CHAPTER III

MASCUINISM versus FEMINISM

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there
is neither male nor female: for Ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

-Galatians (3:28)

Human rights are basic rights and freedoms that all people
are entitled to regardless of nationality, sex, age, n or ethnic
origin, race, religion, language, or other status? (en.wikipedia.org
/wiki/Human_rights). Human rights are conceived as universal and
egalitarian, with all people having equal rights by virtue of being
human. These rights may exist as natural rights or as egal rights,
in both national and international law. The doctrine of human
rights in international practice, within international law, global and
regional institutions, in the policies of states and the activities of
non-governmental organizations has been a cornerstone of public
policy around the world. It has been said that: "if the public
discourse of peacetime global society can be said to have a common
moral language, it is that of human rights" (en.wikipedia.org/
AfricanAmerican_Civil_Rights_Movement). Despite this, the strong
claims made by the doctrine of human rights continue to provoke
considerable skepticism, debates about the content, nature and
justifications of human rights continue to this day.
Many of the basic ideas that animated the movement developed in the aftermath of the Second World War and the atrocities of the Holocaust, culminating in the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in Paris by the United Nations General Assembly in 1948. The ancient world did not possess the concept of universal human rights. Ancient societies had:

Elaborate systems of duties... conceptions of justice, political legitimacy, and human flourishing that sought to realize human dignity, flourishing, or well-being entirely independent of human rights.
(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights)

The modern concept of human rights developed during the early Modern period, alongside the European secularization of Judeo-Christian ethics. The true forerunner of human rights discourse was the concept of natural rights which appeared as part of the medieval Natural law tradition, became prominent during the Enlightenment with such philosophers as John Locke, Francis Hutcheson, and Jean-Jacques Burlamaqui, and featured prominently in the political discourse of the American Revolution and the French Revolution.
From this foundation, the modern human rights movement emerged over the latter half of the twentieth century. Social activism and political rhetoric in many nations put it high on the world agenda. By the 21st century, Moyn has argued, the human rights movement expanded beyond its original anti-totalitarianism to include numerous causes involving humanitarianism and social and economic development in the Third World. Article (1) of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) points out:

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.(en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Human_rights)

The African Americans have about four hundred years? history in America. The peculiar kind of experience that they had in America has evolved them into a community of their own. The Black community is described variously as Negroes, Afro-Americans, Coloured people etcetra. More than twenty-two millions in number, the Black people in America comprise a considerably large chunk of the American population. They are people of African origin and they are neither like the rest of their race in Africa where their ancestral
past lies, nor like the Whites in America with whom they had about four hundred years of social inter-action. The Negro or the Black American, as Richard Wright, the renowned Afro-American novelist, has pointed out: "means something not racial or biological, but something purely social, something made in the United States."

(Smith 80)

The African American is recognized as "something purely social" and as a product of a cultural heritage as shaped by the American experience, the social and political predicament. Recognition of this fact will enable one to understand their parentage as well as their "needless plights" under the bondage.

Apart from being subjected to the inhumane and dehumanizing conditions of slavery, the African slaves in America were generally denied many of their basic rights in life. They were not allowed to marry the person of their choice, nor were allowed to lead a family life, and the family of convenience they had, was often broken up by forced separation of the members.

The precious words of Malcolm X on human rights create a tremendous awareness among the Blacks. *The Ballot or the Bullet* (1964), a social justice speech, presented in Ohio runs thus:

Any time you know you’re within the law, within your legal rights, within your moral rights, in
accord with justice, then die for what you believe in. But don't die alone. Let your dying be reciprocal. This is what is meant by equality. What's good for the goose is good for the gander. Human rights are something you were born with. Human rights are your God given rights. Human rights are the rights that are recognized by all nations of this earth. And any time any one violates your human rights, you can take them to the world court? The free world! And you over here singing "We Shall Overcome." Expand the civil-rights struggle to the level of human rights, take it into the United Nations. (www.edchange.org/multicultural/speeches/malcolm_x_ballot)

The researcher considers all the physical sufferings and moral degradations undergone by the Blacks as needless ones. Being natives of their land, they were reigned brutally by the Whites. They were not allowed to enjoy even their basic human rights. They were treated inferior in their own country. They were prohibited to enter into some common social places. They were restricted to go into the educational institutions, and denied obtaining equal education. They didn't get opportunities for self-expression, and had to suppress their feelings. They were called
and treated as dogs. Men were handled as manual workers to make the lives of the Whites more sophisticated. Their women had gone through sexual torments. Their children were denied equal education. In all aspects, they were segregated and underprivileged in their own country by the licensed authorities. These situations motivated Claude McKay and Gwendolyn Brooks and other poets to voice against the White supremacy, to make an awareness of the human rights among the Blacks community and bring them completely out from the darkness of suppressions.

None of the comforts and benefits of civilized life was meant to be enjoyed by the Negro slaves. As they are being traded like mere commodities, the Africans in America had to undergo a dehumanizing experience, and in spite of their rich heritage, they, in the course of time, degenerated culturally and morally. No wonder, they soon became unfit for many of the tasks that civilized men usually take. For proponents of nationalism, Black independence is a process in which Blacks shed the indoctrination inherent in American society that Blacks are inferior. Similar to a religious conversion, Black nationalist 'converts' active in the Black Panther Party expressed a belief that learning about the historical greatness of their African ancestors and the empowerment acquired could revitalize and develop their own community, a changing experience that had a profound impact on their social and political beliefs.
According to some members of the Constituent Assembly, Black candidates are only responsive to money, which Blacks either don’t have or are not willing to give. Other participants were less likely to differentiate Black candidates from any other politicians because they felt that Black candidates had not lived up to expectation that they would be the voice and caretakers of the needs of Black people. So they no longer felt allegiance to Black candidates because “a lot of time they put a Black person in certain positions or categories just to get the vote?” (Price 42) Thus the rejection of Black candidates is often attributed to the failed efforts of Black candidates. O’Neil suggests that this failure on the part of Black candidates has been detrimental to the Black community. I think that we are in a very precarious position in Black politics right now. I think that Blacks that we have had in positions of authority for whatever reasons haven’t done a good job in those positions, and that doesn’t look well for the future endeavors? (42). Though members of the focus group view Black candidates in varying ways, there is no denying that voting is an important component of their political behavior.

Sharon makes the argument that,

This is my father’s saying but I agree with it. If you don’t vote you don’t have any right to complain because if you didn’t vote to make
a change and that person didn?t get elected.
But at least you tried. I heard my grandmother complain about the condition of life and close to when she died we were just talking and she said she never voted a day in her life. And I?m like?oh?and she grew up in the south where she couldn?t vote . Then when she got up here she wouldn?t vote , and that never dawned on me that she hadn?t voted because we always voted. (Price 43)

The Civil Rights Movement was at a peak from 1955-1965. Congress passed the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965, guaranteeing basic civil rights for all Americans, regardless of race, after nearly a decade of nonviolent protests and marches, ranging from the 1955-1956 Montgomery bus boycott to the student-led sit-ins of the 1960s to the huge March on Washington in 1963.

The Montgomery Bus Boycott officially started on December 1,1955. That was the day when the blacks of Montgomery, Alabama, decided that they would boycott the city buses until they could sit anywhere they wanted, instead of being relegated to the back when a white boarded. It was not, however, the day that the movement to desegregate the buses started. Perhaps the movement
started on the day in 1943 when a black seamstress named Rosa Parks paid her bus fare and then watched the bus drive off as she tried to re-enter through the rear door, as the driver had told her to do. Perhaps the movement started on the day in 1949 when a black professor Jo Ann Robinson absentmindedly sat at the front of a nearly empty bus, then ran off in tears when the bus driver screamed at her for doing so. Perhaps the movement started on the day in the early 1950s when a black pastor named Vernon Johns tried to get other Blacks to leave a bus in protest after he was forced to give up his seat to a white man, only to have them kill him, that he ought to knowed better. The story of the Montgomery Bus Boycott is often told as a simple, happy tale of the "little people" triumphing over the seemingly insurmountable forces of evil. The truth is a little less romantic and a little more complex.

Henry Louis Vivian Derozio, the Eurasian poet and reformer expresses the untold feelings of a slave when he is freed. The noblest feelings of the soul begin to glow in him at once. His subordination is no more there. He need not kneel anymore. His joy knows no bounds and he feels that there is something dear even in the very name freedom. When people demand for liberty, their protests deafen the rage of the ocean. Even the powerful volcanoes become powerless before the liberalists. Derozio explains the happiest feelings of a slave in his poem, Freedom to the Slave:
How felt he when he first was told
A slave he ceased to be;
How proudly beat his heart, when first
He knew that he was free! (1-4)

McKay and Brooks have written their poems to express their
protests and, object to the inhumane activities execut by the
Whites. Moreover, their poems provoke the Blacks to fi back or
fight against their counterparts in order to prove their physical and
ethical strength.

It makes a distinction, when McKay is seen as a mascul ist
and Brooks, a feminist. As a masculinist, McKay works as a Men?s
Right Activist in a genuine sense. All the adjectives masculine:
heroic, gentle-manly, powerful, strong, vigorous, musc ar, etcetera
will go with Claude McKay. ?It is the Negro?s wounds I want to
heal/ Because I know the keenness of his pain? (3, 4). These lines of
his men and his poems are andro-centric.

Black masculinity explores the physical and psychological
defensive strategies employed by black men. Works of Richard
Wright, Claude Brown, Nathan McCall, and James Earl Hardy
detailed the black male consciousness, which was polit cized due to
racism. Social and psychological dimensions suggest an alternate
form of black masculinity.

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The power of liberty is more glorious than the glare of lightning and more potent than the tramp of the earthquake. McKay shows himself as an outright liberalist. He reiterates the fact that nothing can withstand the spirit of liberty. His concept of liberation referred to both freedoms from external rule (Whites) and freedom of thinking? (www.mapofworld.com / liberation). McKay is full of high spirits, when he thinks about the freedom of his race, from racial segregation, social oppression and human ill-treatment.

A feminist is a person, who fights for women? s rights. Brooks believes in the radical notion that women are people, and should be entitled to equal rights, equal treatment, and equal opportunity. She fights for their rights to vote, work and receive equal pay. She supports equality between the sexes. The world today would be very different if feminists never took action to change laws and empower themselves. One among them is Gwendolyn Brooks. She is an egalitarian person and her poems are gyno-centric.

Non-discrimination and equality are fundamental components of international human rights law and essential to the exercise and enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights. Article 2 (2) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights ( ?Covenant?) obliges each State Party ?to guarantee that the rights enunciated in the present Covenant will be exercised without discrimination of any kind as to race, colour, sex, language,
religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status?. (docs.google.com/viewer_Economic
and Social Council, Committee On Economic, Social And Cultural
Rights, Forty-second session)

Barbara Christian, Toni Cade Bambara, Mary Helen Washington and Claudia Tate are some of the admirable feminists,
written poems to make a consciousness among the African American women of their equal rights. As they are African Americans, they are able to mirror the sufferings and under privileges of their own women folk unadulterated.

Apart from suffering and struggle, another existential plight named ?lonesomeness? threatens the black women. The middle aged woman is focused as a victim of a modern, urbanized environment, and portrays her broken family. The woman sees herself as hopeless women whose needs are no longer satisfied in her cold, empty house, in the poem ?A Sunset of the City?:

There is no warm house
That is fitted with my need.
I am cold in this cold house this house
Whose washed echoes are tremulous down lost halls.
I am a woman, and dusty, standing among new affairs? (15-19)
Like old furniture, she is ?dusty? and now ?hurries through her prayers? (20). The poem ends on a pessimistic note with her concluding that Fate has played a cruel joke on her. Brooks writes the inner turmoil of the Black women with deep anguish which conveys ?the meaninglessness of modern living? and ?loss of faith.?

Mary Helen Washington wrote, ?Only African American women writers know my story. It is absolutely necessary? in her Black Eyed Susans. She states the experience of the black woman in the segregated society, ?When I think of how essentially alone black women have been-alone?? (27).

African American women writers have used the word-Negro as both a tool and a weapon to correct, to create and confirm their visions of life as it was and as it could become. They have been inspired by their historical circumstances, be it colonial America, the Revolutionary War, Slavery, the Civil War, Reconstruction, Modernity, the Great Depression, World War II, Jim Crow America, the Civil Rights Movement and Black Nationalist movements of the 1960s. This brought great changes not only politically but also educationally, and these changes gave visibility and accessibility to African American literature in general, and African American women?s literature, specifically. The political changes of the 1960s, created a number of Blacks Studies and Black Women?s Studies
programs, providing intellectual spaces for the critical examination of African American life, culture, experiences and contributions.

Feminist literary theory, aided by French feminist theories born of post-structuralism, became a useful tool in literary analyses that sought to understand the role of gender as well as the roles of patriarchy and sexism in American society and culture. Race, however, was not an integral part of these particular interrogations. Race and gender, however intersected in the literary and cultural criticism of early African American women scholars, such as Zora Neale, Hurston, Margaret Walker, Toni Morrison, Barbara Christian and Claudia Tate, who explored the nexus of race, gender and power in African American lives as depicted by African American women writers. Toni Cade Bambara's ground-breaking anthology, *The Black Women*, with poetry, short stories and essays became a valuable resource in the teaching of African American women writers. Toni Cade proclaimed:

> We are involved in a struggle? from the exploitative and dehumanizing system of racism, from the manipulative control of a corporate society, from the constrictive norms of mainstream culture? (Mills 85)

The editors, Moraga and Anzaldúa, explained their opinion as well as their goal:
What began as a reaction to the racism of white feminists soon became a positive affirmative of the commitment of women of color to our own feminism? (Haggerty 810)

Barbara Smith’s ?Toward a Black Feminist Criticism? became indispensable to discussions of sexuality in African American women’s literature. Calling for a more sophisticated feminist critique, Smith wrote:

A Black feminist approach to literature that embodies the realization that the politics of sex as well as the politics of the race and class are crucially interlocking factors in the works of Black women writers is an absolute necessity. Until such an approach exists, ?we will not even know what these writers mean.? (Bobo 26)

The voices of the African American feminists reflect the disgraceful position of their women in the racist society, and moreover, it was a cry unto their human rights as well.

In the poem ?John, who is Poor? Brooks depicts a widowed mother’s defenselessness and the poverty of the black boy, John.
She requests the children in the neighborhood to sympathize with him:

    Oh, little children, be good to John!
    Who lives so lone and alone.
    Whose Mama must hurry to toil all day.
    Whose Papa is dead and done. (1-4)

The young woman of Brooks’ poem enjoys the healthy memory of her romantic past more than she mourns its losses. These past memories help her bear the burden of the loneliness. Brooks portrays the poor mutual understanding of male-female relationship in the poem, *When you have forgotten Sunday: the love story*, which is the result of racial segregation:

    When you have, I say, forgotten all that,
    Then you may tell,
    Then I may believe
    You have forgotten me well. (27-30)

The black women could not share their problems or sufferings with their husbands. Since black men were busy with facing the craftiness of whites, they could not protect their women. Mary Helen rightly points out, because of our bodies, over which we had so little control; alone because the damage done to our men has prevented their closeness and protection? (27).
Where there is no vision the people perish? is what is written in Proverbs 29:18. It is fitting to quote the here. Without education or the vision of liberation, the people will perish, they cannot be free and they perish under the institution of slavery. Furthermore, their dreams and hope also perish. ?Vision? represents the hope they had that they would one day be free. This hope is inculcated by the Churches in the minds of African Americans.

Being an African American poet, Gwendolyn Brooks? herself is a victim of American society?s racial prejudices. She encountered even as a small girl in Hyde Park Branch School made an indelible mark on her psyche:

I wasn?t so much injured, just left alone. I realized that they were a society apart, and they really made you, feel it. None of them [whites] would have anything to do with you, aside from some white boy if he ?fell in love? with you, aside from some white boy if he ?fell in love? with you. (RPO 172)

?The Ballad of Chocolate Mabbie? describes the society which is, partial and unkind. Whites strictly refused education for Blacks:

?It was mabbie without the grammar school gates. / And mabbie was all of seven. / And mabbie was cut from a chocolate bar? (1-3).
So Churches tried education, as a tool to liberate the African Americans from their ignorance, and to enlighten them through literacy. All the black churches aimed to unshackle the Blacks from the chains of the Whites by offering them education. An educated person within the context of the nineteenth century AME Church was one who had received a good Christian education, and had access to liberal arts and industrial training. These tried to instill broad understanding of human rights through education. This could, the churches believed, certainly set free the Blacks physically socially, economically, politically and spiritually.

Carter G. Woodson elaborated on the role the black Church played in African American social and cultural life. He pointed out that the Negro church as a social force has long been part of Blacks’ life. Before emancipation, the black church was the sole institution whereby Blacks could freely live out their own culture without fear of reprisal, offering the only avenue for expressional activities of the race, the church answered many a social purpose for Blacks? (Woodson 267).

G.M. Elliot strongly says in his work *We Must Educate*:

It is the Christian responsibility and moral duty to educate people and not leave them ignorant, thus arguing that the church has
an obligation to provide education for all
people, namely African Americans. (330)

Education was an unknown word and a dream to African
Americans till the sixteenth century, the slavery peri d. Laws were
passed in the South making it illegal. For instance, in Mississippi,
one could be jailed or whipped with thirty-nine lashes if anyone
tries to educate them. The whites ceased to educate th m fearing
that it would bring them out of their ignorance, enabling them to
fight for their rights.

This reminds the researcher the words of Saint Paul. He
summarizes the pains he is put up with during his ministry in the
chapters of second Corinthians. ?? five times received I forty
stripes save one? (11:24). Blacks were intentionally detained from
being educated by Whites so as to check their progress.

In an oppressive, enslaved, poverty-stricken and economically
dependent situation, the only form of social activity which was
offered to the Black man was the ?Church service,? where he could
give vent to his suppressed emotions and feelings.

Blacks utilized education as a tool for their social upliftment.
Most importantly, African Americans possessed a strong sense of
community, realizing that their individual actions were all tied
together. Thus, everyone did their part in first trying to educate
themselves and then in turn passing that education on to others. Franklin defines it as “the sense of group consciousness that is utilized as a resource in the development of collective economic enterprises.” (68)

Blacks aggressively sought education and intuitively realized its value with connection to their freedom. Literacy and education allowed them to read and teach the Bible to the young; it helped them understand their “legal rights,” and it assisted them in buying and or leasing lands. Education illuminated the minds of the Blacks with human rights, and help them escape the horrors of fatal punishments.

The knowledge of basic human rights often made the Blacks think about their freedom. The theme of freedom is a major part of the African American nineteenth century ontology and epistemology and made its way into many of the Negro spirituals. Negro spirituals are a collection of informal religious songs that developed during slave times that often had double meanings. These songs have both secular and sacred significances, signifying a call for physical and spiritual freedom (Cone 68). To cite an example, one of the Negro spirituals goes as follows:

Oh freedom! Oh freedom!
Oh freedom, I love thee!
And before I'll be a slave,
I?ll be buried in my grave!
And go up unto my Lord and be free!

This spiritual song entitled \textit{Oh Freedom} exemplifies the African American?s historic desire to be free. The Blacks? longing for escaping the present hardships owing to the denial of basic human rights to a place far away, that is Heaven where there will be everlasting bliss and happiness.

Frederick Douglass suggested that America could not reach its full potential until it granted full citizenship rights to its most marginalized and oppressed groups (African Americans). Speaking directly to the rampant lynching taking place in the South, and more broadly to solve the Negro problem. Douglass in \textit{The Lessons of the Hour} (1894), urges white Americans, especially those in power, to

\begin{quote}
Put away your race prejudice. Banish the idea that one class must rule over another.
Recognize the fact that the rights of the humblest citizens are worthy of protection as are those of the highest. (366)
\end{quote}

Philip Wheatley, who is the forerunner of McKay and Brooks, advises the dark people to accept the LORD, who is a Redeemer in the real sense to escape from their compelled wretched
starvations. In the poem, "On the Death of the Reverend Mr. George Whitefield," she advises thus:

That on his lips with list'ning pleasure hung.
'Take him, ye wretched, for your only good,
'Take him ye starving sinners, for your food;
'Ye thirsty, come to this life-giving stream, (27-30)

Seeing as these conditions make them commit sin more and more, she invites them to this life-giving stream, to escape sinning and enjoy the real rest.

How he has wrestled with his God by night.
He pray'd that grace in ev'ry heart might dwell,
He long'd to see America excell;
He charg'd its youth that ev'ry grace divine (19-22)

These lines remind the reader that Philip Wheatley like Jacob has provoked the slave Blacks to struggle and stand erect to the boundless tortures given by the Whites and fight till their goal is achieved. Moreover, she is very much confident to see he Americans excel by charging in them grace of Jacob, who had struggled with God, the Almighty, till receiving His abundant blessing to enjoy his heritage.

Should with full lustre in their conduct shine;
That Saviour, which his soul did first receive,
The greatest gift that ev’n a God can give,
He freely offer’d to the num’rous throng, (23-26)

As a Saviour of the whole humanity, Christ has offered the complete liberation of freedom as a gift to everyone irrespective of continent and race. What had been offered free of cost, to every individual, is illegally banned by Whites. Wheatley says that the truth of God will make the Blacks free, as it is said the Holy Bible, in the book of Saint John, ?And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free?If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.? (8:32, 36)

"Ye preachers, take him for your joyful theme;
"Take him my dear Americans, he said,
"Be your complaints on his kind bosom laid:
"Take him, ye Africans, he longs for you,
"Impartial Saviour is his title due: (31-35)

The poetess urges her suppressed, heavily burdened people to bring their complaints to the one, who is ready to deliver them. Jesus, the impartial savior longs for His hands? creations, to approach Him to attain their rights.

By nature, the Blacks are deeply religious, endowed wi h the Christian virtues of patience, long suffering, endurance and humility. Again Christian religion speaks of a kind and just God who sent His only begotten son to liberate the world e

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sin, by sacrificing His life on Calvary. This Gospel of God’s love, which embraced the whole humanity, regardless of colour, creed, race and sex attracted the poor Blacks who were yearning for love and acceptance. Yet again, Christianity offered the Blacks a hope of eternal joy and justice in the world beyond, which they greatly missed in the temporal world: “Wash’d in the fountain of redeeming blood, / You shall be sons, and kings, and priests to God.” (36, 37).

To track down injustice and oppression by hating America is to fight against shadows. The basic evil is hatred itself, and that is what one must hate. It is hatred that wrecks unity, separates one against the other, and the individual against himself. But it is the farthest point to which the pagan doctrines can lead one. God alone can lead a man further on and conquer hate itself. Claude McKay expresses his Christian faith in the poem, “The Pagan Isms”:

I cannot live my life without the faith
Where new sensations like a fawn will leap,
But old enthusiasms like a wraith,
Haunt me awake and haunt me when I sleep?

(5-8)

Claude McKay and Gwendolyn Brooks are Christian poets, who find that the parables, miracles, sermons and preachings of Christ are so many learning experiences to the religious Christians. Whites do not follow what they profess to believe. There
was a tremendous disparity between their doctrines and their lives. They justified and carried out slavery. McKay and Brooks realize the importance of practical Christian living. Their poetry abound with Christian truths and profundities.

Gwendolyn Brooks makes a scathing attack upon the definite air of superiority exhibited by the Whites in the poem, "The White troops had their orders but the Negroes looked like men". The first three lines of the poem illustrate the institutionalized authority and prejudice of the Whites:

They had supposed their formula was fixed
They had obeyed instructions to devise
A type of cold, a type of hooded gaze
But when the Negroes came they were perplexed. (1-4)

The procedure of the Blacks was designed by the White authority. Blacks ought to obey the instructions and execute their plan. They have no other way to escape from that. They should not have any self-will or have any right to violate. There is no place for human concerns. The word hooded gaze? such as the blindness of the White Americans to the humanity of the Black Americans. Even though Blacks are bewildered, they blindly abide by the directions of the Whites.

These Negroes looked like men. Besides, it taxed Time and the Temper to remember those
Congenital iniquities that cause
Disfavor of the darkness. (5-8)

Though the Whites are dictators, Blacks are their executors. Besides their strains and duties, Negroes looked like men. When Blacks think of the White men’s congenital iniquities which caused them unpopularity, they become aggravated. Congenital presents the hereditary qualities of the dominant Whites. They were always determined to do only injustice to the Blacks. They kept them constantly in the bad books.

Thus the poem clearly states that the Blacks are treated as servants appointed to carry out the devices of the Whites. Whites placed Blacks in a dark room without allowing them to enjoy their basic human rights. Whites tried to prevent the advancement of Blacks especially in the field of knowledge. Because they have a fear that Blacks would become conscious of their Rights. Even though Blacks started being aware of their rights, Whites brutally suppressed them, in order to make use of their strength and energy. Whites always restricted, humiliated and degraded the Blacks. They know the physical and ethical power of the Blacks very well. So they wanted to place them always under their feet starved of human rights.

Claude McKay displays his masculine features in almost all his poems. He always designs the poems as a thought provoking
one. He is capable of infusing courage into even the lily-livered Blacks inducing them to protest and to revolt. He raises a defiant cry over the ?accursed lot? of the Blacks. He makes a clarion call to his whole race. The poem ?If We Must Die? became instantly popular with the Blacks and it even found its way to the stage in Black areas. Addison Gayle states: ?The lines pulsate with anger? (Gayle 23) and ?Such dagger like words cut deeply into the Negro psyche? (33). It is worth quoting to present here the full sonnet ?If We Must Die?:

If we must die, let it not be like hogs
Hunted and penned in an inglorious spot,
While round us bark the mad and hungry dogs,
Making their mock at our accursed lot.
If we must die, O let us nobly die,
So that our precious blood may not be shed
In vain; then even the monsters we defy
Shall be constrained to honor us though dead!
O kinsmen! we must meet the common foe!
Though far outnumbered let us show us brave,
And for their thousand blows deal one deathblow!
What though before us lies the open grave?
Like men we'll face the murderous, cowardly pack,
Pressed to the wall, dying, but fighting back! (1-14)
It was the unflinching courage and defiance? (Cooper 301) which is deeply rooted in the Black consciousness. Thus the sonnet is an effective mob-rouser. McKay points out that the poem was written for all men who were being abused, brutalized, and murdered, whether they were black, brown, yellow, or white. Ironically, no poem better illustrates McKay's universal outlook than this sonnet.

It is remarkable that this poem was hailed as the personification of a new spirit of race militancy. It contained no specific mention of race. Nowhere McKay uses words like black, colored, Negro, or any other that would indicate an exclusive appeal to an audience of African Americans. The poem was universal enough for Winston Churchill to have quoted from it at the conclusion of his oration before the American Congress, when he was seeking American involvement in the World War II. With blooming success Churchill could bolster up the sagging spirit of the Britishers on the face of German onslaught during World War II. In this context Ulli Beier observes that:

?it is essentially a cry of defiance from the human heart in the face of a threat to man?s dignity and civilization, a threat which was and is true of Nazism and the hatred of the Negro alike? (Beier 77).
In the hands of ethnic minorities in America such as the Jews and the Blacks, Protest literature was the main weapon of attacking the Establishment. It is characterized by slang terms, four-lettered word and deliberately introduced deviants. McKay bravely asserts that he will shoot down ten of them (Whites) for every one of his black brothers murdered and burnt by them. This poem?To the White Fiends,? brings out the excellent masculine characteristics of Claude McKay very well.

Think you I am not fiend and savage too?
Think you I could not arm me with a gun
And shoot down ten of you for every one
Of my black brothers murdered, burnt by you?
Be not deceived, for every deed you do
I could match?out-match? (1-6)

Further the element is evident in ?for every deed you do, I could match ? out-match.? McKay declares for an open fight and at the same time it shows sign of ?tit for tat?.

Jean Wagner states, ?It is, indeed, admirable that in his case hatred and rebellion did not become, as they might have a vehicle lurching onward without reins or brakes?? (235).

Though fighting against the ?supremacy?, McKay is unyielding and he challenges the White man in the poem?Tiger?. McKay?s
protest has a sharp cutting edge when he identifies the Whites with ?monsters.?

Oh white man, you may suck up all my blood
And throw my carcass into potter?s field,
But never will I say with you that mud
Is bread for Negroes! Never will I yield. (5-8)

The sixth line of the poem reminds us of the words written in the book of Saint Matthew (27:7). Judas, who had betrayed Jesus, when he saw that he was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, Saying, he had sinned in that he have betrayed the innocent blood. The chief priests said it was not lawful to put them into the treasury. It was the price of the blood with which the potter?s field was bought with the silver pieces, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, the field of blood, unto this day (8).

Blacks are considered as ?strangers? by the Whites. Even though, they have a very good inheritance, they are treated as strangers in their own country. Whites master over Blacks. This condition creates in him a rebellious heart. That is w y he confronts the Whites that he never will surrender nor ill care about, even his dead body will be thrown into the potter?s field. This establishes the ?masculine? characte of McKay, who always defends and fights for his black men.
Never will I yield? reveals the ?manly? quality of Claude McKay. Blacks expect freedom to live like an ordinary human being, enjoying the basic rights without any fear. They do not want to rule their country, but long for the benefits of equal human rights.

McKay?s protest carries him a step further in putting into action what he speaks about. He is ready to take up the lead. The poem ?Baptism? proves the heroic nature of McKay once again. The Black man is ready to enter naked ?Into the weird depths of the hottest zone? (4). The Black man proclaims that he will not tremble about the ?frailest bone,? the poor health. He boldly asserts that the Whites will not detect even a sparkle of their defeat. He is very much confident about their ?triump? in the poem Baptism.?

I will not quiver in the frailest bone,
You will not note a flicker of defeat;
My heart shall tremble not its fate to meet
My mouth give utterance to any moan. (5-8)

Further, he gallantly says his heart shall not tremble to meet its fate, and his mouth will not utter any moan. These features establish the black men?s power of endurance. The more the Blacks are suppressed, the more they gain the headship qualities. J ean Wagner points out that McKay?s ? Baptism? ?expresses the poet?s ultimate goal, which is to take on his shoulders when e emerges from this baptism of fire, the burden of all his race?? (228).
McKay strove, and struggled for the rights of black men. Similarly, Brooks as a feminist, fought for the rights of black women. Her poems document women’s experiences and their problems in society. This gives a universal touch to her poems. As a feminist, she has written a lot for the Black women to free them from their ‘ancestral sufferings’ - woman as a victim of the usual three factors - race, sex and money. Brooks explores the multifaceted oppression of women, from the points of being poor, black and female. Beverly Guy Sheftall observes that:

a more realistic view of the diversity and complexity of Black women than the stereotypes?The major portion of the Gwendolyn Brooks’ work does indeed reflect, among other things, an intense awareness of Black women’s identities and an unusual insight into the problems that they face.

(Wright 244)

Masculine features and feminine features are seen exclusively in the poems of Claude McKay and Gwendolyn Brooks. Apart from that, they have written poems portraying the social and economical losses? they have undergone as a consequence of racial discrimination. McKay intends direct approach in stimulating the
inner conscious of the Blacks to create the desirable effects ?fight back? among the Blacks. Whereas, Brooks writes for the Blacks, and not against the Whites. Her intention is to create a Black Consciousness among the Blacks to make them aware of their deprived rights.

McKay?s grief gets stirred up at seeing not only the physical sufferings of his people but also the moral degradation to which they have been put-down. He scrutinizes the reason why some of the Black girls suffer the awful predicament as prostitutes. Racial discriminations force it upon them to lose their human dignity. ?Harlem Shadows? and ?Harlem Dancer? envisage the young prostitutes as going from door to door just to earn their livelihood. Economic deprivation is the major cause of their moral degradation and physical degeneration. As Eugenia W. Collier observes in The four-way Dilemma of Claude McKay:

One of McKay?s most famous poems, ?Harlem Shadows? shows the paradox of the Black man?s lot in America. The poem is a sad, tender, loving, compassionate view of Harlem Prostitutes, whom the poet sees as symbolic of the destruction which racism has wreaked upon Blacks? (351)
McKay beautifully presents the mind of the ?dark girl?, who is compelled to dance amidst the White supremacy. Being a Black and a female in the suppressed society is a challenge to survive. The last two lines of the poem, *Harlem Dancer*? mirrors the poor status of the Black women: ?But looking at her falsely-smiling face, / I knew herself was not in that strange place? (13-14). The ?dancing girl? doesn?t enjoy the dance, because she is crying bitterly in her heart thinking of her destiny in her own prospered, well-off country. That?s why her mind is not there in the midst of strangers (Whites). It is a fitting to give the comment of Eugen Collier on this poem: ?The theme of the poem [*The Harlem Dancer*?] is not lascivious dancing, but human dignity, not mid-night gaiety, but unobtrusive tragedy?? (82)

There is another poem named, *A Country Girl*? by McKay. In this poem McKay tells the wretched tale of a girl called Lelia, who has deserted the country with the aim of earning money and getting comfort from the city. She wants to escape from poverty, hunger and loneliness. The corrupting nature of the city has damaged her moral standards. Moreover, the racial hatred also breeds only in the city. Therefore, McKay does not blame her, instead sympathizes her in the poem *A Country Girl*?:

I gave up all honour, I took a new name
An? tried to be happy, deep sunk in de shame.
Dere was no other way, Fed I could live,
Dat was de gift dat a gay town could give;
I tried to be glad in de open day light,
But sorrowed an? moaned in de deep o?de night (15-20)

McKay feels sorry for the lot of this poor country girl. Only the whites and their *discriminated policies*? caused her this destruction and ruined her blissful country life. All future dreams are collapsed in the city life. As Jean Wagner remarks that, to McKay ?the city symbolizes an evil that is multiple? (227).

McKay?s own trials in life and his agonies as a result of racial determinants help him to understand human sufferings in real sense. He sees his men going through torments all the day, from ?dawn to dusk?. They have ndime to unwind or retire from the yoke set on them by the White supremacy. Deliberately, they are not offered any time to think about their own rights. *The Tired Worker* describes earnestly his longings for the ?night? since it is the time which will ease him of his wearisome work. McKay represents the exhausted life of Blacks, reflecting their aches in the rights denied society. It is worthwhile to present the whole poem *The Tired Worker* to understand the tangible life of the Blacks:

O WHISPER, O my soul ! -- the afternoon
Is waning into evening -- whisper soft!

135
Peace, O my rebel heart! for soon the moon
From out its misty veil will swing aloft!
Be patient, weary body, soon the night
Will wrap thee gently in her sable sheet,
And with a leaden sigh thou wilt invite
To rest thy tired hands and aching feet.
The wretched day was theirs, the night is mine;
Come, tender sleep, and fold me to thy breast.
But what steals out the gray clouds red like wine?
O dawn! O dreaded dawn! O let me rest!
Weary my veins, my brain, my life, -- have pity!
No! Once again the hard, the ugly city. (1-14)

James R. Giles points out thus: ?At no point does the poem [The Tired Worker] specify that the worker is black, and one senses that McKay?s concern is for all laboring people? (57).

Though the Blacks have been declared to be politically free and franchised, they are certainly not free economically, socially and culturally. They have been disqualified to enjoy the rights of citizens by the inexplicable colour barrier. Colour is a dead weight on them, which segregates them and decides their destiny. This bitterness makes the Black man feel inferior and form a very low opinion of himself. He feels that he is ordained to do only menial jobs for the Whites. They end up as hewers of coal and drawers of
water. Thus they are kept in a state of dependence. McKay himself
gives the clear picture of his rights-denied poor category in an
interview:

? in the university a white student does not
tolerate a black student next to him at a
lecture; negro children are not admitted into
white schools, teachers of the colored children
are boycotted and must employ forced heroics
to avoid complete alienation? (476)

Even educated Blacks have no chance of obtaining good jobs
and making a decent living. He has to serve only the coloured
people, most of whom are very poor. There is little chance to
achieve material prosperity. McKay surveys in an interview:

No American would ever turn to a colored
doctor or lawyer; this in our condition is
absolutely inconceivable. These colored serve
only Negroes? Between Whites and colored
no [contact], and under the present conditions
I clearly am unable to have a place in White
societal contacts. They don?t count us as
people?do you understand this?... (477)
Black is torn between the two cultures: the culture of the Blacks and the culture of the Whites. While the former so much a part of him, the latter steals upon him unawares. At the same time he is unable to attain perfect identification with neither. This cultural division or pressure has to be faced by every Black man. This sense of not belonging or the identity crisis is a mental torture.

Social liberties just do not exist for him. He has no right to talk to a White woman or walk with a White woman. Even Churches, which are meant to promote love and equality, perpetuate racial discrimination. No colored man is permitted to enter a White Church. Arnold Rose reveals the fact:

Negroes are not admitted to white Churches in the South, but if a strange white man enters a Negro church the visit is received as a great honor. Likewise, a white stranger will be received with utmost respect and cordiality in any Negro school? (190)

Muhammed Ali [Cassius Clay] won the Olympic Gold Medal in Boxing. When he returned from Rome, the nations admired him but America which he represented and which he claimed be his, was hostile and treated him as just a nigger. He writes:
But the USA is my country still,

?Cause they waiting to welcome he receiver in America?
Do you know what kind of welcome he received in America?
He felt ?shamed, shocked and lonesome? when a restaurant

in his hometown of Louisville refused to serve him food. Why?
Because he was a negro. What did he do then?
He threw the gold medal in a river!...

Black is prohibited from entering even theatre and restaurants. Moreover, he is good at sport, but he is not allowed to display his talent and prove his strength. McKay emotionally discloses the fact thus in his The Negroes in America:

?in the United States there is not room for a Negro, even in the area of sports. Only in the national American sport called lynching is he assigned first place? (53)

The exclusion from all the advancements caused the Blacks many economical, social and political pressures. Economically they are exploited, socially unacknowledged and politically unaccepted. McKay rightly points out in his work The Negroes in America that
the ?Negroes are denied all civil rights and all economic rights??

(37)

Claude McKay and Gwendolyn Brooks are contemporaries but belong to different decades. Being at once Americans and Blacks, they are bestowed with the unique double advan age. They couple their American ingenuity and creativity with their Black experience and are thus able to evolve as powerful Black creationists. They are able to think creatively of the which are quite commonplace and ordinary. Their main purpose is instruct the Blacks how to face the existential perils of human life. Brooks is the product of the second half of this century, especially, of the 1960s and 1970s, when the ?New Black? came to be in fashion. In 1967, Brooks? carrier began to take a new dimension. She preferred to be consciously raw thereafter, as opposed to her previous idea of ?polished? method,

Dare to be raw sometimes, Poet! Dare to extend, with something more of clangor. Dare ? sometimes ? to concern yourself with seeable, feelable, hearable people... (RPO 199)

Since the early 1940s Gwendolyn Brooks has exhibited in her poetry a deep and cogent sense of black female in America. Her portraits of women- vibrant in color, diverse in the degree of their heroic response to their circumstances, and complex in the social
and psychological dimensions of their lives-refute the libels of monolithic and stereotypical treatment of women in American literature and reveal a creative consciousness seriously aware of the major racial and social traumas of her time.

McKay’s own boyhood recollection was an evidence of the poor treatment of Blacks that, in the popular mind, Negroes were more or less clowns. He remarked that all those that he saw in Kingston on the street were the happy-go-lucky clowning types who sang coon songs for White men and they seemed to like it.

The treatment of Blacks by their counterparts is clear when one reads the following observation of Milton Meltzer’s in his biography of Hughes:

Negroes were always being made fun of in the stories and cartoons of the popular magazines?Many a novel savagely caricatured the Negro, and in the movies and on the stage, audiences saw Negroes only as clowns, servants are helpless victims. (128)

Brooks expresses her aspiration to present a variety of real life-situations in In the Mecca as follows, in her autobiography, Report from Part One: ?I wish to present a large variety of personalities against a mosaic of daily affairs...? (189).
Brooks presents Blacks as human beings. She endows them with ideal human virtues. She strongly reacts to the pictures which depict the Blacks as ugly, dishonest, violent, brutal and mean. As a Black American poet, she tries to explode the stereotypes created by the Whites that Black is connected with evil and sin, and wishes to present them with their unique nature: ‘Black is beautiful.’ She has committed herself to the mission of creating Black Consciousness among the oppressed Blacks. In the poem ‘The Second Sermon on the Warpland,’ Brooks defends that the Blacks have every right to claim the right of citizenship and equality: ‘In the wild weed/ She is a citizen/ And is a moment of highest quality; admirable?’ (IV 14-16).

Brooks demonstrates in ‘The Anniad’ that a black woman’s belief in the dominant beauty and gender role fictions I cause her to suffer immensely more than the typical white woman, because the image of womanhood and physical beauty that is projected by the dominant culture is unreal and almost unattainable for most black women. In ‘The Anniad’ Brooks enjoins her readers to:

Think of thaumaturgic lass
Looking in her looking glass
At the unembroidered brown;
Printing bastard roses there;
Then emotionally aware
Of the black and boisterous hair,
Taming all that anger down (94-100)

Brooks? poetry is often conditioned by the optimism that was also a legacy of the period. She rejects outright their romantic prescriptions for the lives of Black women. And in this regard, she serves as a vital link with the Black Arts Movement of the 1960s that, while it witnessed the flowering of Black women poets and social activists as well as the rise of Black Feminist aesthetics in the 1970s, brought about a curious revival of romanticism the Renaissance mode.

However, since the publication of *A Street in Bronzeville*, Brooks has not eschewed the traditional roles and values of Black women in the American society. On the contrary, in her subsequent works, *Annie Allen*, *The Bean Eaters* and *In The Mecca*, she has been remarkably steadfast in identifying the root cause of interracial problems within the Black community as White racism and its invasive socio-economic effects (Hansell 199). Furthermore, as one of the chief voices of the Black Arts Movement, she has developed a social vision, in such works as *Roit*, *Family Pictures*, and *Beckonings* that describe Black women and men as equally integral part of the struggle for social and economic justice.

Gwendolyn Brooks is an eyewitness of the lives of the cks, their status, mental disparagement, and the psychological dismay.
After all, the Blacks are reduced to a lowly, dangerous condition, and their community has been deprived of its physical and emotional health. Brooks in her *Beverly Hills, Chicago* describes the longings of the Blacks towards a peaceful life:

Nobody is furious. Nobody hates these people.

At least, nobody driving by in this car.

It is only natural, however, that it should occur to us

How much more fortunate they are than we are.

(26-29)

Whites are so calm and leading their lives peacefully without any fear of oppressions. Nobody is there to hate them or to disgrace them. They are free to go anywhere without any restriction. Blacks desire to possess Whites' natural way of living. Blacks think, *more fortunate they (Whites) are than we (Blacks) are.* This shows the pitiable condition of Blacks. Brooks portrays the plights of her Black women clearly and tries to save them by infusing in them moral courage. Moreover, she teaches them a new *strategy - fit as a fiddle* to win the war, in her *The Womanhood.*

First fight, Then fiddle:

?Be remote

a while from malice and from murdering.

But first to arms, to armor. Carry hate

in front of you and harmony behind.

144
Be deaf to music and to beauty blind.
Win war. Rise bloody, maybe not too late.  (7-12)

Brooks advocates her race not to stand against the supremacy, and advises them to play second fiddle to, malice and murder. She counsels them to go with arms and armor carrying hate in front of you and harmony behind. Further, she recommends to be deaf to music and to beauty blind for some period and press them towards Win war, Rise bloody, maybe not too late. As a well wisher of Blacks, Brooks proves her diplomacy in showing them the right path to gain their birth right.

Blacks knew well their existence among the monsters. The routine sufferings supplied them readiness to face their sudden death with more guts. It became one of their birth behaviors. This quality of the Blacks helps them to stay alive. In To the Young Who Want to Die, Brooks expresses about the awaiting crisis:

Sit down. Inhale. Exhale.
The gun will wait. The lake will wait.
The tall gall in the small seductive vial
will wait will wait:
will wait a week: will wait through April. (1-5)

Blacks do not have any plan about their future. On account of racial segregation, they are under compulsion to live in an
unhinged society. Death may visit them at any moment. t is their neighbour, waiting to swallow them. Brooks further illustrates the status of her discriminated race in the same poem:

I assure you death will wait. Death has a lot of time. Death can attend to you tomorrow. Or next week. Death is just down the street; is most obliging neighbor; can meet you any moment. (8-12)

Brooks boosts up her people that they are ever fresh? to undercut the tortures given by the Whites: remember, green?s your color. You are spring? (17). In ?Speech to the Young: Speech to the Progress Toward,? Brooks enhances the good will towards progress and advancement of suppressed life: the harmony-hushers, / even if you are not ready for day/ it cannot always be night (5). By and large, Blacks yearn for freedom to lead a happy family life. They silently wish for harmony. So Brooks encourages her race. Wilfred Cartey observes that she ?chafes at the oppression and? yearns for a vital life? (264).

Being a real activist, Brooks yearns after ?integration,? to enjoy the equal human rights. She expects her dream of incorporation? come true as early as possible. In the poem ?A Song in the Front Yard,? a White girl says so:
I want to go in the back yard now
And maybe down the alley,
To where the charity children play.
I want a good time today. (5-8)

A front yard can symbolize several meanings in this poem. It is generally inviting, orderly and does not change too much from the neighbour's front yard and can be seen from the street. It also symbolizes order, consistency, and the status quo. In the 1940s this front yard was very much a White man's world. The static order of the front yard is challenged by the aesthetic order of the back yard.

The back yard is representative of a secluded individualist. It is symbolically a place of African American culture. Brooks uses her indelible black pride by crowning the back yard as a place that the White person wants to be. A sort of secret garden for this young White girl as she desires to explore the mysterious freedom the Black culture has to offer. But her mother sneers at her that it will spoil her life. But the White girl says, ?And I'd like to be a bad woman, too,? (19) longing to be a part of the African American culture. Brooks conveyed her ?longings? by using effective symbols in the poem.

Brooks? early poetry are, Clark says, ?traditional,? ?accommodationist,? or ?white? (St. Louis University 143). Her later
poetry after attending the Second Black Writers? Conference at Fisk University, refuses the restrictive poetic forms for which Brooks? early poetry is well known and critically rewarded. They are post-1967. The violence and apparent chaos of this ?Riot? are significantly, caused by African Americans; it is, as Dr. King wrote and Brooks herself quoted in her epigraph - the language of the unheard. However, if riots are indeed a language, then it is a language learned from White lynchers.

The 1960?s riots were caused by White racists and mirrored the White-initiated violence. For many oppressed group, riots have been a way of achieving political power. Brooks is presenting the riot as a legally binding method for achieving political reform. Socialists say this riot created a new type of people and strong intimate relationships among the African Americans. They offered confidence and provoked love.

?Because the Negroes were coming down the street? (10). ?? They were black and loud. / And not detainable?? (14-15). The threatening young Black men emerge with their message of the new Black Power, fighting back with collective violence. Brooks possibly even celebrates, that recuperation of power, declaring, ?Nobody gets excited about White power merely means that black people who have been weak and helpless for so long will no longer be so. I?m all for that? (Drotning 174).
Throughout Brooks’s poetry and fiction, she has revealed the inner tensions and emotional turmoil created when black girls and women become aware of these extrinsic standards and face self-denigration. These feelings are often complicated by the anxiety they are made to associate with a black man’s ultimate choice of beauty. *Ballad of Pearl May Lee* is a satiric voice of a woman whose lover is lynched for consensual sex with a White woman. In an interview, even though she is directly commenting on colorism, Brooks stipulates that this poem is about “woman rage.” (Gabbin 254)

The following ballad discloses a poet whose tone ranges from mild irony to derisive sarcasm as she expresses the outrage of a black woman who has been despised by her black lover who preferred “a taste of pink and white honey.” (95).

And my glory but Sammy she did! She did!
And they stole you out of the jail.
They wrapped you around a cottonwood tree.
And they laughed when they heard you wail.
You paid for you dinner, Sammy boy,
And you didn’t pay with money.
You paid with your hide and my heart, Sammy boy,
For your taste of pink and white honey,
Honey,
Honey,

For your taste of pink and white honey. (80-98)

Brooks? treatment of the black woman-black man-white woman triad revenge, pain, and death that is played out in a scenario made unlawful by the ethics of a racist and prejudiced society. The speaker is not the black man who is torn between forbidden desire and fear of violence. Quite the opposite, the speaker is a desperate, infuriated black woman whose voice had rarely been heard in American literature.

?Though never was a poor gal lorn,? the heroine pushed her dejection and personal rejection into a private vengeance. As the hero Sammy had cut her love cold, Pearl May Lee cooly views his fate. Brooks mirrored the color consciousness of the black woman, which caused a deep hurt in their minds as well as in their lives. The soul, which is created in every human body by the Almighty, has equal passion though the external appearances are different and deceptive. Therefore, Brooks rightly reads the inner struggles of the black woman and hence voices the opinions in their stead.

Brooks admits that Pearl May Lee?s rage was not foreign to her sensibility. She says in an interview with Claudia Tate in Black Writer at Work, that she has sensed some real rage in the Ballad of Pearl May Lee and the speaker is a very enraged woman. She has
been compelled even in the midst of travail and faltering self-esteem to reveal women in the fullness of the struggle for self-definition.

Evaluating her status as a developing activist, Brooks says with fine distinction that appear to be too deprecating,

I-who have ?gone the gamut? from an almost angry rejection of my dark skin by some of my brainwashed brothers and sisters to a surprised queenhood in the new black sun-am qualified to enter at least the kindergarten of new consciousness now. New consciousness and trudge-towards-progress. I have hopes for myself. (8)

Feminists had a common vision of recreating black women through the literature, they asserted the validity and strength of black women and provided means for other women to redefine themselves. They felt that their achievement would be an argument against discrimination. Many authors say the writing as an assertion of self as well as the expression of search for ethnic identity and heritage. They used art, including poetry and fiction, to define the identity. Brooks too through her roles, expansions to the readers, their placements in the racial prejudiced society.

Brooks portrays a young girl named Mabbie, who early becomes painfully aware that sweets and chocolates were not
enough, she is ?all of seven,? imagines Willie Boone and herself in a
heaven of her making in the poem, ?The Ballad of Chocolate Mabbie,? 

Oh, warm is the waiting for joys, my dears!
And it cannot be too long.
Oh, pity the little poor chocolate lips
That carry the bubble of song! (13-16)

Yet her imaginings are as fragile as ?the bubble of song? that
bursts when Willie appears in the schoolyard with a little yellow girl
who has ?sand-waves loving her brow.? Brooks exposes the
unsubstantiated ego of chocolate Mabbie, who readily accepts her
inferiority to ?a lemon-hued lynx.? In the ballad, the poet intimates
that Mabbie will not outgrow this intense disappointment but will
relive it when she is grown:

Out came the saucily bold Willie Boone.
It was woe for our Mabbie now.
He wore like a jewel a lemon-hued lynx
With sand-waves loving her brow. (17-20)

From the earliest publication of A Street in Bronzeville, Brooks? poetry has had strength of conviction. Brooks insists that
?The Mother? is not so much bothered about abortions as it is
about ?mothering?: ? Abortions will not let you forget. / You
remember the children you got that you did not get? (1, 2). Brooks
also explores the impact of poverty on the lives of her women characters; ?The Mother? deals with a poor woman who has had a number of abortions. She experiences anxiety and anguish as a result of these decisions. ?Brooks refers to her as ?customary? Mother; but a Mother not unfamiliar, who decides that he rather than her World, will kill her children? (RPO 184). The poem ?The Mother? reveals this:

?if I sinned, if I seized

Your luck
And your lives from your unfinished reach,
If I stole your births and your names,
Your straight baby tears and your games,
Your stilted or lovely loves, your tumults, your marriages,

aches and your deaths,
If I poisoned the beginnings of your breaths,
Believe that even in my deliberateness I was not deliberate.

(15-22)

Although the Mother realizes that she has protected her unborn babies from the harsh realities of the life they were sure to lead, she also admits of having stolen from them whatever joys they might have been able to experience. She wonders if she had that right. It was her deep concern for them as well as her own suppressed situation, which caused her to have the abortions. The
economical deprivation caused black women to do such ?sinful? abortions.

Captivatingly, Brooks? description of her mother could well fit the woman that Toni Morrison immortalizes in her novel, Beloved, who is strong-minded enough to kill her children in the womb as she will not bear to see them dragged back into slavery.

Brooks? ?Mame? in the poem, Queen of the Blues? feels empty and abandoned. Within the first four lines of the poem a great deal is revealed about Mame. She is a singer in a midnight lub. Her only release is singing and shaking her body across the floor. But her life and ?internal struggles,? Brooks explores, begins with the line: ?For what did she have/ To lose?? She justifies her profession and pities because she doesn?t have a ?Legal Pa,? or a brother to protect her, or a son to maintain her morality. Brooks is actually trying to justify Mame?s way of living and her profession. She convinces by telling that Mame has nothing to lose. Her poem Queen of the Blues? exhibits this:

Mame was singing
At the Midnight Club.
And the place was red
With blues.
She could shake her body
Across the floor.
For what did she have
To lose? (1-8)

She does not have a husband, a lover or a boy friend to stop
her from performing. Furthermore, Mame tells her isolated state.
She has nothing to lose except the respect she has for herself. The
M.C. of the club exploits her by giving her the title? Queen of the
blues.? Yet she concludes
"Men don't tip their
Hats to me.
They pinch my arms
And they slap my thighs.
But when has a man
Tipped his hat to me?" (68-75)

Mame says the closeness of her men through the words
?pinch my arms? and ?slap my thig hs.? Yet, she regrets that those
?Men don?t tip their hats? to her as a mark of respect when she is
declared as ?Queen of the Blues?:

Strictly, strictly,
The queen of the blues!
Men are low down
Dirty and mean,
Why don?t they tip
Their hats to a queen? (76-81)
Brooks’ women are alive and vibrant as they struggle against the racism, sexism, classism that invade their lives. is a liberatory model for working-class black women.

Brooks almost documented all the sufferings of women. e did not handle any trivial theme in her poems for poems’ sake. She analyzed the real problems of black women in different angles. She considered her art of writing a mission.

She had done it with devotion and dedication. She did her best to the suppressed race to lift high its banner of victory. George Kent estimates the works of Brooks:

There is no single verse or poem which as brilliantly sums up the conflict which a Black woman could feel before the natural hair movement made some moderation of the necessity to keep one eye focused upon white standards of beauty. (Gabbin 258)

Violent and militant reactions worsen the state of the Blacks. But amidst the noise and whip of the whirlwind their blooming takes place. Darkness which exists for the Blacks should not be an excuse. They must commence the cultivation of strength in darkness itself. Cultivation takes time but its rewards are great? healing and enhancement. Brooks expresses this valuable message for her dark people in the poem To Prisoners?:
I call for you
Cultivation of victory over
Long blows that you want to give and blows you are going to get over
What wants to crumble you down, to sicken
You. I call for you
Cultivation of strength to heal and enhance
in the non-cheering dark,
in the many many mornings-after;
in the chalk and choke? (8-17)

George E. Kent observes how Brooks stresses on the values of liberation by developing a sense of togetherness, born out of ?love?:

Leaving to others elaborate political pronouncements, elaborate get-whitey strategies, and free-wheeling suggestions of violence, Brooks seized largely upon cultivation of group and intragroup self-appreciation, togetherness, creativity, endurance, wisdom, and faith, for the liberation values to be pushed?(Kent 68 )

Brooks’ strategy for obtaining liberation in the true sense is by making ?Black-emphasis? for Blacks and not against Whites.

Maulana Karenga (1993), presents the definition of Black Nationalism as,
a social theory and practice organized around
the concept and conviction that Blacks are a
distinct historical personality, and they
should therefore unite in order to gain the
structural capacity to define, defend, and
develop their interests. (334)

Brooks believed, at some stage in the 1940s and 1950s,
?integration was the solution. All we had to was keep on appealing
to the whites to help us, and they would?? (RPO 175). With this
strong certainty, she exposed the agonizing lives of the Blacks living
in the ghettos of America in her poetry.

The oncoming of spring denotes new life, joy and singi. The
spring season brings to mind the cycle of seasons. There is no
stoppage to the goings-on of life and one is reminded P.B.
Shelley?s note of hope in his ? Ode to the West Wind?: ?If Winter
comes, can spring be far behind?? Sorrows and strains never stay;
they give in to new joys and miracles and ecstatic moods of life.

Brooks gained a remarkable change in her consciousness in
1967, after observing the aggressive spirit of several young Black
poets at the Second Fisk University Writers Conference. As a result,
she became ethnocentric in her vision of race and made prominent
declarations on Black inscrutability. She felt the urgency for
violence and Black commonality. Dudley Randall says thus:
I wrote to Gwendolyn Brooks and obtained her permission to use "We Real Cool." This first Brook of six Broadsides is called "Poems of the Negro Revolt" (Bloom 53).

When McKay wrote the last lines of the poem "The Negro's Friend," he was almost on the verge of death. His personal conclusions take on the value of a message not for his own race alone but for all men, when he calls out: "The Negroes need salvation from within" (14).

This conclusion comes as no surprise from a man who had already written for more than ten years before his death. In his Long Way from Home, he writes thus: "The whites have done the blacks some great wrongs, but also they gave civilization. They can still do a lot more, but one thing they cannot do: they cannot give the Negroes the gift of a soul - a group soul" (McKay 139).

McKay's fellow Catholic worker poet James Rogan adopted his beloved sonnet form in 1948 elegy, "To Claude McKay." This sonnet elucidates that McKay's life career was initially,

Filled with a fervent, fevered, anguished thirst
For justice still denied your fellowmen
outraged, oppressed, degraded with worst
Nobility of purpose guided you (6-9)
Further, the poem bears the testimony on McKay's later life:

Rest, weary pilgrim, now your journey's through,
Your last surrender made to love and death.
How peace and justice must have welcomed you,
Who fought injustice to your dying breath.
Long had you sought with burning tongue and pen,

(1-5)

McKay, in his waning period, paid his attention towards Christianity, and determined that ?love? was the only weapon to be successfully freed. The second line of the poem can be taken as an evidence.

Jesus Christ, as an individual, suffered for the whole of humanity. The Black intellectuals take up the cause of their suffering race and suffer for it. The one who serves and loves has to endure a good deal of suffering both physical and mental. The Black creationists Claude McKay and Gwendolyn Brooks, who possessed these qualities, were obsessed with the problems of the Blacks, make a passionate attempt to identify themselves with their universal suffering. Their poems bring to light not only the denied or deprived rights of African Americans but also their longing for ?quickening? freedom, to enjoy their equal rights. Their poems reflect their woeful concern for the rights - denied fellow BI ks. Particularly, McKay has written more poems defending rights for his
men by registering his strong protests than Brooks for her women. Subtle distinctions can be traced in their ideas and themes, in their way and mode of expression. The shade of discrimination is precisely due to their individual differences which spring from the differences in their gender, temperament, family background, the age and the timing of the flowering of their art and their unique talents of writing. Brooks? purpose of creating ?Black Consciousness? is achieved through her latter poems. Her intention is to achieve the ?yearning? of her beloved people, which denotes only their ?freedom.?

Thus, McKay and Brooks have switched over from their v and ideas. McKay has replaced his protest feelings with divine love. On the contrary, Brooks has relinquished her faith in love and harmony and embraced violence and blackness. The researcher agrees with the principles of Martin Luther King Jr., great liberator, who has taught the priceless truth of non-violence.

Following the Ghandian model, Blacks would integrate by taking the moral high ground. King (1986) suggests that Black protestors

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\text{do not seek to defeat or humiliate the opponent, but to win his friendship and understanding. The nonviolent resister must often voice his protests through noncooperation or boycotts, but he}
\]

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realizes that noncooperation and boycotts are not the ends themselves; they are the means to awaken the end of moral shame within the opponent. The end is redemption and reconciliation. (86)

As Booker T. Washington insisted on ?inter-racial harmony and white good will as prerequisites for Negro advancement? (Price 29), the African Americans must recognize their importance and not desert a country but enjoy its associated due rights as citizens.

Claude McKay, as a masculinist, has mightily defended the rights-denied fellow men. He has created an awareness of the Blacks of their deprived rights in the racially segregated society. Through his poems he has strengthened them to stand and struggle ceaselessly for their freedom. Gwendolyn Brooks, as a feminist, has written poems for the ?recognition? of Black women in the racially and gender-wise discriminated society. She has strived hard to deliver them from sexual harassments to attain equality.

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