



Migration and Identity in Pearl Cleage's *Flyin' West*

. Ahmed Khudhur Fadhil

Department of English

College of Education for Humanities

University of Mosul

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Abstract

Identity is considered one of the main elements of life in all times. One may sacrifice one's property for the sake of preserving their identity even if they are forced to leave their motherlands. This paper adopts a feminist approach to analyze the role of women in *Flyin' West* and their endeavor to find their own identity. It also attempts to clarify the relationship of identity to African Americans' culture, history, and land. In this play, Pearl Cleage makes clear her own experience of migration by her female point of view to reform the identity of African American people in the United States. Furthermore, she brings out how her women characters suffer twice, as being female and black that results in their movement from one place; south, to another; west. The paper also refers to the causes of migration of black females on account of certain social circumstances in order to sustain their honorable identity. Finally, it tries to find the positive outcomes of the relocation so as to achieve the aims and confirm the self-determination of Blacks in the United States.

Keywords: Identity, culture, migration, African American people, self-determination.



الهجرة والهوية في مسرحية بيل كليج (الهجرة باتجاه الغرب)

. أحمد خضر فاضل

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الخلاصة

تعتبر الهوية واحدة من العناصر الرئيسية للحياة في جميع الأزمنة. قد يضحي الفرد بكل ما يملكه من أجل الحفاظ على هويته حتى لو كلفه الأمر بترك وطنه. يتبنى هذا البحث مقارنة نسوية لتحليل دور النساء في مسرحية الهجرة باتجاه الغرب وسعيهن للعثور على هويتهن الشخصية. يحاول البحث أيضا بيان علاقة الهوية بتاريخ وأرض وثقافة الأمريكان ذوي الأصول الأفريقية. توضح الكاتبة المسرحية (بيل كليج) في هذه المسرحية تجربتها الشخصية للهجرة من خلال وجهة نظرها الأنثوية لكي تعيد تشكيل هوية الشعب الأفريقي-الأمريكي في الولايات المتحدة الأمريكية. علاوة على ذلك تبين الكاتبة كيفية معاناة شخصياتها النسوية مرتين: كنساء تارة وكشخصيات سود تارة أخرى مما ينتج عن ذلك هجرتهم من مكان إلى آخر (من الجنوب إلى الغرب). يشير البحث أيضا إلى أسباب هجرة النساء السود نتيجة لظروف إجتماعية معينة من أجل الحفاظ على هويتهن المبجلة. أخيرا يحاول البحث بيان النتائج الإيجابية لاستبدال المكان من أجل إنجاز الأهداف المرجوة والتأكيد على حرية الإرادة للسود في الولايات المتحدة.

الكلمات الدالة: الهوية، الثقافة، الهجرة، الشعب الأفريقي – الأمريكي، حرية الإرادة.

1.Introduction



Pearl Cleage (1948-) is a productive writer in diverse literary fields: poetry, short fiction, drama, and essays. She is presently holding the position of full-time writer as a resident of Atlanta, Georgia. Her life and works were affected profoundly by her father who established Black Christian Nationalism. Many of her writings were influenced by the political and rational disorder of the 1960s and 1970s and the events happened during these periods. Her plays reflect economic, political and social conditions. In this play, Pearl Cleage mixes her private experiments and meditations with feminine vision. Her writings shed light on the liberation of African Americans, especially African American women. Thereupon, her writings focused on the social-political issues in her residence and her works dealt with the themes of love, sexism, racism, and violence against African American women. Cleage also excels the development of her characters when she promotes the working people who may have lived during the times of historic importance (Jones in Nelson 96-97). Her plays are characterized by a determination to be a main element of constant world strife against classism, racism, sexism and homophobia. In her plays, she expresses her emotional answer to oppression by naming it, demonstrating it, analyzing it, rejecting it, and finding solutions to it. She sets up a context and explains an opinion in her plays. She used to instigate her readers to action. Her writings focus on black history and culture. She intentionally fills her plays with fast-talking and quick-thinking black women. As a black playwright, she is full of protest and resistance. And as a female playwright, her cultural heroines go beyond ethnical and national limits (Perkins and Uno 46). Through her plays, she tries her best to restore the stolen rights of women in her times and before that period.



2. Migration and Identity in Pearl Cleage's *Flyin' West*

Pearl Cleage's *Flyin' West* is written in 1992. It talks about the migration of four women in search of freedom and escaping racist violence. It opens with the dialogue between Miss Leah (73 years old and born into slavery) and Sophie (36 years old and born into slavery) at home in Nicodemus, Kansas. They exchange speech of how to accept a free land in Nicodemus in the West after they left Memphis in the South as a result of racism. Fannie (32 years old, born into slavery) and Wil (40 years old, born into slavery) are outside talking about their common acquaintances and wildflowers. Sophie looks forward to establishing school and library in Nicodemus. Minnie (21 years old, born into slavery) and her husband Frank (36 years old and is of mixed parents) have recently come from London.

Frank depended on his white father who was sending him money. After his father's death, Frank's white brothers stopped sending him money and he has been cut off from his family. He insists that Minnie should sell her portion of land to white speculators so that they continue their wealthy lifestyle but she, Miss Leah and all other sisters refused that matter. Therefore, Frank always abuses Minnie physically which led sisters to kill him. Miss Leah was the mastermind of killing Frank by feeding him a poisoned apple pie.

Flyin' West deals with the themes of identity reformation, violence against women, the relationship of woman to her body, the relationship of women to each other, the response of community to crisis, economic autonomy in the African American community, spousal abuse, women controlling their own lives, and encounter with the domestic violence (Perkins and Uno, Introduction, 10-12).



These themes are related to the main causes of the migration of black females in this play and the suitable solutions of maintaining their identity and their existence.

The events of *Flyin' West* are based on real incidents taken from the African American history replete with the long-standing strife for identity. In 1965 there was a survey on the "Negro Family", entitled as "Moynihan Report", and the consequence of the report's thesis was that the basis of the oppression was more profound than the segregation which had resulted in unemployment, sleazy housing, unqualified education and bad medical care. Herbert Gutman observes that a great number of Black families were grudgingly separated. But the bonds of love and intimacy, the cultural principles ruling family relations, and the true insistence of staying side by side made them safe from the attack of slavery (Davis 13-15). Cleage documents that matter of fact through the meeting of sisters out the door in Nicodemus and they agree to do their own ritual after being away from Memphis where they lost their lives, honor and souls. They did the ritual of staying together forever with all their trust, love, strength and courage when they could emancipate themselves from bondage and they regarded that as a holy compact among them:

"Sophie: We choose this day to declare our

lives to be our own and no one else's.

And we promise to always remember the

day we left Memphis and went west

together to be free women as a sacred

bond between us with all our trust.



Fannie & Minnie: With all our trust...

Sophie: And all our strength...

Fannie & Minnie: And all our strength ...

Sophie: And all our courage...

Fannie & Minnie: And all our courage ...

Sophie: And all our love.

Fannie & Minnie: And all our love.” (I.iii.63)¹

Lee Rainwater, in an essay entitled “Crucible of Identity: The Negro Lower-Class Family,” shows that E. Franklin Frazier predicted that the reason stands behind the migration of Negro family was the existence of the insolvent order in southern farming (176). This order, in *Flyin’ West*, helped these sisters move from south to western cities. The migrant Negro families restrict their offspring for the sake of benefitting their few children (182). In this connection, Rainwater observes that migration plays a great role in marital disassociation. Sometimes marriage becomes undesirable by both husband and wife or by one of them. So this condition causes the mobility from one city to another, for instance, from South to West as it is apparent in *Flyin’ West* (194). Cleage makes clear the image that uncovers the consequence for African Americans is their mobility and desire to be in eternal transition from one place to another in order to affirm their self (Grassian 158). She re-created that self in the realm of migration from south to west and she

¹ All quotations from *Flyin’ West* are taken from Pearl Cleage’s play *Flyin’ West*, in *Contemporary Plays by Women of Color: An Anthology*. Introduced by Kathy A. Perkins and Roberta Uno. London and New York: Routledge, 1996. Further references will be to the act, scene and the page number.



performed the identity of her Black characters (Bhabha 9). She is overwhelmed with the issue of who the person thinks himself/herself to be and to be becoming (Rainwater 200). The immigrant sisters comprise the convergence of racism and sexism in which the situation of white female workers is linked to the oppressive plight of Black females (Davis 94-95).

As the title suggests, women in this play move to another area of America seeking for freedom and trying to rebuild their identity as Blacks and nothing else. The character of Sophie performs this aim of departure because she is ambitious to be liberated when she took on the town of Nicodemus to restore the African American identity and to live as a human being. She looks forward that Blacks can work hard for themselves but not for whites. She wishes that black children could enjoy their innocent life like other children all over the world without being sold by overseers:

*“Sophie: I want this town to be a place
where a colored woman can be
free to live her life like a human being. I
want this town to be a place where a
colored man can work as hard for himself
as we used to work for the white folks. I
want a town where a colored child can go
to anybody’s door and be treated like they
belong there.” (I.v.66)*



Another reason which stands behind the sisters' migration to Nicodemus is the racist violence. Frank's inhumane treatment is linked to that kind of violence against Minnie. The sisters' migration from Memphis was motivated by a desire to liberate themselves and to stay away from barriers of living among white community. In Nicodemus, also, black people have and exercise power among their community and it enables them to overcome the speculators who have intended to purchase their land (Anderson 18). Through her speech to Frank in Act I, Scene iii Sophie portrays this horrible image of racist bad treatment of whites against blacks in Memphis that urged her and sisters to move to Nicodemus:

*“Sophie: Memphis was full of crazy white
men acting like when it came to colored
people, they didn't have to be bound by
law or common decency. Dragging people
off in the middle of the night. Doing whatever
they felt like doing. Colored women not safe
in their houses.” (I.iii.62)*

Woodie King, Jr. argues that although Blacks failed to found sufficient institutions because of racism but they realized a crucial lesson. They realized that as long as they love themselves and love their sisters and brothers, they will not underestimate the Black existence (97). The usual identification of Black people as servants enhances the basic pillars of racist ideology (Davis 94). This ideology promotes the devastation of the identity of Blacks.



In Cleage's *Flyin' West*, there is also the ideology of male supremacy practiced by Frank Charles over his wife Minnie Dove Charles. It enhances the thought of abolition of women's identity and it figures them as *Other*. The migrant sisters could destroy the depraved conviction of the racist and masculinist stare that rejected their existence. They made a counter-glimpse which turns the discriminatory gaze back on itself (Bhabha 47). Some feminist theorists in the first stages of anti-rape movement think that the most essential reasons of migration are rape, slavery and racism. Racism's outstanding historical characteristic is the pretense that white businessmen have the absolute right to access to the bodies of women of color. Slavery depends on the daily sexual abuse which, in turn, involved whip and lash. Sexual abuse became a part of the social relations between slave owner and slave. The right to rape helped and paved the road for the strict economic hegemony that was a distinctive sign of slavery (Davis 173-175). Working-class men, white and black, are urged to rape because they thought that their maleness had had that privilege which grants them the right to dominate women. The attack on Black women reflects the disintegrating condition of the workers of color and the impact of racism in the judicial authority. The new emersion of the Ku Klux Klan² and the related proliferation of violent attacks on people of color, establishes the pattern of dangerous existence of racism. As a villain part of sexism, the ghost of male supremacy will live so long because the oppression of women stays a fundamental prop of capitalism (Davis 200-201).

² The Ku Klux Klan (KKK) indicates two ethnical terrorist groups in the United States. The first started as a social club after that it started as a confidential organization of standing against Reconstruction and retrieving white hegemony over recently freed African Americans. It had achieved its aims by the 1870s. The second KKK emerged in 1915 as a result of two reasons: because of longing for the Old South and because of panic of the appearance of communism in Russia and the inconsonant racist character of American society. It considered Catholics, foreigners, Jews, and labour unions as its foes (Campbell 204).



The image of human identity is a reflection of selfhood that emanates from the depth of the Western culture (Bhabha 49). The capitalist ideology enriches the economic oppression of Black women as the latter were exploited by the capitalists who form the majority of white men of American society. As a result, the financial state of Afro-Americans depends on what white America earns and spends (King, Jr.17). Pearl Cleage belongs to that generation of writers who purposely concentrated on assisting their black women characters to identify themselves affirmatively rather than only acting against others' stereotypes. She granted her characters the energy to speak their own names and tales (Williams in Mitchell & Taylor 81). In the *Flyin' West*, Cleage shows the importance of belonging and the dream of freedom when Sophie, who represents the leader of reformation of identity in the play, tells Miss Leah her dream of being an active member of American society. She dreams of having independence as any free person. She desires to be out of oppression, segregation and slavery:

"I'll have enough when I can step

Outside my door and spin around with

My eyes closed and wherever I stop, as

Far as I can see, there'll be nothing but

Land that belongs to me and my sisters." (Li.49)

Dana A. Williams, in an essay on "Contemporary African American women writers", observes that contemporary African American literature by African American women writers shows a complete reference to the intricacy of contemporary African American life, especially that of black women. She adds that Eleanor W. Traylor notes that this literature is written to find out the *self* (71).



Angelyn Mitchell and Danille K. Taylor in their introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to African American Women's Literature* point out that identity was among the most effective subjects for the African American women writers who submitted and discussed the Afro-American experiments during the period of Harlem Renaissance. They also state that Eleanor W. Traylor expresses that the malfunction of ideological duties of identity is among the themes that are delivered by the founding mothers and other leading women writers of the Black Arts movement. African American writers made great efforts in searching for the self and its link to society. They tried to explore their interior self through their individual experiences, such as motherhood and marriage. This self-definition lasts to draw the African American writers' attention throughout the last decades of the 20th century (8).

In their essay "Early African American women's literature", Frances Smith Foster and Larose Davis mention that Civil War is considered almost the final act of national identity reformation. By nullifying slavery, America sounded to displace the unique greatest block that obstructs the way of building a new national identity. African American women writings mirror this national ideology with defining the citizenship and freedom and the relations between these thoughts of the developed American identity, formulating those definitions by their connections to African American identity (Mitchell & Taylor 29).

Pearl Cleage strongly believes in the close linkage between place and identity. She once said: "When I write about place, I'm writing about family, about us, still trying to rebuild and redefine our families after the ravages of enslavement. I'm still trying to create a place that feels like home when we are so far from home"(qtd. in Olga Barriers 187). In an obvious hint in Act II, Scene II, Cleage



considers the importance of place and land a base for reconstruction of identity and restoring the black dignity through Miss Leah's speech to Sophie, Frank and Minnie:

"Miss Leah: Every colored woman ought to have a piece of land she can claim as her own." (II.ii.69)

Family, for niggers, represents the original source of the formation of the personal and collective identity and culture (Rainwater 178). In an essay on "The Social Construction of Black Feminist Thought," Patricia Hill Collins holds a view that Black church and Black family are two essential pillars of identity by which Black women have in common their cognition with their sisters. She regards these two pillars as a self-definition and she insists on the idea of sisterhood as a core of relationships among Afro-American community (762). Therefore, Sophie depended on church as a place from which she can deliver her speech concerning popular vote and to prevent Blacks from selling their lands to the speculators. Olga Barriers further observes that a new space that has been invented by Pearl Cleage in this play is female-centered which, according to Gloria Hull, formed a first step of resistance. This space was transgressive because it paved the way for revising, rebuilding and widening Afro-American's history. It also provides the environment in which women can reform their identity and promote their social, sexual and personal necessities (190). Cleage, through the character of Minnie, expresses dual oppression which is black and female at the same time.

Curiously enough, the folk drama and tradition of rustic South throw more light on the simple lives of normal people who rely on land and the sequence of



seasons. This grant was given although the subordination practiced by whites over blacks outside the playhouses. Being derived from servitude, the African American folk tradition distinguished the black theatrical writings from those which belonged to the European culture. This difference was because slavery and migration didn't exist in whites' tradition. The folk tradition of African Americans is related to their identity and it is the base of black voice. African American writer Maya Angelou observes that "all African Americans find their roots in the South." They yearn for it even they emigrated from it. Pearl Cleage admits that African American identity is connected to the southern folk culture spiritually, socially and emotionally in spite of the migration of blacks to the West. She wrote this play so that she maintains the identity of African American people, especially of black women (Gray 246). The issue of migration is expressed as a formulating tool for detecting themes of vagabondage, immigration and displacement, evaluating local and universal relationships of women and the effect of flight on their lives (Goddard 61). Benjamin Sammons, in an essay on "Flyin' 'Anyplace Else': (Dis)Engaging Traumatic Memory in Three Plays by Pearl Cleage," shows the importance of migration in reformation of identity. He also refers that this play discusses the issue of founding and preserving an area by which African American people can achieve their individual freedom by leaving the painful past. He asserts that the title of this play alludes to the flight narration which produces an allegorical view in which the migratory activities of the characters lead to unsteady situations regarding liberation and oppression. In addition, Sammons affirms that *Flyin' West* advocates Page DuBois' inspiration that looking for reality may require a journey, ... (99). So the Three sisters put themselves into self-protection



when they migrate westward and when they share the process of killing Frank in order to defend Minnie and their land.

Pearl Cleage focuses on the female awareness in which the idea of self cannot be separated from community .Patricia Hill Collins points out that self is not an independent entity from others. She insists that self exists within the community and family as well as this association among people brings a significant self-definition to African American women. So, Cleage believes that this female awareness is the source of strengths of Black sisters in this play. She considers it the integrating ideology by which the Black women struggle against racial and sexual oppression (Stephens in Murphy 100-101).

It is axiomatic to say that the African Americans have a particular identity which makes them distinctive from others. Daniel Grassian, in the introduction to his book on *Writing the Future of Black America*, indicates that African American writers such as Pearl Cleage emphasized on the fact that African American generational identity is different from that of whites. He adds that some essential concerns of young Afro-Americans, for some forcible causes, are not similar to those of non-African American ones (5), and African American writers, Cleage among them, concentrate on the most crucial facts which were regarded as challenges for the Blacks' lives such as: What must they struggle for and look forward to personally and collectively for Afro-American people? (17). Furthermore, Pearl Cleage displays the condition of Afro-American social existence. She illustrates a method on which the recent generation of African American community builds its identity and entity. The method she follows is different from that of former generations. Therefore, Cleage wrote this play to help Black people confront many years of physical and cerebral violence and to reform



the African American identity (Grassian 21). As freedom is connected to the independence of identity, the reformation of Black identity came from the same sources of searching for liberation (King, Jr. 96).

Cleage uses limited historical time periods to involve her reader in an instant in black history. One of these specific historical instants is the Exodus of 1879 (Anderson 17). She illustrates, in one way or another, the black history which was ignored and neglected for some period by history texts in United States. Through the African American emigrants from the South, Cleage insists on the fact that they had the ability of regarding the diversity of liberation and spiritual needs of defining their own identity and history. African Americans became aware of their past and their history. Cleage urges the African Americans to ask: Who are they? Was there a Black history? Where can one find a Black identity? And she answers these queries by her *Flyin' West* (Gray in Murphy 249). Woodie King, Jr. thinks that if African Americans don't glorify their past and history, they will not be able to understand and build their future (95). *Flyin' West* brings history into present and it makes clear that Afro-American issues have been harmonious through time. In this play, the character of Wil Parrish shows through his dialogue with Fannie that he was sheltered by Seminole Indians when he ran away from the plantation: “*They a lot like them Seminoles I grew up around in Florida. When I run away, them Indians took me in and raised me up like I was one of their own* (I.i.52).” Hence, history is available where African American people worked with Native Americans. They were protected by Native Americans when they escaped from slavery. Therefore, Cleage's use of history makes her among the most well-known playwrights of the last fifteen years (Anderson 33 -34). Through the character of Fannie and her book, entitled *The True History and Life Stories of*



Nicodemus, Kansas: A Negro Town, which she is working on in this play, Cleage expresses the significance of history in the Black cultural identity:

“Fannie: I’m writing a book about Nicodemus.

I’m going to call it The True History

and Life Stories of Nicodemus, Kansas: A

Negro Town.” (I.iii.60)

Trudier Harris in her book *Reading Contemporary African American Drama* mentions that African American playwrights have explored their themes in historical incidents that formed their entity. She appends that Pearl Cleage and other Afro-American Playwrights discovered abilities for African Americans to determine their identity without undertaking the traditional representations of history, but by changing that history into thoughtful incentive for forward development. Harris considers that migration across wide distances of American land has the equal significance of narrative as it is beneficial for black women in defining and redefining themselves (Introduction ix).

According to the black women’s literary theory, the free woman becomes evolving black female and drives the way of narrative when she makes a journey for self-exploration and self-strength. The three sisters and Miss Leah made such a journey by which they affirmed and reformed their identity. Cleage’s *Flyin’ West* symbolizes migration to west so as to fulfill the personal freedom for emergent black female characters. The characters of *Flyin’ West* move westward believing that it is the place from which they can restore at least parts of their identity which, in turn, sounds to escape from them when they were living in the south (Goddard 46-49). Therefore, the characters of *Flyin’ West* are in search of a self-identity



which can be seen in the idea of migration to west. Thus, Cleage clarifies the aim of black sister's movement to the west when Minnie requests Sophie to inform Frank about it:

“Minnie: Tell about the ritual. Tell about the

Day we left Memphis and came west to be

free women.” (I.ii.61)

bell hooks notes that “oppressed people resist by identifying themselves as subject, by defining their reality, shaping their new identity, naming their history, and telling their story” (qtd. in Goddard 178). Woodie King, Jr. sees that being Black means something which is so complex. And to understand this complexity demands that people have to realize that Blacks are less than 300 years out of bondage. Their language is removed from them and their identity is part African, part European and part American (17). In *Flyin' West*, Cleage does not repudiate the bad impacts of slavery and racism on African American people but she stands against the idea of slavery to be considered as the source of continued violence and misogyny (Anderson 20). She presents Frank as a male version of “tragic mulatto” who wanted to disavow from his black identity and he refused his belonging to a large black community. On the contrary, Sophie identifies herself as African American although she has one white parent and she feels comfortable within the black community (Anderson 22). Cleage refers to a tight link between identity and culture. She uses Frank's fine clothes to create a white-masked black man who has an ambivalent identity (Bhabha 62). Frank's black skin and white disguise shows the double standard of his identity. Frank lately realizes that whiteness is not his own identity when he was prevented from his inheritance.



In the first scene of the play, Miss Leah and Sophie talk about their love and belonging to their land in Nicodemus. Miss Leah tells Fannie and Sophie that plantation is connected to the identity of colored people and they can never forget it at all. Through Miss Leah's speech, Cleage attributes plantation to the culture and history of African American people:

"Miss Leah: Colored folks can't forget the

Plantation any more than they can forget

Their own names. If we forget that, we ain't got no history past last week". (I.i.54)

Frank refuses his half black identity when he, as a response to Minnie, says: *But we have a home, don't we, darling? (I.ii.57)*. In addition, Cleage reveals the reformation of the black identity through the dialogue between Sophie and Minnie. She uses Sophie's speech of the maps of the new Nicodemus as the rebuilt identity of colored people:

"Sophie : It not paradise yet, but it can be

beautiful. The century is going to change

in two years! This can be a great time for

colored people. We can really be free

instead of spending our lives working for

the same people that used to own us." (I.v.66)

Cleage shows the value of freedom and the importance of migration for African Americans through Minnie and Frank's movement to London. Minnie informs her sisters that she *"felt so free, could do anything, go anywhere and buy*



anything she loves” (II.i.68). Frank indirectly supports his movement to London and criticizes the African American community as well when he tells Fannie that Londoners “*treat me like a human being*” (II.v.76). He indirectly disclaims his black identity and praises the whites as they behave as human beings. The question of black female identity in the African American community is trapped in formation of sexuality rooted in the psychosocial history of United States which constructed a subhuman sexual identity for Blacks in order to make excuses for their slavery and its permanent social, political and economic oppression (Marsh-Lockett, introduction 11). So, Cleage does not have even a while without being both female and black through her life (Anderson 17). She feels the necessity for relocation of Blacks’ power to construct strong identity as a first step for achieving the aim of being an active subject in this life (King in Marsh-Lockett 128).

The issue of identity has historically tortured the souls of displaced African American people, a matter which finds its place at the top of the Afro-American literature and raises the question of “Who am I?.” The black migration was the huge demographic subject of the American Century as it rebuilt the politic affairs of the African American areas. It changed the economic nature of America and altered its culture. The historiography of the black migration mirrors the constant African American strife for autonomy. It has been as effective as any historical event at leading black America to the core of the national narration (Huddle in Hornsby, Jr. 450). The connection of African American migrants to the civilized consumer culture and the influence of Afro-American migration on American literary culture are all represented in the modern cultural histories. In *Flyin’ West*, Cleage describes how sisters struggled to accomplish their self-sufficiency and preserve their esteem within a racist community in Nicodemus.



She explains the role of these sisters in reforming their post-migration life style. She focused on the cultural influence of the migration as well.

The sisters participated in the construction of a new black identity in the west. Sophie's act against Frank was a way of changing African American vulnerability and subordination into a request for dignity. The migration, generally, has had a great impact on American politics, economics and culture. It drew the American attention into the far distance between their national ideals and national truths. It increased the racial conflicts in the United States of America. Cleage shows that much can be uncovered of American society by the movement of its people (Huddle 457-459). The issue of constructed identities is a complex subject which hinders the writers when they register the history of some peoples. For this reason, historians made strenuous efforts exploring the way by which groups of human beings present band identities (Anderson in Hornsby 89).

3.Conclusion



Migration and identity are related to each other for African American people. Pearl Cleage regards these two subjects as a chain which they cannot be separated at all. Through this play, she proved that migration is the cornerstone on which identity is built. Sisters worked out in their affirmation of their self-definition through their genuine love and co-operation in their new area of the United States. By convincing blacks not to sell their lands as well as to kill Frank, black sisters fulfilled their goal of protecting their land and identity. They defeated both sexism and racism when they had left their motherland and they had headed for west. They derived their strength from their unity and loving one another. The two matters fueled the meaning of identity during all periods of time. To sum up, Cleage confirmed that African Americans cannot give up their original identity whatever the strength of their foes is in this world. Getting rid of slavery is the positive consequence of the African Americans' migration and their ability of reconstructing their identity.



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