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THE REVIVAL OF BURIED HISTORY IN *LINDEN HILLS*

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Abstract

History revival refers to a strategy employed by minority groups, who are usually in need of basic rights, justice, or respect. This approach aims to secure their social and political identity and establish an extent of social gratitude and recognition by approving original cultural logic; which holds that ancient traditions are immutable and peculiar to the group, and passed down only by inheritance and ancestry. Gloria Naylor (1950- 2016) is one of the famous sponsors that aims to show the great Afro-American culture. She writes artistic novels in American dialect but deep inside reveals the rich culture, history, and tradition of Afro-American people. Naylor reflects the inner lives of African people in settings ranging from the suburbs to a fictitious Southern island free from slavery and white oppression.

Naylor converts the investigation mostly to culture, which turned into a persisting issue for the late twentieth century. In *Linden Hills*, Naylor exposed the hidden history of the Nedeed's females. Through the story of Willa, Naylor portraits the life of Afro-American females who are supposed to follow male standards. Yet Willa rejected their law and search deeply for her African roots.

Keywords: Afro-American, culture, double-voiced, history, *Linden Hills*, servitude.

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1. Introduction

The Afro- Americans are ascending swiftly from the condition of poverty and ignorance leaving servitude behind, to take their position among the refined and cultivated folks. The moment looks not away when they have rummaged their past exclusively and approach a unique situation among cultured people, as a race having different customs, principles, or morals. As a way of reflecting their unique culture, African authors sketch their history implicitly in their works (Gates and Tatar 2018: 17).

Blacks have not just been dealt with brutally, blacks have been exposed first to times of servitude, later on to years of second class residency, enormous legalized discrimination, financial discrimination, educational absence, and cultural forfeiture; they have been murdered, hitting, raped, purchased, sold, eliminated, subjugated, humiliated, and belittled. Hitherto they have to convert progressively effective against the probabilities (Tillman 2005: 1).

The author's style is acquired and formed by his political and social experience, religious nature, cultural views, knowledge, educational achievement, geographical location, and acquaintances. Mostly, the African authors are interestingly affected by African culture. Culture unvaryingly has been introduced as the features and acquaintance of a specific set of people, labeled by each item from language, social customs, art, music, and religion. Consequently, and since literature mirrors the dealings of the past, transfers socio-cultural morals and makes vast awareness of the tradition of its empowering society (Awe 2018: 34).

In the 1960s and 1970s, the black arts movement requests the suitability of white interpretative ideologies for explaining black literature. However, it was a Eurocentric description of "great" texts that alienated black writers in American aesthetic history and essentially omitted them from the American standard (Tyson 2006: 365). The black aesthetic would mitigate their endeavor to discover an identity, in other words, that was not theirs, black art inspired them to appreciate their experiment, not to cover it in the white culture copy. By declaring an ethnic identity that was detached from and not determined by white perspective, theory, and application, it rejected the supposition that the white experiment is the perfect one to imitate (Dobie 2012: 220).

Afro-American literature in the time of the Black Aesthetic Movement delivered an essential transformation in the way from its direct past. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., describes

the movement as “the shortest and least successful in African American cultural history”(Bressler 2011: 216).

They desired to get rid of the notion of racial discrimination and attained fairness in the white community. They as well vowed to recover both the form and the purport of their writing. They maintained that there must be “uniquely black” manners of assessing literature and that not a sign of this form could be efficaciously performed in a method that linked blacks’ text to the text of the actual white tyrant, the blacks were texting in contradiction of (Martin 1990: 727).

Since the 1960s, the American community has suffered racial modifications in its regard for social groups (Dobie 218). School integration, fresh regulations barring prejudice, and the expiry of old regulations that encouraged prejudice have unlocked the door to chance for humans who had habitually been excluded. Within such an estranged class, the renaissance of the esteemed convention that dissent from those of the controlling class has been employed to enrich self-confidence and restate divergent identities. Similarly, cultures’ richness that has hitherto been neglected or condemned has come to the contemplation not merely for those who are associated with, but of a broader public too. The ceremonies, religion, crafts, and fine art of Afro-Americans, Hispanics, American Indians, and other different historically unnoted classes are now promoting increasing attention in countless aspects that frame the American community (219).

The 1970s were mainly dynamic and prolific era for black women authors, serving to place the basis for literary erudition on black women writers of the past, in addition, to improve the essential thoughts to black feminist critique(Sickles 2010: 11).

Exposing the many shapes of racism with which Afro-Americans have had to resist, no wonder that many Afro-Americans were involved in what W. E. B. DuBois first defined in his work, *The Soul of Black Folk* in 1903 as “double consciousness” or “double vision”, “the awareness of belonging to two conflicting cultures: the African culture, which grew from African roots and was transformed by its unique history on American soil, and the European culture imposed by white America” (Tyson 362). Henry Louis Gates wants to look for a middle manner concerning the mindless observation of diversity for its welfare and the nostalgic back to neutral similarity (Duan 2012: 148).

For the black author, literature was habitually a case of culture. Not in the sight of the other magnificent philosophical features of a specific social class, yet in the limited sight of "cultivation" or complexity by a person class (Graham 2004: 5).

2. Conceptual Framework

Representing one of America's greatest and prolific critics, Henry Louis Gates Jr. has constantly been enthusiastic about baring and reviving Afro- American people's history (Duan 2012: 142). He focused on illuminated misplaced and buried Afro-American knowledge, including history, culture, race, identity, and multiculturalism (Ongaga 2013: 54). Gates investigated broadly African, Afro- American, and Caribbean literature and cultures. Contrasting many Afro-American authors and scholars, Gates points ample of his concern to other Afro- American scholars, asserting that they "must redefine theory itself from within (their) own black cultures, refusing to grant the premise that theory is something that white people do" (Bressler 2011: 217).

Critics consider the "double voice" as a key to understanding Afro-American literature. No doubt, critics before him explained and applied the term. The notion of "doubleness", taken from the founder critic of Afro- American history, W. E. B. Du Bois, who use it to define an individual whose personality is split into some aspects. As a suppositional device, "double consciousness" shows the psycho-social parts of the American community and consents for a full acceptance of those splits. Du Bois concentrates on the quality of black experiment that allows for confronting prejudice in national and realm systems.

The double-voiced was first utilized in an article titled "Strivings of Negro People" in 1897, later re-edited and titled "Of Our Spiritual Strivings" in (1903) book *The Soul of Black Folk*. Du Bois defines "double consciousness" as:

> This sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body. The history of African Negro is the history of this strife, this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. (Shaw 2015: 41)

Afro-Americans have “souls”, yet the nineteenth-century racist authors regularly visualized the black person in a specific as a naïve being; a lot of white Americans asked whether black folks had souls. If literature is a manifestation of the soul, at that moment the thriving of Afro-American patterns would be required evidence of mankind of black reality to white skeptics (Blades 2011: 252). Nevertheless, Du Bois does not endorse assimilation; the clue to improvement builds upon respecting and admitting difference, besides permitting this into a considerate of what is to be American: the black would not Africanize America, nor would he blench his black soul in a stream of white Americanism. Reasonably, he desires to make it potential for a person to be both a black and an American (251).

Contrasting those real activists who preferred Frantz Fanon and Marcus Garvey, Gates has permanently assumed of himself as both a literary critic and a literary historian, a critic who enjoys archives and who is devoted to reviving neglected works of Afro-Americans. For Gates, the mission for awareness and fact has been the beginning of his academic job, as well as, he would relatively achieve the structural alteration by discovering the heritages of our works and discovering the literal origins of our folks. Among the great published writings of Gates throughout the last three decades, critics see a clear curve of how he motivated smoothly from reading origins of Afro-American writings to the origins of Afro-American folks and even that of American people as an entire (Duan 2012: 144).

In the 1970s, Gates entered the Afro-American studies field at Yale, and he devoted himself to understand his people’s stories narrating and theorizing their apparent aspects. Gates tried to discover the literary custom from a perusal of the tales. By setting up the consciousness that reached into forming these writings, they were qualified to speak about Afro-American awareness itself and the many means by which blacks have echoed on their own exists and the exists of others (145).

Besides, an essential notion in the writings of the powerful African American analyst, Gates set articles like “Black Literature and Literary Theory” (1984), which was analytically innovative of his critical work in the 1980s. Also, *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of Afro-American Literary Criticism*, (1988) provided a pioneering, deconstruction study of African American literature. In this respect, Gates draws consideration to the ‘complex double formal antecedents, the Western and the black’ of Afro-American pieces of literature, and maintains for the appreciation of the connections between black language and literary

conventions. In the 1980s, the effort of Gates expanded to a serious attitude that viewed black literature as a slavery form that frees the black tone to talk for itself, reverting to the literariness of the black works (Bressler 2011: 218).

In *The Signifying Monkey,* Gates examines the connection of the black language convention to the Afro-American literary convention. Subsequently, the black language practice is double-voiced, though signifying(g) in the form of double-voiced. Signifyin' is the pattern of delineating a notion indirectly, throughout a clarification that is habitually comical, bragging, insulting, or irritating. Gates claims that the prevalence and criticality of signifyin' in Afro-American and African art and literature illustrate that all such terms are a sort of discourse with the art and literature of the past (online Britannica).

Gates claims that vernacular practice apprises and becomes the basis for proper black literature, and he suggests a literary analysis that is also informed by language strategies production and clarification ascending out of Afro-American language traditions. Gates defines signifying as a "double-voiced trope," a metaphor for a proper review, or the tradition of involving or revising with a variation, as a clue tradition adjusted from Afro-American vernacular practices and printed into Afro-American literary works. Accordingly, he states native black literary critique will yield its hint from black language culture and thrive images for studying and elucidating "signifying black difference" in Afro-American fictional works (Moody-Turner 2017: 12).

Signifying Monkey stories or toasts, just as they are usually denoted in the language, are narrative verses executed regularly, yet not entirely, by guys in bars, in pool foyers, and on-road nooks. Gates suitably shows that assuming the essence of these verses as rites of insult, identification, and documented forms has a phallocentric prejudice. Tales own a universal outlining pattern, containing a scenic or stirring overview, action interchanging with discourse, and a trick finishing of some kind, either a sarcasm, a satirical remark, or a swagger. Signifying Monkeys' stories focus on three standard personalities; "the Monkey, the Lion, and the Elephant" (Campbell 1994: 464). Through the story, the Monkey gossips to his colleague, the Lion, of some offense supposedly made by their common colleague the Elephant. The Lion annoyed by the offense requests the Elephant an admission of guilt, who rejects and afterward beats him. Appreciating that he has been fooled, the Lion just then comes back to the Monkey to rectify the matter. The Lion's fault, undeniably, was in assuming the Monkey words literally, to be exact, in mistaking to appreciate that Monkey

was “signifying”. Though Gates condemns the white, black binary opposition a lot of critics have inferred concerning the Lion and the Monkey, an enthralling insinuation found in Lion’s misinterpretation of the Monkey’s application of Language (465).

One trope mutual to Afro-American works is Signification. Gates asserts that signifying “is a trope in which are subsumed several other rhetorical tropes, including metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, and irony, and also hyperbole a litotes, and metalepsis” (Brown 2013: 55). Signification, as well as, denotes the mode in which Afro-American writers study and evaluate other African American works in an action of rhetorical self-description.

In “Cultural Perspective on African American Culture,” Angela Khristin Brown states that some critics fight against utilizing Western literary concepts to evaluate Afro-American literature. Equally to what Gates, Jr. assumed, "I have desired to allow the black tradition to speak for itself about its nature and various functions, rather than to read it, or analyze it, in terms of literary theories borrowed whole from other traditions, appropriated from without."(55). He claims for the binary opposition’s collapse of “white” and “black”: “We are all ethnics,” and all should exceed the situations of our culturally inevitable awareness (Carter 2006: 131).

3. Cultural Revival in *Linden Hills*

Naylor portrays a wealthy upper-middle-class community underneath the novel's extreme patriarchal power. The story traces Luther Nedeed's family for the last five generations; each generation, the heir, has a similar name Luther Nedeed. Every female character in the novel portrays a different outlook on the black feminine body and its supremacy by the patriarchal community. The depiction of black females as sufferers or victims is not Naylor's lone target yet to show other issues such as Afro-American heritage (Sahu 2017: 51).

The condemned character of Luther Nedeed represents the present generation who is worried about developing a community that reserves the image of wealth and triumph to strangers as the aspect of Linden Hills' world. The community of Linden Hills more persistently terminates the females than the males. The suppression of females, especially the Linden Hills's wives, is the base on which the rich culture is formed. The history of dominance is a lengthy procedure from the moment of the forming of the community: "Past and Present reveal a trail of human destruction tied to the Nedeed ambition, passed from

generation to generation and from designer house to designer house, to get over" (Toombs 1997: 90). Naylor shows how the past and the present are interwoven through the Nedeed family's attempts to hide their history.

The first four generations of the Nedeed family have a stable tradition of marrying octoroon females. Still, the fifth Luther Nedeed has destroyed the family mores by marrying a wrecked-skinned female. He has carefully followed every other law handed on to him. The Nedeed males believe that they have the art of perfect reproduction (Fowler 1996: 70): their "seed was only released at the vernal equinox so the child would come during the Sign of the Goat when the winter's light was the weakest" (*LH* 1986: 19).

The cutout of the society, besides the brutality of the family undoubtedly becomes clear in Mrs. Nedeed's story. Once Luther's wife appears for the first time, she is factually and figuratively subversive, with her husband and her son's corpse. This affects the situation outcomes from layers of repressive patterns that return to the Nedeeds' first generation. Reading the novel shows, Nedeed men hold the unchanged name "Luther." The significance of similar names signifies the similar personality that the men hold.

In this handy form, the Nedeed forefathers create private ties with their inimitable male offspring, pushing the mothers wholly away. The order is more highlighted by the physical sameness of the Nedeed males. Willa is truly persecuted and fenced in the underground store because, unintentionally, she pauses and disobeys the monotonous circle formed by the Nedeed males by giving birth to a boy who bodily looks like his mother not his father, man tradition requires. Breaking the family wicked chain becomes a defining moment in the existence of all Nedeeds.

The Nedeed male set a kind of specific standard not only for themselves, yet as well they force all dwellers of Linden Hills to accept their terms. The reason that makes Linden Hills's residents follow Nedeed's law is Luther Nedeed has the property of the land:

> Sold the land practically for air to the blacks who were shacking there, he gave them a thousand year and a day lease- provided only that they passed their property on to their children. And if they wanted to sell it, they had to sell it to another black family or the rights would revert back to the Nedeed. (*LH* 7)

These conditions create the connection between an economic and racial opportunity that essentially complicated the matter for the inhabitants of Linden Hills. The race opportunity seems rather intelligent. The Nedeeds' necessity that a black family must own the property of the land if no heirs exist submits that their main concern is not with certifying racially only but relatively with offering the successful black one. Conversely, Luther notes that "Linden Hills wasn't black, it was successful" (*LH* 7). Therefore, when Luther charts and applies the general terms of the land, he is not fixing and ensuring the black people's future. Mr. Nedeed is safeguarding the association between economic success and racial terms.

4. The Double-Voiced in *Linden Hills*

Naylor's idea to mix multiple texts in one universal well-composed world, over her novel. Firstly, she reaches her advanced narration tops that are reliable with main Afro-American literary customs. She also contributes to the practice of signifying in noteworthy means, and she ensures so using repeating series. Gates defines signifying(g), saying "a trope that subsumes other oratorical tropes, including metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and irony" (1998: 286). In “The Blackness of Blackness”(1984), Gates points out that the signifying construction is out that contains "intertextual revision, because it revises key tropes and rhetorical strategies," he adds pointing that it is vital to Afro-American fictional history since "black writers read and critique other black texts as an act of rhetorical self-definition" (Gates 1988: 290). In this case, Naylor mixes Dante's *Inferno* with her novel. Naylor's novel is a closely knitted storyline of intertextualities, compound levels of story that retell, review, and convert celebrated western works. Nowadays, Critics have been interested in thoroughly studying several of these texts, particularly "Dante’s *Inferno*, Plato’s Allegory of the Cave” (Moore 2000: 1410).

In Dante's *Inferno*, both the world of the living and dead dramatize their fair penalty. In comparison, Naylor's world in *Linden Hills* is different. Virginia C. Fowler comments on it, saying:

> Its inhabitants, who have destroyed or are in the process of destroying their souls through a range of behaviors, suffer many of the torments of hell and, most importantly, have become hollow and dead. Linden Hills is the land of the living dead (1996: 68).

The novel is covering the development zone which the first Luther Nedeed has ruled since 1820. Luther Nedeed is the first person to obtain his independence and departed to the north, eventually discovering Linden Hills. He is a rich man, but he is culturally and spiritually hollow. The first masculine offspring of Luther Nedeed are called Luther Nedeed. Every following generation had one child who precisely looks like his father. The first Nedeed and his sons after marrying white-skinned females directly fascinate the Luther family personality. The first Nedeed believes the future generation of the whites would be healthier. Nevertheless, they have engaged white mates, they have not let them mix readily with other people.

Luther Nedeed the second, consecutively, inherits his father's fortune and increases it. Resembling his father, he knows that the coming of America would be “white; white money backing wars for white power because the very earth was white- look at it- white gold, white silver, white coal running white railroads and steamships” (*LH* 1986: 8).

Luther Nedeed the third further improves his forefather's versions; he wishes Linden Hills to be a mender to the African people. Finally, he understands that he will partake to mold Linden Hills in a form that redirects the passions of its black people in the right way:

> So bright that it would spawn dreams of dark kings with dark counselors leading dark armies against the white god and toward retribution all feared would not be just, but long overdue. Yes, a brilliance that would force a waking nightmare of would the Nedeeds were capable. And the fools would never realize …. That it was nothing but light from a hill of carbon paper doll. (*LH* 1986: 9-10)

Nedeed the third, like his forefathers, utilizes Linden Hills as a gate of achieving authority. Yet, that authority will be made potential by many people of Linden Hills who see white persons in their ambition for material fortune, rank, and control. When the fourth Luther Nedeed takes possession of the family realm, though, Linden Hills reflects the Nedeeds view, for it turns from a "black" world to be a "successful" one (*LH* 1986: 17). Nedeed, the fourth, is forced to diagnose that "the plans and visions of the fathers might have been misdirected" (*LH* 1986: 18). Undeniably, he is obliged to find his influence only in outlining what is required and guiding his admission to what he has well-defined. In a natural satanic way, he discovers his happiness in observing the people suffer to stay at the

bottom of Tupelo Drive, afterward "they eventually disappeared. Finally, devoured by their drives, there just wasn't enough humanity left to fill the rooms of a real home, and the property went up for sale" (*LH* 1986: 17-18). In Nedeed's world, the factual achievement is recognized with white values, and its little chase results in the ruin of the man's soul. Aside from that ruin for the Afro- American persons who follow this white culture is the forfeiture of their traditions.

Equally, to what the fifth Nedeed understood, material victory does not reveal the race of those who attain it; such triumph reveals itself. There are many precise allegorical denotations in Naylor's story, yet its basic notion is the loss of the black person's soul caused by the quest for the white American dream (Fowler 1996: 69).

A related shift is regularly promoted that Afro-Americans have been traditionally omitted from traditional Western culture. As a way of treating and reparation the existing prejudice, Feminist critics, for instance, have cheered the double perception issued by females' insider/outsider position. Correspondingly, Afro-American ambiguous position within traditional American culture has required a "double consciousness," Du Bois's prominent word. The doubleness is "both a curse and a blessing, for it leads to "second-sight" and a special perspective, which allows for openness, the embrace of contradiction and paradox, and a broad inclusiveness, even of one's deepest fears" (Page 1999: 114). The doubleness in the case of Luther Nedeed and his offspring is a curse because it ripped him out of his African roots. Luther Nedeed indeed adopts the white behavior and thought sightlessly.

The Nedeed portrayed as suppressing their perceptions and desires in agreement with what is known to be called the rules of profitability. Therefore, Naylor offers a subtle difference of the possible dangers that the black middle class faced. Indeed Afro-Americans appear eager to imitate white norms; they are depicted as envious people, and their jealousy more aggressively mimetic in racial issues (Engles 2009: 665).

The Nedeed male rebel and make a radical withdrawal from the standards usually connected with Afro- American society. The novel throws light on the dark side of those who carelessly and undeniably accepted traditional American culture. Their absolute obsession with their materialist journeys does not leave the possibility of ordinary life. While the events progress, the reader approaches Naylor's idea and realizes that the bonds that link them are

built on falseness, greed, and hatred. They act in a way to reveal their spiritual dilemma, especially among Afro-American folk.

The novel's residents are cultivated and intelligent individuals though they are mindful of their culture and identity. Even though Linden Hills' people are impotent to create vigorous ways seen in the world they lived in. Afro-American persons have toppled victims to the idea of the American dream. The American dream became their ultimate goal to the unique identity of the Afro-American tradition and culture. Naylor attempts to show the Afro-Americans' way of living, which centers on their uniqueness through the customs and ceremonies and the food they eat, intending to show how this social class has an ancient history (Maheswaramma and Putta 2018: 85).

Though Linden Hills's people act spontaneously with no intention of resembling white, their act of mimicry appears unfavorable. Naylor criticizes Afro-Americans mode to mimic white culture, which generally appears as a primarily repressive way of view and behavior that illogically turns away both common ties and individual uniqueness (Engles 2009: 666). Many Afro-Americans who seek financial attainment by following qualified white business and social arenas eagerly approve such behavior, moderating and even attempting to neglect or abandon their root by destroying their fictional cultural outlets.

Linden Hills's residents usually think and behave in ways that resemble white people though they are not consciously aware of that. They believe in the Western viewpoint that whatever is associated with white is proper behavior. Yet Naylor wants to refute this wrong idea in *Linden Hills*. Though the Nedeed men agree with the western and detach themselves from their traditions and roots, at the same time, Willa and the other Nedeed wives revive African history (665). However, as Linden Hills inhabitants reveal that whites in mainly white atmospheres do not make them ignore that they are nonetheless perceived essentially in racial conditions (666).

The novel's location, Linden Hills neighborhood has symbolical issues to the communities' suppression. It is materially designed like "wells: the former is an urban block, closed off from the bustling city by a high brick wall; the latter is a V-shaped hill whose circular drives wend downward to the Nedeed house" (Page 1999: 116). The location is segregated, detach from the American society, greatly resembling Afro-American during American history. Mostly, all the persons in this place live in hell due to the inhabitants'

hatred, greed, and social desires. Naylor's version of the Seven Deadly sins has a slight adjustment, in which she considers lust, double standards, denial of one's tradition, hatred for one's race, collusion in exploitation, consequently, all these features are present in the house of Luther Nedeed himself, greed, perversion, hatred, and murder (Puhr 1994: 520).

The Nedeeds are imprisoned in the spiritual demise of their interior perception. As contrasting to Linden Hills' inhabitants, Willie and the Andersons afford a possible alternative to the surrounded society. For them, kindness, sympathy, and love balance rank and economic achievement; and they do their best to publicize their perception among Linden Hills people, allowing them to cultivate their own and others' feelings instead of losing their souls.

The novel ends have a touch of success and victory in Willa's last minutes of life and a feeling of optimism, Willa asserts charge for her marriage, and this claim makes her "[gain] strength and a sense of power" (*LH* 1986: 280). She experiences a revival termed as "an unconscious journey in toward the power of will" (288), and this journey reasserts her power to rethink and act accordingly. And consequently, with braveness and firmness, she scours the underground store and embarks her path up, leaving the basement toward the kitchen entrance. While she tidies up the kitchen and walks toward the hole, she and Willie at the same time see her double in the mirror (Fowler 1996: 89). The narrator comments:

> There in the mirror next to the open kitchen door was a woman, her hair tangled and matted, her sunken cheeks streaked with dirt. Her breasts and stomach were hidden behind a small body wrapped in sheer white lace. The wrinkled dress was caked under her arms with dried perspiration, the sagging pantyhose torn at the knees and spotted with urine. (*LH* 1986: 289-99)

No more a smart female; at this minute, she fits a woman corpse, a disorganized human. Nevertheless, her persistence in challenging Luther with the kid's corpse, whom he denied his fatherhood, is the first stride toward defeating him. Her triumph is certified when she goes intending to complete her way. Willa efforts to move the baby's corpse into a seat in the kitchen's direction. Eventually, when Willa arrives at the boy corpse, she shuts them in a hug "and the three were welded together," while they sway against the hearth, the wedding shroud in which she has covered the kid:

> Brushed an ember, the material curling and shrinking as orange sparks raced up its fine weave. There was no place in her universe to make sense out of the words, 'My God, we're on fire.' No meaning to his struggle except that it was pushing her back into the kitchen. (*LH* 300)

Willa might not purposely set fire to the wedding shroud because she rejects returning to the basement's direction. Shifting to the other plot, Naylor ends the novel with Willie and Lester's last words that advocate some feeling of confidence. Willie was stunned when he recognized that Tupelo Drive inhabitants had endorsed Luther's home to flame. Such work manifests complete atrocity, yet he consents to their diverse clarification of the affair.

> A deep sob caught in Willie's throat as he told the wind once again, "They let it burn, shit."
>
> "Yeah."
>
> They let it burn.
>
> Each with his own thoughts, they approached the chain fence, illuminated by a full moon just slipping toward the point over the horizon that signalled midnight. Hand anchored to hand, one helped the order to scale the open links. Then, they walked out of Tupelo Drive into the last days of the year. (*LH* 304)

The importance of home in Naylor's description due to her belief that home is a glib place rooted in cultural memory and engrained in the past that returns eventually to ancient Africa (Montgomery 1995: 75).

The "white" world had rejected to integrate them because of their skin color. yet now the Afro- Americans have been certified limited oncoming to the American Dream, their factual achievement, conversely limited relation to white attainment, records not as resistance but instead as adjustment, or at any rate agreement. Furthermore, the admission of a white meaning of attainment as that which could be determined in material conditions is not the only way of acceptance to silent shreds of evidence of preferred standards. The method also occurs at the individual level, at the cost of one's racial acceptance (Engles 2009: 663). The

European community has a kind of prejudice, yet Naylor thinks that Afro-Americans paid the price of their American citizenship. Therefore, Afro-Americans are questioned to whiten or leave behind what shows them as different from the white standard. The current Nedeed's attitude of depression is beached in a credit of this attacking section within his pure black society, and forcing his wife and doubtfully white-skinned child into the basement signifies in part his anxious desire to suppress it.

5. History helps Willa to survive

Linden Hills a warning story alerting against the threats connected with a life lived remote away from African roots and its nourishing traditions. The story focuses mainly on the Nedeed family, the Nedeed male who follows the whites' culture and desert their history. Naylor portraits such kinds of characters jointly to construct a single society to interchange with their African people and with the Americans at the same time. "the Nedeed had made a history there and it spoke loudly of what blacks could do" (*LH* 1986: 16). This sentence epitomizes the aim of the Nedeed male, they try hard to make a new history of their success in Linden Hills. Here Naylor contrasts her precursors in pointing that it is not the white morals that defile them but the morals which they adopt willingly. Luther Nedeed applies and endorses the evils of wealthy Americans. The impact of the middle-class community is shown in Naylor's *Linden Hills*, yet is not centered on the whites' persecution of blacks. Naylor points here to the idea of class domination (Bouvier 1993: 145). Luther character exposes the idea for he:

> Started to work with the ones who would be the most eager to work with on the future of Linden Hills. The children of the parasites and outcasts from the South, who would find a welcome only from the dead that boardered their homes, wanted nothing better than a way to forget and make the world forget their past. (*LH* 1986: 10)

The first Luther Nedeed bought the whole northern zone of a hill and achieved the mountainous property called Tupelo Drive. As an alternative to exhausting the land for agriculture, he forms a two-chamber cottage at the end of the hill. After the cabin is made, he goes in front of the firm every day and gazes at the sky. He designed the construction of Linden Hills with the only target to frame their influential black community and aimed to attain through materialistic achievement. He is a practical man who would not be convinced

with people's unity; he trusts more in separate labors. He has sketched a target to mark Linden Hills an icon of black attainments. Luther has made wooden cabins for local black people and he has hired the cabins in the zone alone, but folks did prefer to reside beside the cemetery zone, and they rejected that. In 1837, Luther Nedeed has a twenty-year-old octoroon consort who gave birth to a child. He has stayed in the zone for seventeen years. Luther spends few hours with his lone kid; he rests from business and leads him to a prime boarding school; however, after years, his boy returns to manage his father's commerce when his father, the first Luther Nedeed, died in 1879.

The Nedeed males think that those folks "who had hopes of building on, not ever, their past… fools who could do the most damage if he let them stay" (*LH* 1986: 11). Alternatively, The Nedeed has searched for persons eager to "forget what it meant to be back" to dwell in Linden Hills; "you step outside Linden Hills, and you've stepped into history" (*LH* 1986: 16). Relying on this, the Nedeed males abandon Afro-American traditions and culture and imitate the White culture. Following the same standard, the Nedeed men neglect their mates and nearly erase them from reminiscence; for example, Luther's inexperience makes him believe that Sinclair, the white son is not his son and Willa lied to him. He had also "pause a moment to remember his mother's first name because everyone including his father had called her nothing but Mrs. Nedeed" (*LH* 1986: 18). While Luther trapped Willa in the underground store, she retrieves her part as a consort (Fowler 1996: 79).

Regardless of her husband's efforts to erase Willa from history, Willa Prescott Nedeed will not be removed. She will affirm for herself a detached character and power. The narrative part in which she manages to march her first step toward autonomy directly follows the Braithwaite part. Naylor employs the mirror image for a second time as a mode of asserting the mirror's perfect likeness of self. After "staring at the gaping hole that was once Priscilla McGuire," Willa starts "to touch her own face," (*LH* 1986: 267) this act shows Willa's way of challenging herself, the right way to reflect her essence (Fowler 1996: 87).

Willie's uttered words the day before she moves to Luther Nedeed's home expose are: "There is a man in a house at the bottom of a hill. And his wife has no name" (*LH* 1986: 227). Willa's passage is a pursuit for her name, Naylor reveals her name at the end of the novel, or more precisely, it is not only a journey for her right to a name but to an existence (Fowler 1996: 79).

She wears her child for the funeral, and she arranges to cover the corpse using pieces of stuff from a nearby box of old dresses. Willa marks a detection that finally changes the narrative's direction from further recurrence to signifying. Between the pieces of cloth, curled in a roll of a tie, Willa catches:

> A leather-and gold-bound Bible. Luwana Packerville 1837 was etched in fading gold on the bottom border …… she throws the Bible on the cot and began to wrap the lace veiling around the child's body. How strange; what must that woman have seen or lived. (*LH* 1986: 92)

The Bible recovery allows Willa to reform the missing past of Mrs. Nedeed. While she searches carefully, she discloses assets of the Nedeed females, hidden within the packets, buried figuratively in the basement built by Chief Luther Nedeed.

The method of self-discovery creates in her encounter of the assorted fragments of the experiences of the preceding Nedeed females: starting with Luwana Packerville Nedeed, Evelyn Creton Nedeed, and ends with Priscilla McGuire Nedeed. The presence of the previous females' has been apparent in Willa's presently dead boy (Fowler 1996: 80). Hidden in old boxes where Willa has been caged are the leaflets that help her retrieve a missing history: in Luwana's Bible, specifically on the blank sheets where she has documented; Evelyn's cookery book and marketing bills; and Priscilla's photo albums. The saved historical archives stand in contradiction to the official history that the Nedeed males dedicated to Linden Hills. Willa has had a related experience, and her bitter expertise helps her recognize the history exposed by the records those females had kept. The saved documents lets Willa eager to identify her existence in theirs, the forms reveal both the circumstance of Mrs. Nedeed in the house of the Nedeed and the inner and spiritual effect of that incident on her.

Consequently, Luwana Packerville Nedeed recorded her journey with her husband in the Bible. Luther owned her as a slave and recorded describing her feeling when she learns "only exchange one master for another … and even her son belonged to her husband" (*LH* 1986: 117). On the cover of another page, Luwana penned that Luther has heard of a slave female who poisoned her owner's food, accordingly he determined that Luwana must exclude from serving him or her son. The conditions diagnose that cruelty of Luther's dealing made her inscribed her atrocity in messages. However, she tries to terminate the other part's protest due to its generality: "this senseless prattle about evil is unhealthy for your soul. There is

nothing-do you hear me—nothing that is going on in your home that is not repeated in countless other homes around you" (*LH* 1986: 123). Luwana keeps calm, and she remains mute all the time:

> To the day it is exactly 665 times that I needed to open my mouth to speak-332 times to answer their good morning's and 333 time to do the same in the evening. It would have been 720 times but this was not a leap year and they were both travelling for a little over a month-32 days in exact reckoning-viewing different schools for the boy. (*LH* 1986: 124)

Tracing the daily specifics of Luwana helps Willa appreciates that Luwana married the wrong man, and that leads her to transcribe all these minutiae. Luwana's documents of her conditions make Willa understand her marriage's reality and accept her participation's outcome.

While searching, Willa realizes a complete other sets of records; recipes and a cookery book written by Evelyn Creton Nedeed. Willa comments on Evely's document clarifying:

> These recipes were from another lifetime. Evelyn Creton probably never knew Luwana Packerville. As she roasted her meats and canned her apple butter year after year, she didn't know that a woman had gone insane because she was barred from the very kitchen that Evelyn Creton later filled with damned cookbooks (*LH* 1986: 140).

Willa is powerless at first to comprehend any implication in Evelyn's recipes yet later she discovers her components are rare, in one of these mixes she utilized aphrodisiacs to entice her husband. This recipe lets Willa know that every Luther has tracked the same manner of neglecting his wife when she gives him a boy (Fowler 1996: 82). The experiences of the previous generation make Willa give justification to Luther's treatment, Luther's dealing with her is out of his odium of females, not on certain weakening in her (Fowler 83). When Willa reads the history of the previous women she knows how frightened Evelyn must have noted her desires, and although she was in the second half of the twentieth century, she did not need new expression "to validate these types of desires in a Mrs. Evelyn Creton Nedeed" (*LH* 1986: 188). Evelyn remarking allows Willa to lastly realize that Evelyn, resembles many modern women, so she starts a cycle of tucking and purging as a mode of protecting herself

against her man's denial. Ultimately, she takes more laxatives than nourishment, becomes thin and pale, and lastly kills herself with vanilla ice cream (Fowler 1996: 83).

Though Willa risks the agony that resembles these females, she scans these records truthfully. However, she is smart enough to rebuff discomfort after she fulfills her review of Evelyn's notes and tries to cut her association with the former Mrs. Nedeed. Willa tells herself, “she wasn’t crazy like these other women; she had coped and they were crazy … to strike out what had happened, to destroy those beginnings” (*LH* 1986: 204). Suddenly, Willa makes a strange decision, starts destroying letters and records, and decides to leave reading. She paused in a picture from the album, Priscilla’s album; at this minute, she cuts up the pages. Priscilla uses the album to document the vacuum that her wedding made of her. While flips the photo, Willa recognizes that the portraits of the family have something strange, the part where Priscilla McGuire Nedeed is standing is cut, as the captions advocate, “recording the growth of a child; the only thing growing in these pictures was her absence” (*LH* 1986: 209).

The history puts Willa in a challenge that strengthens her but at the same time makes her opposites the power of the male Nedeed family. Willia’s manner of retrieval, both of that past and herself, arises as she sanctions herself to reminisce, reunifying herself with the new history of her experiences. Directly after her child’s loss, Willa rebuffs to recall him or lament, fearing the pain would destroy her. Though, the memories surround her despite her vain attempts to deny them (Simpson-Vos 2001: 25). The narrator describes her:

> She paced by the cot, pressing her temples so tightly the skull bone threatened to give away. But the memory had already splintered into blinding needles of white light that burned so badly she knew if it didn’t stop, she would have to bash her head against the concrete floor. (*LH* 1986: 92)

Willa’s quest to recover history might be read as Naylor’s determinations to reinstate a common sense of woman society that is very serious in African and Afro- American cultures that aims to show the group value over that of an individual. Willa and the other females, though they appear as separate women, represent African females in their culture and their way of outlining the community's morals over those of single. In *Linden Hills*, Naylor explores females’ conditions in multiple scopes and over their associations with their community. Past and present are contrasted, whereas females’ parts as mothers and lovers turn out to

be essential forces in different societies. Female stories are essential in the text and show uniting threads linking them to their African culture.

The enthralling history gives Willa the required wisdom to rebirth, and the novel's end holds a sense of peace and calm. Lastly, she dares to reveal her real name, "Willa Prescott Nedeed," and utters it in a "lyrical and delicate" voice (*LH* 1986: 277). Willa also takes authority from Luther by calling her dead child Sinclair, a name that means the clear sin of the child's skin. Willa reminisces her birth memory and echoes it on her childhood occasions. The improvement of these memories from birth to maturity helps Willa revive. She learns "the amber germ of truth"(*LH* 1986: 289) and its reflection on her personality.

Obsession with materialism has formed definite environments with moral poverty which are revealed credibly and verified with the required investigation and in the route; the appearance of invented culture in the Afro-American environment is sketched (Maheswaramma and Putta 2018: 81).

Black women's presence cannot be condensed to a simple exploration of existence after colonization, however reasonably in the re-colonized American's life. Here, Naylor's female has challenged the male society of both the Afro-American and the American people in her call home, especially for the place she makes within her society of females. She needs to realize her identity in a continually altering country. Showing America through this obscure glass formulates one for a group of characters Naylor introduces. The females are standing in a world that coerces them to refashion themselves to endure the racial distinction. Naylor's writings could suit feminist discourse because the female characters in her novel give voice to reclaim their rights. Yet in a more precise way, the novels expose the linkage of gender, class, and race in a society of females, ending in demand for individual identity. In conversation with Virginia Fowler, Naylor points that "feminism to me is political, social, economic equality for all human beings," referring to the political feature of the novel. Larry Andrews clarifies the idea saying that she, "derives its power from the women's previous sense of isolation, from their mistreatment by men, and their regenerative discovery, through suffering, of the saving grace of a shared experience" (1989: 125).

Willa Nedeed's story and her predecessors revealed women's subordination within the Afro-American world and showed women's history as the suppressed race of Linden Hills. The Nedeed men want to document their history neglecting women's part. Barbara Christian

claims that Naylor critiques the Nedeed males' "By emphasizing the Nedeed women's ignorance of their herstory, Naylor shows how the repression of women's herstory is necessary to the maintenance of patriarchy and why it is that history is so exclusively male" (Christian 1990: 361). The female's subordination to males is important for male authority.

The parallel location within Anglo-American culture for Afro- American females authors, exemplifies the significance of this double trouble, Naylor's failure to remove herself from the dual aspect of culture in Linden Hills. Eventually, Willa Nedeed bares females' hidden histories and sets fire in the home of Nedeed. Willa's strength Resembling W.E.B. Du Bois's idea of African people, for he comments saying, "those people whose forebears experienced slavery but who now can overcome the horror of the memory contribute positively to the struggle to redeem African history" (Kaba 2001: 13).

6. Conclusion

Willa and the other Nedeed's females may symbolize the voyage of African slaves to America, while the Nedeed's men may represent the American community's effort to obliterate the African past and impose its own history, culture, and customs on them. Burning the house of the Nedeed family which is based on Western culture is a kind of revolt, Willa rebels against everything that is not original in Afro-American culture. Naylor attempts to show how her protagonist Willa, the submissive, tortured abused wife of the tyrant Luther Nedeed turns into a strong and resolute person when she reads the Nedeed family wives' history and discovers that each one had resisted oppression in one way or another. History enforced her to revolt and burn the Nedeed house to free herself and end the Nedeed male tyranny.

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