Ancestral Lineage in Paule Marshall’s *Brown Girl, Brownstones*

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**Abstract**

The paper examines Paule Marshall’s strategies in achieving her goal of attaining indigenous culture. She also emphasizes the importance of ancestors in her works, while retracing the journey of her African American female protagonists back to their roots. Marshall takes heed to the powerful and appealing voice of the ancestors in order to achieve selfhood based on a renewed identity. The novel is set in the Brooklyn Community of Marshall’s own childhood, among immigrants like her parents and their friends who work hard, often cleaning houses, scrimping, and saving their money to buy a house as a way to become fully adjusted to their adopted country. But the roots of the culture they create and perpetuate in the United States are firmly rooted in the Caribbean rituals and traditions that they left behind. The title of the novel signifies the overriding desire of the community of her parents’ generation to assimilate into the white culture, while the “Brown Girl”, the young woman protagonist, Selena Boyce, learns one of life’s first lessons, the integration of the self and community.

**Keywords:** Culture, Ancestors, Roots, Homeland, Journey, Identity.

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