



## AFRICAN AMERICAN WOMEN AND WOMEN NOVELISTS

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### Abstract

*African Americans have held this opinion for a long time already, and it is universally accepted. It was important to take into account how the tensions between Africans' and Europeans' ideas with one's own cultural heritage, as well as their oral and written traditions, influenced African Americans' literary rituals in British colonies in North America. The British colonization of Africans has intensified this conflict. Everybody in the United States who qualifies as African-American has a propensity to either work within and against the dual literary heritage he or she gets as a portion of their North American culture and heritage, be it African or European, romantic or realistic, for men or women. Both the first-person and 3rd viewpoints are equally valid. African American writers engage in an elusive war for authority, position, and identification when writing in this milieu. Literary classicism both in Eurocentric and the wider Afro-American cultural meanings is based on a writer's ties to historical and contemporary authors, and also his or her works' connection to other writers in the tradition.*

*This holds true irrespective of whether one approaches it from a literary structuralist or an Afro-American culture standpoint. In his novel Gobbledygook (1972), techno-aesthete, as well as artist Ishmael Marsh, presents an Afrocentric view of the world in which ancient Africa, such as Egypt, is depicted as the more historical and contemporary and archaeological finds valid cradle of civilization and cultural diversity, challenging our common wisdom in the process. For those who hold to a Eurocentric vision of the world in which ancient culture and the universal standard for cultural excellence are held in high regard by the Greeks and Romans, an Afrocentric worldview offers a new picture. At least 2 million years ago, people initially emerged in Africa's eastern and southern regions, then moved on to Europe and Asia, until having arrived in the Americas around 12,000 and 30,000 years ago through Bering Strait. Although that is true, it cannot be ignored. Using the magical realism approach, Alice Walker, Pulitzer Prize-winning writer of *The Temple of My Beloved* (1989), dismantled this myth and also rebuilt the primordial Sub-Saharan African mother of everyone, no difference if you call her Lucy or Eve.*

**Keywords:-** African Americans, Sub-Saharan African, women, Black women's, Writer

### Introduction

There has been a decent chunk of cultural advancement made by the works of women of African heritage. The majority of these writers produced their works during in the Harlem Renaissance, which was a crucial period in African American history. Others have been active in the book community since the 1970s, which was a decade in which movies were commonly adapted from the works of African American women authors. groups who

discuss books. The literature written by African American women is notable for not only the artistic qualities it has as well as for the way it sheds light on the social struggles that the authors of this poetry had to overcome. An outstanding summary of the works and lives of African American women authors is provided in the this book. It also includes an alphanumeric code of more than 150 notable female authors from the African American community who have achieved significant success in their respective fields. Some of these people, like Toni Morrison and Gloria Naylor, are among the most well-known authors writing today, whereas others have been mostly overlooked or are only just beginning to be more well. The term "the Black women's literary renaissance" was coined to describe what took place in the 1970s as a direct consequence of a number of literary, cultural, and political movements that took place during the latter half of the 1950s and the early 1960s. The term "Black women's literary renaissance" has been used to characterise this occurrence. Black feminist issues and expressive customs have also become more important in African-American literature as just a result of these changes, which include greater visibility for authors such as Hansberry, Kennedy, Walker as well as Brooks. There was no time lag between any of these events. The vast majority of African-Americans in the U.S were held in slavery prior to the American Civil War.. Some individuals were successful in acquiring a second language despite the fact that doing so violates the law. We could not have envisioned the number of African-American authors, poets, novelists, and short scriptwriters who have produced poetry, novels, and short story collections. This includes both autobiographical as well as fictional works. Sadly, until the late 1960s, when the civil rights struggle sparked unparalleled interest in the opinions, conduct, and accomplishments of black people, the majority of this collection of writing stayed relatively unreachable to the general public. This interest in black people's opinions, behaviour, and achievements was sparked by the movement for racial equality. As a direct consequence of the response, thousands of books various subjects such as African-American history, literature, and art were reprinted.

### **Toni Morrison**

Toni Morrison's *That Bluest Eye* (1970) is generally regarded as the beginning of this movement by African American women through literature, regardless of the fact that this outpouring of fire & emotion has a long history. After growing up in a city of Lorain, which is situated in the state of Ohio, Morrison studied both Howard University as well as Cornell University. In her debut novel, she focused just on devastation that white ideals of beauty, symbolised by light eyes, had on an all-alone Black girl's quest to discover a good self in a family lacking love and a community that is open to attempting to blame others for her own problems. She also discussed the effect of having blue eyes has on white public views of what is beautiful. Black Arts movement's usual depiction of macho protagonists in combat with the wider white society was replaced by an emphasis on the Freudian idea of oppression or how it affects an poor, little Black girl in this movie. The fact that *The Bluest Eye* implicitly endorsed the "Black is beautiful" motto of the 1970s helped ensure that the song remained contemporary. The attention which the movie paid to these issues, on the other hand, wasn't really typical of what Black Arts movement was

doing at the time. *Sula* was published the year before *The Bluest Eye* was taken from out print in 1974, although Morrison already had written and published *Sula*. *Sula* was a pioneering novel because it portrayed female companionship as that of the essential relationship in an African American novel. It also founded the immoral, adventurous, and self-sanctioned character of *Sula Tranquility*, whose radical individualism Morrison marks with a non-judgmental disconnection. *Sula* was a groundbreaking novel because of its portrayal of female companionship as the essential connection in an African American novel. By 1974, *The Bluest Eye* wasn't any longer in print and also was unavailable. The popularity of Morrison's second significant repairs of the 1970s, *Sula*, whetted the thirst of her growing fan base towards her third, *Song of Solomon*. Morrison, in instance, penned the book (1977). *Songs of Solomon* was first African American book to be picked as just a major selection by the Book-of-the-Month Club following the release of *Native Son*. Folklore, history & literary tradition are interwoven together just to help Macon Killed (the first man protagonist in a Morrison book) recover his spiritual and moral purity, with help of his aunt Peter (another Morrison heroine). Macon Deaths, Morrison's first male protagonist, is likewise celebrated in *Songs of Solomon* for his moral and spiritual rebirth. Song of Solomon's use of African American mythology, history, & literary tradition helps achieve that harmony. Specifically, this is done by bringing together these three elements. Toni Cade Bambara and Gloria Naylor, both of whom won the American Man Booker prize in the late 1970s, looked to Toni Macarthur as a source of inspiration. When Naylor was awarded the Book Award in 1983, Bambara received the American Book Award in 1980. Toni Morrison has established herself as the leading African American writer of the decade even by late 1970s. **19th-century African-American women who are also authors** Many of these formerly black slaves went on to publish their writings after they were freed, even though they were still required by labor in jobs such as housemaids and seamstresses. Beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century, when black women gained a greater right to get educated, a period of significant literary creation by black women started. Edenton, North Carolina is the site wherein Harriet Ann Jacobs was bought by a slave owner and brought to a life of servitude. Margaret Horniblow took care of them up till she reached eleven years old, and it was Margaret that showed her how to read as well as how to sew. During that time, she also was kept by Margaret. When Horniblow died away, Harriet with her brother became the property of Mrs. Horniblow's brother, Dr. James Norcom, who's been a lecherous devil in the past. Harriet's brother got the land as well. Dr. Norcom was the caregiver for Harriet her siblings, especially her brother. Two children were born as a result of a connection that developed between Harriet Jacobs and a single white man who's not her master. This relationship resulted in the introduction of the children. Jacobs hid for further than 7 years in a hole in her grandmother's home in order to avoid her rapist, Dr. Norcom. She did this in order to get away from them. She was able to walk away in 1835 and eventually located a new home in New York City, where she started working as a maid again for the Willis family, which Nathaniel Parker Willis led. She remained with the Willis family for the rest of her life. In the year 1861, when she penned her memoirs, which were titled *Occurrences in the Life of a Slave Girl*, she did it under the pseudonym Linda Brent.

In addition to that, she listed a number of the other people in her work with fictitious names. Throughout the much mid-twentieth century, the majority of the world's population thought that Linda Brent was a white woman and that *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* was a work of fiction. This misconception persisted but after Linda Brent's identity is known. The real name of Harriet Jacobs was not disclosed to the public for the first time until the 1980s. Her autobiography is often regarded to be most in-depth slave tale ever published by a black woman in the United States, and there is a good reason for this acclaim.

After the year 1861, she served once again as a clerk again for New England Women's Club and also ran a boarding home that served to the needs of students and faculty at Harvard University. Her finding shed light on further occurrences in his life that did take place after the year 1861. During the time of the Civil War, she helped previously enslaved persons who were in need of help in Washington, District of Columbia, where she worked as a relief worker.

### **Elizabeth Keckley (1818-1907)**

Elizabeth Keckley was the child of the a link between her slave mother and her master as she was born at Dinwiddie Court House, Virginia. While she was younger, she were abused by many owners in succession. After spending many harsh decades with Robert Burwell but instead his family, Keckley was transported to St. Louis, Missouri, to live alongside Anne Burwell Garland, a married daughter of the Burwells. Anne Burwell Garland was Keckley's new guardian. Inside the early 1850s, Mrs. Garland finds herself in a good situation when she was able to recruit Elizabeth to work as only a tailor in St. Louis, Missouri. She polished her talents as a seamstress as well as dressmaker to a high degree. Regardless of the fact that her owner obliged her to give a percentage of their wage to him, she saved away any money she can afford in the hopes of one day of being able to set her as well as her son, who was born as a consequence of a rape, free.

Elizabeth was able to buy her independence by gathering the required \$1,200 due to Elizabeth Keckley was indeed the child of a connection between her enslaved mother and her owner when she was born at Dinwiddie Court House, Virginia. While she was younger, she were mistreated by multiple owners in succession. After enduring many harsh years with Robert Burwell & his family, Keckley was relocated to St. Louis, Missouri, to live alongside Anne Burwell Garland, a married granddaughter of the Burwells. Anne Burwell Garland was Keckley's new guardian. Inside the early 1850s, Mrs. Garland finds herself in a good circumstance when she was able to recruit Elizabeth to work as only a tailor in St. Louis, Missouri. She polished her talents as a seamstress and seamstress to a high degree. Regardless of the fact that her owner obliged her to contribute a percentage of her wage to him, she saved away any money she can spare in the hopes of one day being able to set herself and also her son, who was conceived as just a consequence of a rape, free. Elizabeth is able to buy her freedom by amassing the required \$1,200 owing to the nice gifts of some of her customers as well as her personal money. In her autobiography entitled *Behind the Scenes, Or, 30 Years a Slave and 4 Years inside the White House*, Keckley details the steps she took to win her independence from the Garland family in November 1855. Keckley was a slave over 30 years prior to her time in the White House (1868).

After going through two failed marriages, Elizabeth Keckley relocated her family and went to the country's capital in the year 1860. There, she opened a business wherein she made clothes, and she hired something in the region of twenty people to work for her. As word spread amongst the well-to-do ladies of Washington society about her talent, she started getting a growing amount of commissions from a range of companies. Mary Randolph Custis Lee, who was wedded to Robert E. Lee, and Varina Howell Davis, whose spouse would go on to serve as President of the Confederacy during in the Civil War, were two of her customers. Varina Howell Davis's husband will go on to serve as President of the Confederacy. Another of my patrons was Varina Howell Davis. Another one of Keckley's customers was also the one who brought her to Mary Lincoln's attention, and they were also Keckley's customers. Keckley was both the First Lady's seamstress and her confidant at some of the most tough moments in her life, including as the Civil War, the loss of her son, and the murder of the President. She was in there for her during all of these events. She recounted many aspects of a private life of Abraham but instead Mary Lincoln in her book "Behind the Scenes, Or, Thirty Years in Slave as well as Four Years in the White House." This novel was written by her. Keckley was given a harsh sentence as a result of the fact because she divulged sensitive information on the First Family. Both her friends and her company was taken away with her as a result of her misfortunes.

### **Sarah Jane Woodson Early (1825-1907)**

Indeed, in addition to becoming a writer, Sarah Jane Woodson is also an educator as well as an activist. As the general superintendent of a black division from 1888 to 1892 again for Women's Christian Temperance Union, Early (1888–1892) gave over 100 lectures throughout five states while serving in the this role. She later served as national superintendent. She became the first African American woman to hold a teaching position in a university around the year 1858, but instead she did it at Wilberforce University (both colleges are located in Ohio). Wilberforce had forced to close for 2 years during in the Civil War because it had lost the large bulk of its roughly 200 membership students. This was due to the fact that wealthy landowners in the South removed their children, who were made up of a variety community. The Cincinnati Methodist Conferences reached the conclusion that they were unable to continue their previous level of financial assistance as they were asked to provide security and care for accompanying spouses in addition to the soldiers themselves. It wasn't until AME Society acquired the institution as well as reopened it that African-Americans could declare themselves the owners and directors of a college. Sarah served both as Lady Principal and the Matron just at school, in addition to becoming a teacher of English and Latin there. She was the superintendent at four various schools while she was living in Tennessee, and she taught at the Freedmen's Bureau's first college for black girls in Hillsboro, North Carolina, after her marriage to minister Jordan Winston Early was consummated in 1868. She was married to Early while she was still living in Tennessee. Her book, *The Life as well as Labors of Reverend Jordan W. Early*, that she wrote about her partner's freedom from slavery and released after World War II, is considered a part of the canon of postwar slave narratives. In 1893, she addresses the World's Congress of Representative Women, and among those in attending was Sarah Jane

Woodson Early. The lecture was given underneath the heading "The Organized Efforts of the Colored Female One and of the South to Improve Their Lives," and its title matched its topic of the presentation. At this get-together, speeches were solicited by Hallie Quinn Brown, Anna Julia Cooper, and Fanny Jackson Coppin who were all asked to participate.

### **Phillis Wheatley, Poet**

Author of the first publications by an African American Phillis Wheatley were probably born from what is now Africa in the year 1753, and she was sold as slaves in the year 1761. As soon as she arrived in The Americas (Boston, Massachusetts), she was bought by Master John Cotton to serve as a house slave to his wife. John Cotton was a slave owner. Mrs. Wheatley defied the rules of a period and social traditions in instructing her slave Phillis in reading, handwriting, and arithmetic regardless of the fact that such education is strictly prohibited for slaves just at time. Phillis excelled in poetry, Latin, and Greek a most out of all the subjects she has learned. Wheatley soon put her education to use to carve a niche about herself in the book community as just a poet but rather writer. In the year 1773, Wheatley released her second book of poems, which has been given "title Poetry On Various Subjects, Religious and Moral. Her writing style conjured up pictures of hymns and so more traditional approaches towards philosophy. Wheatley's work was published with the backing of abolitionists in well to feminists, therefore she got great acclaim for her outstanding poetry after it was published. Her poetry were in fact composed with such skill that several colonists questioned the veracity of her writing until she received testimonials from both John Hancock & George Washington. After that, many colonists stopped questioning her. Wheatley was able to write a series of songs on her experiences as commander in chief of the Army after Washington asked her to attend Washington, DC in April of 1776. Washington was so pleased by Wheatley's skill that he repeated the invitation.

### **Zora Neale Hurston, Novelist,**

Zora Neale Hurston, an American author as well as folklorist, was born on January 7, 1891 in the city town Montgomery, Alabama. Hurston, on either hand, said that Eatonville, Florida was my birthplace, despite the fact that she was notorious for setting the date of her birth. She spent the majority of her adult years steeped in the customs and cultures of a range of countries and regions across the world, including the Caribbean, Latin America, as well as the American South. After that, Hurston went on to get a free associate's degree in anthropology from Howard University and a free bachelor's degree in anthropology at Barnard University. She attended both of these universities off scholarships. After receiving her doctorate from Howard University in Washington, District of Columbia, Hurston moved to New York to pursue careers as a fine artist. During this time, she was strongly influenced by the Harlem Renaissance. It all started when she fought for awards in literary magazines and started to work with Langston Hughes, a good friend of hers. During the beginning of the 1930s, he worked with Hurston on a variety of initiatives, including the creation of the play Mule Bone: A Comedy of Negro Life. A number of Hurston's plays, including "The Great Day" and "from the Sun to the Sun," were produced

by her in the years leading up to her career as a novelist. *Jonah's Gourd Vine*, her first novel, was published the same year she did, in 1934. Her next book, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, is considered by most to be her best work (1937).

## Conclusion

At a time when African-American literature as well as art were in their infancy, the nineteenth century was pivotal. Black Americans in the United States before to the Civil War were bound. Teaching blacks to read was illegal according both to laws and normal procedure at the time. Many of the obstacles on education as well as creative output persisted even after World War II. Even in the nineteenth century, black men and women learnt to read and write. As a result, a larger number of African-Americans than we are aware of have turned their thoughts and feelings into published works. Poetry and short tales were among the many forms of writing published throughout the 19th century, were also historical accounts, narratives, books of history, autobiographies, social critique, and theological tracts. This mass of writing largely remained unavailable to historians, educators, artists and others interested in black life in the 20th century until recently. These 19th century writers were virtually unknown to the majority of Americans until to until late 1960s. The civil rights as well as black power revolutions triggered a wave of interest in black people's ideas, practises, as well as accomplishments. Reprints of "classic texts" in the fields of African-American culture and history, literature, as well as art were among the publisher's responses, as they rewrote traditional texts and brought new generations of African-American writers to the American public. Those who also published a variety of themes anthologies. The reprints were often released in a variety of formats, such as single titles, bound volumes, or microfilms.

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