

Women's Liberation in the African Female Bildungsroman: A Reading of Chimamanda N. Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* and Sefi Atta's *Everything Good Will Come*

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Abstract: The paper analyzes the way in which African women writers have contributed to the liberatory, self-fulfillment and emancipatory struggles of their sisters through their literary works. It has looked at how Sefi Atta and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie have used literature to reach the aforementioned goals, especially through the African female bildungsroman. The approaches used to collect and interpret the study's data are the close-reading technique and the comparative one. The analysis indicated that the feminized bildungsroman enables the female protagonists to gain a high-level of agency through a process of formation. It also revealed that the feminized bildungsroman is an appropriate weapon, which gives the possibility to the subaltern female voices to speak out for themselves.

Keywords: emancipation, feminized bildungsroman, liberation, subjugation, women.

Résumé : Cet article analyse la manière dont les romancières africaines ont contribué aux luttes émancipatrices, libératrices, et d'accomplissement de soi de leurs sœurs à travers leurs productions littéraires. Il a été aussi question d'examiner comment les deux auteures, Sefi Atta et Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, font usage de la littérature pour atteindre les objectifs mentionnés dessus, notamment à travers le bildungsroman africain féminisé. Les approches utilisées pour collecter et interpréter les données de l'étude sont la technique du « close-reading » et l'approche comparative. L'analyse a indiqué que le bildungsroman féminisé permet aux protagonistes féminins d'acquérir de nouvelles capacités pour s'affirmer, notamment à travers un processus de développement. Elle a également révélé que le bildungsroman féminisé est une arme appropriée qui donne la possibilité aux voix féminines subalternes de s'exprimer par et pour elles-mêmes.

Mots clés : assujettissement, bildungsroman féminisé, émancipation, femmes, libération.

Introduction

Persuaded of the power of the *written word* in the liberation of women, African female writers have established a literary tradition. This latter consists in using the genre of the novel as a means of unshackling and forwarding women's causes. Put differently, their purpose is to raise women's awareness about their precarious living conditions and endow them with enough confidence and inner energy to face those conditions. To be able to do so, African women writers from the first to the third generations have all and univocally opted for the novel and its sub-genres. This choice is related to the:

Novel's capacity to map out and reorganize reality made it the most convenient medium for [Female African writers] seeking to rethink and reimagine the social worlds in postcolonial times. As a genre that encourages interiority and accommodates other genres, forms and voices, the novel opens individual locations of struggles and desire and provides a flexible and discursive space. (Irele, 2009, p.177)

African women writers thus re-appropriate the new space generated and made available by the novel genre to create a new discourse of female agency. This discourse aims at redefining and refashioning women's worlds. In light of the foregoing, the novel has become the ultimate medium through which African female writers have brought forth a new destiny and existence for marginalized African women. For instance, they have set up in the genre of the African female novel a new model of African women who are self-adjust female characters and the very obverse of female characters encountered in most male literature. These new female emerging voices with their new discourse change the politics of the female subjects' representation in the African novel and literature to a larger extent. Hence, their commitment is to *de-masculinize* the novel genre and make it bear the burdens of women's struggles for the attainment of their emancipation, liberation and freedom in the various spheres of African societies.

In view of the latter, the de-masculinization of the African novel can thoroughly be achieved only through a re-invention and re-shaping of the novel and its different sub-genres such as the *bildungsroman*, which is one of the writing techniques in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Everything Good Will Come*.

In regard to the above remarks and considerations, the paper seeks to investigate the ways through which African literature, especially the African novel, could be reshaped to ensure the emancipatory, expansionist and liberatory struggles of women. In this context, the emphasis is to see how the *feminized and postcolonial bildungsroman* participates in the epistemological and

ontological struggles of women for self-actualization and self-definition. In so doing, the focus is placed on young female characters such as: Sheri and Enitan in Atta's novel, and Kambili and Amaka in Adichie's.

Methodologically, the paper is structured in three parts. The first part deals with the origins of the bildungsroman in the West and in Africa. The second part accounts for the feminization of the bildungsroman. The third one demonstrates how Adichie and Atta give voice to marginal female voices by using the feminized bildungsroman as a way to alert and guide them towards their social self-actualization.

1.The Bildungsroman in African Literature

Historically, the bildungsroman is a literary sub-genre that emerged in the 21st century in African literature as one of the most efficient means to deal with wider postcolonial feminine and African conditions at a larger scale. However, it is axiomatic to know that it first originated from German literature and existed in African literature since the 20th century. Yet, before decorticating how the African feminine bildungsroman has taken a new shape in terms of thought, orientation and exploring how it empowers women by giving them a voice, it is of paramountcy to trace back the history of the bildungsroman in the context of world literature.

To begin with, the bildungsroman is indeed a German term composed of two words: *bildung* [education, formation or development] and *roman* [novel]. The bildungsroman can therefore be defined etymologically as a novel of education and formation or development (from childhood to adulthood or from immaturity to maturity). According to Wolfreys et al (2012): "the bildungsroman is a novel that traces the formative years and spiritual education of its main protagonist [usually a male figure]" (p.17). In this respect, the focus in the bildungsroman mainly consists in tracking the personal and spiritual journey of a specific character usually from his or her childhood to his or her adulthood. Concerning its origin, the bildungsroman, as a novelistic form, first appeared within a masterpiece in the German literature entitled Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister Lehrjahre* in 1795-96. Some critics argue that the bildungsroman is one of the greatest contributions of Germans in world literature. The first novels of this genre were primarily and mostly interested in accounting for the life of the protagonist from his or her birth or childhood to adulthood or from immaturity to maturity.

Nevertheless, as it grows, its focus has widened by covering the other different aspects in the existence of the protagonist in conformity with the realities of his or her society. For instance, at this stage, it “was used to address questions like morality, spiritual development and other social concerns” (Golban, 2018, p.ix). It is important to specify that European scholars have long utilized the bildungsroman in this way. However, it has been used differently by African writers, both male and female for different purposes.

The first bildungsromans in African literature were much more concerned with questions of childhood experience, home and abroad, duality of existence, and the image of the postcolonial subject in the process of becoming. Some novels that fall within that category are Camara Laye’s *The Dark Child* (1954) and Cheikh Amidou Kane’s *Ambiguous Adventure* (1971). These novels address the postcolonial identity formation challenges through the main protagonists, who, in many ways, are torn between two contradictory and antagonistic worlds. They as well represent different irreconcilable identities despite their quests for an actual identity in the midst of a chaotic environment. In addition, the African male bildungsroman also deals with nation-wide issues like the independence struggle. It was also used to explore the structuration of African precolonial societies. The foregoing reality is actually evidenced in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958), a socio-anthropological story interwoven with and narrated through the Igbo society. At this point, people can notice that the first bildungsroman that had been Africanized and included in modern African literature were primarily produced by male novelists. All their works without any exception had exclusively male protagonists as the narrating voices, thus excluding female voices. Nevertheless, the bildungsroman, as a subgenre of the novel, has always existed in Africa, especially in African oral narratives such as the stories of Chaka Zulu, Soundjata Keita and the like.

2. Feminizing the African *Bildungsroman*

It is convenient to emphasize that, in spite of the masculinization of the bildungsroman from its inception by African male-authors; African female writers have lately re-appropriated it for different usage and orientations. African female writers in investing this new style of writing create a new trend in African literature, which consists in re-modelling the bildungsroman genre

to meet women's needs and aspirations. It allows female writers to give a voice to the marginal identities, referring to voiceless women and breaks taboos in that process too.

In the novels under study, the heroines belong to and evolve on the margin of their respective societies. That is to say, their existence is not given much importance and value. One of the characteristics of the African female bildungsroman is that the story is created and narrated through the voices of the once peripheral female characters. The foregoing female characters' voices advocate women's agency through their narrations and they therefore speak from the center by breaking the shackles of subalternity. For instance, in *Purple Hibiscus*, the story is made possible through the movement and gaze of Kambili who is the main protagonist. Although her father, Eugene an orthodox Catholic, reduces her to silence, the whole story is brought into existence through the authoritative intervention of Kambili. Through the latter, the reader may clearly see a highly remarkable shift from a traditionally male-centered narrative to a female-oriented one. It indicates that a significant voice is given to Kambili. In other words, she is pulled from voicelessness and marginality into being the center of attention. Her voice symbolically stands for the voiceless. Voicing in this specific context implies a certain freedom and agency because of the importance and the power of words in breaking the shackles of subalternity and marginalization in any society.

Like Adichie's novel, Atta's *Everything Good Will Come* is built around Enitan and her friend Sheri. Enitan, though enjoying much more freedom than her counterpart Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus*, faces family and social challenges that hinder her progress. In the same line of thoughts, although Enitan is given a space to grow, the space is not well enough for her to attain her fullness and empowerment. Both Enitan in *Everything Will Come* and Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus*, in spite of the limited space they evolve in and restrained freedom they are given, are the characters through whom the stories are called into being. This narrative technique is all the more important as it gives the marginalized narrative voices some authority not only in recounting their own stories but also the stories of other characters. It is a way to sensitize and show marginalized women the path towards freedom and empowerment through a process of awareness raising and to break the backbones of passivity.

As the male version of the bildungsroman focuses on the psychological, mental and physical growth of the male protagonist from childhood, and sometimes from birth to adulthood, the feminine type as Bakhtin says: "provides an image of the female protagonist in the process of

becoming” (Golban, 2018, p.18). In the feminized bildungsroman, the protagonists are always female characters and its plots must follow a certain trajectory. That is to say, the heroine grows from childhood to adulthood in a process, but sometimes she does not reach adulthood because the process stops halfway. If the female-centered bildungsroman does not go all the way to adulthood, this type of bildungsroman is referred to as a semi-bildungsroman. Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* therefore falls within this category whilst Atta’s can be considered as a full bildungsroman. However, it is of paramount importance to specify that the first recorded African female bildungsromans may eventually be traced back to Buchi Emecheta’s *In the Ditch* (1972) and *Second Class Citizen* (1974). They are all semi- bildungsromans talking about the predicaments and the changes that the heroines undergo through a process of development (from childhood to adulthood).

Furthermore, the female protagonist in most cases is a sensitive person looking for answers and experiences to mature. Alternatively, the process of maturity is “long, arduous, and gradual consisting of a repeated clash between the protagonist’s needs and desires and the views and judgements enforced by an unbending social order.” (Noomé, 2004, p.126). In addition, “the growth process, at its root a quest story, has been described as both “an apprenticeship to life” and “search for a meaningful existence within society.” (Noomé, 2004, p.127).

As such, in both novels the protagonists go through a series of successive ordeals susceptible of breaking them or blockading their growth as well as their emergence. This fact is widely illustrated in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Everything Good Will Come*. In Adichie’s text, the heroine, Kambili, is traumatized by the way his father Eugene violently and savagely interacts with her based on her education at school and at home, and on any other issue related to her life. Because of the violence meted out against her by Eugene, Kambili begins to develop a paranoiac behavior. She lives in total anxiety and fear. The preceding phenomenon is thoroughly illustrated when Kambili states: “He [Eugene] lumbered upstairs, each heavy step creating turbulence in my head.” (Adichie, p.24) In fact, the quotation clearly evidences the ordeal that Kambili goes through in the hands and under the roof of Eugene. His incessant terrorizing of Kambili clips off her wings and confines her in an open-like prison. Living and growing in such an un-hospitable and terrifying environment is a huge hindrance for Kambili to spread her wings and be who she yearns to be. For example, her whole existence is shaped around and depends on a piece of paper, the schedule made by Eugene for her. In following the schedule literally, Kambili

becomes robot-like unable to develop her personal thoughts. The environment she lives in and the father she lives with become a serious obstacle to her growing, both physically and psychologically. Therefore, a geographical relocation becomes necessary for Kambili. This relocation in aunt Ifeoma's house drastically enables the free thriving of her personality and her free growth to action.

Indeed, Enitan also has trouble with her mother, who over-bullies her over trivialities. Completely stuck in the religious straitjacket after the death of her first son, Enitan's mother Ari begins to terrorize her through her authoritarian drift. Enitan perceives home, which is supposed to be a safe place, as insecure and unbearable, for she prefers spending her vacation at the boarding school instead of coming back home. Furthermore, Enitan faces more serious challenges in the process of becoming the true self she aspires to. To attain her selfhood and self-actualization, the young female protagonist needs transformation.

3. The Bildungsroman, a Catalyst for Women's Liberation

As it is generally recognized, the bildungsroman is a novelistic type that sets forth change, which is, if not, one of its most important aspects. The fact of tracking the life of the heroine from her childhood to adulthood implies multiple changes necessary for the growth of the main character. The transformation that occurs in the story, whether at the beginning, middle or end, is inevitable and even constitutes the essence of the genre of the bildungsroman. Underscoring the importance of the transformation, Ogaga Okunyade states: "change is one of the determinants of a successful bildungsroman." (2011, p.142). However, the attainability of change depends on other external and internal forces such as changing geographical location and gaining consciousness of one's condition. The focus here is to see how significant the first two traits are in the maturing process of the heroines. As a result, one notices the delocalization of the heroines in *Purple Hibiscus* and *Everything Good Will Come*. That is their displacement from their original settings, city and family, to new enabling and empowering areas. Many scholars consider this journey as a sort of transformational "pilgrimage". The journey, that each heroine does, connotes a separation from her family and somehow dissociation from the old social environment.

In *Purple Hibiscus*, Kambili travels from Enugu, the city where she was born and grew up, to Nsukka. It is where she spends some time with her aunt Ifeoma and her family. In a short time following her arrival, Kambili becomes fascinated and influenced by Nsukka. She is especially attracted by the way in which Ifeoma's family is organized and how she manages her children. The movement from Enugu to Nsukka is very symbolic, for it raises and alerts Kambili's awareness about her own oppressive condition back in Enugu. Kambili's new state of consciousness begins to manifest some changes since the first day she has put foot in Nsukka. This is evidenced in the text when she is having dinner with her aunt Ifeoma and cousins Obiora, Chima and Amaka. Kambili herself describes the scene as follows: "I had felt as if I were not there, that I was just observing a table where you could say anything at any time to anyone, where the air was free for you to breathe as you wished." (Adichie, p. 68). The foregoing excerpt shows that back in Enugu, the Achikes have no such freedom and intimacy during and outside of mealtime. On top of that, Kambili goes on describing their prison-like compound whose "compound walls, topped by coiled electric wires, were so high I could not see the cars driving on our street" (Adichie, p.9). Although the Achikes do live in a mansion-like house, Kambili always feels asphyxiated and caged because of the constant fear inhabiting her. Consequently, she captures that inauspicious atmosphere at home as follows:

Although our spacious dining room gave way to an even wider living room. I felt suffocated. The off-white walls with the framed photos of grandfather were narrowing, bearing down on me. Even the glass dining table was moving toward me. (Adichie, 2009, p.8)

Considering these conditions under which Kambili lives in Enugu, the relocation is essential and even needed. It enables her to gain the capacity to speak out and access a certain freedom formerly denied to her. In underlying and witnessing the paramountcy of this relocation and the significance of Nsukka, Kambili utters that: "Nsukka could free something deep inside your belly that would rise up to your throat and come out as a freedom song as laughter." (Adichie, p.161). The excerpt indicates the mental growth of the heroine. Thanks to relocation, she has gained a mental maturity that thus permits her to understand the conditions in which her family in Enugu lives.

Likewise, the chief protagonist Enitan goes through the same ritual in *Everything Good Will Come*. Like Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus*, Enitan is obliged to leave her home, too, due to the suffocating atmosphere pervading in the house. Nevertheless, unlike Kambili who moves from one city to another, Enitan's pilgrimage manifests in two dimensions. The first transition occurs on the very first day she sets foot in the Bakares', a next-door family. Once in the Bakares, Enitan notices all the freedom that the children in this house enjoy, mainly Sheri who is her friend. Enitan discovers that the burden of the constraints of movement that weigh over her head does not exist on her friend Sheri. Unlike Enitan who is pinned down at home, Sheri is given the possibility to move freely.

The fact of treading the Bakares' doorstep thrusts Enitan to critically think of her own condition. The second pilgrimage occurs when Enitan is sent to London to pursue Law Studies. During her stay in London, Enitan enjoys much freedom and new conditions that allow her to cast a critical look at her former life back home in Nigeria. As a result, she refuses to go back and spend her holidays with her parents in Nigeria. The new experiences introduce Enitan to new types of freedom, decision-making for herself, movement, and even control over her sexuality. Thanks to these new experiences, her personality has changed consequently. As an illustration, "Enitan after going through all these new ways of being starts challenging the very norms restraining her, that is to say, the Native laws". (Atta, p.121). Thence, the relocation process awakens both Kambili and Enitan from the deep sleep they were once plunged into. On top of that, it enables them to see how their former conditions constitute a barrier to their aspirations for a better future. Besides, they begin to display tendencies of resentment and discontent for their former spatial and psychological geographies which they hope to transcend. The purport of this transcendence is to drive the heroines to gain an identity of their own agency, which is the gist of their journey.

In the same scope, the heroines in many other African female-authored bildungsromans follow almost the same trajectories like Kambili and Enitan. They at the beginning also face sheer life adversities that impede their growth physically, materially, and psychologically. Under those circumstances, the up-growth of the female protagonist, in every respect, becomes possible only through displacement, whether it is willing or coerced. The movement allows the female subject to break free from the weight of the oppressive social norms and standards confining her. The new journey that the heroine undertakes is characterized by a quest for a new agency. To

sustain what precedes, *Nervous Conditions* (1988) begins with the dilemma and existential questions of Tambu deprived, due to her femaleness, of one of the basic rights of a child that is education. The little Tambu has experienced this social injustice since at an early age. The societal values do a great disservice to the young Tambu because she is denied the right to choose and exist as a full human being. Tambu would have met the same fate if her brother were still alive. Owing to the harsh and unfavorable environment she lives in, Tambu joyfully celebrates the death of her brother Nhamo whose existence is a threat to her emancipation. Tambu's schooling would have been shortened if her brother had still been alive because the family being poor decides to consecrate the little money they have on Nhamo. Tambu's early childhood is fraught with a series of tribulations. To escape this toxic environment and to ensure self-actualization, moving to a new space becomes the only means available.

As a result, Tambu migrates to her uncle's house Babamukuru in order to pursue her education. The presence and journey of Tambu through this new space can be regarded as a new life initiation, which gives her the possibility to acquire new values and become a free agent. Tambu gains some authority and autonomy under the roof of Babamukuru due to the empowering environment provided by the latter. Consequently, she is able to critically assess her former existential conditions. The feeling that now emerges out of this critique is a resentment for her old environment, people and social organization.

Certainly, one of the most common features of the Africanized and feminized bildungsroman is that it does not only present the heroine in the process of becoming and maturity, but also situates her on the threshold between different historical areas. The heroine then emerges along with her world. She reflects the historical emergences and political situation of this world too. The quest for a distinct identity and a certain freedom by the heroine is entangled with the country's in which she inhabits. Her struggles for self-determination and sufficiency explicate in miniature of the type of society she belongs to.

As such, the struggles of the heroines Kambili and Enitan are interwoven with their countries in crisis striving for their own trajectory. The historical periods depicted in both novels are characterized by a sheer dictatorship crushing and dynamiting everything that stands in its way. By way of illustration, in *Purple Hibiscus* the government puts a limitation on people's freedoms. The country is at the same time undermined by coup, corruption and mismanagement. Like the heroine, the difficulties of the country in accessing full maturity are caught in the

following words: “a coup always began a vicious cycle. Military men would overthrow one another, because they could, because they were all power drunk” and on top of this instability, the “politicians were corrupt” as well (Adichie, p.16).

In the like context, one witnesses the same scenario in *Everything Good Will Come*. The country’s struggle for political and economic maturity is thoroughly portrayed through Enitan’s search for psychological growth and to a larger extent existential fulfillment. Enitan’s country is plagued with successive coups that jeopardize its stability and its development. Like the heroine, the country is deprived of the instrument that ensures its viability and smooth functioning. The situation is highlighted in the following words of Enitan: “Law school ended the summer of 1985. Within a week of my graduation, there was another military coup and our constitution was further suspended.” (Atta, p.63). Overall, in the African feminine bildungsroman, the heroine’s struggle for independence and maturity is a microcosm of the society’s, and to a larger extent the country’s in which she lives. Her emergence into agency equates with the country’s in general.

According to Idette Noomé, the novelist genre, bildungsroman, “ends with an assessment by the protagonist himself [herself] and his [her] new place in that society.” (p.16). Put differently, it implies that the heroine after her liberationist pilgrimage in the new place makes a critical assessment of the outcome of her journey. This self-checking consists in seeing, if she reaches the inner development and level of maturity with all the power that goes with it after her long and effortful journey. In addition, the bildungsroman also often ends with a display of pride in the heroine’s self-accomplishments. Still, in the end of the female bildungsroman in general, the protagonist “takes control of her transition or journey of self-discovery” (Okuyade, 2011, p.145), but most importantly she reaches a full independence worthy of the name.

In light of the above argument, both novels under study ended with a good denouement because the heroines Enitan in *Everything Good Will Come* and Kambili in *Purple Hibiscus* emerged out of their oppression and psychological immaturity to self-policing and self-piloting their lives. Strong, ambitious, hopeful, and self-conscious come out the heroines from their pilgrimage. Kambili, following the death of her father Eugene and the jailing of her brother Jaja, takes the lead of the family. It marks the emergence of Kambili from the marginalized space to the center and testifies to her maturity and metamorphosis. Her attaining of full maturity is captured in the following metaphor: “Above, clouds like dyed cotton wool hang low, so low I

feel I can reach out and squeeze the moisture from them. The new rains will come down.” (Adichie, p.165).

In the same fashion, Enitan also develops a distinct personality of her own, which shows her new-found self-knowledge and the fruit of her thorny journey. She succeeds in quitting the restraining environment to live a life of her own marked by the freedom of movement and decision-making. The following excerpt exemplifies Enitan’s attaining of full maturity:

When people speak of turning points in their lives it makes me wonder. [...] Before this, I had opportunities to take action, only to end up behaving in ways I was accustomed, courting the same frustrations because I was sure of what I would feel: wronged, helpless, stuck in a day when I was fourteen years old. Here it is: changes came after I made them, each one small. I walked up the stairs. Easy I took off a head tied. Very easy. I packed a suitcase, carried it downstairs, put it in my car. When situations became trickier, my tasks became smaller. My husband asked why I was leaving him. “I have to,” I replied. Three words, I could say them. (Atta, 2005, p. 296)

Like in *Purple Hibiscus*, the novel also ends up in good notes. The ending corresponds to the singing and dancing of Enitan as a way of celebrating not only the release of her father from the *Prison* but also her new freedom that she dearly struggled for:

I danced the *palongo*, fearing nothing for my sanity, or common sense. I added a few foreign steps to disorientate the discontented so-and-so: flamenco, can-can, Irish dancing from side to side. Nothing could take my joy away from me. THE SUN SENT HER BLESSINGS. MY SWEAT BAPTIZED ME. (Atta, 2005, p.299)

The above excerpt therefore confirms the personal and psychological development of Atta’s heroine. This is an implicit manner for her to entice marginalized and oppressed women to refuse passivity and stand up for their rights and social empowerment. The same revolutionary feminist thought is also underscored in Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, especially through the growth of Kambili, the heroine. In view of the foregoing analysis, it has become evident that the African

female novel, namely the female genre of the bildungsroman serves as an effective and efficient catalyst for women sensitization and empowerment within the interstices of sexism and patriarchy.

Conclusion

The purpose of the African feminized bildungsroman is to make women's voices audible whilst giving them the possibility to narrate their own woes and grievances. The analysis of the two novels have also shown that there are multiple ways that can be explored by women to attain and ensure agency and maturity in every respect of life. Accordingly, the psychological and mental development of the heroines is made possible through a geographical relocation also considered as a "pilgrimage" or a willing or coerced "displacement", which is an essential step in the journey undertaken by the heroines in both works. In addition, the development of the heroines coincides with the emergence of the society they live in. After going through this long and strenuous development process in search for their own and distinctive identities and agency, the heroines come out full-fledged. The two heroines, Enitan and Kambili, take pride in their achievements and even seem to celebrate it at the end of the two novels. Therefore, we witness happy resolutions. These happy endings through protagonists' displacement are an overt feminist didactic lesson to invite subalterns to move from the periphery to the center by seizing all the possibilities ensuring their agency. Thus, they should avoid passivity and immobility.

In the light of what precedes, we thus confirm that African female novelists have been able to re-fashion and re-adapt the European and African-male versions of the bildungsroman to women's conditions and realities, and used it as an efficient instrument for their liberation and empowerment as illustrated by Adichie and Atta in their two novels.

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