

Republic of Iraq
Ministry of Higher Education
and Scientific Research
University of Babylon
College of Basic Education
Department of English Language



GWENDOLYN BROOKS BLACK WOMAN: A STUDY IN IDENTITY CRISIS

A Paper

Submitted to the Council of the College of Basic Education, University of
Babylon in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Bachelor of Education in English Language

By

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2022 A.D

1444A.H

Dedication

To my family And to Asst. Prof.

Dr. Hadeel Aziz Mohammed And

all teacher staff

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Gratitude goes to Almighty Allah the source of all knowledge, understanding and wisdom.

I would like to acknowledge with deep appreciation and gratitude the in valuable help of my supervisor Asst Prof. Dr. Hadeel Aziz Mohammed for her encouragement, guidance and instructive suggestions. Moreover, I would like to thank my parents and friends who encouraged and helped me with their advice and efforts to carry out this research.

ABSTRACT

This paper is about the identity crisis of the black women in Gwendolyn Brooks' poetry. It is divided into three chapters: Chapter One deals with Black Americans who have suffered from injustice, oppression, tyranny and poverty since World War I: women have also been subjected to harassment and deprivation of their rights. It focuses on Gwendolyn Brooks' work before 1967, as this year represents a turning point in her career as well as in black cultural productions in the US. She writes within and against the confines of verse to symbolize the difficulty of living in and overcoming societal prejudice. Chapter Two tackles Gwendolyn Brooks' poetry displaying the selected poems.

The paper is concluded with Chapter Three in which the findings of the paper are summarized.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Identity Crisis: Definitions

Erikson was one of the first to name and explain the notion of identity, describing it as a subconscious process that combines a person's personality into a coherent whole and creates ties between the individual and the social world. According to Erikson, identity can be defined as the answer to the question "who am I?" He also mentions that identities are not always positive, as some people select a bad identity in order to maintain their sense of self-worth. A good example would be identifying with a violent individual and then becoming violent as well (Eriksons, 1998, 309).

On conceptual (analytical) grounds, Jurgen Habermas (1973) claimed that there are two sorts of identity crises: "legitimation crisis" and "motivation crisis." A legitimation crisis occurs when a social entity is unable to meet the obligations and expectations it has placed on itself. It refers to an incapacity to justify necessary acts. The term "a motivation crisis" refers to a lack of "action motivating meaning." Existing (internal) motives are insufficient in this scenario. Habermas' declaration of analytical completeness for his system of crisis tendencies is particularly significant, implying that this dichotomy of identity crisis kinds is exhaustive. Habermas was primarily focused in social system crises, but his notions can also be applied to personal crises.

An identity crisis is a necessary aspect of the identity building process. During these times of transition, young people ask themselves questions about their future, such as what career to pursue, what religious, moral, and political ideals and perspectives to accept, whether or not to marry

and have children, when and how many children to have, and which social group to join (Avis, 2009,P309).

Identity conflicts arose among female medical students, according to Roeske and Lake, because the commitment to being a woman imposed demands and prescribed behaviors (such as having children, being noncompetitive, and nonaggressive) that were incompatible with the commitment to becoming a physician. Immigrants who expect to maintain connection to their native culture while engaging in their adopted one are an evident example of identity conflict (Roeske &Lake, 1977, 465)

Levinson compares the subjective experience of male mid-life crisis to adolescent identity crisis (deficit crisis). All of the subjective characteristics that we connect with the teenage crises can be seen in their discussion and examples, with the exception of anti-authoritarianism. The fundamental aversion to making any commitments that we mentioned in relation to adolescents is no longer present in the same literal manner. However, there is certainly a reluctance to give up a portion of one's potential. In contrast to adolescence, the mid-life crisis stems in part from the realization of mortality. Thus, identity deficit crises in adolescence and middle age are marked by a conflict between the fear of unrealized potential and the desire for stable commitments (Levinson et al ,1978,P253).

The ideological features of teenage identity deficit crises, according to Bios (1962), stem from a basic psychodynamic struggle between the adolescent man and his parents. He claims that after a male's emotional tie to his parents is broken (around late adolescence) by finding other love objects, he will begin to absorb family attitudes and beliefs. Bios' suggestion is a model for restoring pre-crisis values, and it is likely to be applicable in many circumstances. However, it appears to imply that

identity development occurs after adaption to heterosexual intimacy (Bios, 1962, P320)

1.2 Black Community in USA

Black Americans have suffered injustice and persecution since the World War, and they have been subjected to a lot of tyranny, poverty, theft of their rights and belittled them, women have been sexually harassed, women's rights have been robbed, children have been subjected to humiliation and humiliation. as well as they have been subjected to repression by the police and violence. They have lived as slaves over the years compared to white Americans..to Barack Obama appeared and nominated himself for the elections and was the first black-skinned candidate that led to the rise and victory of black Americans and not to remain silent about their usurped rights and to declare them with the loudest voice

Despite the success of black Americans in eliminating slavery and racial segregation, their society still suffers to this day from backward aspects and many problems by American standards. Half a century after Martin Luther King's historic "I have a dream" speech, the difficult living conditions of blacks in America still exist.

The election of Barack Hussein Obama as the first black president in the history of the United States represents an important historical institution in the history of blacks in this country. Since the blacks were brought into the United States as slaves, Obama's election, a long march has fallen in the history of their liberation and their struggle for equality
In 1793 :The invention of the cotton gin increases the demand for slave labor in the South American

1808 :Banning the import of slaves .

1831 : Nat Turner leads a slave rebellion in Virginia

1861 :The secession of the southern adherents of slavery under the name "Confederate States of America" from the federal government in the North, the outbreak of civil war and the victory of the North in it.

1862: Federal President Abraham Lincoln, abolitionist, promulgates

2008 : Barack Obama, the state senator from Illinois, becomes the first black party candidate to run for president in the United States. Obama elects the first black president of the United States. They count 40.2 million out of a total population of 305.5 . in the United States Millions of people. The poverty rate among blacks is 24.3%, while it is 12.3% among the rest of the American citizens. The average annual income of a black family is 32,000 dollars.

1.3 Gwendolyn Brooks: Life and Works

Gwendolyn Brooks (1917-2000) led a long and illustrious life, highlighted by her unwavering commitment to composing her people's poetry Brooks' family migrated to Chicago, Illinois, when she was six weeks old as part of the Great Migration; she has called Chicago home ever since. Among her close friends, she was known as "Gwendie." Although she faced racial prejudice in her neighborhood and at school, her home life was solid and loving. (Bloom, 2003,1).

She attended Hyde Park High School, the city's most prestigious white high school, before transferring to Wendell Phillips, an all-black high school. Brooks eventually attended Englewood High School, which was integrated. Wilson Junior College awarded her a diploma in 1936. She began submitting her work to the Chicago Defender's poetry column, "Lights and Shadows," when she was seventeen years old. Her poetry, many of which were published while she was a student at Wilson Junior

College, ranged from classic ballads and sonnets to free verse poems with blues rhythms. Her characters were frequently derived from the inner city's underprivileged. Her poetry began to gain traction. Kent (1990, p. 13)

The Midwestern Writers' Conference honored her with a poetry award in 1943. *A Street in Bronzeville* (1945), Brooks' first collection of poetry, was published by Harper & Row and received immediate critical praise.

"The Mother," one of her early poems, is a powerful theatrical monologue, restrained in both sadness and irony, and curiously crafted in emotional contraries. (Abortions won't let you forget) personalities were frequently chosen from the underprivileged of the world. (bloom, 2003, 1)

You remember the children you did not receive, the moist tiny pulps with little or no hair, the singers and workers who never handled the air. You will never ignore, beat, or mute Them, nor will you ever pay with a sweet. You'll never get past the sucking-thumb stage. (Bloom, 2003 , 1)

Brooks went on to become a social protest poet, participating in the major currents of African-American poetry in the latter half of the twentieth century. She became more forthright, and she was undeniably liberating. The enigmas of her older works, such as "The Mother," appear to me to be more inventive. (bloom,2003 , 11)

Gwendolyn Brooks was the first of two daughters born to David Anderson Brooks and Keziah Corinne (Wims) Brooks on June 7, 1917. She was born at her grandmother's house in Topeka, Kansas, and was moved back to her parents' house in Chicago about a month after her birth, where she remained for the remainder of her life..(Bloom,2003 , 12)

Gwendolyn's interest in poetry and enthusiasm for writing began at a young age, and she published her first poem in the magazine *American Childhood* at the age of thirteen. She met poet James Weldon Johnson in

high school, who pushed her to read and admire writers such as T.S. Eliot and e.e. Cummings. Brooks was inspired by this fortuitous meeting, and by the age of sixteen, she had published over seventy poems. Her notoriety was further boosted by her friendship with Langston Hughes, who encouraged her to keep reading and writing and frequently wrote in his newspaper column about Gwendolyn's promise and brilliance. (Bloom, 2003 , 12)

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CHAPTER TWO : POEM & ANALYSIS

2.1 The Mother

Mother is a human being who cares deeply for her offspring. A mother is a woman who wishes to safeguard her children when pregnant And during childbirth.(LESTARI/2016/2) She wants to care for and educate her children for the rest of her life because she loves them. Her contribution to her children is important to recognize because she puts her life on the line for them as her responsibility. (LESTARI/2016/2)

As a result, the figure of mother is worth Debating because her existence is significant and can teach other humans a lot.. Poetry is a form of literature that has become an inextricable component of humanity's civilization. According to, "Every civilisation in history has generated poetry, and it shows no signs of losing its potency in our day. The Renaissance and twentieth centuries show that poetry is intimately linked to humanity's most pressing concerns. (LESTARI/2016/2)

Poetry differs from other literary works in several ways. "Poetry is typically more concrete and specific than some types of prose. That is, it expresses feelings, attitudes, and ideas by addressing a specific situation or event that implicitly embodies abstract generality.(LESTARI/2016/4) This is a free verse poem with four stanzas and 33 lines. Gwendolyn Brook wrote this poem. Brooks' best poem, "The Mother," was initially published in his debut collection of poetry, A Street . . .(LESTARI/2016/4)

This poem, however, is distinct from others that deal with the same subject of motherhood. Poems about mothers mainly focus on the mother's role in protecting and caring for her children. This poem, on

the other hand, is about a mother who has an abortion or murders her children. As a result, being a mother is still contradictory after having an abortion.

The term "abortion" is defined as "the removal of an embryo or fetus from the uterus in order to terminate a pregnancy" by Random House Webster's College Dictionary. It also denotes that it is an act in which women terminate their pregnancy by removing the fetus from their wombs utilizing various methods. As a result, the fetus will die before he or she can be born into the world. On the other hand, it can be perilous to women's lives at times.

Brooks also looks at how poverty affects the lives of her female characters; "the mother" is about a poor woman who has had a number of abortions and is filled with anxiety and agony as a result of her choices. Brooks describes her as "hardly your crowned and praised and 'customary' Mother; but a Mother not unknown, who determines that she, rather than her World, will kill her children" in the appendix to her memoirs (Report, 184).

Despite accepting full responsibility for her "crime," she is conflicted about her actions and what she has done. Although she recognizes that she has protected her unborn children from the harsh truths of life, she also accepts that she has robbed them of any joys they may have been able to enjoy. She wonders if she was correct.

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(WGB, 51)

Throughout the poem, one gets the impression that they would have been permitted to live if the circumstances had been different, if she had been able to provide enough for them. Ironically, it was her genuine concern for them, as well as her own predicament, that drove her to undergo abortions

Believe me, I loved you all.

Believe me, I knew you, though faintly, and I
loved you, I loved you all .

)WGB,6(

She knew perfectly well what their fate would have been

You will never neglect or beat

Them, or silence or buy with a sweet

You will never wind up the sucking-thumb or
scuttle off ghosts that come

You will never leave them, controlling your luscious,
Sigh

Return for a snack of them, with gobbling mother-eye.
(WGB, 5)

2.2 The Children Of The Poor

Brooks examines the tumultuous and ambiguous connections that plague disadvantaged families. The second portion is narrated by a

woman whose children, although not demanding luxury, yet yearn for a sense of fulfillment that the mother cannot provide. The octave concentrates on the children's voices; the sestet, in three phrases, portrays the mother's displeasure at not having "access to my proper stone" while possessing "mode, design, device" (Faulkner,2008,51)

People who have no children can be hard:
Attain a mail of ice and insolence:
Need not pause in the fire, and in no sense
Hesitate in the hurricane to guard
And when wide world is bitten and be warred
They perish purely, waving their spirits hence
Without a trace of grace or of offense
To laugh or fail, diffident, wonder-starred.
While through a throttling dark we others hear
The little lifting helplessness, the queer
Whimper-whine; whose un ridiculous
Lost softness softly makes a trap for us
And makes a curse. And makes a sugar of
The malocclusions, the in conditions of love.
What shall I give my children? who are poor
Who are adjudged the leastwise of the land
Who are my sweetest lepers, who demand
No velvet and no velvety velour
But who have begged me for a brisk contour
Crying that they are quasi, contraband
Because unfinished, graven by a hand
Less than angelic, admirable or sure.
My hand is stuffed with mode, design, device.
But I lack access to my proper stone.

And plenitude of plan shall not suffice
Nor grief nor love shall be enough alone
To ratify my little halves who bear
Across an autumn freezing everywhere
And all hysterics arrogant for a day
Instruct yourselves here is no devil to pay.
Children, confine your lights in jellied rules
Resemble graves; be metaphysical mules.
Learn Lord will not distort nor leave the fray.
Behind the scurryings of your neat motif
I shall wait, if you wish: revise the psalm
If that should frighten you: sew up belief
If that should tear: turn, singularly calm
At forehead and at fingers rather wise,
Holding the bandage ready for your eyes

2.3 A Sunset of the City

Visual imagery and rhyme abound in A Sunset Of The City. The poem has a gloomy and depressed tone to it. Gwendolyn Brooks alternates between the various features throughout the six stanzas. This poem, in my perspective, is about a lady who has raised her children for many years in the same house. She talks about the city, the culture, and how her kids outgrew her. Everything around her seems to change, including her children, spouse, residence, and seasons, but not her. It's almost as if she misses the old days. (Kibin,2022,1)

The opening section is filled with images. For example, after reading the sentence "My daughters and sons have put me away with marbles and dolls," a mental image of small children putting their toys away is imprinted in the reader's mind. Brooks, I believe, is attempting to convey

the idea that the mother's children have grown up and put away what they once treasured, including her.

The season has turned to fall in the second portion, and the mother feels trapped in the spring or midsummer. She feels left out since everything is happening too rapidly for her. This line also has imagery, as it states, "Because the sun remains and the birds continue to sing." This reminds me of a giant sun shining brightly in the sky, with birds flying far above.

The fourth stanza is quite similar to the second. It's a new season, but without the love of her children, the mother grows increasingly lonely and melancholy. (Kibin,2022,1)

Already I am no longer looked at with lechery or love.
My daughters and sons have put me away with marbles and dolls,
Are gone from the house
My husband and lovers are pleasant or somewhat polite
And night is night
It is a real chill out
The genuine thing
I am not deceived, I do not think it is still summer
Because sun stays and birds continue to sing
It is summer-gone that I see, it is summer-gone.
The sweet flowers in drying and dying down,
The grasses forgetting their blaze and consenting to brown
It is a real chill out. The fall crisp comes
I am aware there is winter to heed
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
I am a woman who hurries through her prayers
Tin intimations of a quiet core to be my
Desert and my dear relief
Come: there shall be such islanding from grief,
And small communion with the master shore
Twang they. And I incline this ear to tin,
Consult a dual dilemma. Whether to dry
In humming pallor or to leap and die
Somebody muffed it? Somebody wanted to joke

2.4 Sadie And Maud

The poet opens her first piece by describing a girl named Maud who is attending college while the other girl, Sadie, remains at home. Sadie scrapes her life with a tool known as a fine-toothed comb, according to the poet. There is a picture of an educated girl and a plain female who has a unique idea to fulfill her goal, which is unlike the other girl's

(Anasthasia , 2007 , p.32)

Sadie is not married, but she is the mother of two children. In most societies, it is against the law for a woman to have children if she is not married. Brooks paints a strong image of how the fact irritates Sadie's parents, as well as Maud. They believe Sadie has succeeded in putting them in an unforgivable situation. (Anasthasia , 2007 , p.32)

There is a specific point where Sadie says her final goodbyes to her daughters. Sadie has passed away, but she tells her children to draw on their ancestry, utilize her fine-toothed comb, and begin any strike with themselves (Anasthasia , 2007 , p.33)

Maud, a college girl, Maud is depicted as a skinny brown mouse who is lonely and mistreated by others . Maud lives alone and suffers from her own sense of isolation as a result of her privileged life (Anasthasia , 2007 , p.33)

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

CHAPTER THREE

CONCLUSION

This paper discussed the poems of Gwendolyn Brooks to investigate the suffering presented through her poetry. She represented her people, especially the women and their suffering at her time. The poems interestingly and uniquely showed how women must fight back and gain their rights because the inability to change would only highlight their suffering. Change should start from the hearts of those women then their behavior.

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