CHAPTER II

SEGREGATION, an ABOMINATION

"Every Kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand."

- Matthew 12:25

Segregation generally is taken to mean the practice of forcibly separating people based upon their race or ethnicity. However, under modern civil rights law force doesn’t have anything to do with the legal definition of segregation. From a legal standpoint, there are two types of segregation which affect preferred racial minorities in the United States of America: "de jure" segregation and "de facto" segregation. "De jure" segregation means racial separation forced by specific laws. All such laws were eliminated in the United States of America by the mid-1960s. Therefore, today in the United States of America there is no such thing as "de jure" segregation. "De facto" segregation means racial separation that occurs as a matter of fact, e.g., by housing pattern, where one lives or by school enrollment, where one goes to school (en.wikipedia.org/ segregation).

In *Racism: A Short History*, George Fredrickson defines racism as a "way to describe the hostile and negative feelings of one ethnic group or people toward another and the actions resulting from such attitudes" (Fredrickson 1). These hostile and negative attitudes then
result in actions that discriminate. Fredrickson specifies that
[Racism] either directly sustains or proposes to establish a racial
order, a permanent group or hierarchy? (Fredrickson 6).
Segregation is the action of separating people based on ethnicity,
class, or religion in order to discriminate. Therefore, segregation is
an established hierarchical racial order resulting from hostile racist
attitudes. This established racial order has oppressed people of
color in many locations including Jim Crow in the Unit States.
On the other hand, segregation has proven to be unscientific and
aimed at oppressing and dehumanizing a group of people.
(en.wikipedia.org/ wizki/ racialsegregation)

According to C. Vann Woodward, racial segregation began
prior to the Civil War in the Northern States and then spread South
across the United States (17). Woodward specifically writes on
perceptions of White supremacy and Negro inferiority in The
Strange Career of Jim Crow:

Along with these practices and the
justification in defense of them, were
developed the old assumptions of Anglo-
Saxon superiority and innate African
inferiority, white supremacy and Negro
subordination. In so far as segregation is
based on these assumptions, therefore, it is
based on the old pro-slavery argument and has its remote ideological roots in the slavery period (11).

Segregation was instituted in the North to maintain wh superiority in public based on the inferior status of ethnic minorities. It was from the 18th, 19th and early 20th centuries due to rampant racial theories and stigmas against American Indians as uncivilized savages.

Stetson Kennedy writes, ?As has been characteristic of White imperialism, the European settlers and their descendants in America were inclined to look down upon the African Indians as pesky redskins,? ?savages,? dh?heathens? ? (Kennedy 9).

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) defines racial discrimination as: ?any distinction, exclusion, restriction or preference based on race, colour, descent, or national or ethnic origin which has the purpose or effect of nullifying or impairing the recognition, enjoyment or exercise, on an equal footing, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural any other field of public life? (24). Ethnic minorities, indigenous and tribal peoples, people of different colours, and migrant workers are common victims of racial discrimination in employment and occupation.
Discrimination in employment and occupation takes many forms, and occurs in all kinds of work settings. It entails treating people differently because of certain characteristics, such as race, colour or sex, which results in the impairment of equality of opportunity and treatment. In other words, discrimination results in, and reinforces, inequalities. With discrimination the freedom of human beings to develop their capabilities and to choose and pursue their professional and personal aspirations is restricted without regard for ability. Because of discrimination, skills and competencies cannot be developed, rewards to work are denied, and a sense of humiliation, frustration and powerlessness take over.

Langston Hughes expresses grief for his life in the race conscious society thus:

I have had so many hardships in this life
that it is a wonder I'll live until I die. I was
born young, black, voteless, poor and hungry, in a state where white folks did not
even put Negroes on the census? (243)

The Whites want to keep the Blacks segregated in all possible ways even after emancipation from slavery. They expect the Blacks to be servile to them and must be satisfied with their marginal privileges allowed by them. This idea is focused in Brooks? Of De
He was born in Alabama
He was bred in Illinois
He was nothing but a
Plain black boy. (1-4)

The works of Claude McKay and Gwendolyn Brooks view Black Identity in the right angle. The Black man has to redefine his present identity in the American society. The Black man is different but not inferior. In fact, he is more talented in various fields like arts, sports and music than his White counterpart. McKay and Brooks project the Black male and female as unique human beings gifted with innate capacities of endurance, courage and strength.

The oppressions experienced by the Blacks and the several restrictions which they carry with them. The oppressions are traced to the slave past when the poor Africans were blown from their land, language and families and sold away in an alien land. Their miserable slavery in America where they were kept chained, whipped, lynched, underpaid and underfed is brought to focus. They were kept in a state of continued ignorance and poverty without education. Women were abused, children separated, and their efforts to improve ruined, the Black men were at a loss. Christianity offered a spark of hope. Even after Emancipation Proclamation in 1865, the martyrdom continued in the guise of segregation and deliberate neglect from politics and public life.
Martin Luther King, Jr. in *The Sword that Heals* unerringly
gives a commentary on the strategies adopted by the Whites to keep
the Black suppressed:

In the days of slavery, this suppression was
openly, scientifically and consistently applied.
Sheer physical force kept the Negro captive at
every point. He was prevented from learning to
read and write, prevented by laws actually
inscribed in the statute books. He was forbidden
to associate with other Negroes living on the
same plantation except when weddings or
funerals took place. Punishment for any form of
resistance or complaint about his condition could
range from mutilation to death. Families were
torn apart, friends separated, cooperation to
improve their condition carefully thwarted.
Fathers and mothers were sold from their
children and their children were bargained away
from their parents. Young girls were in many
cases, sold to become the breeders of fresh
generations of slaves. The slaveholders of
America have devised with almost scientific
precision their systems for keeping the Negro
defenseless, emotionally and physically? (106)
The researcher studies how this segregation, resulting in racial and gender discriminations, pave way for the physical, psychological and sexual torments, which are undergone by the Blacks.

A high tension of racial injustice is seen everywhere the Blacks, who are called ?inferior?. Segregation affected all aspects of life including civic institutions, entertainment venues, religious and educational institutions. These separate spaces in lude restaurants, transportation, jobs, and neighborhoods, churches and schools. Each of these locations contains racial boundaries that enforced the colour line between Whites and Blacks.

Segregation and suppression of the Blacks are strictly enforced by local practice and governmental policy. Blacks are perceived by Whites as incapable and ?too simple minded? to understand anything. This different treatment places Blacks below Whites in an established racial hierarchy.

McKay and Brooks, who live in the period of segregation, have personally undergone these racial separations. They suggest ways and means to overcome these limitations and view them from positive angles. They advise the Blacks to retain their ethnic identity, take pride in them and direct their vigour in right paths. In this way McKay and Brooks offered directives to the Blacks to turn their trials into triumphs.
McKay had never felt seriously about colour so long as he lived in Jamaica. But from the moment he set foot in the United States, he has been increasingly made to keep his place on the consideration of coloured gazes at him. It has become an abomination and a serious obsession with him. McKay openly declares in his autobiography, *A Long Way from Home*:

> What, then, was my main psychological problem? It was the problem of color. Colour consciousness was the fundamental of my restlessness? (245)

Booker T. Washington rightly states in his *Up from Slavery*:

> ? out of this hard and unusual struggle
> Which he is compelled to pass, he [the Negro] gets a strength, a confidence, that one misses whose pathway is comparatively smooth by reason of birth and race? (40)

Every coloured man, irrespective of his being intelligent, educated or efficient, is denied his human rights. To coloured is a shameful thing. He is not allowed to forget the fact that he is coloured. McKay writes in *The Negro in America*?: *?The Negro in America is not permitted for one minute to forget his colour, his skin or his race?* (4).
The word "coloured" is engraved on his psyche and no one could erase it from him. He and his colour are inseparable. Even the Black man's achievements, accomplishments and intelligence cannot lift him from his low status and place him alongside the white. McKay quoted in Marion Berghahn's *Image of Africa in Black American Literature*:

All your education and achievements cannot put you in the intimate circles of the Whites and give you a White man's full opportunity. However advanced, clever, and cultivated you are, you will have distinguished adjective of ?colored? before your name? (148)

The sufferings of the youth forced them to rebel against the officials who were responsible for their sufferings. Collins comments on Wilfred Owen's revolt against the elder generation in *English Literature of the Twentieth Century* thus:

The sacrifice of the young by the old, the insensitiveness of civilians, the whole business of modern warfare forced strong bitter phrasing from him. In the trenches men ceased to feel and lost imagination so that they might live and endure while back at
home there were those who made themselves immune to pity. (53)

The rage of the youth stimulates them to revolt agains the elders. They used literature as a weapon to voice their anger against the elders on the Establishment which caused them destruction. Thus anti-war poetry came to be written. Wilfred Owen, E.E.Cummings, Rudyard Kipling, Edward Thomas and others exhibited their rage towards those fighting the war from arm chairs at home (Owen 30). They opposed the attitude, feelings and opinions of the elders. They became nit-picking critics of the contemporary world giving an exact picture of the contemporary scene.

In all the attainable ways, the young writers favoured the unrefined, simple language to the elegant, refined and chasted language of the elders. They used intolerable and detestable words. Protest literature started off thus. With the whole class of war poets leading the way as protest writers, close on the heels came many other writers who disapproved evils no less dreadful than that caused by the war which had just ended. The rage over the humiliation of its aftereffects on the new generation began to settle down when new protests are voiced and heard. The post-war depression and economic crisis induce protest. Peter igh observes in An Outline of American Literature: ?In the early thirties,
the first reaction to the Depression was a literature social protest? (161).

The period between the two World Wars witnessed among the Afro-Americans a ?sudden awakening? called the Negro Renaissance (Johnson 149). The Manhattan neighbourhood of Harlem came to be regarded as the ? Mecca of the New Negro? (Locke 154) and a crucible from which a new spirit would emerge? (Wagner 154). This new spirit helped the Blacks to identify their own individual worth. It made them possible to throw away the stigma of slavery which was sticking on to them even though a century had passed since the Emancipation Proclamation.

The African American writer in America could not afford to be a mere onlooker when his race suffers under the yoke of segregation. In this context Sartre in Black Orpheus observes: ?During the centuries of slavery, the Black man drank the cup of bitterness, to the last drop?? (32).

Claude McKay too pours out his anger on seeing the troubles and turmoils inflicted upon his race, in his sonnet ? Enslaved?: ?Oh when I think of my long ? suffering race/ For weary centuries, despised, oppressed/ Enslaved and lynched, denied a human place? (1-3).

The above lines mirror the status of the Blacks during the period of segregation. Even though slavery was over, so was the stigma
of slavery was sticking on to them. It is clearly understood that the Blacks are treated as slaves by the White supremacy and often are lynched and denied equal rights. The inhuman savage activities of the Whites are indeed clear.

?And in the Black Land disinherited? (5), this line reminds that the poor Africans are blown from their land and sold away in an alien land. They have their intrinsic longing for Africa. They are not only uprooted from their homeland but also from their valuable heritage. Blacks are forced to live ?inferior? instead of celebrating a ?goodly heritage?. McKay wants his people to sing with great delight like the psalmist David in the Holy Bible: ?The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.? (Psalms 16:6)

Living like a slave in one? s own country is really an unbearable one. McKay cannot endure this state of his race. He and his people have undergone such a severe psychological torment. The researcher feels to compare this denied state of the Blacks to a bird with injured wings. The wings are made injured by the ?vultures? (Whites). God, The Almighty has created the bird (Blacks) only to fly freely everywhere. Moreover, ?flying? is the birthright of the bird. There lies its real happiness. But the bird could not enjoy its fly because of the injury. Like that, God has created everyone equal. ?So God created man in his own image, and blessed them,? to have dominion over every living thing upon the earth? (Genesis
And it is Blacks' birthright to inherit all the sovereignty of their homeland without any hindrance. But they are denied and restricted by the Whites to inherit their freedom and enjoy their heritage.

In *The Negro's Tragedy*, McKay continues to attack the American practices of discrimination in one of his protest sonnets. The poet begins with a series of dramatic images illustrating the oppression of the Blacks. The main idea conveyed in the poem is that, since a Negro's suffering can be understood only by a Black man, no white man can hope to draw an aesthetically valid picture of the Black soul. The poet has all compassion for the Negro's tragedy which he wants to mitigate. He describes the heavy iron chain that binds the Negro, the wounds from which he suffers, and the shroud that hides and buries him. The Blacks are portrayed as wearing a crown of thorns and bleeding from many wounds.

It is impossible for the white man to understand the tragedy of the Black man, the agony of his bleeding soul, and the veil that separates him from others. Therefore, no white man can champion the Black man's cause in the proper manner:

There is no white man who could write my book,
Though many think their story should be told
of what the Negro people ought to brook.
Our statesmen roam the world to set things right.
This Negro laughs and prays to God for Light! (10-14)

?Only a thorn-crowned Negro,? McKay perhaps identifies suffering Blacks with the suffering Christ to the suffering Blacks. Christ?s ministry is all but over, and His Passion when underway, by the time he is beaten before Pilate (Matthew 27:26) And it is just such a suffering Christ whom the Negro must follow, for McKay, a Black man only can understand or feel another Black man?s sore heart. So he excludes the Whites. Langston Hughes, McKay?s contemporary, refers the suffering Blacks to crucified Christ in his poem ?Christ in Alabama?: Christ is a nigger, / Beaten and Black, / O bare your back! (1-3). Both the poets believe that the ?beaten and Black? moment of Christ?s life was endured with a crown of thorns. The physical and psychological sufferings of the Blacks are crystal clear in the poems.

McKay scoffs at the American statesmen who busily trying to repair social relations in other countries, while racial justice mars political action at home: ?Our statesmen roam the world to set things right/ The Negro laughs and prays to God for Light? (13-14). He ironically jeers at the ?statesmen? who wants to set things in order while there are all sorts of ugliness on his back. He attacks the cynicism of America which tries to export democratic principles to the rest of the world while maintaining racism at home. Of
course, our statesmen could also refer to the Negro leaders who had missed the real point of racial progress. The Light reveals the irony of the American policy which is trying to brighten the world while their own house is plunged in darkness.

The Whites, who do not care about the people of their own country, show much concern towards others. This reminds the researcher the words of Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ. When he writes to Timothy, about the qualifications of the Bishop, he says thus: One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity; For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?? (I Timothy 3:4, 5).

Under racial segregation, mixed race children distorted the racial boundary line. Ann Stoler writes in Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule, about children of mixed heritage: Mixed-bloods, poor Indos, and abandoned métis children straddled the division of ruler and ruled as they threatened to blur that divide? (51). In addition to blurring racial boundaries, race mixing was historically about power and the movement of property. Anti-miscegenation laws were established throughout the United States of America beginning in 1661(Saks 11). These laws with harsh punishments, including lynching, were aimed at African American men accused of, among other crimes, crossing racial boundaries. Both the laws and
extralegal punishment demonstrate how white society considered
interracial relationships to be a serious threat to social order
(Johnson 5). The progeny from interracial relationships created a
greater threat to white society because mixed race children
threatened white racial purity. Therefore, anti-miscegenation laws
were established to prevent the blurring of racial boundaries, and
?Miscegenation Law, which during slavery kept interracial children
slaves, after slavery bastardized them? and Miscegenation Law ?was
frequently used as a vehicle for disenfranchisement? (Saks 11).
Historically mixed race children were subject to stigmatizing
miscegenation laws and they were also alienated from the white
community and sometimes the ethnic community.

Stetson Kennedy writes in Jim Crow Guide: The Way it Was,
?In the 29 states having laws governing certain relations between
whites and non-whites, it is of course illegal for the latter to ?pass?
as the former, or vice versa, when such passing entail violation of
the segregation and anti-miscegenation laws? (52). Regardless,
many racially mixed people passed as white and blended into
mainstream society. Kennedy later writes, ?Nevertheless, an
estimated five to eight million persons having some ascertainable
amount of Negro blood have passed over into the white community,
in order to enjoy the special privileges and immunities everywhere
enjoyed by whites in the United States of America? (52). Depending
on the phenotype of a ?mixed blood,? an individual could ?pass,? and
even attend the white school. Phenotypic features like hair colour or texture, eye colour and skin colour all indicated a degree of Native blood. Mixed race individuals posed a threat to the purity of the white race.

Claude McKay too has written a poem on *Mulatto*, which means a person with a white and a Black parent. This results in *miscegenation* (the intermarriage of people of different races). In the United States the term is primarily used to describe the marriage between a black person and a white person. Miscegenation is an American word, and especially in historical contexts, it is a transgression of the law (www.answers.com/topic/miscegenationixzz1).

Because I am the white man?s son?his own,
Bearing his bastard birth-mark on my face,
I will dispute his title to his throne,
Forever fight him for my rightful place. (1-4)

In McKay?s *Mulatto*, the father-son forces cannot be settled or reunited. The Mulatto says that he is put up with a birth-mark on his face by the White father. It is the irremovable blemish or stain on racial purity, the manifestation of the White man?s shame that the mulatto must *bear* for his entire life. At the same time the *birth-mark* testifies against the White father?s absurd denial of his son. Instead of mutual recognition, there is mutually violent
rejection. The speaker-son first fantasizes about regicide (killing of a king): ?I will dispute his title to his throne? (3).

There is a searing hate within my soul,
A hate that only kin can feel for kin,
A hate that makes me vigorous and whole,
And spurs me on increasingly to win. (5-8)

Further, mulatto feels that, ?A hate that only kin can feel for kin? (6). The intense hate that burns in the son?s soul also gives him a coherent identity and vitality that makes him vigorous and whole. The mulatto is egged on to hate his own father, as does a warring Ishmaelite to assert his rights.

Because I am my cruel father?s child,
My love of justice stirs me up to hate,
A warring Ishmaelite, unreconciled,
When falls the hour I shall not hesitate
Into my father?s heart to plunge the knife
To gain the utmost freedom that is life. (9-14)

The break between justice and reality fuels his anger: ?My love of justice stirs me up to hate? (10). ?A warring Ishmaelite,? a citation from The Holy Bible, says about the illegitimate son of the Abraham and his slave, Hagar. In the Biblical version the story, the Almighty establishes His covenant with Abraham?s younger
legitimate son, Isaac, and excludes Ishmael: ?He shall be a wild man; / his hand shall be against every man, / and every man?s hand against him? (Genesis 16:12).

Isaac, who is very submissive, unknowingly awaits his execution at the hands of his father. But the rebellious Ishmaelite son says furiously, ?When falls the hour I shall not hesitate,/Into my father?s heart to plunge the knife,/ To gain the utmost freedom that is life? (12-14). McKay?s replacement of Ishmael for Isaac in the final lines becomes reasonable. While the violence of ? Mulatto? is direct and uncompromising, such violence is also deferred and shows readiness for some future violence.

In the South and across the United States, miscegenation was socially feared and outlawed. Norman Crockett writes in The Black Towns about the consequences of racial mixing. He states:

Prostitution and extra- or pre-marital relations were considered bad enough, but sexual intimacy between a black-town woman and a white man was worse. It jeopardized racial purity. Some residents would have agreed with the editor at Langston in January, 1908, when he proposed that the Oklahoma legislature pass a law against miscegenation;
male offenders would be hung, females imprisoned. (202)

As a result of miscegenation, hoards of mulattoes flooded the Black scenario. The passions and miseries undergone by the ?mulattos? is well illustrated in the poem. The deniable rights from the White father and ?desertedness? makes the mulattos go through severe psychological torments.

Thus McKay, in a short preface to ?Constab Ballads?, sums up his personality in a disarmingly candid self-analysis:

Let me confess it at once. I had not in me the stuff that goes to the making of a constable: for I am so constituted that imagination outruns discretion, and it is my misfortune to have a most improper sympathy with wrong doers. I therefore never ?made cases,? but turning, like Nelson, a blind eye to what it was my manifest duty to see, tried to make peace, which seemed to me better. (42)

Moreover, McKay was by temperament, unadaptive; by which he meant that it was not in him to conform cheerfully or uncongenial usages. Blacks were all somewhat impatient of
discipline, and to the natural impatient of his race there was added, in his particular case, a peculiar sensitiveness which made certain forms of discipline irksome, and a fierce hatred of injustice. Not that he ever openly rebelled; but the rebellion was in his heart, and it was fomented by the inevitable rubs of daily life?trifles to most of his comrades, but to him calamities and tragedies. To these feelings, he wrote poems, and into them he poured his in its various moods (Cooper 7).

This self-analysis of McKay plainly means that he has no interest at all in the constable job, in which he has no job satisfaction. His inborn rebellious character always urges him to serve and save his race. Jean Wagner asserts:

If this policeman was Claude McKay himself, he must have been haunted by the possibility that he might yield to the temptation of failing in loyalty to some one of his own colour and so betraying his race. (331)

The same spirit continues in all the poems of the Harlem Renaissance. His outbursts during that period ushered in the arrival of mighty star. The seed for all this rebellion was sown when McKay was in the constabulary where he had his first encounters with blatant race prejudice, bureaucracy, and the brutal elements
of the city. In this Constab Ballads, he reacted with righteous indignation to his new environment.

The fighting back theme of ?If We Must Die? continues in the poem ?The Negro?s Friend?, where the poet asks the Blacks to keep fighting to the end. McKay directly engages the Black intelligentsia, who, he felt, is willing to sacrifice for the meaningful advancement of their people. He asserts that the only true road for the Negro to follow to get equal rights and political status in America is fighting till the end of success. When segregation is the stark reality in many states, it is waste of time to cry ?no segregation,? as it is the pronouncement of the Whites, the authority. McKay in ?The Negro?s Friend? exclaims:

What waste of time to cry: "No Segregation!"
When it exists in stark reality,
Both North and South, throughout
this total nation,
The state decreed by white authority. (5-8)

McKay feels that his race loses all the benefits only cause of segregation. So he cries for the salvation, a complete freedom from the clutches of the Whites. The poem ends with the note of salvation, ?Oh, Segregation is not the whole sin, / The Negroes need salvation from within? (13, 14).
McKay uses the bestiary imagery of the tiger to represent an American in the sonnet?America.? He presents himself as a stoic rebel who never fears of malice around him. The power and justice personified by the United States is the immediate subject of this sonnet. In addition to hate-producing discrimination, McKay speaks of the attraction he felt for the energy and power of America, at the same time his anger at being excluded from its inner workings. This conflict produces a robust stoicism in him. He declares that, despite racial prejudice, his defiance and strength, bolstered by the very vigour of America, will permit him to scale new heights:

Although she feeds me bread of bitterness,
And sinks into my throat her tiger?s tooth,
Stealing my breath of life, I will confess
I love this cultured hell that tests my Youth! (1-4)

In these lines, he depicts the pitiable position of the Blacks who are fed with the bread of bitterness by a country that sinks her tiger?s tooth into their throats. The compulsions and limitations faced by the Blacks is clearly rhymed here. They even shorten the life span of the Blacks. McKay cannot digest this state of living. He wants to liberate his race from all these physical as well as psychological pains.

He expresses both anger and admiration for the United States. The poem begins with an account of the feeling of sharp
pain, but ironically, McKay reveals that the brutality perpetrated against him invigorates him. The hatred that America's ells for Blacks does not obliter ate the poet's love for it. Even though he consumes 'bread of bitterness,' and is consumed by America's 'tiger tooth,' he claims to 'love this cultured hell,' 'Her vigor flows like tides into my blood./ Giving me strength erect against her hate/ Her bigness sweeps my being like a flood' (5-7).

He expresses an admiration that is requited with contempt. The hate fills him with a mighty 'vigor,' and shows his determination to stand 'erect against her hate.' James R. Keller in *The Politics of Compromise in Claude McKay's Protest Sonnets,* observes that the phrase 'cultured hell,' suggests 'the creation of an object out of the apparatus of violence and oppression, paradoxically, destruction generates artistic beauty' (222-35). McKay further expresses his praise for the country, describing the awe and respect experienced by a rebel confronting a king's majesty, the same king he contends with: 'Yet a rebel fronts a king in state,/ I stand within her walls with not a shred,/ Of terror, malice, not a word of jeer' (8-10). He goes on to express his desire for the 'granite wonders' of the country:

Darkly I gaze into the days ahead,
And see her might and granite wonders there,
Beneath the touch of Time?s unerring hand,
Like priceless treasures sinking in the sand. (11-14)

These last four lines are less personal, and in an omniscient voice, prophesy the eventual doom of racist America: McKay?s message seems clear-a society founded on hatred and injustice will ultimately be destroyed by its own corruption. The pro hecy is characterized by a tone of regret.

The final three lines of the poem are borrowed from both Shakespeare?s sonnet ?Nor Marble, nor the Gilded Monuments? and P.B.Shelley?s poem ?Ozymandias.? These two works emphasize the inexorable forces of time that bring humanity?s most enduring labors to dust. Shakespeare?s poem reminds us that ?Sluttish time? destroys all ?monuments,? and the epitaph on Ozymandias?s grave invites passers-by to admire the king?s already vanished works. McKay?s allusion to these works serves to undermine America?s cultural pride, reminding the young and arrogant country that it too will inevitably sink ?In the Sand.? McKay reveals his moderate estimation; he is not desiring to destroy or abandon America, but endeavoring to amend it and enjoy an equal footing with other citizens. Commenting on this poem, James Giles writes:

The flux of ideas in the sonnet is interesting-McKay begins with an expression Of mingled attraction and
bitterness that One feels is intensely personal, and he ends with a godlike proclamation of the Inevitable defeat of the fortress of injustice. (18)

All the ill sufferings of his race make McKay a revolutionary. It makes him even to write and think extremely that the oppressors? country will certainly encounter a destruction. He feels sorry for the impending, inevitable destruction of America. This message resembles a prophesy. The researcher wants to put side by side the proverb said against the king of Babylon, in The Holy Bible in the book of Isaiah while reading this sonnet: ?The Lord hath broken the staff of the wicked, and sceptre of the rulers? (14:5). ?He who smote the people in wrath with a continual stroke, he that ruled the nations in anger, is persecuted, and none hindereth? (6).

?And see her might and granite wonders there? meets the following result: ?Thy pomp is brought down to the grave, and the noise of thy viols? (11); ?Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.? (15)

McKay?s dream and hope is to have a heaven-like country instead of this ?cultured hell?. Heli likes to have the ?paradise? on the earth, where he and his race can enjoy their rights fr ely without any discriminations and sing joyful songs. Since everyone in heaven is tied with the band of ?love?, no one can see malice or anger,
bondage, limitations, humiliations and dominations in en. Thus McKay wants to have a complete deliverance from the physical and psychological torments, which is being undergone by his race.

McKay's hatred is a reproach directed against the country's inability to reconcile discriminatory practices. What he hates is not America, but evil. His hatred is targeted toward the denial of America. In the civilized hell, evil adopts the most varied guises. All the same, his hatred coexists with respect and love for America. He himself acknowledges in his autobiography, *A Long Way from Home* that he is in love with the unclassical rhythms of American life. He wonders at the brutal bigness of America, but is never fascinated by its Titanic strength. At the same time, he enjoys the richness of the engineering exploits and the architectural splendours of New York.

Addison Gayle Jr., in his book which contains only forty-three pages, *Claude McKay: The Black Poet at War* goes a step further and terms McKay as a "warrior poet." Gayle argues that McKay is the militant poet, the angry poet, the poet who calls for revolutionary action?, one who kindled a race spirit and race soul in his poetry?. Moreover, he brought a sense of immediacy to his poetry, an urgency that bespoke the possibility of cultural warfare. Gayle asserts that McKay, using words as his weapon in this
waged war against the cultural tyranny of the stronger nations (white), against the weaker ones (Black)?. Gayle states that McKay's War was against images constructed by men of the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries who were married to the thought that Black men have no human rights or cultural, which white men needed to respect. Gifted with keen perception, with an intellect capable of seeing history and the world in three-dimensional configurations, he was the logical choice for the role of warrior-poet of his people. (18)

Du Bois, Claude McKay, Langston Hughes, Countee Cullen, Jean Toomer, James Weldon Johnson, Tchicaya U Tamis are the notable Black poets, who voiced for the freedom of their race. It is their awareness of the miserable life of the Blacks, h w the Blacks are subjected to lynching, flogging and other humiliating and horrible experiences which force them to protest. Lynching is a death knell for the Blacks, but it is fun for the Whites. As a humanist, McKay feels that everyone must enjoy the human rights and no one should be denied any privilege. Arthur D.Dr on wonders at McKay's capacity to react to Negro suffering, not just as
a Negro, but as a human being; to react to human suffering as such? (Drayton 77). It is this consciousness which compels McKay to protest against the Establishment. McKay’s humanistic concern is evident in his poems. The inhumane act of a Black boy’s hanging, a terrible scene, he describes in his sonnet *The Lynching*:

His Spirit in smoke ascended to high heaven.
His father, by the cruelest way of pain,
Had bidden him to his bosom once again;
The awful sin remained still unforgiven.
All night a bright and solitary star
(Perchance the one that ever guided him,
Yet gave him up at last to Fate’s wild whim)
Hung pitifully o’er the swinging char.
Day dawned, and soon the mixed crowds came to view
The ghastly body swaying in the sun.
The women thronged to look, but never a one
Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue.
And little lads, lynchers that were to be,
Danced round the dreadful thing in fiendish glee?

(1-14)

Arthur D. Drayton makes a pointed reference:

In *The Lynching*, he [McKay] approached the agonizing subject if not in a dispassionate
mood [how could any Negro?] in a disciplined one; in a mood which allows him to see more than one painful aspect? McKay sees not only the violence done to his own people, but the violence which the whites inflict on themselves as well? (85)

The pitiable condition of the Blacks are well defined in this poem the lynching takes place in the dusk, which indicates one’s faded, gloomy end. The Whites design the fate of the Blacks. On seeing these miserable, cruel executions, McKay’s heart develops a deep hatred and his soul becomes red. The violent activities of the Whites provoke his burning thoughts to write poems of st. His people also become very hard and gravelly by experiencing the tortures and pains.

The women thronged to look, but never a one/ Showed sorrow in her eyes of steely blue (11,12). A multitude of women rushed to see the body, but no one reveals her sorrow. ?The eyes of steely blue? directly conveys the meaning that the Black women are very tough, sturdy and determined. It is obvious, the racial and gender discriminations create in them a strong base and formulate a ?ready soul? to face encounters caused by the whites. The physical sufferings and the mental pains construct his whole race to be very
bold enough to fight back? their counterparts till the end of success.

And little lads, lynchers that were to be, / Danced round the dreadful thing in fiendish glee (13, 14). Usually young boys will be always afraid of the dreadful things. But here the scene is different. They dance brutally round the dead body. This wretched act is an evidence that even the little lads know no fear. The fact is the segregational environment, an unhealthy atmosphere that spoilt their moods.

The physical suffering of the Blacks in the Whites dominated country is an unmeasured and untold one. Their toils and moils are uncountable. McKay defines the hard working planters of his race in *The Songs of Jamaica, Quashie To Buccra.* The Quashie (Blacks) speaks to Buccra (Whites), the land owners:

You tas’e petater an? you say it sweet,
Bur you no know how hard we wuk fe it;
You want a basketful fe quattiewuk,
?Cause you no know ?tiff de bush fe cut. (1-4)

The Whites enjoy the fruits which are the results of the painstaking efforts of the Blacks. They do not care to realize the pains of their labour and show any human concern towards them. They want to concentrate only on the manufactured goods. The
Whites taste the potatoes and say it is sweet, but they do not know how hard the Blacks work for that. De fiel? pretty? It couldn?t less? an dat,/ We wuk de bes,? an? den de lan? is fat; (21, 22). The phrase ?be on pins and needles? helps one to understand the real life situations of the Black planters. They do their best to make Whites? land fat. Whites do not consider their physical labour at all. This clearly shows their malicious, brutal nature.

The Black man?s existence in the ?racially discriminated? society is a disgusting and discreditable one. The physical torment he has to go through to make his living is apparently frustrated by McKay in his poem, ?When Dawn Comes to the City?:

The tired cars go grumbling by,
  The moaning, groaning cars,
And the old milk carts go rumbling by
  Under the same dull stars.
Out of the tenements, cold as sone,
  Dark figures start for work;
I watch them sadly shuffle on,
  ?Tis dawn, dawn in New York (1-8).

Though it is dawn in New York, it is painful to note that the life of the Black men is still swallowed up in darkness. His race is compelled to shoulder the pains and sufferings. Subjugation and persecution are inescapable.
McKay’s own high regard for his poem *Harlem Shadows* was obvious when he made it the title of his collection as early as 1922. The six-line stanza of this poem with alternative end rhymes, closed by a couplet resembles Neo-Classical forms. This poem reflects on the migration of the Blacks from the south to the North at the beginning of the twentieth century. In the first stanza of the poem, the poet says that Harlem is the home of Negroes, and nothing is heard there during the night time other than the *slippered feet* of a lass who goes *prowling through the night* to *bend and barter at desire’s call*. The lass’ body has become merchandise, and that is the misery of being a Negro lass. *Harlem Shadows* shades this well.

I hear the halting footsteps of a lass
In Negro Harlem when the night lets fall
Its veil. I see the shapes of girls who pass
To bend and barter at desire’s call.
Ah, little dark girls who in slippered feet
Go prowling through the night from street to street!

(1-6)

The poem paints a melancholic, tender, loving, and compassionate picture of the Harlem prostitutes, whom he poet sees as symbolic of the destruction which racism has wreaked upon the Blacks. The poet penetrates into the life of the prostitutes and
produces word pictures. Eugenia Collier in The four-way Dilemma of
Claude McKay, rightly views this poem as a gentle whisper and at
the same time a bitter indictment? (345). McKay shows his
unquestionably sincere sympathy to the fallen angels of race:

Through the lone night until the silver break
Of day the little gray feet know no rest;
Through the lone night until the last snow-flake
Has dropped from heaven upon the earth’s white
breast,
The dusky, half-clad girls of tired feet
Are trudging, thinly shod, from street to street. (7-12)

The street walkers are neither figures of contempt nor objects
of reproach. They are little dark, dusky girls who trudge thinly
shod, from street to street. These dark girls have been driven into
prostitution because they have no other option in a white-
dominated world. They evoke nothing but sympathy from the poet:

Ah, stern harsh world, that in the wretched way
Of poverty, dishonor and disgrace,
Has pushed the timid little feet of clay,
The sacred brown feet of my fallen race!
Ah, heart of me, the weary, weary feet
In Harlem wandering from street to street. (13-18)
Stern harsh world? pushed the girls of his race to prostitution. Poverty, dishonor and disgrace were thrust on them, and so they have become victims of the circumstances. McKay’s *The Harlem Dancer* portrays the theme well:

The wine-flushed, bold-eyed boys, and even the girls,
Devoured her shape with eager, passionate gaze;
But looking at her falsely-smiling face,
I knew herself was not in that strange place. (11-14)

The poem clearly demonstrates McKay’s fearless analysis of the problems of the Blacks. As Prof. Sterling Brown in *A Century of Negro Portraiture of American Literature*, aptly remarked, the poet is no idle singer of an idle day, but a man deeply concerned with the bite and tang of actuality? (576). The Black prostitute is symbolic of the moral and material destruction of her race in Harlem. The poem focuses almost exclusively upon the victims of racial discrimination rather than oppression. At the same time, it is a scathing criticism of society, expressed with poignancy and compassion. According to Sterling Brown, the poem is:

Original and authentic in its controlled
Craftsmanship and in its revelation of
Personality, an independent, angry,
Radical?now exhorting America for its
In justices now rousing race solidarity, now
Setting nostalgic vignettes of his native Jamaica against the tragic but fascinating Harlem. (577)

McKay’s regretful portraits of the “little dark girls” of Harlem is written in a sympathetic vein. McKay describes the wandering, prowling dark girls of Harlem in the poem. Racial and sexual discriminations invite many unwanted situations in the society. They set the background for all the shameful and sinful lives of the Black women. In the segregational society they do not any honest work to earn. Poverty pushes them to bend and barter at desire’s call? (4).

“Fallen race” signifies the “inferior” status of his race among the Whites. This condition transforms the “sacred brown feet” of the dark girls into “secular”. McKay’s agony touches extreme point when he laments: Ah, heart of me, the weary, weary feet/In I lem wandering from street to street (17-18). He shows a great concern towards his “dark girls” and a greater anger towards the Whites, who are cause of this wretched state.

Racial and sexual discriminations spoiled the “virtue” of his women. McKay wants his race to get free from all the stigma and destructions. He worries about the ethical standards of his race. He anticipates their “slippered feet” to turn towards the “dawn” to inherit
the blossoming future. He tries to eliminate the sexual harassment, and expects women to be treated with due respect. Through his poems, McKay tried his level best to make an awareness among them of their plights. He provides the guidelines to acquire complete freedom by writing thought-provoking poems.

Gwendolyn Brooks is a prolific writer in her lyrics there is an affirmation of life that rises above the stench of urban kitchenette buildings. Brooks’ poetry is marked by some unforgettable characters who are drawn from the underclass of the nation’s Black neighborhoods. Like many urban writers, Brooks has recorded the impact of city life. But she does not hold the city completely responsible for what happens to people. The city is simply an existing force with which people must cope.

Brooks depicts the constrained lives of the poor Blacks who are entrapped by socio-economic conditions in her collection of poems, *A Street in Bronzeville*. The very existence of Blacks is intimidating. Brooks provides a picture of the poor condition of the Blacks, who linger in a small room, not bigger than a kitchen in the poem, *Kitchenette Building*. There is no place for dreams and ambitions in the tenement building. The segregated Blacks are: things of dry hours and involuntary plan, which indicates their scared life, where as yesterday’s garbage symbolizes their perished life. Their dreams are delayed by the domineering setting. As they
are busy with the conflicting environment, they cannot accomplish their dreams. In the *Kitchenette Building*:

But could a dream sent up through onion fumes
Its white and violet, fight with fried potatoes
And yesterday’s garbage ripening in the hall,
Flutter, or sing an aria down these rooms, (4-7).

However, the poor Blacks anticipate *lukewarm water,* which express their hope to get freedom from the White supremacy, to enjoy their equal rights, shortly.

Although Brooks’ poetic voice is objective, there is a strong sense that she, as an observer, is never far from her action. Of course, Brooks is a protest poet; yet her protest evolves through suggestions rather than through a bludgeon she sets forth the facts without embellishment or interpretation.

Beverly Guy Sheftall comments on Gwendolyn Brooks’ vision of women: *The diverse nature of Brooks’ females enables her to reveal many facets, complexities and paradoxes of the Black experience*? (Mootry 154).

The Black women manifest their desire for assimilation through the process of internalization of White beauty ideals. Confront with a society attuned to White standards of beauty as the positive marks of humanity, the Black women feel ashamed of their
Black colour. Such a condition causes loss of self-esteem, and produces self-hatred and self-depreciation. The Blackness is the antithesis of a creamy White skin. The concept of beauty affected the Black women than the Black men. The Black women suffer from the torture of sexism both by the white men and Black men. Black men hold Black women as their scapegoats and damage their feminine psyche. Just as white people have created a sexist culture, so have Black men created a sexist culture.

*Negroid*, written 18 March 1935, in which Gwendolyn Brooks felt scorn for the woman who wrote on her job application, *I've Negroid features, but they're finely spaced.* This truckling to Nordic concerns Gwendolyn found an outrage? *Oh, how much better if it had been phrased/ I've Negroid features - and they're finely spaced?* (Kent 36). This reveals Brooks's early thoughts about being a Black female and that she felt both agony and pride about who she was.

Brooks is real and so are her poems. It is Brooks's inclination to write about what is real to her, and as a resident of Bronzeville since the age of four, the realities of the community are certainly her own. The reality of Bronzeville, not just as a real geographic location that Brooks chooses to write about, but more importantly, as a true community that is capable of shaping the meaning of beauty for its residents, is what leads to the social complexity to
write about its failings. In the poem, ?A Street in Bronzeville?, she writes:

She made the babies sit in their places at the table.
Then, before calling HIM, she hurried
To the mirror with her comb and lipstick. It was necessary
To be more beautiful than ever. (46-50)

As a result of segregation, the Black women suffered the state of ?inferiority? even within their families. They had to try a lot to attract their own husbands, who ran after the white la . This was the pitiable condition of the Black women. This compelled the Black women to have a ?sense of beauty?. But this awareness resulted in a great trouble. Instead of Black men, White men were drawn towards them. This caused them a great deal of sexual torments. The Whites started seeing them as sex dolls, and used them as their bedmates. The sufferings of the women, b th at the hands of the White and the Black male were untold. The Black women were raped by the slave masters without moral compunction. Being very active in the social, racial problems Black men could not think or spare time to protect their wom n. These circumstances forced the Black women to undergo more d s than their men folk. Alphy J .Plakkottam rightly observes:
The black woman faced the reality of double discrimination, of both race and sex. She was a doubly burdened, doubly jeopardized person? The Afro-American woman bore a double-edge persecution: one, as a worker, both in the house as well as in the fields; two, as an object of sexual exploitation? (12)

It is worthwhile to quote the words of Tom Skinner?s in *Black and Free* in this context to comprehend the sexual torments experienced by the Black women:

> Whenever the master had guest in his home who came from distant places it was considered part of hospitality to offer any one of the slave women to sleep with that man for the night? (17)

The contribution of the Black women to the American culture is not minimal or marginal. She has more capacity for enduring hostility, rejection and desertion and possesses unsurpassable talents to her credit in the fields of art, music and ports. Brooks herself is an example in the sense that she is the first recipient of the much coveted Pulitzer Prize in 1950. She is the first Black woman artist to receive the same. George E. Kent, Brooks?
b i o g r a p h e r ,  i n  A  L i f e  o f  G w e n d o l y n  B r o o k s ,  o b s e r v e s  h o w  B r o o k s  
became the spokeswoman of the American culture on receipt of the  
Pulitzer Prize:

With the publication of Annie Allen and the  
receipt of the Pulitzer Prize, Gwendolyn  
achieved rank both as an artist and as a  
citizen of the world?for both whites and  
Blacks, Gwendolyn would from now on be  
tagged ?the first Negro to win a Pulitzer  
Prize,? and with that label would come the  
roles of spokespersons and arbiter in the  
upper realms of her city?s and her nation?s  
cultural affairs?. (102)

Lynching was the most severe and the most common  
punishment for any trivial offence, even after liberation from  
slavery. Lynching was much easier than holding a legal trial. To  
quote Tom Skinner?ts, in Black and Free, lynching was enforced on  
the blacks for ?ridiculous charges as standing too close on the  
street to a White person or being too friendly with a White person?  
(22). Brooks cites a tear-jerking account of one of the Mississippi  
lynchings in her Report from Part One, an Autobiography:

When the two Negroes were captured, they  
were tied to trees and while the funeral pyres
were being prepared, they were forced to hold out their hands while one finger at a time was chopped off. The fingers were distributed as souvenirs. The ears of the (victims) were cut off. Holbert was beaten severely, his skull was fractured and one of his eyes, knocked out with a stick, hung by a shred from the socket. Some of the mob used a large cork screw to bore into the flesh of the man and woman. It was applied to their arms, legs and body, then pulled out, the spirals tearing out big pieces of raw, quivering flesh every time it was withdrawn. Then the couple was burned ?at the stake?? (200-201)

In ?The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till,? a mother mourns for the death of her son Emmett Till, a young boy who was lynched unexpectedly for petty reason, when he was sent on vocation. He was brutally tortured and murdered and whose body was mutilated beyond recognition in 1955 in Money, Mississippi. The fourteen year- old boy from the South Side of Chicago was accused of whistling at a white woman. His mother Mamie Bradley?s heartrending statement in, A death in the Delta, runs thus:
Two months ago I had a nice apartment in Chicago. I had a good job. I had a son. When something happened to the Negroes in the South I said, 'That's their business, not mine.' Now I know how wrong I was. The murder of my son has shown me that what happens to any of us, anywhere in the world, had better be the business of us all. (Whitfield 90)

One can see the rage of baffled and hurt heroines like Queen of the Blues, Pearl May Lee and many others in the poems of Brooks. In ?Ballad of Pearl May Lee?, the hero (Sammy) is lynched for his passion for the White girl. When the white men take him off to the jail to be lynched for the ?crime? of passion for the white girl, Pearl May Lee thinks of her anguish at her loss of Sammy?s love and her anger at Sammy?s rejection:

Then off they took you, off to the jail,
A hundred hooting after.
And you should have heard me at my house.
I cut my lungs with my laughter,
     Laughter,
     Laughter.
I cut my lungs with my laughter. (1-7)
Instead of feeling sorry for her lover, the heroine feels happy about his lynching. Though both of them belong to the same race, she could not bear the loss of her true love. That’s why she gets angry against him for he has rejected her and followed a white lady. She says sarcastically that she is laughing and laughing till her lungs is torn apart.

They dragged you into a dusty cell.
And a rat was in the corner.
And what was I doing? Laughing still.
Though never was a poor gal lorne,
Lorne,
Lorne.
Though never was a poor gal lorne. (8-14)

At the same time, she does not fail to attack either the racial violence of the white men or the seductiveness of the white women of the hypocritical society. She does not forget to expose the vengeance and intolerable injustice against Sammy boy through the imagined Sheriff’s voice:

?You son of a bitch, you’re going to hell?
?Cause you wanted white arms to enfold you,
Enfold you,
Enfold you.
?Cause you wanted white arms to enfold you. (17-21)
Her criticism of the seductiveness and the betrayal of the white girl, which has caused the lynching of Sammy boy, are equally vehement. After sexual act, the white lady incites the white men to lynch him:

?you raped me, nigger,? and what the hell
Do you think I?m going to do?

What the hell,

What the hell
Do you think I?m going to do?
I?ll tell every white man in this town.
I?ll tell them all of my sorrow.
You got my body tonight, nigger boy.
I?ll get your body tomorrow

Tomorrow,

Tomorrow.
I?ll get your body tomorrow.?(67-78)

Besides interracial discrimination and racial violence, Brooks, through Pearl May Lee, brings to light the love/hate relationship that exists between African American men and white women:

You grew up with bright skins on the brain,
And me in your Black folks bed.
Often and often you cut me child,
And often I wished you dead. (42-45)
By temperament, the Black males were drawn towards White women. If they attempted a sexual assault on her, they were brutally lynched and publicly hanged. One painfully remembers the famous ?Scottsboro Case?, which shook the Black world including McKay and Brooks. ?Nine Black boys were savagely mob-lynched for having raped two White women. The narrow-minded American Press made a sensation of every crime committed by or to be committed by a Negro? (Meltzer 147).

This humiliation and painful suffering undergone by the Blacks is focused by Langston Hughes in ?Southern Mammy Sings?, where a Black boy is lynched for an insignificant reason. He did nothing but sang casually that ?we all should be free?:

Last week they lynched a colored boy.
They hung him to a tree.
That colored boy ain?t said a thing
But we all should be free.
Yes, m?am!
We all should be free? (1-6)

In order to channelize and harness the innate moral courage in a human being in right directions, Brooks and McKay use several action-words which constructively activate and invigorate the Blacks. Brooks is more lavish in using imperative terms than other poets. She gives a series of commands like pellets, to be
immediately obeyed. One understands the urgency in her call to the Black boys: See, say, salvage/ Legislate. / Enact our inward law. (12-14)

Brooks? voice resounds with an urge to propel the Blacks towards action. A sense of the present is wrought by Brooks, by which she expects the Blacks to rise and act immediately. In ? The Womenhood, ? First fight. Then fiddle? Brooks repletes with directives. Here, the mother advises her children on how to civilize or refine a space first in order to make it an apt place to live:

But first to arms, to armor. Carry hate
In front of you and harmony behind.
Win war. Rise bloody, maybe not too late
For having first to civilize a space
Wherein to play your violin with grace? (10-14)

Brooks advises her people like a mother. She instructs them first to make their dwelling place a cultured, educate and refined one. Then only they can enjoy the music and play the violin gracefully. Generally, Africans prefer music to anything else. Amidst discriminations, they use to sing always joyfully to forget their miserable conditions. By singing loudly and playing the musical instruments vigorously, they use to renew their hope and regain their moral strength to have a better tomorrow.
Jean Wagner presents how their jubilant dancing and jostling gives an outlet to the thousand emotions in his *Black Poets of the United States*, thus:

? human beings who all day have been tense, inhibited, blocked ad frustrated in their work with white people now find the identical powerful means of release and forgetfulness in the whirl and frenzy of the dance, whether profane or sacred. In both places [Church and Dance hall] they have come together with their own kind in a brotherly jostling that banishes all constraint, and their bodily exaltation is thoroughly capable of summing up the thousand emotions which have found no other outlet... (441)

It is needless to say, one understands that these orders cannot be carried out without self-confidence and determination on the part of the listeners. Brooks, in her ? *The Second Sermon on the Warpland*? continues to instruct furthe r. She wants the Blacks to live, define and medicate the ?whirlwind? which is the ?troubled lot? of the Blacks. Their survival must be qualified by enj yment. Instead of being followers of directions they must be he definers of
their situations. They are the salt and preservers of heir society.

Brooks writes like this in ?The Second Sermon on the Warland?:

?the whirlwind is our commonwealth.
Not the easy man, who rides above them all,
not the jumbo brigand,
not the pet bird of poets, that sweetest sonnet,
shall straddle the whirlwind.
Nevertheless, live.
All about are the cold places,
all about are the pushmen and jeopardy, theft-
all about are the cold stormers and scramblers but
what must our Season be, which starts from Fear?
Live and go out.
Define and
mediate the whirlwind? (7-19)

Brooks strengthens her race by advising them whatsoever
their situations are, they should face the threats, risks and dangers
boldly. They should live and go out to describe their short-term
woes. She and her people hope all the segregation and
discriminations will be ended soon. They anticipate liberation every
day. Like the mother in Brooks? ?First fight. Then fiddle,? the
mother in Hughes? ?The Negro Mother? also gives a series of catchy
phrases:
Remember my sweat, my pain, my despair,
Remember my ears, heavy with sorrow-
And make of those years a torch for tomorrow.
Make of my past a road to the light
Out of the darkness, the ignorance, the night.
Lift high my banner out of the dust. (1-6)

The mother describes to her generations, the dark history of the ancestors and their slave past. Those sufferings are the torches of today that bring to light, the existing liberation contrast to darkness and ignorance. She instructs them to lift high the banner of victory from the ?dust?, which indicates their ?defeated past?.

Stand like free men supporting my trust.
Believe in the right, let none push you back.
Remember the whip and the slaver?s track.
Remember how the strong in struggle and strife
Still bar you the way, and deny you life-
But march ever forward, breaking down bars.
Look ever upward at the sun and the stars? (7-13)

She continues to encourage her people to believe in the truth and instruct them not to forget the ?whip? and the ?track? which they have passed. Moreover, she is cheering them up to marc ever
forward, to break down the bars and barriers and to ?Look ever upward at the sun and the stars?.

As a feminine poet herself, Brooks? poems naturally tend to focus on women and their problems in particular. She has more encouraging words for women. Having exposed her own rights and place as a woman, Brooks specially counsels women to realize their speciality and enjoy themselves thoroughly. Brooks in *Report from Part One*, expresses her view in detail:

Black Women must remember, through all the prattle about walking or not walking three or twelve steps behind or ahead of her male, that her personhood proceeds her femalehood; that, sweet as sex may be, she cannot endlessly brood on Black Man?s blondes, blues, blunders. She is a person in the world - with wrongs to right, stupidities to outwit, with her man when possible, on her own when not. And she is also here to enjoy. She will be here, like any other, once only. Therefore she must, in the midst of tragedy and hatred and Neglect, in the midst of her own efforts to purity, mightily enjoy the readily available:
sunshine, and pets and children and
conversation and games and travels (tiny or
large) and Nooks and walks and chocolate
cake? (180)

One of the most miserable and psychological torments
undergone by the Blacks is ?Poverty?. No Black child is given proper
education during the period of separation. Brooks in her sonnet,
?The Children of the Poor? grieves for the poor children thus:

What shall I give my children? who are poor,

Who are adjudged the leastwise of the land,

Who are my sweetest lepers, who demand

No velvet and no velvety velour; (ll 1-4)

Brooks says that the children of the Blacks are poor because
of the low income. They are considered to be the ?leastwise? of the
land. They are denied equal educational opportunity and basic
privileges. She calls them ?sweetest lepers.? There is an antithesis
found here. She christens them first sweetest but besi s it she
couples the word with lepers. It is realized that she treats the
children as her pets, at the same time their status in their land is
as ?lepers,? that is, the rejected ones. They do not wish for ?velvety
velour,? costly velvety material to make their hats. The family
circumstances cause them to begin schooling at a disad antageous
position when in comparison with Whites. The situations of Brooks' period define the element "poverty" and less opportunity to be liberated.

In the poem, "We Real Cool? Brooks presents again the bleak future of African Americans, the inner-city youth. She emphasizes the Blacks' "brevity" of existence. The poem explains the nocturnal activists of the young and "strike straight" that signifies their monstrous behavior. "Jazz June" refers to the month in which they enjoy listening to music. The last line "Die soon" implies that the youth do not care about the consequences of their behavior, because they do not look into the future. That's why they think, they don't need school, they stay out late, they fight, they drink and engage in sexual mischievous behavior. It doesn't matter because they will be dead soon. It is fitting to cite the words of Hortense J. Spillers in this context, about the poem, "the piece is dense with intimations of frustrated potency? (Bloom 50).

Sing sin. We

Thin gin. We

Jazz June. We

Die soon. (5-8)

The segregation policies spoiled the physical and mental aptitudes of the young African Americans. Gradually, they lost their
moral standards and became violent and vicious. Above all, it caused them utter frustration and paved way to lose their precious hope of survival.

Brooks’ own commentary on using repeatedly ‘We’ in her poem, reveals Blacks’ uncertainty due to discrimination

These are people who are essentially saying, ‘Kilroy is here. We are.’ But they’re a little uncertain of the strength of their identity. The ‘We? ? you’re supposed to stop after the ‘we’ and think about validity, of course, there’s no way for you to tell whether it should be said softly or not, I suppose, but I say it rather softly because I want to represent their basic uncertainty. (RPO 156)

Hortense J. Spillers praises the ‘wealth of implication’ in this ‘[l]ess than lean poem,’ says it is ‘no nonsense at all.’ Further she says, ‘the poem is their situation as they see it. In eight (could be nonstop) lines, here is there total destiny? (Lindberg 300).

Further, Brooks’ ‘The Bean Eaters,’ explores the effect of the poverty of an aged couple. Though ‘The Bean Eaters’ is an apt portrayal of aging, as characterized by ‘this old yellow pair,’ it is also a social commentary on the dire poverty which has afflicted
their lives in which home ownership, a goal of the American Dream, is not a genuine option for them; even in old age they have, not an apartment, but merely a rented back room. The title poem of the book, The Bean Eaters is no casual romanticized reference to the aging of one Black couple; it is the report on the socioeconomic status of an entire Black community, evident in the opening quatrain of The Bean Eaters?

They eat beans mostly, this old yellow pair.
Dinner is a casual affair.
Plain chipware on a plain and creaking wood,
Tin flatware. (1-4)

The racial prejudice and discrimination played a major role in creating past discrepancies between African Americans and Whites. Housing, education and employment outcomes cannot be denied. Fight for the equality of educational opportunity was a major goal of the civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s is a historical fact.

Booker T. Washington in his Up from Slavery gives an account of how he, as a boy, on several occasions, wen as far as the school house door, carrying his books but never once went into study himself? (15). Thus the Blacks are denied education and kept in a state of ignorance. The Whites fear that if their eyes are opened, they will be aware of their privileges. They want to keep
them in a state of constant poverty, in order to retain them in a state of dependency.

Segregation extends its bitter roots even among the small kids. They too show the feeling of ?untouchability? towards the Blacks. This is clear in Brooks? poem, ? The Life of Lincoln West?: ?Don?t touch me!? cried the little/ fairy-like being in the playground (87-88). Lincoln, a seven year old Black boy, tries to touch the little white girl while playing. At once, she screamed not to touch her. This is a shocking response which one cannot expect from a little girl.

Child was in sight. Pity flooded her./ She buttoned her gloves and suggested/ cheerfully that she walk him home (62-64). On seeing Lincoln sitting alone, the teacher feels pity o him. She fastens her gloves and told him cheerfully that she will take him home. But she walks only a few steps holding his hands. At once, she feels ashamed and dropped him. This clearly proves the great offense ?untouchability?, which remains among the Blacks during the time of segregation.

What a pity what a pity. No love/ for one so loving. T little Lincoln/ loved Everybody? (43-45). Contradiction is identified here. Lincoln, the little boy loves everybody. But he is not loved by anyone. Being filled with love, he deserves the love of everyone. But his kindergarden teacher?whose/ concern for him was composed
of one/ part sympathy and two parts repulsion (48-50). Pity is akin to Love. But it is measured that ?pity? is overcome by the feeling of ?disgust?. It is not only the Black men, who suffer from the psychological tortures but also the small kids.

Once a White man happens to see Lincoln in a theatre. exclaims at him, ?one of the best examples of the species?, the real thing (104). Black, ugly, and odd. ?You/ can see the savagery. The blunt/ Blankness. That is the real thing? (108-110). He describes the features of the real Black as if describing a lifeless thing.

he thought about that. He told himself

?After all, I?m

the real thing.? 

It comforted him. (135-138)

At last, Lincoln is comforting himself by telling ?After all, I?m the real thing? and a genuine one, not a fake one. The psychological torments gone through by Lincoln are gone through by every Black. Brooks has written a number of poems on children. On this aspect Gary Smith remarks thus:

?one of the few modern poets who has
made children an organic part of her poetic
vision. Her children do not exist in a pastoral world apart from the socio-
economic and psychological problems that beset her adult characters. As the most vulnerable members of society, her children are at the center of her poetic vision? (Mootry139)

Brooks writes about the miserable conditions caused by residential segregation in many poems. Brooks herself s undergone through this in her life time. In the poem, ?The Birth in the Narrow Room?, Brooks mirrors the sufferings of the Blacks thus: "How pinchy is my room! How can I breathe! / I am not anything and I have got/ Not anything, or anything to do!" (8-10). The room is very narrowed and one cannot take breaths freely. The narrator has possessed nothing. She has nothing to do. Racial discrimination is the main cause, which segregated the Blacks to undergo such sufferings.

The unclean slums of Chicago, as projected by Arthur P.Davis, do find a place in her poems as in ?The Lovers of the poor?:

But it?s all so bad! And entirely too much for them.
The stench; the urine, cabbage, and dead beans,
Dead porridges of assorted dusty grains,
The old smoke, heavy diapers, and, they?re told,
Something called chitterlings. The darkness. Drawn Darkness, or dirty light. The soil that stirs.
The soil that looks the soil of centuries.
And for that matter the general oldness. Old
Not homekind. Oldness!... (33-42)

The only jobs opened to the Black men were menial jobs. The Black women have to do household chores for Whites, like cooking, cleaning, washing and ironing. A Black servant with such a busy schedule would be left with little time to look after her own family. Her daily routine job is presented in Brooks? poem, ?Hattie Scott/The End of the Day?:

It?s usually from the insides of the door
That I takes my peek at the sun
Pullin? off his clothes and callin? it a day.
?Cause I?m gettin? the dishes done
About that time. Not that I couldn?t
Sneak out on the back porch a bit,
But the sun and me?s the same, could be:
Cap the job, then to hell with it.
No lollin? around the old work-place
But off, spite of something to see.
Yes, off until time when the sun comes back.
Then it?s wearily back for me?(1-12)
It is frightening to find that even these weird jobs are not secure. They are working only on the ?last hired, first fired? terms. The only way is to continue to depend on the Whites an works under them are again the racial determinants for the Blacks. The Black servant had to spend ?All day subdued, polite, / kind, thoughtful to the faces that are white (Hughes 70). Hughes? Madam and Her Madam? lists out the unpleasant tasks of a women:

Wash, iron and scrub,  
Walk the dog around?  
It was too much.  
Nearly broke me down? (8-12)

Blacks expected to be treated equal and to be united with all without any racial segregation. This zeal is not revolutionary in nature; it simply seeks to change American institutions in a way that includes minority groups within a large populatio . It makes an effort to include the Blacks into mainstream instit both public and private eliminating the racial barriers. This leads them to take factors other than racial group membership and uplift them to political circles too.

Thus McKay and Brooks through their poems enlightened the eyes of the bonded Blacks in the segregation society. The Physical, Psychological and Sexual torments undergone by the Blacks are well expressed in the poems of McKay and Brooks. Thus hey
created a consciousness among them of their ?status? in their own country. They suggest the immediate remedial efforts to be implemented by them. These poets paved a way towards liberation from the clutches of the dominating Whites.

Claude McKay as well as Gwendolyn Brooks, the two Black creationists project themselves as representative poets. They are acutely affected by cultural divisions. They are torn between the cultures of Africa and America. Their agony stems from the social injustice that they find in the American context where the Blacks are being denied social rights. They hold the majority Whites responsible for their sufferings. They display a remarkable felicity to capture in verse the self-revelations, longings and aspirations of a people who have been deprived, denied and downtrodden for centuries. When they explore their own selves, they want to assert their identity and social rights.

McKay and Brooks do not allow their racial determinants to constrict their art. Though their poetic compositions rooted in racial equality, they evolve into poets of universal implications. The poets are ready to partake of their people?s sufferings both physical and mental. They advocate the principle of human oneness and thus universalize their humanistic concerns. This show the notable similarity between the poets. Apart from these parallelisms, the two artists prove remarkable differences as well. While McKay?s
approach is direct and raw, Brooks? is a directory of instructions. Both these poets are conscious of the strengths and li of the Blacks. That is why they talk of Blacks? solidarity, love, vitality and dignity in their poems. McKay and Brooks have taken the best efforts to liberate their community from the ?segregation? and render their maximum service to make them enjoy their human rights.

*******