CHAPTER-IV

STYLISTICS

Everything is technique which is not the lump of experience itself, and one cannot properly say that a writer has no technique or that he eschews technique for being a writer, he cannot do so???

Mark Schorer.

Poetry tends to be remembered not only for what is said but also for how it is said. It is first of all, a communication, a thought or a message conveyed by the writer to the reader. The reader’s understanding is immeasurably increased if he is familiar with the many techniques or devices of poetry used by the poet in his writings. Poetry begins with an emotional, develops into a thought and finds expression in words. It is, therefore, important to the reader that he understands how the poet uses words and how he puts fresh vigour of new meaning into words.

For McKay, writing is an art and not an accident. His works are primarily governed by a saturating consciousness of his race. McKay employs a number of technical devices and artistc embellishments to colour his wordy pictures. Elimimian places McKay, on par with the major English poets in making use of the techniques. He comments:

his [McKay’s] techniques, although basically traditional, are as complex and varied as
those of any major poet in English: the use of foreign languages, dialects, the sonnet sequence, the couplet measure, repetition, alliteration and mythology? (211)

In order to bring about the unification of sensibility and association of ideas McKay employs a number of stylistics and poetic innovations. Thus McKay has imparted to his verse a certain dynamic force. Robert A. Smith, admires McKay as ?a man of deepest emotions, as well as one who was a skilled craftsman? (Bloom 116). On the basis of both form and content, McKay?s poetry as a whole can be brought under two broad categories - The Dialect Poems and The Poems in Standard English.

As Baxter R. Miller says, ?Opportunities to write about Gwendolyn Brooks abound,? because not more than ten full-length studies have been undertaken on Brooks so far (26). The predominant concerns of Brooks? poetry are the issues of race, sex and art. Poetry written before 1967 are egocentric, reveals her perception of these issues. She is concerned with the oral experiences of her characters. Her racial protest is implied rather than stated overtly. With regard to her perception of n, she highlights their poverty in the sordid urban environment, the devaluation of love in heterosexual relationship and the biting ironies of intra-racial discrimination. Moreover, her poetry of this
period is primarily devoted to traditional forms of craft, and displays an objective and fine detachment from the lives or emotions of her characters.

Poetry written after 1967 are radically ethnocentric. She is less devoted to craft, and is more concerned about Black mystique, the necessity for violence and Black commonality. They are written primarily for the assorted Blacks. She intends her poems to be read by the Blacks whose lives she has celebrated throughout her poetic career. Moreover, she gives up using bombastic language and writing rhymed verses, ballads, sonnets, mock epics and heroic couplets. The simple unrhymed free verses and the extensive use of jazzy poetic style of this period bear testimony to Brooks' avowed commitment to the cause of her community. Gloria T. Hull wrote a five page article, "A Note on the poetic Technique of Gwendolyn Brooks" (1975). She asserted that Brooks was a singularly independent writer, and that she had her own way of handling poetic techniques:

She has taken definitive techniques of diction, verbal economy, and sound, which are the shared tools of every poets and used in an individual way to give herself a recognizably distinct poetic voice. (285)
Brooks’ critics such as Norris B. Clark, William H. Hansell, George E. Kent and Harry B. Shaw have referred to this dual evolution in Brooks’ poetry from egocentricism to ethnocentricism.

Gwendolyn Brooks’ poems abide by the definition of poetry. George E. Kent rightly points out this in his *A Life of Gwendolyn Brooks*,

Think of life as a rough powder that you pour through a sieve. Well, the finest part of it that comes through will be the poetry. Poetry is a concentration; you can get the essence of a novel into a short poem? (235)

A good work of art is marked by a definite form. Further, the form in art not only enhances the manner of what is being said but also satisfies the innate human urge for beauty or order. McKay and Brooks have used different forms of poetry like sonnets, ballads, lyrics and narratives to convey their views and ideas. They place the greatest stress in the suitable form, a tight structure and a well-knit organization to create poetry of lasting value. The right kind of poetic form chosen serves as vehicles to convey their deeply-felt feelings and experiential thoughts. A balanced fusion of form and content is traced in their poems.
McKay has chosen the traditional sonnet form to clothe his militant anger, bitterness and protest. McKay skilfully combines the Shakespearean rhyme scheme with the Petrarchan turn to create a novel sonnet form of his own. Arna Bontemps writes, ?McKay?s ability to bend traditional form to his purpose? (37).

Most of the poems of McKay are conventional in style; sonnet in form and with a definite structure. McKay, in his poem, ?My Mother? followed the Shakespearean sonnet form to portray the beauty of nature. The rhyme scheme is ab ab cd cd ef ef gg.

| The dawn departs, the morning is begun,       | a |
| The trades come whispering from off the seas, | b |
| The fields of corn are golden in the sun,    | a |
| The dark-brown tassels fluttering in the breeze; | b |
| The bell is sounding and the children pass,   | c |
| Frog-leaping, skipping, shouting, laughing shrill, | d |
| Down the red road, over the pasture-grass,    | d |
| Up to the school-house crumbling on the hill. | d |
| The older folk are at their peaceful toil,    | e |
| Some pulling up the weeds, some plucking corn, | f |
| And others breaking up the sun-baked soil.    | e |
| Float, faintly-scented breeze, at early morn  | f |
| Over the earth where mortals sow and reap--   | g |
| Beneath its breast my mother lies asleep.     | g |
McKay’s definite structure in sonnet form is crystal-clear in most of the poems. One such example is “La Paloma in London” in Shakespearean sonnet form with the beautiful rhyme scheme ab ab cd cd ef ef gg:

About Soho we went before the light;  
We went, unresting six, craving new fun,  
New scenes, new raptures, for the fevered night  
Of rollicking laughter, drink and song, was done.  
The vault was void, but for the dawn’s great star  
That shed upon our path its silver flame,  
When La Paloma on a low guitar  
Abruptly from a darkened casement came--  
Harlem! All else shut out, I saw the hall,  
And you in your red shoulder sash come dancing  
With Val against me languid by the wall,  
Your burning coffee-colored eyes keen glancing  
Aslant at mine, proud in your golden glory!  
I loved you, Cuban girl, fond sweet Diory. (1-14)

The poems of Claude McKay and Gwendolyn Brooks echo their moods and the musicality of changes with changes of mood. Their poems are also famous for their mastery of form-mastery over the stanza forms, simple as well as complex ones such as complete, quatrain, ballad stanza and sonnet.
Being in confessional mode, the ballad has the quality of the blues. Brooks has skilfully adventured by mixing blues and ballad forms. In the Queen of the Blues, she blends the ballad's narrative technique and the blues' confessional form,

I was good to my daddy.
Gave him all my dough.
I say, I was good to my daddy,
I gave him all of my dough.
Scrubbed hard in them white folks' Kitchens
Till my knees was rusty
And so'. (61-68)

The African American confessional poets differ from the British confessional poets. A major difference is, British poets pour out their personal feelings, thoughts and experiences of their own anguish and angst, whereas American Confessional Poets project the suffering, the sturm-und-drang of the whole race. is not an individual voicing his sentiments and thoughts. They become the voice of humanity.

It is true that McKay draws his inspiration from the British poets. Whether in echoing the mechanic of the Neo-classicists or whether in treating the reverberant themes of the romanticists, McKay might as well pass for a British writer. But the backdrop in
his poems is purely native. Geta LeSeur is definite on this point: Regardless of his [McKay's] thoroughly British orientation, emotionally and literally he never forgot his blackness? (307).

McKay followed definite rhyme scheme in his poems. His poem, ?North and South? is an apt and excellent example. The rhyme scheme is sweet and simple.

O sweet are tropic lands for waking dreams!
There time and life move lazily along.
There by the banks of blue-and-silver streams
Grass-sheltered crickets chirp incessant song,
Gay-colored lizards loll all through the day,
Their tongues outstretched for careless little flies,
And swarthy children in the fields at play,
Look upward laughing at the smiling skies.
A breath of idleness is in the air
That casts a subtle spell upon all things,
And love and mating-time are everywhere,
And wonder to life's commonplaces clings.
The fluttering humming-bid darts through the trees
And dips his long beak in the big bell-flowers,
The leisured buzzard floats upon the breeze,
Riding a crescent cloud for endless hours,
The sea beats softly on the emerald strands--
O sweet for quiet dreams are tropic lands!

Brooks, who has written her poems mostly in free verse, has also written some poems with proper rhyme scheme. For the poem ?The Old-Marrieds.? But in the crowding darkness not a word did they say. Though the pretty-coated birds had piped so lightly all the day.

And he had seen the lovers in the little side streets.
And she had heard the morning stories clogged with swee s. It was quite a time for loving. It was midnight. It was May.

But in the crowding darknesss not a word did they say. (1-6)

Couplet is a stanza of two lines. ?The aesthetic quality of the couplet is its lightness, rightness and condensation.? (Sethuraman 51) Brooks? ?The Independent Man? is an example for this: ?A Woman would be wise to think it well/ If once a week you only rang the bell? (9, 10). This is a closed couplet as it is self-contained with end-stopped lines. Similarly, McKay, in his poem ? A Prayer? has adopted the closed couplet form:

'Mid the discordant noises of the day I hear thee calling;
I stumble as I fare along Earth's way; keep me from falling.

Mine eyes are open but they cannot see for gloom of night:
I can no more than lift my heart to thee for inward light.
The wild and fiery passion of my youth consumes my soul;
In agony I turn to thee for truth and self-control.

For Passion and all the pleasures it can give will die the
death;
But this of me eternally must live, thy borrowed breath.

'Mid the discordant noises of the day I hear thee calling;
I stumble as I fare along Earth's way; keep me from falling.

Brooks? poem ?We Real Cool? is a short and epigrammatic in
style. It is such a word shorthand with a condensed style, in which
the last but one word in every couplet gains the same rhyme.

    We real cool. We
    Left school. We

    Lurk late. We
    Strike straight. We

    Sing sin. We
    Thin gin. We

    Jazz June. We
    Die soon. (1-8)

Zack Gilbert praises Brooks thus: ?Queen of your craft,
queen/ of the perfect word and shorthand phrase,??(Brooks 46)
Quatrain is the most common stanza form in English poetry which has four lines. The rhymes in a quatrain may vary. In Brooks? poems we come across stanzas with four lines but without any rhyme scheme. But in McKay?s poems, there are numerous quatrains but the rhyme scheme abab is followed everywhere. For example, in ?A Memory of June,? McKay has followed the proper rhyme scheme.

When June comes dancing o'er the death of May,
With scarlet roses tinting her green breast,
And mating thrushes ushering in her day,
And Earth on tiptoe for her golden guest,

I always see the evening when we met--
The first of June baptized in tender rain--
And walked home through the wide streets, gleaming wet,
Arms locked, our warm flesh pulsing with love's pain.

I always see the cheerful little room,
And in the corner, fresh and white, the bed,
Sweet scented with a delicate perfume,
Wherein for one night only we were wed;

Where in the starlit stillness we lay mute,
And heard the whispering showers all night long,
And your brown burning body was a lute
Whereon my passion played his fevered song.

When June comes dancing o'er the death of May,
With scarlet roses staining her fair feet,
My soul takes leave of me to sing all day
A love so fugitive and so complete. (1-20)

The quatrain also called tetrastich is a stanza of four lines, the most common stanzaic form of poetry in English? (Shaw 312).

McKay's poem The Easter Flower is a fine example for a quatrain with simple and definite rhyme scheme.

Far from this foreign Easter damp and chilly
My soul steals to a pear-shaped plot of ground,
Where gleamed the lilac-tinted Easter lily
Soft-scented in the air for yards around;

Alone, without a hint of guardian leaf!
Just like a fragile bell of silver rime,
It burst the tomb for freedom sweet and brief
In the young pregnant year at Eastertime;

And many thought it was a sacred sign,
And some called it the resurrection flower;
And I, a pagan, worshiped at its shrine,
Yielding my heart unto its perfumed power. (1-12)
Ballad Stanza is a form of a quatrain and may follow the pattern of abcb? (Sethuraman 54). It is perceptible in Brooks? Sadie and Maud?,

Maud went to college.
Sadie stayed home.
Sadie scraped life
With a fine toothed comb.

She didn’t leave a tangle in
Her comb found every strand.
Sadie was one of the livingest chicks
In all the land.

Sadie bore two babies
Under her maiden name.
Maud and Ma and Papa
Nearly died of shame.

When Sadie said her last so-long
Her girls struck out from home.
(Sadie left as heritage
Her fine-toothed comb.)

Maud, who went to college,
Is a thin brown mouse.
She is living all alone
In this old house. (1-20)

McKay has followed a different but a definite rhyme scheme. First line in all the threequatrain stanzas has the same word and same rhyme scheme. Second and fourth lines rhyme together excepting the third line. ?December 1919? is written in this form.

Last night I heard your voice, mother,
The words you sang to me
When I, a little barefoot boy,
Knelt down against your knee.

And tears gushed from my heart, mother,
And passed beyond its wall,
But though the fountain reached my throat
The drops refused to fall.

'Tis ten years since you died, mother,
Just ten dark years of pain,
And oh, I only wish that I
Could weep just once again. (1-12)

McKay's poem, ?Harlem Shadows? is an illustration for his expertise in writing sixains, a stanza of six lines. There are three six line stanzas with beautiful rhyme scheme.
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!

Through the long 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.

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. (1-18)

Brooks has also written sixains. The poem, ?

_Marrieds_? with proper rhyme scheme, is an example.

But in the crowding darkness not a word did they say.
Though the pretty-coated birds had piped so lightly all the day.
And he had seen the lovers in the little side streets.
And she had heard the morning stories clogged with sweetes.
It was quite a time for loving. It was midnight. It was May.
But in the crowding darkness not a word did they say. (1-6)

? The City's Love ? by McKay is a poem of eight lines, which may be called Ottava Rima.

For one brief golden moment rare like wine,
The gracious city swept across the line;
Oblivious of the color of my skin,
Forgetting that I was an alien guest,
She bent to me, my hostile heart to win,
Caught me in passion to her pillowy breast;
The great, proud city, seized with a strange love,
Bowed down for one flame hour my pride to prove. (1-8)

McKay reserves the sonnet form mostly for his protest elements. His love theme, nature theme and other personal themes are often conveyed through non-sonnet lyrics. He appreciates the beauty of nature in the poem ?After the Winter,? which has two eight line stanzas, [Ottava Rima]:

Some day, when trees have shed their leaves,
And against the morning's white
The shivering birds beneath the eaves
Have sheltered for the night,
We'll turn our faces southward, love,
Toward the summer isle
Where bamboos spire the shafted grove
And wide-mouthed orchids smile.
And we will seek the quiet hill
Where towers the cotton tree,
And leaps the laughing crystal rill,
And works the droning bee.
And we will build a lonely nest
Beside an open glade,
And there forever will we rest,
O love -- O nut-brown maid! (1-16)

The above poem is a simple, direct lyric. It is syllab and makes the most of the iambic form with the alternate lines rhyming.

Brooks? poem, almost written in free verse, represents her freedom of thought and freedom of press. In the poem, ? Queen of the Blues,? she has written stanzas of varied forms, mostly written in eight lined stanzas.

Mame was singing
At the Midnight Club.
And the place was red

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With blues.
She could shake her body
Across the floor.
For what did she have
To lose?

She put her mama
Under the ground
Two years ago.
(Was it three?)
She covered that grave
With roses and tears.
(A handsome thing
To see.) (1-16)

She didn't have any
Big brother
To shout
"No sister of mine!..."
She didn't have any
Small brother
To think she was everything
Fine.

She didn't have any
Baby girl
With velvet
Pop?open eyes.
She didn't have any
Sonny boy
To tell sweet
Sonny boy lies (24-39)

A different structure in Brooks? poem, which has two
quatrans, then an octave in between, and a quatrain in the end. It
is observable in the poem ?A Song in the Front Yard.? 

I?ve stayed in the front yard all my life.
I want a peek at the back
Where it?s rough and untended and hungry weed
grows.
A girl gets sick of a rose.

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.

They do some wonderful things.
They have some wonderful fun.
My mother sneers, but I say it?s fine
How they don?t have to go in at quarter to nine.
My mother, she tells me that Johnnie Mae
Will grow up to be a bad woman.
That George'll be taken to jail soon or late
(On account of last winter he sold our back gate).

But I say it's fine. Honest, I do.
And I'd like to be a bad woman, too,
And wear the brave stockings of night-black lace
And strut down the streets with paint on my face.

(1-20)

Maximum number of Brooks' poems are quite unconventional in style as they are mostly unrhymed verses. She may deviate from conventional style by changing the lengths or the forms. *Young Heroes* is an example for this.

He is very busy with his looking.
To look, he knows, is to involve subject and suppliant.
He looks at life?
Moves like into his hands?
saying
Art is life worked with: is life wheedled, or whelmed:
assessed:
clandestine, but evoked.

Look! Look! to this page!
A horror here
walks toward you in working clothes.
Willie sees
hellishness among the half?men.
He sees
lenient dignity. He
sees pretty flowers under blood.

He teaches dolls and dynamite.
Because he knows
there is a scientific thinning of our ranks.
Not merely Medgar Malcolm Martin and Black Panthers,
He teaches
strategy and the straight aim;
Black volume;
might of mind, Black flare?
volcanoing merit, Black
herohood.

Black total.
He is no kitten Traveler
and no poor Knower of himself.
Blackness
is a going to essences and to unifyings.
"MY NAME IS AFRIKA!"
Well, every fella's a Foreign Country.

This Foreign Country speaks to You. (1-37)

Brooks has written sonnets with the fusion of a ballad. ?

*Sonnet Ballad*? is a Shakespearean sonnet with the theme of a ballad. The rhyme scheme here is abab cdcd efef gg.

Oh mother, mother, where is happiness?
They took my lover's tallness off to war,
Left me lamenting. Now I cannot guess
What I can use an empty heart-cup for.
He won't be coming back here any more.
Some day the war will end, but, oh, I knew
When he went walking grandly out that door
That my sweet love would have to be untrue.
Would have to be untrue. Would have to court
Coquettish death, whose impudent and strange
Possessive arms and beauty (of a sort)
Can make a hard man hesitate--and change.
And he will be the one to stammer, "Yes."

Oh mother, mother, where is happiness? (1-14)

Brooks subjects the sonnet form to a modern approach and yet at the same time makes certain that it is traditionally untraditional. As George E. Kent views:

She [Brooks] attacked the sonnets' rigidity by breaking up traditional sentence syntax into punctuated phrases, by emphasizing the colloquial, and by the pressure of her contemporary realism. In winning a freedom from traditional formal eloquence, however, she won also a freedom to use at will her own style of formal eloquence without being constricted by tradition? (112)

?The sonnet is a formal lyric - a form which has attracted all the great poets at sometime or other and which is still largely used by modern writers? (Rees 87).

Brooks has adopted ?free verse? in some of her poems to break the yoke of tradition. Free verse is a flexible tool which the poets can use for writing poems with lines of varying length. Brooks? ?The Good Man? can be quoted as an example here:
Watches our bogus roses, our rank wreath, our
love's unreliable cement, the gray
jubilees of our demondom.
Coherent
Counsel! Good man.
Require of us our terribly excluded blue.
Constrain, repair a ripped, revolted land.
Put hand in hand land over.
Reprove
the abler droughts and manias of the day
and a felicity entreat.
Love.
Complete
your pledges, reinforce your aides, renew
stance, testament. (10-24)

There is no illustration of free verse in the poems of McKay.

The poems of Brooks and McKay abound in imagery and a
variety of figures of speech. The poets create the pictures or images
in the minds of the readers to convey more than what is actually in
poetry is the expression of sense experience, channeled through
sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. It also refers to the pictures
which we perceive with our mind's eyes, ears, nose, tongue and
skin and through which we experience the meaning and truth of
human experiences not in abstract terms. This is a device by which the poet makes the meaning strong, clear and sure. In the words of T.E. Hulme: ?Images in verse are not mere decoration, but the very essence of an intuitive language? (287). To be precise, imagery is the use of figurative language to enrich poetry, that is, describes one thing in terms of another.

Colours become significant in their poems. They bring red, yellow, brown, black, white, green, gray, crimson and blue in different contexts. Each colour has its symbolic effect.

She was becoming aware of an oddness in color and sound and smell about her. The color was gray, and the smell and sound had taken on a suggestion of the properties of color, and impressed one as gray, too. The sobbing, the frustrations, the small hates, the large and ugly hates that came to her from behind those walls?via speech and scream and sigh?all these were gray. There was a whole lot of grayness here... (Lauter 568).

Like Brooks, McKay has also used a lot of colour image ies in his poems. While describing the advent of June in *A Memory of June*, he writes thus: ?with scarlet roses tinting her green breast? (2). In *A Red Flower*? ?Your lips are like a southern lily red? (1), ?In which the brown bee buries deep its head? (3) ?your lips are the red symbol of a dream? (9), ?That line the green bank of a fair blue stream? (11), in ?*After the Winter*? ?With black-ribbed blue-bells blowing near? (15), in *Birds of Prey*? ?Beating their heavy wings of owlish gray? (4), in *Flower of love*? ?The saffron petals tempt my amorous mouth/ The yellow heat is radiant? (5, 6), ?Uncovered on your couch of figured green? (9), in *Harlem Shadows*? ?The earth?s white breast? (10), ?The sacred brown feet of my fallen race? (16), in *If shall Return*? ?Wafting their blue-black smoke to sapphire skies? (4).
One can find animal, as well as bird imageries in their poems. There are also references to insects, flowers, fruits and trees. In Brooks? poems, we have the following imageries: In A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi bacon? She heard no hoof-beat of the horse? (116), in Sadie and Maud? Sadie was one of the livingest chicks? Ballad of Pearl May Lee? You son of a bitch? (17), The moon an owl?s eye minding?(56), in God works in Mysterious Ways? I pull you down my fox hole? (19), in The Chicago Picasso? a horse-and rider? At most , another lion? (14,15). In Riot? The fine of pig foot? (23). In Leaves from a loose-leaf war diary, we read: Bees in the stomach? (21). In The Sundays of Stain-Legs Smith, we have the flower imagery? would you prescribe a show/ with and in The Coora Flower?, Flower I learned the coora flower (1).

We find counter images also. We find the love-hate imagery in A Bronzeville mother loiters in Mississippi meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon?. There are also light and darkness, strength and weakness and heat and cold:

He whispered something to her, did the fine Prince, something about love and night and intention.

She heard no hoof-beat of the horse and saw no flash of the shining steel.

He pulled her face around to meet
His, and there it was, close aloes,
For the first time in all the days and nights.
His mouth, wet and red,
So very, very, very red,
Closed over hers.
Then a sickness heaved within her. The courtroom

Coco-Cola,
The courtroom beer and hate and sweat and drone,
Pushed like a wall against her. She wanted to bear it.
But his mouth would not go away and neither would the
Decapitated exclamation points in that Others Women? s

eyes.

She did not scream.
She stood there,
But a hatred for him burst into glorious flower,
And its perfume enclasped them?big,
Bigger than all magnolias. (111-130)

The husband, ?The fine Prince? and ?the milk-white maid,?
his wife suspect the worthlessness of the murder of the ?dark
villain? of fourteen years. When the husband approaches the wife,
she shows her hatred towards him.
In *Subway Wind*, Through sleepy waters, gills wheel and sweep? (10), in *To O.E.A.*? Your voice is the color of a robin?s breast?, in *Winter in the Country,*? Bare hands to touch the sparrows cheep?, the poet makes a mention of different birds. Insects are also used as images. In *A Red Flower,* The brown bee buries deep its head? (3),? with butterflies and bees close to each heart? (12); in *The Castaways,* The butterflies and sparrows in brief flight/ chipping and dancing for the seasons birth? (3-4), in *To One Coming North,* At first you?ll joy to see the playful snow/ like white moths trembling on the tropic air?(1-2) are examples for his birds imagery.

Flowers also find a place in McKay?s poems. In *A Memory of June,* we read: When June comes dancing o?er the death of May/ With scarlet roses tinting her green breast? (1-2). *A Red Flower* is pictured as: Your lips are like a southern lily red?(1),? what visions of warm lilies they impart? (10). In *After the Winter,* with black-ribbed blue-bells blowing near/ And ferns that never fade?(15-16), in *Spring in New Hampshire,* Too faintly sweet the first May flowers? (8), in *The Easter Flower,* where gleamed the lilac-tinted Easter lily?(3), in *The Plateau,* The purple flowers of fragrant June? reflect the flower imagery.

Figurative language is a language that communicates ideas beyond the ordinary meaning of words. The words used i
figurative expression are not literally true, rather, they create vivid images and ideas in the readers' mind. One kind of figurative language is the simile. It is a comparison between two basically unlike things that have something in common. A simile includes words ?like? or ?as?. Similes are commonly used by the poets.

Brooks, in ?The Ballad of Chocolate Mabbie? uses the simile, ?He wore like a jewel a lemon-hired lynx? (19), in ?Piano After War?, music is compared to rose-?And music, warily, like the golden rose?(5). In ?The Ballad of Pearl May Lee?, ?she was white like milk? (62).

there's a sweet sob in its like rain-still rain in the night? (2). In *The Barrier*?-?fluting like a river reed? (7).

Metaphor is the comparison of two unlike things, not using ?like? or ?as? as in a simile. It is the simplest and also the most effective poetic device in the use of comparison. It establishes a relationship at once. It sets two unlike things side by side and makes us see the likeness between them. Brooks uses a variety of metaphors in many of her poems. In *The Ballads of Chocolate Mabbie*? ? ?Oh, pity the little poor chocolate lips? (15), in *Big Bessie* thrown her son into the street, ?Be Precise/ with something better than ?candles? is a metaphor. In *The Sundays of Satin-Legs Smith*,? ?Her body is a honey bowl? (9).

In the poems of McKay also there are several metaphors. In *Alfonso, Dressing to Wait at Table?*, Alfonso is a ?bronze ?hires lad? (1), in *Polarity*?-?And I am a fire, swift to flame and burn? (5), in *Subway Wind*, native schooners drift/ through sleepy waters? (9-10), in *Summer Morn in New Hampshire*?-?The mist nestled soft against the earth?s wet breast? (8), in *The Night- Fire*,? ?The Flames laugh high?(3). In *My House?. In *America*,? ?And sinks into my throat her tiger?s tooth? (2), in *Tormented*,? ?I will not fight you, bold and tigerrish? (6).

Both the poets use peculiar adjectives that express the shape and the size of the organs like heart, heel breast, arm, legs, eyes,
limbs, face, bones, feet, hands, tongue, throat, body, skeleton, head, brain, veins, shoulder, neck, head, cheek, mouth, lips, and knees. For example: In ?A Bronzerville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother burns Bacon?, we find: ?with the bones of many eaten knights and princesses.? (23), ?And a mouth too young to have lost every reminder? (27), ?she looked at her shoulders, still/ Gripped in the claim of his hands? (103-104), in ?To Be in Love? ?You look at things/ through his eyes?(4-5), ?Your arms are water? (20). In ?The Life of Lincoln West?, while describing the little boy, Brooks coins adjectives to present the physical features of the black boy,

The pendulous lip, the
Branching ears, the eyes so wide and wild
The vague unvibrant brown of the skin
And, most disturbing, the great head. (14-17)

Similarly, McKay in his poem ?After the Winter?, uses quality-based adjectives: ?laughing crystal rill,? ?wide-mouthed orchids.? His poems also deal with the parts of the body In ?Outcast? ?While to its alien gods I bend my knees/ something in me is lost?(8), ?some vital things has gone out of my heart? (9). In ?Romance?, he imagines thus: ?To clasp you now and feel your head close-pressed/ scented and warm against my beating breast? (1-2), ?To lie at full length, taut, with cheek to cheek/ And tease your
march? (5-6), ?when on your trembling lips I murmur? (12). In ?The Tired worker?, McKay wishes rest for the body. ?To rest the tired hands and aching feet? (8), ?O let me rest/ weary my veins, my brain, my life!? (12-13).


?Archaism is the revival for special literary or other purposes of words which had become obsolete or had fallen out of use entirely-from Greek ?archaios? meaning ?ancient? (Wrenn 127). Archaic words are still used occasionally in writing poems to convey the intended meaning and to give rhythm or ornamentation to the poem. They are also used to create realistic or romantic atmosphere. Archaic words enrich the English language. McKay is much interested in using archaic words in order to renew them with life:
I have not hesitated to use words which are old, and in some circles considered poetically overworked and dead, when I thought I could make them glow alive by new manipulation?
(McKay xxxiii)

The poem *My Native Land, My Home?* is an example for this:

DERE is no land dat can compare

Wid you where?er I roam;

In all de wul? none like you fair

My native land, my home.

This influence is found at random in the poems of McKay. The common archaic words found are: thee, thy, thine, wilt and thou art. It is the language of the native blacks. But there are no such archaic words in the poems of Brooks.

Personification is attributing human qualities to an object, animal or idea. We find only a few personified words here and there in Brooks? poems. For instance, ?The alarm clock meddling in somebody?s sleep? (32) in *The Sundays of Satin-Legs Smith,*? in *A Song in the Front Yard*? ??And wear the brave stocking of night-?Febraries shudder and are gone. Aprils/ fret frankly/ October looks away? (11-13).


Apart from sonnets, Brooks experiment with the Black folk forms like ballads and blues. She has written quite a number of ballads adopting narrative and dramatic techniques. She uses the usual ballad themes like sex, unrequited love, violence and disaster, employing folk diction and Black vernacular. ? Ballad of Pearl May Lee? which is about raping and lynching is a good example. Epithets like ?pink and white honey? (25), ?dark meat? (36). Stand for the White girl and the Black girl respectively and thus enrich the texture of the ballad. Moreover, the pathetic and mocking tone of Pearl May Lee is sustained throughout the ballad:

And I was laughing, down at my house.
Laughing fit to kill.
You got what you wanted for dinner,
But brother you paid the bill.
Brother,
Brother,
Brother you paid the bill.

You paid for your 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. (85-98)

Repetition is a technique in which a word or a phrase a sentence gets repeated for emphasis. In McKay's poems, even stanzas are repeated for emphasis. The following poems ?Exhortation: Summer 1919? and ?When Dawn Comes to The City? are best examples for this technique.

In the East the clouds glow crimson with the new dawn that is breaking,

And its golden glory fills the western skies.
O my brothers and my sisters, wake! arise!
For the new birth rends the old earth and the very dead are waking,

Ghosts are turned flesh, throwing off the grave's disguise,
And the foolish, even children, are made wise;
For the big earth groans in travail for the strong, new world in making--

O my brothers, dreaming for dim centuries,
Wake from sleeping; to the East turn, turn your eyes!

Oh the night is sweet for sleeping, but the shining day's for working;
Sons of the seductive night, for your children's children's sake,
From the deep primeval forests where the crouching leopard's lurking,
Lift your heavy-lidded eyes, Ethiopia! awake! (5-17)

In the East the clouds glow crimson with the new dawn that is breaking,
And its golden glory fills the western skies.
O my brothers and my sisters, wake! arise!
For the new birth rends the old earth and the very dead are waking,
Ghosts have turned flesh, throwing off the grave's disguise,
And the foolish, even children, are made wise;
For the big earth groans in travail for the strong, new world in making--
O my brothers, dreaming for long centuries,
Wake from sleeping; to the East turn, turn your eyes! (18-26)

In ?When dawn comes to the city,? in which two complete stanzas are repeated:

But I would be on the island of the sea,
In the heart of the island of the sea,
Where the cocks are crowing, crowing, crowing,
And the hens are cackling in the rose-apple tree,
Where the old draft-horse is neighing, neighing, neighing,
Out on the brown dew-silvered lawn,
And the tethered cow is lowing, lowing, lowing,
And dear old Ned is braying, braying, braying,
And the shaggy Nannie goat is calling, calling, calling
From her little trampled corner of the long wide lea
That stretches to the waters of the hill-stream falling
Sheer upon the flat rocks joyously!
There, oh, there! on the island of the sea,
There would I be at dawn. (9-22)

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In the heart of the island of the sea,
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That stretches to the waters of the hill-stream falling
Sheer upon the flat rocks joyously!
There, oh, there! on the island of the sea,
There I would be at dawn. (31-44)
In Brooks’ following poem, *Ballad of Pearl May Lee* there is a
lavish use of repetitions and colloquialism.

I cut my lungs with my laughter,
Laughter,
Laughter,
I cut my lungs with my laughter (1-4)

?Cause you wanted white arms to enfold you,
Enfold you,
Enfold you,
?Cause, you wanted white arms to enfold you (18-21).

In *The Queen of the Blues*? (1945):

?I loved my daddy.
But what did my daddy
do?
I loved my daddy.
But what did my daddy
Do? (52-57)

Queen of the blues!
Queen of the blues!
Strictly, strictly,
The queen of the blues! (85-88)
In *The Good Man*:

In the time of detachment
In the time of the vivid heather and affectionate evil,
In the time of oral
Grave grave legalities of hate (3-6).

But there is no illustration of stanza repetitions in Brooks’ poems.

There are repetitions of phrases in Brooks’ poems, *A Sunset of the city*?. *?It is summer-gone that I see, it is summer gone? (10), *?I am a woman, and dusty, standing among new affairs/ I am a woman who hurries throughout her prayers? (19-20). In *The Lovers of the Poor* there are repetitions of words-?Old wood, old marble, old tile, old, old, old? (40).

Similarly, in McKay’s poems: In *Exhortation: Summer 1919*?
Assonance is the repetition of a vowel sound within words? (Johnson 439). It is also called interior rhyme. Here, only the sound of the vowel is considered and not the spelling. Brooks and McKay have adopted assonance in their lines. In Brooks? Ballad of Pearl May Lee?-?In the back of her Brick you drank your fill? (66), ?you got my body tonight, nigger boy? (77), ?you got what you wanted for dinner? (88), ?The eyes so wide and wild? (15), ?His mother high-piled her pretty dyed hair? (25), in ?The Independent Man?-?In one room or in two rooms or in three? (2). We find assonance.

In McKay?s A Red Flower?-?The brown bee buries deep its head? (3), ?That line the green bank of a fair blue stream? (11), in ?America?-?And see her night and granite wonders there? (12), in French Leave?-?And fell the bed about me kindly deep? (17), in ?Romance?-?And tease your mouth with kisses till you speak? (6), in ?Subway Wind?-?Through sleepy waters, while gulls wheel and sweep? (10), in ?Winter in the Country?-?And feel the soft sea-laden breeze? (2), we find assonance.

Consonance is the repetition of a consonant sound within and at the ends of words? (Johnson 439). We come across consonance in sound in the lines of Brooks and McKay. To quote a few: In Brooks? To The Young Who Want to Die?-?The tall gall in the small seductive vial? (3), in ?The Explorer?-?Whose tatters, he kept hunting through the din? (3), in ?God works in Mysterious Ways?-
Top, with a pretty glory and a merry (17), in The Children of the Poor? That is not kind and does not want to be? (5:6). In We Real Cool? We Real Cool,? (1) Thin gin? (6). In A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon? That a red ooze was seeping , spreading darkly, thickly, slowly? (106), in Garbageman: The Man with the orderly Mind? Is earnest enough, may earnest attract or lead to light? s light enough, if hands in clumsy frenzy, flimsy whimsically, enlist? (6-7). In McKay? s following poems, we find consonance. In Adolescence? Gained without effort, sweet like early love? (8), in Africa? Watches the mad world with immobile lids? (8).

In The White City? The poles and towers vapour-kissed? (11), The tides, the wharves, the dens I contemplate? (13), in To One Coming North? You? ll love the Northland wreathed in golden smiles? (15).

Alliteration is a form of consonance and is the repetition of consonants at the beginning of words or syllables? (Sethuraman 48). In the poems of Brooks, we find alliterations in me of her poems. For instance in Speech to the young: Speech to the progress- Toward? The sun-slappers/ the self- soiler/ the harmony- hushers? (1-3), in The Independent Man? give her a good glee? (5), in Lovers of the Poor? Sleek, tender-clad, fit, fiftyish (15), ]udge it high time that fiftyish fingers felt? (17), in Gang Girls? But
swallow, straight, the spirals of his flask? (23), in ?The Independent Man?- ?Woman would be wise to think it well? (9), in ?The Children of the Poor?- ?Learn Lord will not distort nor leave the fray? (3:8), in ?The near-Johannesburg Boy?- ?My way is from woe to wonder? (9), in ?The Sundays of Satin-Legs Smith?- ?Postponed resentments and the prim precautions? (11).


There are words, antithetically juxtaposed or oxymorons in Brooks’ poems. Oxymoron is a figure of speech that combines
contradictory terms. Brooks depicts the lives of her characters in antithesis to their desires and aspirations: ?Grand griefs. And choices? (11), in ?The Explorer,? ?Served by their love, so barbarously fair?(10), in ?The Lovers of the Poor,? ?the seasoning of the perilously sweet!? (13), and ?all unashamed. And sways in wicked grace?(IV 3), ?Bright lameness from my beautiful disease,? in ?Big Bessie throws her son into the street." in ?The Sermon on the Warpland,? and ?I'll go out in the frosty dark? (7), in ?The Crazy Woman? are some of them.

Also, there is variation in the length of each line. There is no uniformity in writing. Using her poetic license, she changes the pattern according to her whims and fancies, breaking the monotony. In ?A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi Mother burns Bacon.? - ?she made the babies sit in their places at the table.

Then, before calling Him, she hurried? (46-47).

HE sat down, the Fine Prince, and

Began buttering a biscuit. HE looked at HIS hands.

More papers were in form the North, HE mumbled. More maddening headlines.

With their peppers-words, ?bestiality,? and ?barbarism,?

and ?Shocking.?

The half-sneers HE had mastered for the trial worked across HIS sweet and pretty face. (58-65)

In some poems, a single line forms a stanza. In *A Sunset of the City*? Somebody muffed it? Somebody wanted to joke? (28). In *Garbageman: The Man with the Orderly Mind*?, the Whole poem has a peculiar form of writing.

What do you think of us in fuzzy endeavor, you whose directions are sterling, whose lunge is straight?

Can you make a reason, how can you pardon us who memorize the rules and never score?

Who memorize the rules from your own text but never quite transfer them to the game,

Who never quite receive the whistling ball, who gawk, begin to absorb the crowd? s own roar.

Is earnest enough, may earnest attract or lead to light;

Is light enough, if hands in clumsy frenzy, flimsy whimsically, enlist;
Is light enough when this bewilderment crying against
the dark shuts down the shades?

Dilute confusion. Find and explode our mist. (1-13)

Like Emily Dickinson, Brooks has the poetic ability to employ
apt words and concise language. The craftsmanship of Brooks is
commented by Blyden Jackson thus:

Her craftsmanship is careful Miss Brooks
belongs to the school of writers who do not
believe in wasting a single word. Selection and
significance- one can divine in her diction how
she has brooded over them, how every word
has been chosen with due regard for the
several functions it may be called upon to
perform in the dispensation of a poem? And
the principle of dire economy which governs
her choice of diction disciplines severely all of
her poetic maneuvers? (Popkin 102)

Another stylistic feature of McKay's way of writing is using
the title in the first line of a poem as in ? O Word I love to sing,? the
last line of a poem as in ? If We Must Die,? and several lines in a
poem as in ? I Shall Return.? Brooks too uses this technique in her
poems? First Fight. Then Fiddle,? ?Mrs. Small,? ?Strong Men, Riding Horses,? and ?We Real Cool? are some examples.

McKay and Brooks use Interrogative sentences to make their men contemplate over them. McKay in ? If We Must Die? asks the Whites ?what though before us lies the open grave??(12), in ?Futility? realizing the grief status, he asks ?Oh want new purpose Shall I now embrace??(12), in ?The Spanish Needle,? when he think of his deprivation, he asks ?Do you of the exile dream?? (8). Brooks also encourages her people to think more by asking questions. In ?Truth,? she anticipates freedom. She prepares them how to welcome the freedom, ?And if sun comes how shall we greet him??(2). In the ?Queen of the Blues,? when Brooks portrays the compelled poverty of the Black woman in the segregated society, she repeatedly says, ?For what did she have to lose?? (8).


McKay and Brooks use optimistic notes as techniques to revive and renew the suppressed feelings of their race by emphasizing ?rise,? and ?Let us combine,? in ?Men of Careful Turns, Haters of Forks in The Road,? ?fighting back,? and ?pressed to the wall,? in ?If We Must Die,? ?first fight,? and ?win war,? in ?The
Womenhood, awake, and arise in Exhortation: Summer 1919, and black-ribbed blue-bells blowing near, in After the Winter and etcetera.

Apart from the traditional techniques like Sonnets and Ballads, McKay and Brooks have written short poems too. Flirtation, December 1919, The City's Love, The Wild Goat, are some of McKay's poems. And We Real Cool, Pete at the Zoo are Brooks' poems.

Unlike McKay, Brooks uses bold lettered words in between the stanzas as a device to mean a segment in the continution of the poem. Here are hats, Restaurant Vendors, and At Joe's Eats are given in the poem The Sunday of Satin-Legs Smith. She uses single words bolded to emphasize some meaning. THERE (102) in The Life of Lincoln West, and YOUR (17) in To Don At Sallam are some examples.

Capital letters in between the words is a peculiar way of writing in Brooks' poems which is absolutely not found in McKay's writing. She uses this technique to express the unstable status and feelings of her characters. In The Ballad of Chocolate Mabbi, Brooks says in the starting, mabbi, a black girl. In the middle of the poem, when the Black girl gains the friendship of White boy, Willie Boone, she says Mabbi. In the end, when Willie Boone is attracted towards a lemon-hued lynx, the White boy becomes
willie boone? to deserted ?mabbie.? Brooks makes the readers feel and understand the discriminations.

Claude McKay and Gwendolyn Brooks, with all their artistic techniques and crafted art are committed Black artists. They are similar in achieving their goals - to create Black Consciousness among the race and inculcate courage and positive beliefs in attaining freedom. Being racial artists, their works capture the wretchedness of their tortured lives in general. Certain dissimilarities have also been pointed out as some of the techniques used by one of the artists is not applicable to the other. On the whole, it can be concluded that they are unique in stylistic features by which they stamp their originality.

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