**Comprehensive Analysis of *Brown Girl, Brownstones***

*Brown Girl, Brownstones* is aboutthe journey of a free-spirited girl towards independence. The story is a combination of traditional characters, illustrated in a simple but thoughtful manner to the reader. Here simple does not refer to meaningless text rather I found Selena's voice more important to hear and understand. The harmony of the novel made it more prominent and attractive to the reader, as compared to the other traditional portraits, being studied this semester. Now, this study presents a comprehensive analysis of the Paule Marshall’s work of fiction: inclusion of self, attention to context, and focus on the positive in *Brown Girl, Brownstones*.

The author Marshall has used poetic language to express the heartbreaking sadness in Selina’s story. After the death of her father, instead of retaliating in anger and harshness, she expressed herself in a soft and tempered way. This part of the novel was found to be struggling the most, where Selina's attitude showed a great change than was expected. When Beryl harshly interrogated Selina about what exactly she has found from Deighton, the readers were expecting her harsh and angry attitude. However, the author, here, presented her a different personality which instead of showing her anger and fire, talked softly and warmly about the memory, her father has given her. As Marshall presented it:

*“She would have liked to turn and tell Beryl, very quietly, there in the dim hall with the others gathered apprehensively on the landing above, what he had given her. How one cold March afternoon long ago she had found him stretched on the cot in the sun parlor in his shirt sleeves, his head cradled in his arms and humming. ‘Is it spring?’ she had asked, her breath coming in cold wisps. He had drawn her down beside him, loosened her arms and said, ‘Yes.’ And suddenly she had sensed spring in the air, seen it forming beyond the glass walls and had not been cold anymore.” (Marshall, 1959, p.169)*

Here the things seem quite different than the readers were understanding or observing. This remembrance points us towards the soft corner of Selina's life, where Deighton was flawed with poor money management. Here it seems that the readers were not aware of the whole picture and yet many things were about to be revealed. He was her father and so it was just a glimpse into her memories. He has soft and warm feelings for her father and this was something different than what Marshall portrayed about Selina at the beginning of the story. However, with the elaboration of her feelings for her father, through her memories and expressions, Marshall developed a strong bond between the readers and Selina's beauty of mind and enabled them to understand her character on a more personal level. In other words, Marshall developed a situation for the readers, where they could understand the moment of happiness in her multi-dimensional world that they may otherwise do not acknowledge.

The analysis of the novel, *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, makes it clear that the author Marshall has shaped the story to express his experiences as a young Barbadian. He presented Selina’s life in a tragic yet beautiful manner, as the narration ‘beautiful-ugly’ shows in the following passage;

*"And nothing, no matter how beautiful, was ever described as simply beautiful. It was always ‘beautiful-ugly': the beautiful-ugly dress, the beautiful-ugly house, the beautiful-ugly car. Why the word ''ugly,'' I used to wonder when the thing they were referring to was beautiful, and they knew it. Why the antonym, the contradiction, the linking of opposites? It used to puzzle me greatly as a child." (Marshall, 1983)*

Here the author has presented Selina as a strong character, who gave up her greatest opportunity by turning down the Association award and thriving in the face of great hardship. By facing great hurdles and challenges, Selina showed herself the power in her morals and convictions throughout the story. Through the appropriate use of words, Marshall helped the readers to better understand the events that shaped Selina's life and to have a look in the protagonist sphere. The author gave a glimpse of Deighton past to the readers when another man confronts Deighton unaltered:

*"That touch recalled things thrust deep into forgot tonnes: those white English faces mottled red by the sun in the big stores in Bridgetown and himself as a young man, facing them in his first pair of long pants and his coarse hair brushed flat, asking them for a job as a clerk - the incredulity, the disdain and indignation that flushed their faces as they said no..." (Marshall, 1959, p.33-34)*

Through such narration, the author provided background information in the context of a portrait and elaborated how feeling manifested itself. The best thing about the novel is that Marshall created a way to provide important information without distracting the readers from the narrative. Her tangent storytelling has enabled the reader to have an understanding of Selina's central role in the story along with a comprehensive picture of her world. However, the analysis of the story made it clear that like other stories of the author, Marshall’s development of these characters was pulled from her childhood and thus showed her strong personal connection with Selina's life. This becomes even clear when the author Marshall mentioned her personal experience interrelating with the characters’ life. She mentioned that in her childhood, she has found the women to speak with simple words in a complex manner. This was her personal experiencing that the women were found to be twisting their words beautifully, that the conversation gave new meaning. As said in this content-full passages:

*“Mother...I have to disappoint you. Maybe it’s as you once said: that in making your way you always hurt someone. I don’t know... Everybody used to call me Deighton’s Selina but they were wrong. Because you see I’m truly your child. Remember how you used to talk about how you left home and came here alone as a girl of eighteen and was your own woman? I used to love hearing that. Ant that’s what I want. I want it!” (Marshall, 1959, p.265)*

Conclusively, the author Marshall of the story *Brown Girl, Brownstones* makes it interestingly clear that the fictional pieces can be used as an effective communicator to the readers to elaborate the complete picture and to portray the cultures in words. Through Selina's character, the author portrayed a strong young woman, who showed remarkable self-awareness and courage in facing family crises, financial issues, and racism. The character elaborates the complete picture of Brooklyn. The good in Selina's life has reflected the good in Brooklyn.

References

Marshall, P. (2009). *Brown girl, brownstones*. Mineola, NY: Dover.