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**LONGING FOR A SECURE FAMILY IN THE TWO WORKS OF PEARL
CLEAGE “FLYIN’ WEST” AND
“WHAT LOOKS LIKE CRAZY ON AN ORDINARY DAY”**

Zekiye Canan KAYA BALDUZ

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Danışman
Assistant Prof: Ayşe Gülbün ONUR

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Tez Danışmanı Yrd. Doç. Dr. Ayşe Gülbün ÖNER

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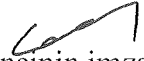
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ABSTRACT**LONGING FOR A SECURE FAMILY IN THE TWO WORKS OF PEARL CLEAGE “FLYIN’ WEST” AND “WHAT LOOKS LIKE CRAZY ON AN ORDINARY DAY”****Zekiye Canan KAYA BALDUZ****Supervisor: Assistant Prof: Ayşe Gülbün ONUR****2014**

The aim of this study is to analyze the importance of being interdependent in one’s family especially if one has experienced segregation in the past like the Africans living in the United States of America. Starting from this standpoint and leading to a tendency of a strong desire for a safe family, in the two works of an African American woman writer Pearl Cleage’s drama ‘Flyin’ West’ and novel ‘What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day’ will be analyzed in detail.

Having experienced the discrimination and humiliation from the early years of those days, it will be much more clear for the reader to understand the reason of colored people’s emotional status towards their own family no matter how close or distant relation they have with black community. It is seen that they are the memories and sharing what make them powerful and durable to this incredible suffering.

As a colored woman writer, Pearl Cleage displays the real events by recalling the life in the past and the remnants of the past of the characters’ inner worlds. This study examines how the feeling of secure family concept is highlighted in two works by analyzing the events and the reactions of the characters against these events by using the method sociological criticism. It is important to understand how society and literature shape each other commutual.

The results of feeling secure in a family atmosphere and being interdependent in black community will be revealed at the conclusion part.

ÖZET

PEARL CLEAGE'IN "FLYIN' WEST" VE "WHAT LOOKS LIKE CRAZY ON AN ORDINARY DAY" ADLI İKİ ESERİNDE GÜVENLİ BİR AİLEYE DUYULAN ÖZLEM

Zekiye Canan KAYA BALDUZ

YRD. DOÇ. DR: Ayşe Gülbün ONUR

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Bu çalışmanın amacı, özellikle Afrikalıların geçmişte Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde deneyimlediği ırk ayrımcılığının, insanın ailesiyle karşılıklı bağlılığının önemini incelemektir. Bu bakış açısıyla güvenli bir aile ortamına duyulan güçlü bir arzuya neden olan istek, Afro-amerikalı kadın yazar Pearl Cleage'in 'Flyin' West' isimli tiyatro oyunu ile 'What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day' isimli romanında detaylı bir şekilde incelenecektir.

Geçmişten günümüze ayrımcılık ve aşağılanmayla yüzyüze kalmış olan bu halkın, siyahi topluma ne kadar yakın ya da uzak hissetseler de, kendi ailelerine karşı olan duygusal bağlarının nedenini anlamak okuyucular için daha anlaşılır hale gelecektir. Bu inanılmaz acıya karşı onları güçlü ve katlanabilir kılan şeylerin sahip oldukları anılar ve paylaşımlar olduğu görülmektedir.

Siyahi bir kadın yazar olan Pearl Cleage bu durumu geçmişteki gerçek olayları ve karakterlerinin iç dünyalarında geçmişten getirdiklerini hatırlayarak gözler önüne sermektedir. Bu çalışma, iki eserde gerçekleşen olaylar ile karakterlerin bu olaylar karşısındaki tepkilerini inceleyerek güvenli bir aileye özlem duyma olgusunun nasıl ön plana çıkarıldığını sosyolojik eleştiri yöntemini kullanarak irdelemektedir. Toplum ve edebiyatın birbirlerini karşılıklı olarak ne kadar şekillendirdiklerini anlamak önemlidir.

Bir aile ortamında güvenli olma ve siyahi toplulukta karşılıklı bağlılık hissinin sonuçları sonuç bölümünde açıklanacaktır.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>Page No</u>
ABSTRACT.....	i
ÖZET	ii
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	iii
ABBREVIATIONS	v
INTRODUCTION	1
1. PEARL CLEAGE’S LITERARY WORLD	4
2. HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS	8
2.1. The Phase Until Emancipation.....	8
2.1.1. Sharecropping.....	13
2.1.2. Homestead Act of 1862 and Its Reflections on Flyin’ West.....	15
2.1.3. The Reagents Against Amendments, Sharecropping and Homestead Act.....	16
2.2. The Civil Rights Movement.....	19
3. AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY	23
3.1. The Elements That Form African American Family	23
3.1.1. What Is A Family?.....	23
3.2. What Family Means for African Americans	24
4. FLYING WEST	32
4.1. The Historical Background of the Drama	32
4.1.2. The Flow of the Drama.....	33
4.2. Dreams of the Characters	46
4.3. The Longings of the Characters for a Secure Family	49
5. WHAT LOOKS LIKE CRAZY ON AN ORDINARY DAY	73
5.1. The Flow of the Novel	73
5.2. Longing For a Secure Family of the Characters in the Novel.....	78

5.2.1. The Power of Love	91
6. PARALLELISM AMONG THE CHARACTERS IN THE DRAMA AND THE NOVEL.....	96
7. CONCLUSION.....	98
8. WORKS CITED	100

ABBREVIATIONS

AA: African American

KKK: Ku Klux Klan

MLK: Martin Luther King

U.S. : United States

WLLC: What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day

INTRODUCTION

Being in a community is the starting point of sharing something with the people around you. What distinguishes us from the animals is the need to have a connection with the other human beings in an emotional way. Everything we learn from the world is mostly based on our sharing with the other people like our family, friends, community, colleagues and etc. Henslin defines this relation as in following; *It is through human contact that people learn to be members of the human community* (qtd. from Scott and Black, 2005: 2).

The things shared in a community is an initiative part of a culture which compromises small details of this very community. It is described by Eitzen and Zinn in their book “In Conflict and Order: Understanding Society” ; *“Culture has to be learned; it is not part of our biological makeup, but our biological makeup makes culture possible”* (2005: 2). As it is the people who generate the culture, there are some divisions of labor or mission among them. Throughout the years of the humanity, there are two most obvious divisions of labor which include the ones conquering the others. It is generally the physical and financial power that give the first group a right to govern the second. Unfortunately, it is the same for the Africans who were brought to U.S. in the name of cheap labor for the powerful superiors, in other words, the whites. The situation that the whites have created for the Africans cause something really concrete among the colored community. It was the power of belonging and feeling secure among your own people. The disadvantaged groups have started to create their own society out of grief and under the cruel treatment.

The historical development of Africans in U.S. territory is highlighted at the theoretical section of the thesis. It is vital to witness the first steps of the colored people in this far-away land until their total freedom. The phases of history for African Americans are handled one by one to make the reader read the lines under the real play and novel more critically and vividly. It can be hard to understand the real reactions of the characters act by act in ‘*Flyin’ West*’ and chapter by chapter in ‘*What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day*’ .

Forming a society in the far away lands has its beginning with the smallest social unit of human being, namely, family. Society is constructed with the association of many families. The common meaning of family is stated in Oxford

Dictionary; 'A group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit' ("Family" <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>).

When one reads the description above, it is the nuclear or extended family that comes to the minds; whereas the family concept which is discussed and analyzed in this thesis has two different meanings. The first meaning is the initial option that resembles the description above which includes father, mother and children like a nuclear family; while the other option is the community that you feel connected to via history and culture. As the conceptual family belonging is one of the main points of this thesis, the family perspective of African Americans is also included. It will be more credible for the reader to understand and accept the struggles of the characters both in the play '*Flyin' West*' and the novel '*What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day*'.

Within the society you share the same history and the same culture, you can easily comprehend the strengths and the weaknesses of it. It is the community that makes you feel secure and give you the sense of belonging. On the other hand, it is also the same community that makes you the target of political and social injustices as in the case of African American people.

Being a part of this very community, Pearl Cleage has her own observations and experiences of that longing in her two works. In '*Flyin' West*' , it can be witnessed that the emergence of salvation from slavery is reached within the family in both forms. The first one is as being the smallest unit of society and the second is the community which is constructed with the connection of the first one. The place, the history and the culture can be identified with the speeches and the reactions of the characters in the play. Like '*Flyin' West*' , Cleage's novel '*What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day*' lifts the light on the struggles of the characters to be an individual who have the feeling of security without forejudging the people because they have a different color.

The main title of the thesis "longing and feeling secure" are also explained inside the analysis of '*Flying West*' and '*What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day*'. These two concepts are the paths to the dreams of the characters in the play and the novel. Because of that reason; dreams, namely, hopes of the characters are also written at the analysis section of the play and the novel. What is obvious to

assert is that the dreams of the characters in the play '*Flyin' West*' are more dominant and concrete than the novel '*What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day*'. The reason of this distinction is the historical phase of the play. At those times, there were many things Africans wished in the land of Americans.

The aim of this thesis is to show the psychological effects of belonging to your own family and society. In order to make it clear, the historical development of the Africans in U.S. is displayed theoretically. It is important to witness the phases they have experienced since the day they first brought to this land. Then, the overall description of family concept is displayed. The concept of family will be analyzed in terms of the accepted phenomenon in the society, and also the reflections of feeling belonging to the family for African American society in the two works of Pearl Cleage. At the application sections of the thesis, the novel and the drama will be evaluated according to the utterances of the characters and the flow of the events from the psychological and structural perspective. The reactions of the characters in the novel and the drama will be compared psychologically, too.

1. PEARL CLEAGE'S LITERARY WORLD

Being a woman with an African American heritage has caused Pearl Cleage to face so many memories of the past and the development of freedom for the Africans in U.S. in front of her eyes. Having a family who are the warriors of civil rights, she has learned many things by being inside the struggles of her parents for complete freedom. She was born in 1948 in Springfield, Massachusetts and has a pastor father, Albert B. Cleage Jr. and a teacher mother Doris Graham. His father was a supporter of civil rights movement and black arts movement. Because of her father's profession, the house was full of people arguing about the future of black society and that negotiations have inspired Cleage from her childhood (Mckoy, 2009). While his father inspires her in the way of making her to meet and listen to the real writers of those times, her mother also richens her intellectually. She made the children listen and read different black writers and fostered the feeling of belonging to the society. She started her education at university of Howard at the department of playwriting in Washington D.C from 1966 to 1969 and produced two one-act plays as a student (Samuels, 2007:106). Because of her first marriage with Michael Lomax who was a politician living in Atlanta, she left her education in 1969 and moved there. She enrolled in Spelman College as a drama and playwright student and got her bachelor's degree in drama.

The first steps of her writing career started when she was a little girl. She was telling stories to her sister ceaselessly and she also discovered that even though she was not old enough to read and write, she learned how to read and write. She was so young the first time she had a pencil to note down her stories. She was at the age of four when she can manage to literate herself (Mckoy, 2009: 2).

Cleage is a prolific writer, because she has many works of art from puppet plays to novels. She is generally interested in the lifes of the black people, especially women. From the perspectives of the characters in her plays and novels, she lets the reader or audience discover the history of the colored people more or less. She has got many awards that give her the label as being one of the nation's most productive African American woman playwrights (Williams, 2007: 89). She herself defines her view and style in an anthology written by Kathy Perkins;

“As a third-generation black nationalist and a radical feminist, the primary energy that fuels my work is a determination to be part of the ongoing worldwide struggle against racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. I approach my work first as a way of expressing my emotional response to oppression, since no revolution has ever been fueled purely by intellect, no matter what the boys tell you; second, as a way to offer analysis, establish context, and clarify point of view; and third to incite my audiences or my readers to action. My work is deeply rooted in, and consciously reflective of African American history and culture since I believe that it is by accurately expressing our very specific and highly individual realities that we discover our common humanity” (1996: 68).

Her scope is to handle the issue of the history of African Americans, which makes them what they are today. In her plays, she usually takes the reader to the past to see the history waiting there to be explored and then give them the concept about the lives of the people at those times. She uses the viewpoints of the black folks without the intervention of white folks. As she herself stated above, her style of writing is not just a way of clarifying her point of view, but also a call for an action for the readers. She is deeply informed about the old days of grief of black people that she does her best to transfer historical and psychological outcomes of these experiences to nowadays. In *‘Flyin’ West’* and *‘What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day’*, the reader is informed consciously and unconsciously about the historical events of those times. It can be made clear by the utterances of the characters. For example, in the play *‘Flyin’ West’*, the characters Miss Leah and Sophie who inform the readers about the past by flashbacks. In the novel, the memories of the sisters Ava and Joyce clear the relationships of the characters and also show the past sharings. Cleage’s way of writing is concluded in such a way by Taressa Stovall in Spelman College Magazine;

“Widely acclaimed for her literary prowess and popular appeal, Cleage infuses all of her work – plays, novels, columns, poetry and essays – with her signature blend of unvarnished honesty, richly-drawn characters, sharp political consciousness and down-to-earth mother-wit. She is a writer-warrior whose pen (she writes longh and rather than on a computer) may just prove to

be mightier than the swords of violence, injustice and destruction that she battles with her words” (2007-2008: 14).

Being a writer gives her the chance to talk loudly from the different view points of her characters. Through the speeches or the events, she paves her way to the unknown or unheard happenings and sometimes she discovers what is hidden behind the curtain. The most important discovery of her is the treasure of having a family. She knows deep inside what constitutes a family and what changes in your life if you are the one who can say I have a family. She describes this internalization in African American Women Literature:

“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” (Mitchell & Taylor, 2009: 210).

In her plays, she generally focuses on the strong African American women. They are described wounded because of their sorrowful pasts. It is not the griefs she always make the reader to remember, but the struggles of the people who cope with all the disadvantages of discrimination. She notices the choice of a woman character in her works and defines it in an interview with Holloway;

“For me, there is usually a strong female character who will make her presence felt. She’s the one who gets to articulate the questions that are driving me crazy at the time, so I get to take her on the journey to find the answers. One thing I have learned is that it is bad practice to base your characters on people who you know. Even if they tell you they don’t mind, what you will find as a writer is that no matter how careful you are, no character that you create is going to be as wise, worldly, beautiful, articulate and amazing as your friends and family think they are. That means they will inevitably be disappointed at what you put down on paper, and even if they don’t tell you so directly, you will feel a slight chill in the air once the book appears. I know this, so I do not use my friends and family as characters in my work” (“Seen” www.FindArticles.com).

As she has remarked in her speech above, being a woman writer makes her use strong and directive characters in her works. While analysing the play and the novel

in this thesis, the reader can easily recognize the women characters who struggle for the well-being of their family. It is Sophie in *'Flyin' West'* and Joyce in *'What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day'* who deal with all the hardships to offer a safe and secure environment for their family. Sophie does this by helping the construction of an all black town including only black people, while Joyce does this by welcoming her sister Ava into her daily life as if she was always with her inside the house although they have spent many years away from each other.

With the help of her play and novel, Cleage shows the newly-freed blacks in *'Flyin' West'* and already freed blacks in *'What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day'* of U.S. to the reader. While reading the two works, the reader encounters now and then of the black people in U.S. and the depressions of those days and the impacts of insecurity on characters. Cleage generally focuses on race and gender. While discovering the events that have taken place in the past, it is not the important personalities who have some words to tell, on the contrary, it is the ordinary people who are the real eyewitnesses of the past. Cleage herself defines her writing;

"My response to the oppression I face is to name it, describe it, analyze it, protest it, and propose solutions to it as loud[ly] as I possibly can everytime I get the chance. I purposely people my plays with fast-talking, quick-thinking black women since the theater is, for me, one of the few places where we have a chance to get an uninterrupted word in edgewise" (Perkins & Uno 1996: 46).

Writing is a way to underline the facts for Cleage and it can be concluded from her lines that it is important for her to demonstrate her reaction to the oppression of Africans as much as possible. When she has the opportunity, she uses it to the extreme by making her characters talk quickly. The speed in speech speaks for it. It is obvious in the play with the speeches of Miss Leah and in the novel with the utterances of Joyce.

2. HISTORY OF AFRICAN AMERICANS

2.1. The Phase Until Emancipation

The very beginning of the lives of Africans in U.S. was not a will but a must. They are taken like an object as a result of an immigration policy of American 'slave traders' ("African" <http://en.wikipedia.org>). The newly conquered continent needs workforce at the virgin fields of plantation which they also captured from the hands of the Indians. It is actually the 'European' slave ships which transport the captured Africans from their homelands to America (Laporte and Tolbert 2005: 50-53). This was because of the reason stated in "The Reluctant Welfare State: American Social Welfare Policies: Past, Present, and Future" by Jansson; *'The new world was a labor hungry society because land had to be cleared, roads built, and crops raised in a harsh environment'* (2005: 53).

As today's African Americans are the descendants of their slave ancestors, it was not really easy for them to reach these years of freedom. Even if they have gained their freedom, they can still feel the severe atmosphere of those years. Their lives have started as slaves on the dream land of the whites. They were the ones who are in charge of everything that comes to one's mind about being a slave; running errands, plantation, raising white children and amusing their masters. It took a long time for them to rejoin the living of nowadays. Being a part of the society they were born, they thought that being slave is a kind of lifestyle for them in this world.

"The raw human material, the biological organism, is transformed into a social person capable of participating in the life of his or her society only in the course of social experience. Due to this reason, the only experience they have was slavery in the land of U.S. , they started to feel this fact like something needed to be a part of" (Chinoy, 1965: 32).

Actually they are first brought as 'indentured slaves' which has the chance to be freed after getting old or by the consent of their masters. They were supposed to be replaced, however it was not easy to get the advantage of white people as workers when compared to their black correspondence. This caused the legalization of black slave ownership ("African" <http://en.wikipedia.org>). As it is stated by Laporte and Tolbert in their book "African Americans a Historical Perspective: A National

Educational Program”, their history in U.S. has seen many attempts of escape to look for a better life, but the result of this caused them much worse pain than before (2005: 4). Like today, U.S. was the country where one came to look for a rich life in terms of high standard living. It suited the expectations of the European commanders, whereas for the Africans it was an involuntary action (Laporte and Tolbert, 2005: 4).

The destiny of Africans as slaves starts in a really dehumanizing way. There was no difference of sex, status, age or size. Their voyage to U.S. started in a ‘tightly packed vessels across the wretched Middle Passage’ and they have become ‘the planters, miners, merchants and even missionaries.’ The trade of Africans ceased in 1888, and it is estimated that the loss of people in Africa continent was between 50 to 100 million (Bryce and Tolbert 3-20).

They were continuously used as properties of their masters without having any right to speak. They were exploited so badly. Mostly the black women are the ones who suffered many times more than the black men. They were raped to have more babies who could work on the fields later. They were despised so much that rebellion was the only way to change this order. They have a concrete reason to rebel against this system and the same system created its own ‘revolutionary spirit’ from the colored people (“Revolution” <http://en.wikipedia.org>).

During those times of history, the conflict between the South and the North has started to rise up. While the North represent the more developed part of the newly emerged ideas that support the rights of human beings in today’s world, the South preferred not to accept these notions. According to their perspective, it was an attempt to cease their production of soil which was the only thing for sustenance. It requires the possession of slaves as it is the only way they know since the early days of their existence. They misunderstood the reaction of the northerners and interpreted it as if the North actually planned to cease the South and to win the power in its hands in the name of human rights. The condition is summarized as;

“Slavery, a part of life in America since the early colonial period, had become more acceptable in the South than the North. Southern planters relied on slave labor to run larger farms or plantations and make them profitable. Slaves also provided labor for various household chores. The institution of slavery did not sit well with many northerners who felt that slavery was uncivilized and should be abolished. Those who held those beliefs, called abolitionists, thought that owning slaves for any reason was wrong. They vehemently disagreed with the South's laws and beliefs concerning slavery. Yet slavery had been a part of the Southern way of life for well over 200 years and was protected not only by state laws, but Federal law as well. The Constitution of the United States guaranteed the right to own property and protected citizens against the seizure of property. A slave was viewed as property in the South and was important to the economics of the Southern cotton industry. The people of the Southern states did not appreciate Northerners, especially the abolitionists, telling them that slave ownership was a great wrong. This created a great amount of debate, mistrust, and misunderstanding” (Monday: 2).

It was the beginning of an internal conflict for the Americans about having slaves for their livelihood. It seemed unacceptable for the North as they were much more affected by the newly-emerged ideas on human rights and equality. In addition to protection of the human rights, unlike the South, the North has been developing its industry depending on technology which started to put the workforce of people at the second stage. This difference of livelihood in U.S. divided the country into two; the ones who were in favor of slavery while the others were not. This phase of history is especially important to mention in this thesis to understand the struggles of the characters in *‘Flyin’ West’*. This conflict and the war have created the environment for freedom for the black and for the characters in the play. The characters of the play are “flying west” thanks to the struggles of Lincoln and the amendments. They rush for freedom so fast that they have left so many belongings behind. West is the place to be free and ensures a secure atmosphere for a family.

Another major problem between the sides was the unbalanced dispersion of the population. The newly-industrialized North attracted the people to move; as it was a big opportunity to have a well-paid job and a better life with one's own family. This made the South lose its charm for people who need job to live. As one portion of the nation grew larger than another, people began to perceive the nation as divided into sections, distinguished by different economies, cultures, and even values. This was called sectionalism (Monday:1). Considering all of these, it was inevitable to create an atmosphere for a war which is called 'the Civil War'. It was kind of a war that gave a really big harm to U.S. unlike any other. This is because the brothers fell into conflict between each other: The South and The North.

The war started harsh and mean. Meanwhile, the chosen president Abraham Lincoln was ready to announce Emancipation Proclamation, in other words, the 13th Amendment. It was banishing the peonage totally and there could not be any action that made the South much angrier. This act caused the death of the president. Abraham Lincoln was the first assassinated president of U.S. Yet, the expectations of his death did not come true. The South could not stop the North to abolish slavery and free the slaves. The 13th Amendment was followed by the 14th and the 15th Amendments. The first guaranteed 'individual constitutional rights to black Americans', the latter provided equality to vote for the colored people like whites. These developments trigger the process of freedom.

The first Declaration of Independence is written by Thomas Jefferson. This is followed by Emancipation Law, which outlaws slavery, has been accepted in 1863; but it did not solve the problem of slavery. The increase of rebellion made the government to take effective measures to finish the Civil War of the slaves. The 13th Amendment was the beginning of these steps which in following years procure the end of enslavement in U.S.

All the life experience of the colored people did not kill what goes on living in their inner world. They are still the people from a different continent with their own cultural heritage. There were some changes in their way of life, whereas there were still vivid memories of the lives they used to have. They do not totally melt inside

the pot of U.S. For this reason, they can protect the most important basic unit of their community in an unprecedented way. *They share a history of enslavement, acculturation, and racial oppression which give relevance to the initial bond of African heritage* (Scott 2005: 3).

With this heritage, the characters in *'Flyin' West'* are bounded to each other concretely. The oldest member at the house does not have a blood connection to the sisters, but the thing they have is more precious. They are bounded by color, culture, history and mostly slavery.

The difference between the black slaves and the American whites are explained really clearly by Charles E. Farger as he states that;

"The American Negro is different from American whites. He has his own history, centering around the experience of slavery and its effects, and more recently including the rediscovery of his African heritage. The Negro has distinct cultural patterns—patterns of speech, patterns of music and dance, patterns of self-expression and relationship—which may have been produced by this history, but which have outlived it and are now surviving on their own creative energy and integrity. These like white ethnic characteristics will not and should not disappear in the future. It is indeed insidious "subterfuge for white supremacy" to expect blacks to abandon this heritage as the price explicit or implicit for integration via assimilation into America's "mainstream" (1967: 5).

The beginning of life on U.S. territory for the Africans and the progress of belonging to each other inside their community are the results of slavery. The black community has its roots in U.S. without their will, but it is their will to have freedom and equality in this land of whites. The way to freedom is won slowly but solidly by the struggles of Africans and newly-emerged human rights norm in the world. It is important to see the phases that the Africans endure in U.S. to understand the point of Cleage and her characters in her two works. It is not easy or all of a sudden for the Africans to achieve a full freedom. The reader can witness the struggles of the characters in the play and the novel. While the early days of emancipation is the

times of the play *'Flyin' West'*, whereas freedom phase can be seen in the novel *'What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day'*.

2.1.1. Sharecropping

The times following the Civil War is labelled with the emergence of sharecropping. It is the times in which the characters in the play have endured. This phase of history is so important to comprehend the flow of the play and the characters' behaviours. Without a knowledge on post-civil war history, it would be hard for the reader to completely analyze the play. Hence, it is important to mention about the phases of African Americans after their first victory.

After the Civil War, there were some suggestions to settle the ex-slaves of the white man down to the new world. One of these suggestions was the sharing of the crop between the white and the black and it is labelled like 'Sharecropping'. In a simple way, the blacks who were set free found themselves in the middle of an economic survival. They do not have any background about the new settlement of the industrialized world as their only life covers serving to the white master. Unlike its name, it was not sharing but making the black again servant of the white in an indirect way. The clear and plain explanation of Sharecropping is stated like that in Reference Dictionary;

"A system of farming that developed in the South after the Civil War, when landowners, many of whom had formerly held slaves, lacked the cash to pay wages to farm laborers, many of whom were former slaves. The system called for dividing the crop into three shares one for landowner, one for the worker, and one for whoever provided seeds, fertilizer, and farm equipment" ("Sharecropping"; <http://dictionary.reference.com>).

It has the inclination of a property shared equally, whereas the practice was not like that. It generally highlights the benefit of the white landowner over the ex-black slaves. All in all, it was the landlord who said the last word for the sharing of what has been earned.

The landowners, whose daily life mostly depend on agriculture, were the ones who were left without workers with the Emancipation Law. This created the need for a new arrangement which enables the landowner to go on his own life with the

workers under his command. This is supplied with the establishment of ‘Freedman Bureau’. *‘This Bureau was a federal agency set up by Congress in 1865 to provide food, clothing, shelter, and education for the former African Americans slaves’* (Reconstruction, ch. 5). Its founders were the white republicans in Northern America. They wanted to prevent the newly-freed blacks to float northern part to find jobs in newly emerged industrial factories. They ordain new cannon by providing the already known profession for the colored people. In short, Donna Franklin states the condition in her book – ‘Ensuring Inequality the Structural Transformation of the African American Family’ - ; *‘it provides former slaves the opportunity to be paid wages for their labor and monitors the problems encountered by this new labor force’* (1997: 28). From the surface, it seemed as a way to ease the blacks’ transition to the free world, but the aim beneath the surface was to ‘protect the interests of the planters’ (Franklin 1997: 29).

With the attraction of having a house to live and a share from the work they have already been doing for years, the blacks accepted this new offer as a way of resurrection. Normally, the wives of the blacks accepted the housework of the white women, because this is the only thing they have known since they were brought to U.S. The only difference is that their work finishes in the evening and they can decide how to raise their own children without having any interference from their ex-owners. It was like having a life of their own, however most of them have stayed ‘dependent on the same group of people they had served as slaves’ planters’ (Franklin 1997: 30). So, it can be concluded as a half-dependency when compared to the past’s whole-dependency.

“Both the landowner and the sharecropper gambled that there would be a crop to sell at harvest, but the owner got the money first. If the rent took all the profits, then the sharecropper got nothing that year. Plus, most sharecroppers had to borrow money to pay for seeds and other supplies during the farm year; often, they could not pay all their bills. It was difficult, then, to ever escape the debt payments year after year since the interest rate was high. Many black families did little more than get by” (Reconstruction, ch. 5).

It is a substantial step for the Africans into freedom and solidarity to have a territory of their own. Although it seems a positive development at first, the blacks were again

subjected to white supremacy. They were freed into foreign lands and these lands were under the command of the whites. They cannot save themselves from the white supremacy totally, on the contrary, they were left alone and bounded to the whites. They have no right to ask for their rights from the whites as the whites are accepted rightful everytime. In *'Flyin' West'*, it is clearly stated that the characters are dependent to the whites to continue their lives. Their destiny is in the hands of whites. To abolish this dependency, the characters in the play are struggling in their own way. While one of them is trying to establish black institutions, the other character shoulders the historical bondage by reminding their pasts to the other characters.

2.1.2. Homestead Act of 1862 and Its Reflections on *Flyin' West*

Another solution like sharecropping was Homestead Act of 1862. Its path was alike sharecropping, but this also gives the black to have their own land. It seemed to give a means for colored people to have a land for themselves. It also prevented the confiscation of their plantations with the full support of the congress as stated in *'The Origins of Southern Sharecropping'* (Royce, 1993). It provides a small acre of land to the black that enables them to work without the command of a master and to be independent in terms of their way of living. This time is also important for the flow of *'Flyin' West'*. Hence, the playwright Cleage informs the reader about the historical background of the play at the beginning of *'Flyin' West'*.

Although as a short term target, it seemed to answer the real purpose of placing the black in the working class of U.S. ; however, in the forthcoming days, the reality started to show itself. The first problem about homesteading is that the separated land was not really fertilized to provide a life for the colored people. Second, the congress wanted entrepreneurs to bring some investment to these lands to supply it financially. On contrary to the plan, this caused the reduction of the land for homesteaders. Third, because of the congress' extending the time to give the land totally to the black homesteaders allow some cheaters and speculators to have the land of them without being bounded to their own territory. The last reason of the failure of Homestead Act was the inadequate personnel to follow all the homesteaders and their demands on the land. While there were those facts needed to be foreseen before

the failure, still the blacks were happy as not being under the command of any white on their own land (“Homestead” <http://www.enotes.com>).

All in all, this provides the ordinary citizen to have a chance to be an individual and ‘to prove his self-assertation, perseverance and hard work.’ This is what provided to the characters in *‘Flyin’ West’*. It gives a chance to move to the west and to get rid of the hands of the South.

2.1.3. The Reagents Against Amendments, Sharecropping and Homestead Act

It was still unacceptable for the South to respect the law. As it is clearly stated by O’Callaghan in ‘An Illustrated History of the USA’, former slaves are obliged to serve as slaves and do not forget the real and obvious fact that they are not white (1990: 54). There were many ways to refrain the black from asking for equality. The names were several and different; but they consist only one aim: to keep them slaves like before and as always forever.

The first solution came under the name of black code. It asserted the limitation of colored rights in a severe way. The blacks have no right like before and this time, they were all written as codes. White supervising was their usher in daily life; because they cannot even go out without the presence of their owner (“The Christian Black Codes” *Working men from the east* <http://moorbey.wordpress.com>). It seems like nothing has changed in the land of slaves despite of the Amendments in the eyes of the South, however; it would not be as easy as before. Although they wrote such codes to implement, the soul of independence and power freed the blacks.

Another solution which is extremely bloody is the emergence of Ku Klux Klan (KKK). As it is stated in ‘Racism in America: The Rise of the Ku Klux Klan in Minnesota’ they were identifying themselves as having the white supremacy over black and it was the most innocent definition of blood, fear and violence (Carlson, 1). Wearing white robes and hoods to conceal their identities, the KKK spreads terror through the African American (AA) homes and communities. They burned crosses to create fear, murdered many people, beated and whipped many AAs. On the way of showing the commander, they even gave harm to the whites who supported the rights of the black in U.S.

They were so powerful that the murders or vandalisms cannot be proven. They were highly encouraged and supported by the Southern white governors and people. First they began night patrolling to catch the runaway slaves and handed in them to their owners. As they feel superior to blacks, the idea of a black man who runs away from a white man makes them to believe that it is their duty to punish the run-away before taking them to the holder. The punishment can be whipping in a public place and there comes the lynchings which are chosen to spread more fear among the newly so-called freed slaves. Their way of thinking gives them to do anything they want to do to their properties-slaves or runaways- without the intervening of the law, the owners or the state. It paved the way for a terror group KKK. In *'Flyin' West'*, we can see the tracks of lynchings from the utterances of the characters. They remind the readers and characters about the danger outside home. Even one of the characters waiting with a shotgun under her hands for the protection of the family's land and home.

They started to night rides by horses to the houses of black people with torches in their hands to make them afraid to run away, rebel or ask for any right or equality. Then, they started wearing white costumes to hide themselves and to get the advantage of spiritual background of Africans. It is stated in a compilation prepared by Southern Poverty Law Center;

"Relying heavily on the oral testimony of contemporary blacks whose parents or grandparents were slaves, Fry concludes that many slaves were superstitious, with real fears of ghosts, "haints," and the supernatural" (Bond 2011: 12).

This does not mean that they reach their goal and make them afraid of the ghosts. The blacks were generally aware of the fact that they are the whites who were wearing sheets on themselves; but the fear was stable. *'The Klan was increasingly used as a cover for common crime or for personal revenge'* (Bond 2011: 13).

From the opposite side, the action has proven the fact that; the South is severe and less-educated compared to its brother rival the North. KKK has both positive and negative effects on the life of U.S. This urged the South took some measures to prevent the negative effects. As a result, there were the feared people, losses of lives and lynchings. The white supremacy tried to reawaken a few times more but never

succeeded in its purpose to control the Black people again (“Crow” <http://www.jimcrowhistory.org>).

While searching for the ways to manipulate the freedom of the ex-slaves, the South was trying hard. As a way of making fun of the blacks, there was a character created by the whites and named as “Jim Crow” - a man who dyes his skin to black- and he was acting stupidly to entertain the whites. It cannot be calculated that this show will also turn into a nightmare for the colored people. The white adapted this character under the title of the supposed equality, but on the contrary, it became the symbol of new restrictions for the black society. At those times, everything was separated; but shown under the motto of ‘seperate but equal’. The schools, restaurants, hairdressers, cinemas and theatres and many more were secluded from the black people. They have a different building or only restricted hours to facilitate from the natural rights of being a citizen of U.S. Harvard Sitkoff mentions in ‘The Struggle for Black Equality;

“Atlanta passed a law that forbade blacks and whites from visiting the municipal zoo at the same time, while Mississippi insisted on separated taxi cabs, and Oklahoma segregated its telephone booths. Florida and North Carolina did not permit white students to use textbooks that had been touched by black students. There was one hospital bed available for every 139 American whites in the 1920s, but only one for every 1,941 blacks” (1993: 5-6).

In a thesis of Masaryk University, the condition of colored people is summarized by Hana Markova. Blacks had never experienced anything else than refusals and humiliation. They were painfully aware of certain death in case of showing defiance against Jim Crow. The severe fact about this endurance that there was no one who would punish or judge the whites for their racial hatred and connected behavior, only convinced them of the correctness of their actions (2008).

However stupid they seem, there is the experience they have been internalising for years. They are aware of the fact that there is only their color that makes the distinction, but one cannot change the nature of oneself. As they were gaining the self-confidence and power of defiance, some obstacles were passed through by small steps. There were sit-ins organized at the school canteens of high schools. Black

students started to use the seats of the white students at lunch time. It was a harmless but effective way of defiance (“Brief” <http://ist.lpgs.org>). Then comes the ‘Freedom Rides’. The colored started to travel in the seats of the whites. It was a reason for arrest of a black woman who refused to give her seat to a white. This triggered the flame of resistance. Along the way, they just form a basis for the concrete and real movement: Civil Rights Movement.

The cycle that brings the blacks into a unity and interdependency was the result of all these inhuman behaviours of the whites. The South tried everything to regain the power of slavery into its hands again. They took the advantage of the African culture like using sheets to make them scared. In spite of the fact that the black were not the foolish people like they used to be and they could fight against the oppression of the whites easier than before. It was their own culture that the whites try to abuse against them, but they could not manage. From the perspective of the whites, the Africans are superstitious and not clever enough to understand the hidden whites under these masks. In the history, the whites tried every way to humiliate the Africans. The reader can also see the stories of the characters in the play and the novel vividly. It is clear that newly-freed characters in *‘Flyin’ West’* and already-freed characters in *‘What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day’* show the reader that the memory of the black people has never been erased.

2.2. The Civil Rights Movement

The core event that enables the black feel free and secure starts with the Civil Rights Movement. It is really necessary to realize that this movement is the most important scene for the AAs. Reaching this point has caused too many people to suffer and die. In the works of Cleage in this thesis, the reader starts with the beginning of freedom atmosphere until the final years of 20th century. It is inevitable not to mention about the last effective step into freedom of the black on the land of American.

The reasons for ending the attitude of the whites against the black were countless. It was time for a full resolution to ask for the real equality, not in the pages of the law. It should affect the minds of the people, at least, to show that they are not the society that they used to know and they will never be again. Washington March

calls for black people all over the world in a non-violent meeting to shout at the nation and they deserve freedom as much as the whites do. The leader was Martin Luther King (MLK).

“The movement reached its climax on Aug. 28, 1963, in the March on Washington, a massive demonstration in Washington, D.C. , to protest racial discrimination and to demonstrate support for civil rights laws then being considered in Congress. The highlight of the march, which attracted more than 200,000 black and white participants, was King's historic “I Have a Dream” speech” (“Civil” <http://school.eb.com>).

MLK’ speech has summarized all the experience of black people vividly. These lines are remarkable to show the picture of the problem;

“But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition” (“Americanrhetoric” <http://www.americanrhetoric.com>).

The speech ‘I have a dream’ section has shown that this dream will come true with the renascence of millions of AAs. Some examples from the lines are;

“I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal.”

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood.

I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a dream today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a dream today! ("Americanrhetoric"<http://www.americanrhetoric.com>).

This march has made a fundamental change in the lives of the black people. All in all, they embraced their rights in a total lawful way with the acceptance of the "Civil Rights Act" in 1964 and followed by the "Voting Rights Act" in 1965 ("Brief" <http://ist.lpgs.org>). As in "OAH Magazine of History" stated by Kevin Gaines, the activists and the leaders of the movement were conscious of the worldwide perspective of the freedom and they did not just seek equality, at the same time, they acquired the honor of being a human. It occurred both in local and national level (2007: 57).

As MLK is the trigger of the acts of civil rights and voting rights, Malcolm X is the representative of black Muslims in AA community. He was also a really important figure in the scene of freedom and gaining equality. He fights against the discrimination again via religion and self-determination. He tried to raise the concept of value of AA in their own eyes by supporting the economical growth of the black market (Healey, 2012: 184).

These two leaders are the symbols of AA freedom and emancipation, but the cruelty of the whites is bigger than their expectations. They are both assassinated; but the way they open to the eyes of the black people was enough to develop day by day. It was the trigger of self-esteem and self-confidence for AAs in U.S. to have the legal results of freedom. While reading '*Flyin' West*', the utterances of Miss Leah gives

information about all the pain they have endured for many years. Freedom phase starts with the play and in WLLC, the reader witnesses the times of freedom in 90's.

3. AFRICAN AMERICAN FAMILY

3.1. The Elements That Form African American Family

3.1.1. What Is A Family?

The main point of this thesis is to show the importance of belonging to a family and feeling secure in this very family. As a whole, the concept of family is really crucial to convey the meaning of the play and novel of Pearl Cleage. Therefore, family issue is explained in a detailed way from the very simple meaning to the special meaning for the AAs.

People who live together are bounded to each other by history, culture or a common aim. This connection can be a result of a psychological or financial need; but whatever it includes, if people are sharing something, feeling of belonging is inevitable. Family is accepted as the smallest social unit of a society, is a well-known definition. According to Oxford Dictionary, family is ; *'A group consisting of two parents and their children living together as a unit'* ("Family" <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>).

Like the meaning that comes to the minds first, there are some other definitions which change according to the participants of the company like;

"... 'matrilocal (a mother and her children); conjugal (a wife, husband, and children, also called nuclear family; and consanguinal (also called an extended family) in which parents and children co-reside with other members of one parent's family' ("Family" <http://en.wikipedia.org>).

According to the seminars carried out in Wisconsin, there is no exact definition for family as it comes into existence from the different perspectives of people living in a community. The expectations of the individuals can change according to the cultural heritage ("Wisconsin" <http://familyimpactseminars.org>). In these seminars, family is categorized into two different headings as structural families and functional families.

At the first claim, they offer some definitions which give importance on the characteristics of the members *'who share a place of residence, or who are related through blood ties or legal contracts'*. At the latter claim, they describe the participants from a different angle. According to this proposal, family members have

function in the unity of family such as *'sharing of resources and property, caring and supportive relationships'*. Despite of the changes that occur while defining the family, more or less, they are interdependent with someone or a group of people because of those reasons which are given at the two divisions of the family. In the play *'Flyin' West'*, the characters Minnie and Fan are bounded by blood to each other whereas there are also Sophie and Miss Leah who also stay with the sisters. Sophie is just a companion to Minnie and Fan before their flying to west and Miss Leah is just an old neighbour of common inheritance. So, it is easy to see the divisions in the play. Like *'Flyin' West'*, the reader can also witness the divisions in the novel *'WLLC'*. In the novel, one can see the sisters bounded by blood like Ava and Joyce. There is also a supporting relationship from the neighbour and old friend of the sisters, Eddie. The most obvious supportive role is on the shoulders of Joyce. She cares for the babies of young mothers in her community and also adopts a baby of a crack addict.

3.2. What Family Means for African Americans

For AAs, family means more than basic definitions. Their past, culture and survival from the dark years of enslavement and segregation can only be overcome by being together, in other words, being united like a family. For them, family is generally the macro-cosm of the world which includes everybody who shares the same history and color. These specialities can be easily recognized in the two works of Pearl Cleage, as the main point of the events happening in *'Flyin' West'* and *'WLLC'* is directly linked with the concept of family.

The most powerful strength of the AAs' survival after all these years of serfdom is just the result of achieving the protection of their kinship no matter how far or close they are to each other. The analysis is divided into meaningful parts like;

"Afrocentric writers have identified five major characteristics as common to African American family functioning: (a) extended family kinship networks, (b) egalitarian and adaptable family roles, (c) strong religious orientation, (d) strong education and work ethic, and (e) flexible and strong coping skills" (qt. Kane, 2000: 692).

Before starting to analyze the five different phenomenons, the explanation of the terms should be written. Kinship is a word which has the meaning of having relatives of blood from the nearest to the furthest. For the African Americans, it has another prefix called like 'extended kinship' which makes the explanation more than a blood relation. It is the sharing of the same cultural heritage, same color, same destiny and same future. This kind of relation can be seen in Pearl Cleage's very play and novel respectively. In the play, the relationship of Sophie with the real sisters Minnie and Fan; and in the novel, the relationship of Eddie with Ava and Joyce are the examples of extended kinship. The second division of family emphasizes the importance of the AAs to understand each other more than any other nation. Being the victims of enslavement, they are in favor of equality in every field of life and it is easy for them to adapt that kind of living. The third part of the division is the religious beliefs they have. Although they have converted to Christianity under the oppression of white people, they have created a blending religion of their past belief with the new one. To feel close to God and have a faith to God have made them get over the years of grief easier than expected. Another piece of their family notion is the habit they have gained because of their dark years of servility. They have learned notably deep that the only chance to eliminate the hands of a master on themselves is to be educated and work really hard. That is what Sophie is struggling to achieve in the years of newly rescued Africans from the slavery in '*Flyin' West*'. For her, the most important thing is to survive and ensure the freedom to be educated. The last but not the least important part of an African American family feature is their ability to feel the strength inside themselves to be free again with the people who share the same destiny.

The concept of extended family is literally extended. It may include the ancestors from early ages till the last descendants. First; it provides the financial backing of the child care and elderly and in addition to that, it covers the sentimental reinforcement of the household and the relatives. In the drama, Miss Leah has become the elder member by heritage bound. She is the one who gives all her experiences to the sisters and a bridge between the past and the future. What is important for the family is to share the same background. The subnet of kinship also comprises the neighborhood of the colored people who are also inside the extended

family. This is named as ‘fictive kinship’. They can be closer than your blood relatives sometimes. There can be neighbours who are labelled as uncle or aunt. This can be easily witnessed in ‘*Flyin’ West*’ again. Miss Leah is the grandmother figure who does not bear any blood connection to the sisters-Sophie, Fannie and Minnie- in fact she is just a neighbor. The difference caused by this kinship can be summarized in an article “More Than a Picnic: African American Family Reunions” ;

“That African Americans survived at all is glorious, but much of the survival is due to the fact that they helped each other, that they took care of each other, that they extended themselves not only to blood relatives but also to others. The extended family was crucial. Aunts, uncles, grandparents, and unrelated individuals who were considered part of the family all were in the neighborhood and gave moral, psychological and financial support. Raising others’ children became a natural phenomenon in African-American life. Caring for others within the family structure and community was not only a value carried over from the African legacy, but also a reaction to discrimination and the fact that many social and human services were not offered to the black community” (Vargus, 2002: 2).

The institution of slavery has concluded in the more intimate connection among the AAs. Despite the harm caused by enslavement, the possibility of separating from their real family members turned them into someone who behaves more protective to the thing they have in their hands. They were used to having different problems because of living under these circumstances. This created more adaptable people among themselves. Whenever there was a problem about someone from their community, they could be the ones who care like a mother, support like a father, share like a sister/brother or provide a shelter like a grandparent. Angela Davis-an Afro-American scholar and activist-argues that;

“The intensity of the labor demanded of slaves and the disruption of marriages and relationships between parents and children meant that people relied on a wider circle of social contacts than a nuclear family. This wider circle included both relatives and others in the community” (61).

Both in *'Flyin' West'* and *'WLLC'*, what the characters are struggling for is to protect their basic and precious unit, namely, family. All the events happening in the two works of Pearl Cleage are mostly related with the secure environment of a family atmosphere and protection of belonging among the characters.

The spiritual life of the AAs is a really significant part of their feeling like a family within their community. Like having a bound among the members of the family as a way of solidarity and endurance, the blacks have strong emotions for religion. It is not only the way through God for them; but also it is a place to be socialized inside their common fate. It is a communion that gives the chance to share your feelings with the ones who share your exact life. Other than these elements, it was a location where they can educate their hopes for future, namely their children. This is clearly stated by McKinney in "The Harvard Theological Review" that;

"The Black Church provided a means of social cohesion for its community by serving as a platform to inform and organize group members in pursuit of broadly defined group interests. In this capacity, it provided informal education for Blacks enabled them to participate in politics, and sponsored African American economic entrepreneurship" (1971: 3).

Another interpretation of the AAs giving so much consideration to church meetings is a kind of rebel against the psychology they have been experiencing because of slavery by Marx;

"One function which a minority religion may serve is that of reconciliation with inferior status and its discriminatory consequences... on the other hand, religious institutions may also develop in such a way as to be an incitement and support of revolt against inferior status" (qtd. from Marx, 1967: 15).

The church is a place to run away after a hard week of slavery, where you can find a place to get rid of your reality by chance. It is a free zone of the whites where they unite with their family and their kinship.

According to Dubois (1898); the activist and the supporter of the AA civil rights, *'The church is the only social institution of Negroes which started in the African forest and survived slavery'* (6).

"It has provided a forum for self-expression, leadership, and emotional and material support. In essence, the church is an extension of the family, the

“quintessential kin network” (Scott and Black, 1989: 22). *That links its member families together.*

Other than bearing the importance of psychological reinforcement, the church is also the place where you can continue to feel as a part of your own community in a strange land. With the motivation you obtain by seeing the people who share the same destiny with you, you can easily get socialized and understand each other. You can feel the belonging to the folks of your color and this makes you endure pretty longer and stronger (Gasman, 4). It offers ‘a measure of solace and hope’ (Jay, 2008: 5).

In the play *‘Flyin’ West’*, the biggest sister -Sophie- is the leader of the salvation of the black folks. She can understand the value of spirituality to gain power and belief inside oneself. She is the one trying to join the prays on Sundays not only for being inside the community, but also to inform the community about the developments that she is planning to make to have a better and more comfortable life. In the book, *‘WLLC’*, Cleage uses the power of church in the local community. There is a circus taking part inside the church which helps the young mothers to raise their babies consciously and carefully. Their leader this time is Joyce, the sister of Ava-the main character. So, the church has strong impact for the blacks from the beginnings of 1900’s and even today it influences the black community.

Another element of having strong relationships among the colored people is their hunger to learn and ambition to work hard to avoid the torture of the overseers and to improve their way of life. The only way for reaching freedom in the future is to get a good education like their white correspondence. Knowing the fact that, education is the key element for their rescue, they start to give a good education to their children especially with the help of their grandparents. They do not have a chance to be educated with the whites, so they have created their own educational system. The eldest family member who cannot be really productive on plantation takes the responsibility of growing up the children according to their own culture. This notion is noted by Watson and et al;

“Historically, during times of the mothers’ poverty and early childbearing, grandmothers of African descent have headed more three- and four-generation

households, initiated more fictive kin relationships, and experienced more role salience than grandmothers of European descent” (qt. from Oliver, 2008: 43).

Having a presence of an elder person in the family also helps the younger to learn their past and not to feel lost in the middle of an unknown land. Especially in *‘Flyin’ West’* the grandmother figure, Miss Leah, conducts her role as a caregiver for the sisters and as a grandmother figure for the new member of the family, Minnie’s baby. Being elder and wiser put the grandmothers at a high position for family’s sake in AA family.

“Extended family caregiving and grandparenting can be understood as forms of organization or behaviors used by the elderly to stabilize families, which are rooted in the agegraded family systems of West African culture as a means of survival amid the social, political, and economic adversities experienced by Black families” (qt. from Oliver, 2008: 43).

Grandmothers have a powerful role within the AA family system. A colored grandmother exhibits an extreme amount of power and authority within the family system. Marquita Ryan displays it in her book *“With African American Families: New Approach Possibilities”* ;

“Her role can also be one of the most complex and problematic for the therapist. The literature defines her role as a “mother and primary caretaker of her grandchildren”; she also represents a major source of strength and security for many Black children” (2000: 24).

The last component that constructs the African American family is *‘flexible and strong coping skills’* they have gained because of serfdom. Every day, they face with extraordinary demands of their masters which require the whole effort of them. It was hard to resist such kind of a life; however their family was always with them to share the same hardships. In the play *‘Flyin’ West’* , the reader reads the lines of Miss Leah about her babies. She recalls that there were times when she gave birth to her child and went on working on the farm. She even tried to hide her babies from the slaveholder not to lose them. This kind of a resistance requires strenght and determination. In the novel *‘WLLC’* ,one of the main characters Ava is also good at coping with hardships. After learning about her illness, she leaves everything behind

and starts a new life with the help of her family. Connie Kane asserts in *Journal of Black Studies*;

“The ability to survive and to cope with hardship is consistent among African American families (Barbarin, 1983; Boyd- Franklin, 1989b). Barbarin (1983) attributes this ability to a combination of other factors: recognition of racism, which reduces self-blame; religious faith; flexibility of family roles; extended family structures; paradoxical control attributions (external locus of control accompanied by high levels of personal efficacy); and reliance on informal community support networks. That is, a combination of the four major characteristics previously described results in the fifth characteristic: strong coping skills” (2000: 694).

If all the elements of African American family are overviewed, it will be more understandable to read the two plays of Cleage. It provides detailed information about their perspective on family connection. They are connected closely to each other mostly because of being in need of more belonging and caring. This situation is solved with the contribution of every person in the community, even if they are bounded by blood or not. This strength can be summarized with these lines;

“That African Americans survived at all is glorious, but much of the survival is due to the fact that they helped each other, that they took care of each other, that they extended themselves not only to blood relatives but also to others. The extended family was crucial. Aunts, uncles, grandparents, and unrelated individuals who were considered part of the family all were in the neighborhood and gave moral, psychological and financial support. Raising others’ children became a natural phenomenon in African-American life. Caring for others within the family structure and community was not only a value carried over from the African legacy, but also a reaction to discrimination and the fact that many social and human services were not offered to the black community” (Vargus, 2002: 2).

It is obvious in *‘Flyin’ West’* that being only a neighbour of the sisters does not prevent them from taking care of Miss Leah at their own house and territory. They are extended in terms of blood, history and culture; as it is the way of their lifestyle in U.S. Like *‘Flyin’ West’*, in the novel *‘WLLC’*, Joyce fights against the oppression

of black women in society and she also fights for the future of a crack-addict's baby by adopting and caring for her. As a tradition of survival, feeling belonging and providing a secure family environment are the most important cornerstones of being African in American territory.

4. FLYING WEST

4.1. The Historical Background of the Drama

Exploring the experiences of Africans in U.S. at the beginning of the thesis allows the reader to internalise the play rationally and vividly. The background information about the historical developments of Africans and their family interpretation on this land will help us link the events to the past, the history and to the family.

The drama of Pearl Cleage takes place at the years of Homesteading, in 1898 Fall. The play includes three colored sisters and an old neighbor as a grandmother figure. One of the sisters is bounded only by kinship like the old lady, sharing the same history. They were the ones who try to gain their freedom totally after what they have experienced. The Homestead Act, which they have been protecting as a matter of life or death issue, is offering '*320 acres of 'free' land, stolen from the dwindling populations of Native Americans, to US citizens who were willing to settle in the western states*' (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 72). They searched for a free life in the West by escaping the lynchings and the riots that can be witnessed almost everyday in the South. Therefore; the news to have your own land, no matter how small it is, makes the colored people rush to the West where there would be only black settlement. It seems like a paradise to them to have a right to possess a land on their own and to be the owners of it make these sisters '*Fly to West*' literally.

In the late 19th century, more than 60,000 African Americans gathered in Nashville, Tennessee to embark on a new life in the Western frontier. In an unprecedented movement that came to be known as "*The Great Migration*," former slaves and free Blacks began an exodus out of the south and staked their futures on the promise of a piece of land in the free state of Kansas. One of the communities that would form as a result of this great journey was Nicodemus, Kansas. It is here where the story of our play, '*Flyin' West*' begins (Rust, 2005: 3).

It is basically the story of three sisters who find each other as a result of the same history and hardships and are bounded to each other like a real family. Their will to be fully free from the whites unites them to have a territory of their own in the

West and they leave everything behind to have a brand new beginning in spite of the rest's suspicious looks and murmur.

The drama includes six characters, all of whom were the descendants of the slave life from the eldest to the youngest. The common point unifying them is their dreams to be a part of a family both socially and traditionally. Their effort starts with the construction of a town including all the necessary establishments without being dependent to the ex-owners, namely, the whites.

4.1.2. The Flow of the Drama

Characters

SOPHIE WASHINGTON a black woman, born into slavery, age 36

MISS LEAH a black woman, born into slavery, age 73

FANNIE DOVE a black woman, age 32

WIL PARRISH a black man, born into slavery, age 40

MINNIE DOVE CHARLES a black woman, age 21

FRANK CHARLES a very light-skinned black man, born into slavery, age 36
(Perkins and Uno, 1996: 71)

As it is mentioned before, the characters find themselves on the way to the West because of the lynchings and the riots against the Black population in the South. Violence against blacks increased in reactionary zeal, and mob rule became the norm. The KKK began a “*reign of terror*”, murdering and lynching innocent Blacks with little evidence and little justification (Rust, 2005: 10).

The characters taking the road to the West are hopeful. They share a land together and it is generally the blacks who have land in this territory. This creates an atmosphere of ‘black paradise’ for them and they work hard to really establish such kind of an occurrence. Celeste Evans includes it in her thesis “Blackness, Femaleness, and Ethics: Moral Dilemmas in Selected Plays of Pearl Cleage” ;

“The characters determine how to negotiate various life challenges, which include race and gender oppression. They are caught between the rules of the external community and the basic rules of survival for themselves and their families. The characters also tackle race and gender issues within their circle of family and friends which is the internal community” (2010).

The play includes two acts. The first includes five scenes and the the second has six scenes. The events happen within a week and they follow each other respectively. The playwright welcomes the reader with the setting of the drama. The play takes place in 1898 Fall, in Kansas. It is a house shared by the characters Sophie WASHINGTON, Miss LEAH and Fannie DOVE as a result of homesteading. There are three more characters included in the events at the next pages of the play. They include a neighbour of the sisters, Mexican Wil PARRISH, Fannie's little sister Minnie DOVE CHARLES and her husband Frank CHARLES who live in England. *The events take place in and around the house shared by SOPHIE, FAN and more recently, MISS LEAH* (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 71). The setting is written in a detailed way by the playwright, including the description of whereabouts and two characters Sophie and Miss Leah.

The first scene of act one starts at the house they live on their own land and this house is the shared property of three sisters Sophie, Fan and Minnie. The eldest character Miss Leah is only a neighbour to the sisters; but because of her age, she is under the care of Sophie and Fan. The surrounding and the furnitures are minimalistic. The reader just observes the necessary furnitures around the house like a table and chairs, a small desk and a wood burning stove. The first scene describes how Sophie comes home with requirements of the house like flour and groceries. At the prompt, the reader is also informed about Sophie's shotgun, which she will carry until the end of the play. She is content to turn back to her own home and enjoys the weather. Before the speeches of the characters begin, we can infer that Sophie is the one who takes the responsibility of household's needs and also has a shotgun under her hand. The gun symbolises the power and taking responsibility for the family members. Just then, Miss Leah shows herself. As she holds on the furniture to enter the room, the reader can understand that she is in need of Sophie and Fan's help.

Sophie and Miss Leah starts talking about the remnants of their old lifes under the command of white slaveholders. While their speeches continue, outside the house, there is a movement. The younger sister Fan is coming home with Mexican Wil Parrish. He has the roots of India and shares the same destiny with Fan. Fan returns from a walk with Wil. They are at the beginning of a romantic relationship. By their utterances, the reader learns the past of Wil, and also how he is affected by

slavery. When Fan enters home, Sophie and Miss Leah joke with Fan about her relation with Wil. The dominant issue of the house is generally the past memories of slavery. Miss Leah almost always recalls the past with its hardships. She remembers the old days so vividly that she describes everything as if she was reliving the past.

“MISS LEAH I wadn’t but fourteen when I had my first one! Got up the next morning and strapped him on my back and went back out to the field. Overseer didn’t notice him ‘til the day half over. What you got there nigger? He say to me. This here my son, I say. I callin’ him Samson like in the bible ‘cause he gonna be strong! Overseer laugh and say, good! Colonel Harrison always lookin’ for strong niggers to pick his cotton. I want to tell him that not what I got in mind for my Samson, but I kept my mouth shut like I had some sense. I ain’t never been no fool” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 80)

These lines show how tense it was living in enslavement. By this reminder, they encourage Fan to be happy about having a future with the man she loves. They all know that Wil is a good man who also loves Fan and will not give any harm to her like the whites do. In a way, it is a positive event for Fan to have a future husband like that; but this does not convince Sophie totally. She remembers in her speeches the importance of being free as a woman.

“SOPHIE Two things I’m sure of. I don’t want no white folks tellin’ me what to do all day, and no man tellin’ me what to do all night” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 80)

Cleage uses the first scene as an exposition. The readers are acquainted with the characters and some historical background about their lives. It seems that the life they have left behind has bad memories for the characters. The situation which the colored people have been suffering since the day they are first brought to U.S. is depicted with the speech of Miss Leah:

“MISS LEAH That’s cause some of them ain’t never had nothin’ that belonged to ‘em. Some of them come cause they can’t stand the smell of the city. Some of them just tired of evil white folks. Some of ‘em killed somebody or wanted to. All everybody got in common is they plunked down twelve dollars for a piece of good land and now they tryin’ to live on it long enough to claim it” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 76)

Remembering the old days of hardship encourage them to feel happier and safer at their new own land. The reader can easily understand how free they are just the way they behave. They decide on the requirements of the house and can handle them on their own. For example, at the first prompt, Sophie comes from shopping and she has taken the items just for themselves and with their own money. While recognizing the personalities, the way Fan moves inside and outside the house shows the reader how careful and kind she is. She tries to make the house fresh and beautiful by decorating it with flowers. Upon her arrival, first Miss Leah talks about her past experiences as a slave to Fan. Fan is curious about the past and she wants to record it not to forget or not let it be forgotten.

The residents are happy because their little sister Minnie is coming to visit them from England. She is the youngest and the most precious in the family and everybody feels glad to have Minnie at home again. The things in Sophie's mind make her a little nervous about Minnie's husband, Frank. Since the house and the land are the property of the sisters, Sophie plans to give Minnie her own share. One thing that makes the characters worried is the objection of Frank to his ancestors. He is not really in favor of the idea of belonging to black folks like the sisters and Miss Leah and tries to escape from his past.

Scene two shows the arrival of Minnie and Frank by train, while the sisters Sophie and Fan are there to welcome their guests. Wil is also there to help the sisters carry the luggage home. They are all happy to see Minnie, but about Frank there is a tension in the air. Even though they meet Frank with the affection of family, the reaction from Frank is not as sincere as they show. Frank is the one who reminds Minnie about their real house which is in England. He makes sure that this place is temporary for him.

“MINNIE That’s just what I told him. We’re family! This isn’t like coming for a visit. This is coming home.

FRANK But we have a home, don’t we, darling?

MINNIE Yes, of course we do. We have a lovely home.

FAN And you’re going to tell me all about...

FRANK (Interrupts her) And where is our home, Minnie?

MINNIE Frank...(He stares at her coldly.) It’s in London.

FRANK So this is really a visit, just like I said, isn't it?

MINNIE (Softly) Yes, Frank” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 85)

Frank is always cold towards Minnie and the other members of the family. He finds himself superior to them as he feels like a white man and passes himself like a white. Unlike the exposition of the play, the second scene starts with a tension. The first scene consists of worries of Minnie and Frank, but the beginning of the second scene depicts the reality of tension.

After the arrival of the little sister, the third scene starts at home with the preparation of dinner. It opens with the realization of Miss Leah's noticing the bruise on Minnie's face. Minnie tells a lie and blames her clumsiness. Having enough experience of life, Miss Leah intuitively senses something is wrong about Minnie. At the table, they talk about the life in England and they compare the different lifestyles of colored people in two different continents. While the sisters are mentioning about the past with good and bad memories, Frank complains about his hearing the same things over and over again from Minnie. Instead, he urges Minnie to talk about how they met and loved each other.

“FRANK Min's got a story, don't you darling?

MINNIE I thought you'd heard enough of my stories on the train.

FRANK But you haven't told our story, darling.

MINNIE I don't think this is...” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 90)

.....

“MINNIE Pretty soon, everybody but me had met him, or at least seen him. And then one afternoon, I was out walking and I thought I was alone, so I started singing and Frank was out walking too and he heard me.

FRANK I really scared her!

MINNIE I hadn't heard him behind me.

FRANK I was tracking her like a wild Indian!” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 91)

The behaviors of Frank irritates the rest of the family. His pushing Minnie to talk about their story, and trying to show himself to the sisters that he is not one of the negroes living in Kansas disturbs them. According to Frank, Minnie is also not the one the sisters have known before. While trying to make his point clear, he does not

think about the others' feelings. He humiliates the standards of the sisters as they have chosen to stay here to establish a black town.

"FRANK I admire the ability to adapt to trying circumstances without a lowering of standards. I wouldn't have expected to see such delicate china way out here" (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 88)

With his utterance about Indians being wild, he upsets Wil who is there with them, but he is too reckless to notice his remark.

"FRANK I was tracking her like a wild Indian!

(WIL looks up sharply, but lets it pass.)" (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 91)

As it can be seen from the prompt of Wil, the reactions of the characters can be written directly in the play; but not all of them are direct. Generally, from the flow of the utterances and the choice of words, the reader can infer the tone of the play. After the story of Minnie and Frank, Fan wants Sophie to speak of their *flying to west*. Here, it is easily distinguished from the lines of Frank that he does not want Minnie to adapt the environment; but Minnie is the one who is longing for security while being at home again. The scene ends with the ceremony of sisters for their freed life.

"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.

BOTH With all our trust...

SOPHIE And all our strength...

BOTH And all our strength...

(As they talk, FRANK walks over to the window, smoking. He looks at the women holding hands in the moonlight.)

SOPHIE And all our courage...

BOTH And all our courage...

SOPHIE And all our love.

BOTH And all our love.

(A beat)

SOPHIE Welcome home, Baby Sister.

(The three embrace, laughing happily. FRANK still watches from the window.)

(Black)" (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 93)

This depiction revives the ceremony in front of the eyes of the reader. It is one of the most important parts of the play. In this depiction, the bond among the sisters is at its highest point. They are free, strong and brave to say that they are home loudly. At the prompt, there is Frank who watches the sisters with a cigarette in his hand. His shadow is always on Minnie and her sisters. He is like an animal waiting for his prey. He is always a threat for the unity of the family and of course for their secure environment. The sisters are under the moonlight. As a general symbol, moon stands for the woman. Moonlight is not as bright as sunlight and this shows the secrecy and sacredness of the ceremony of the sisters. It just belongs to them. The third scene does not have a steady tone. The speeches of Frank and the interruptions of him towards Minnie shift the tone of the scene negatively. Even his appearance behind the window changes the serenity of atmosphere into tension.

Scene four opens in the morning of dinner with the conversation of Minnie and Miss Leah. Miss Leah talks about the old days. Minnie starts the adaptation by letting Miss Leah to braid her hair like before, however this disturbs Frank.

“FRANK (Angrily) I want you to put your hair back the way it was.

MINNIE I always wore my...

FRANK You look like a damn pickaninny! We haven't been here twenty-four hours and look at you!

MINNIE I'm sorry..." (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 96)

He goes out to check if there is a telegraph for him. He is in a kind of war with his step-siblings. Being the son of a slaveholder, he fights for the inheritance he thinks he deserves, while the siblings think vice-versa.

The last scene of act one continues that night. Minnie is surprised to see the plans of Sophie who tries to establish a fully-free black town. She gives importance to the institutions which construct a town like a post office, a bank, a school and a black church. The night is distracted with the arrival of Frank. In this scene, the reader witnesses how Frank thinks about U.S. He hates the people of his color and the territory. Minnie tries to explain his situation to her sisters by mentioning about the problems he faces because of his white siblings. She thinks that Frank behaves like that just because of the things he has been through since the day he was born. From his speech, it is clear that he has lost his right of inheritance.

“FRANK I was gambling. A gentleman’s game of poker with some of my friends from the train. Ran into them in town. And you know what? I lost. I lost everything. What there was left of it.

MINNIE You were gambling with white men?

FRANK White gentlemen, Min. And I lost every dime. And I want to thank you for that. Things were going fine until one of them asked me about the nigger woman who kept following me around the train. I laughed it off, but my luck changed after that so I know they suspected something. (He stands behind her, touching her shoulders lightly.) But I should have known better than to depend on you for luck. You’re too black to bring me any good luck. All you got to give is misery. Pure D misery and little black pickaninnies just like you. (He rubs her arms, stops, keeping his hands lightly on her shoulders. She moves away in fear.)” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 99)

With the anger, he reports that he gambles the share of Minnie away. He is so drunk that he pushes Minnie roughly to the floor in front of the eyes of her sisters. When they make a move towards Frank to give a lesson, there comes the confession of Minnie that she is pregnant. At this part of the play, the behaviours of the characters show the real characteristics of themselves. Sophie hurries her shotgun without any hesitation, Minnie tries to calm her and Frank. At last, Sophie gets Frank out of the house. The tone of the play is at its peak point at the end of act one. It is the place where the rising action starts before the climax. As it is used before by Cleage, she uses the evening as a time when bad things generally happen to the characters.

The reader confronts with the second act early the next morning of the Frank’s physical reaction to Minnie upon learning he does not have any right from his father’s inheritance. At the first scene of act two, Minnie feels worried about her husband unlike Miss Leah. Minnie tries hard to show the situation of Frank understandable to the household. She reminds that his family has rejected him, he does not feel any belonging to any country and now he is also broke. The sisters are aware that the whites are still the whites even they live in England or U.S. They have got the freedom from slavery, but this does not guarantee the whites to see the blacks

as equal as they are. It is Frank's own imagination that makes him disappointed because of his white siblings' behaviour. Sophie tries to make it clear to Minnie.

"MINNIE He's so afraid they will try to trick him out of his inheritance.

SOPHIE Of course they will!

FAN Sister, please!

MINNIE His brothers hate him.

SOPHIE His brothers used to own him!

MINNIE That's not his fault too, is it?

SOPHIE No. It's his fault for thinking that means they owe him something and if he doesn't get it, he has the right to put his hands on you" (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 101)

We realize while following the lines, in spite of being a mulatto, Frank's feelings about his identity make him severe and angry day by day towards Minnie. She is not madly in love the way she used to be. Now, she is afraid of Frank. At the end of scene one of act two, Frank turns back from downtown and appears at the yard and Minnie rushes to him. It is not easy for Frank to enter the house directly after what he has done to Minnie.

In the second scene of act two, it is the next Sunday and early morning. The sisters are getting ready for church. It is the very day when Sophie will talk to the folks about her plans for their dream town. It is also Minnie's birthday. As a gift, Fan and Sophie give the papers showing Minnie's share from the land they have. Frank's first thought is selling it; because he finds it hard to believe in a black town. He even has gambled on the land that Minnie has and asks her for selling it; but Minnie refuses it. For the sisters, it is not merely a proof enabling them to be free of enslavement, but also a sign of freedom as women.

"MINNIE None of that matters! Can't you see that none of that matters! This is the land that makes us free women, Frank. We can never sell it! Not ever!"

(Perkins and Uno, 1996: 104)

Frank blames himself for not having a land or money on his hand and he is under the effect of an inferiority complex. His anger of not being accepted as a family member by his white siblings makes him direct his anger towards Minnie, who is the person who loves him deeply.

“MINNIE I’m so sorry!

FRANK Are you? Sorry for what? Marrying a bastard?

MINNIE Don’t say that!

FRANK Do you know what this means? This means I’ve got nothing. Not a dime. Nothing.

MINNIE You can sell your books.

FRANK Don’t be so stupid. (Pacing) They think they can make me an ordinary Negro. That’s what they think. They think they’re going to have a chance to treat me colored and keep me here where every ignorant white man who walks the street can make me step off to let him pass. They think they can pretend I’m nothing and—presto—I’ll be nothing.

MINNIE You won’t let them do that.

FRANK Let them? They’ve done it! We don’t even have passage back to London. We’re stuck here being niggers. Common, ordinary, niggers!”
(Perkins and Uno, 1996: 104)

Feeling himself worthless and not belonging to the black people make Frank much angrier and more inferior. He thinks that the only way to be free is to have money. Money would provide his acceptance to a white society, but it is not as easy as he thinks of it. He tries to get the deed of Minnie from her, but Minnie does not let him. Taking the advantage of being at home alone with Minnie, Frank uses physical oppression. At the end of the scene, he achieves his goal by threatening Minnie and her sisters with death. He even declares that he shows to the whites Minnie as being a black whore for him to the whites in the train.

“MINNIE Sophie would never sell this land to speculators. Not for a million dollars.

FRANK It wouldn’t be all of it. Just your fair share. The town is full of people looking to buy some of this land before your sister gets that damn rule passed. This is the chance we’ve been waiting for. A chance for me to get back on my feet. To show my brothers I don’t need their money.

MINNIE They’re not your brothers. They don’t even claim you!

FRANK They don’t have to claim me. I look just like them!

MINNIE No, Frank. I can’t ask Sister to split up this land.

FRANK I'm your husband. Don't you ever tell me no!

MINNIE Don't, Frank! (Moving quickly out of reach) I don't care what you do to me, but I won't let you hurt our baby!

FRANK (He grabs her arm and brings her up against him sharply.) Don't you ever threaten me as long as you live, do you understand me? Do you? (She nods silently.) I'll kill you right now, Min. I'll break your damn neck before your precious sisters can hear you holler. I'll kill everybody in this house, don't you understand that? You want to know who I told those white men you were, Min? You really want to know? (She struggles again, but he holds her.) I told them you were a black whore I won in a card game. (He laughs and presses his mouth to hers roughly.)

(Blank)'' (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 105-106)

Frank goes crazy while losing his inheritance and Minnie's refusal for giving her share to him to sell to the speculators makes him worse. Even Minnie's being pregnant does not change his reaction towards her. While Minnie is slow and sure towards Frank, he is so sharp and furious. Frank's behaviours are depicted at prompts to show how harsh he behaves.

On Sunday afternoon at the third scene of act two, Frank tries to fool Sophie and Fan that Minnie has already given the right to use her share. They cannot believe in his words. While Sophie and Frank are arguing, the reader can witness the fact that Minnie was brutally beaten by Frank and hardly stands out of the bed. It finishes when Fan sees what happened to Minnie.

In the evening of the same Sunday, at the fourth scene of the second act, Fan and Wil talk about Frank's movements and they try to understand what he really feels. It is clear that he made Minnie to sign the deed. There is a kind of planning stated. Nothing is clear. Wil has been charged to keep Frank in town away from the house, while Sophie goes shopping to complete the list that Miss Leah has given to her. There is a suspense in the atmosphere. Sophie is really determined to solve this problem. It is not easy to accept that when they are free from the white supremacy, she will not let anyone from her own color to give harm to her little sister Minnie.

"SOPHIE This morning, while I was standing in that church painting a picture of the future of this town, he beat her and did God knows what else to her in

this house. Where she's always been safe. We can't let him do that, Fan. All the dreams we have for Nicodemus, all the churches and schools and libraries we can build don't mean a thing if a colored woman isn't safe in her own house" (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 110)

Security and freedom at home are the dispensable things that the sisters have been fighting for many years. They will not let anyone take this feeling away from her. Now, the control is in the hands of Miss Leah. She has a solution for the problem and Fan is really suspicious about it. Miss Leah has the solution from her own colored people, one woman who comes to the plantation that has served for years. They have the remnants of their culture and they do not hesitate to use it against the enemy if there is a threat to the secure family environment.

The following scene, scene five of act two starts on Monday morning. At this scene, Fan is at a leading role. She is the one who performs the penalty to Frank. Fan convinces Frank on the fact that they want to buy the share of Minnie from him. Although he does not totally believe in this, Frank only focuses on the money that he gets and does not question any detail. Fan offers a piece of apple pie to Frank which brings the end of his life. This brings the freedom of soul and feeling secure at home with one's family.

"(She watches him as he tries to stand, but can't. He looks at her in a panic, then slumps over: dead. FAN shudders slightly: it's over. She composes herself, goes to the door and waves a signal to SOPHIE and WIL, who come immediately. WIL checks the body to be sure FRANK is dead. He nods to SOPHIE and they begin gathering FRANK'S things to remove the body. MINNIE and MISS LEAH, hearing the activity, enter from the back. MINNIE moves slowly from her injuries and from her reluctance to see the result of their collective action. They see that FRANK is dead. MISS LEAH watches MINNIE who moves toward the body then stops, looking at FRANK with a mixture of regret and relief. She approaches the body slowly, her anger and fear battling her bittersweet memories of the love she once felt for FRANK. She reaches out and touches him tentatively, realizing the enormity of what they have done. She draws back, but reaches out again, almost involuntarily, to touch his arm, his hand, his shoulder. We see her move through a complex set

of emotions, ending with her knowledge of the monster FRANK had become. Her face now shows her resolve and even her body seems to gain strength. She steels herself and reaches into FRANK'S pocket to withdraw the deed. She clutches it in her hand then looks to SOPHIE, who stands watching her. MINNIE takes a step toward SOPHIE and extends the deed to her in anticipation of SOPHIE demanding the return of the deed. Instead, SOPHIE re-closes MINNIE'S hand around the deed and gently pushes MINNIE's hand with the deed back to her. MINNIE, grateful and relieved, and finally safe, clutches the deed to her chest with both hands.)

(Black)” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 113)

The prompt before the falling action and resolution shows all the character's approach to Frank in this new situation. All the adjectives used for Minnie make the reader realize that all the danger against a secure family environment has ended. They are all relieved to be together again without the existence of any enemy against their security. The tone of the play starts to decrease at the end of this scene.

The play finishes with the sixth scene after seven months with a new member in the family, the baby of Minnie. The sisters are getting ready for dance and Miss Leah looks after the baby. Being the eldest of the family and also the grandmother make Miss Leah become a grandmother figure. For the perspective of AAs, the grandmother figure is really important for the new generations. She is the woman full of experience and a bridge between the past and present. When they leave the house, Miss Leah starts a conversation with the little baby by mentioning the struggles of these colored women to be free and rocks the baby.

“MISS LEAH Yes, my granddaughter. We got plenty to talk about, me and you. I'm going to tell you about your Mama and her Mama and her gran'Mama before that one. All those strong colored women makin' a way for little ol' you. Yes, they did! Cause they knew you were comin'. And wadn't nobody gonna keep you from us. Not my granddaughter! Yes, yes, yes! All those fine colored women, makin' a place for you. And I'm gonna tell you all about 'em. Yes, I sure am. I surely am... (MISS LEAH rocks the baby, crooning softly to her, SOPHIE continues to spin slowly in the moonlight as the lightsfade to black)”
(Perkins and Uno, 1996: 115)

The last scene ends by the hope for a future. In the end, they are all free and safe on their own land. Having African roots do not let them swerve against their own heritage unlike Frank. Being together and belonging to each other are the vital elements of being a family. They succeed in their own roles as being a grandmother, an elder sister, a neighbour or someone who shares the same destiny.

4.2. Dreams of the Characters

Dreams are the inevitable component of the play and the novel. As the characters are in search of their dreams in life, it is important to understand their hopes for future. As *'Flyin' West'* depicts the days just after salvation, the dreams of the characters are easy to notice for the reader. On that account, it is essential to mention about the dreams of the characters in turn. Throughout the play, the reader comes across the dreams of the characters directly or indirectly. It can be understood from the speech turns of the characters. All the members of the characters' main objective is to live freely without the oppression of the white. For this, every member has his/her own way.

In the house, Sophie is the witty character as it is suggested in her name. She tries to clean the tiniest trace of the whites and she is working on a black town, in other words, a black paradise with all the necessary institutions. Her way of constructing a paradise happens with the new planning of the town that includes a school for education, a post office for intercommunication and so on. Throughout the play, we see Sophie with documents about the construction of the institutions or she is ready for a presentation to the people of newly freed black town. The playwright makes Sophie's dreams concrete by giving the details about her preparations at prompts. *'...SOPHIE is pulling some papers from her desk. Some of these are rolled maps or plans, etc. These are SOPHIE'S plans for the development of the town...'* (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 97). Witnessing the papers at home and her struggle for a free –constructed town make the reader believe in her dream easier.

While Sophie is busy with these struggles, Fan is at the beginning of a romantic relationship with an ex-slave like herself. His name is Wil and his past is linked to Indians. Fan emphasizes the importance of love among the characters. She believes in real love and with the help of real love, the dreams of the sisters can

easily be conducted. She is the one who encourages Minnie to see the love of Frank for her.

“FAN You love Frank, don’t you?

MINNIE I used to love him so much...

FAN You still love him. I can see it on your face. You two can work it out. I know you can. For better or for worse, remember?

MINNIE I’ll try. I’ll really try” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 102)

While Minnie is nervous about the behaviours of Frank towards herself, Fan just reminds her about the value of love and tries to convince Minnie about his love. In her world, there can be problems between the couples, but the love between them can solve all the troubles. She deeply believes in the power of love. Her dream of a world with love and affection seems accessible, but not all the human beings in the world believe in love as innocently as Fan does. Because of this reason, her perspective to life is a little incredible when one think about all the past experiences of the black. She also furnishes the house with fresh flowers. She keeps the free souls like Sophie, Miss Leah and Minnie fresh and strong like the flowers inside the house and she struggles to create a fresh and beautiful environment for the sisters.

In addition to Fan, Miss Leah also stays at the center of the story as being the eldest. She has the role of a mother, a caregiver, a grandmother and represents history. With the help of the memories of Miss Leah, Fan writes a book telling the story of the black people in U.S. All she dreams of is to ease the process of gaining full independence from the white. For this aim, she recalls the past of the black and shows how much they deserve those free years.

“FAN (Coaxing) Let’s just finish the one we were working on Sunday night.

MISS LEAH I keep tellin’ you these ain’t writin’ stories. These are tellin’ stories.

FAN Then tell them to me!

MISS LEAH So you can write ‘em!

FAN So we can remember them try” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 80)

In a way, she performs as a recorder of history with the help of Miss Leah. By this way, she carries the past into the present and to the future. She creates a book of history and her dream of keeping the experiences alive and mobile for the future generations.

The last but not the least important character is the youngest sister Minnie. She comes from England to her own territory and she wants to live there with her sisters

and community. All she longs for is to feel secure among her own people and on her own land. Unlike Minnie, Frank is the only character who has a different dream in his life. His dream is to be accepted like a white man among the white and he does not stand the idea of living in an all black town. He creates an environment of a white paradise for himself and rejects all his belonging that remind him of the black. He tries to fool the white to be one of them because he passes like a white.

FRANK What are you still doing up? It's late.

(He staggers over, sits and drinks a long pull from a silver flask without taking his eyes off of her.)

MINNIE I was waiting for you.

FRANK Why? Haven't I had enough bad luck for a nigger?

MINNIE Are you all right?

FRANK Do I look like I'm all right?

MINNIE Let me get you some coffee...

FRANK You don't need to get me a damn thing. Just sit still! Can you just sit still for once?

MINNIE Yes, Frank.

FRANK You know what happened tonight, don't you? I don't even have to bother telling you anything about it, do I?

MINNIE What is it? What happened?

FRANK I was gambling. A gentleman's game of poker with some of my friends from the train. Ran into them in town. And you know what? I lost. I lost everything. What there was left of it.

MINNIE You were gambling with white men?

FRANK White gentlemen, Min. And I lost every dime. And I want to thank you for that. Things were going fine until one of them asked me about the nigger woman who kept following me around the train. I laughed it off, but my luck changed after that so I know they suspected something. (He stands behind her, touching her shoulders lightly.) But I should have known better than to depend on you for luck. You're too black to bring me any good luck. All you got to give is misery. Pure D misery and little black pickaninnies just like you. (He rubs her arms, stops, keeping his hands lightly on her shoulders. She moves away in fear.)" (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 99)

In this way, he humiliates Minnie in front of the white people and even calls her a black whore just to be accepted in whites' world. This false identity creation makes him angry and unhappy all the time and it is not credible to be accepted as a white person in this society. Minnie and Frank's arrival make all the members of the family happy, but at the same time it triggers the unexpected events in the house. Everything seems normal at first; yet there is always a bomb in the middle of the sisters and Frank waiting to explode. While the days are passing one after another,

Frank has a verdict declaring his demand of inheritance of his father is denied and he is penniless and weak among the black population. Having a fragile mood, he shows his severe anger to Minnie who is the one who really loves him. He is blind and unable to accept his other half being black. He gives harm to Minnie in front of the sisters although she is going to have his baby. In addition to that, she takes the deed of Minnie providing a part of the land to sell it to the white speculators.

As their only escape to the West is to protect the family they have, they find a solution to the problem they encounter even if he is black or not. They consult to past with the suggestion of Miss Leah and solve the problem on their own way with their own tradition. They destroy all the obstacles on the way, because family is the most precious and indispensable possession they have. *'They believe that their black heritage is a fundamental part of their individual and collective identities and should affect everything they do'* ("Guide" <http://www.bookrags.com>). All in all, the general dream which is being free from the whites and all the dangers against them unite the household for a solution. They believe the importance of a secure family environment wholeheartedly. They achieve this dream in the end.

4.3. The Longings of the Characters for a Secure Family

The main issue of this thesis is to analyze the concept of longing for a secure family in two works of Pearl Cleage. Before starting the analysis, these two concepts should be explained to have a clear idea. Longing has a stronger effect on people than missing. If someone longs for someone or something, this person is really in need of that necessity and cannot be safe without it. Basically, human beings can long for basic needs; but in this thesis, what we are searching for is longing for something psychological. Hence, longing is a powerful desire that is hard to fulfill. On the other hand, in the thesis, what the characters long for is a secure family. As they are away from their homeland, they are all in danger. People and lifestyles are all different. This creates an insecure atmosphere for AAs. You cannot find someone easily whom you can trust, especially, if they are whites. For AAs, security is to feel safe and confident without the interference of anyone. It will be more clear to understand the concepts while analyzing the events and the characters.

The characters in the play are the ones who have suffered from the effects of enslavement physically and mentally. Although they want to start a new life, they bear the traces of the past and nothing can change this. These struggles make them stronger and create a warrior type of a person and they have the power inside to protect and be part of a family in all meanings.

“For the female characters, the indoors represents domestic comfort, immediate security, the familiar, and female power and wisdom. On the other hand, the outdoors represents opportunity, risk, challenges, and future security” (“Guide”<http://www.bookrags.com>).

The eldest character Miss Leah has the role of a grandmother for the family who has witnessed all the phases of slavery till the emancipation. It is easy for her to understand the importance of having a place called home with the people you love. It is the kinship that keeps her among the sisters and she has a strong sense of belonging to them by accepting them as her family and her grandchildren.

Being the eldest and having witnessed history make her recognize the black people more than any other character. She comprehends the psychological growth of black community since she is also a member of this community. With her utterance to Sophie about Sophie’s effort to construct a black town, it is clear that she has already guessed how they feel about all this:

“MISS LEAH Bein’ right ain’t always the only thing you got to think about. The thing you gotta remember about colored folks is all the stuff they don’t say when they want to, they just gonna say it double time later. That’s why you gonna lose that vote if you ain’t careful ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 75)

She criticizes her people in an accurate way and she has the role of a mother in this line. She warns her children to be careful about the actions and the load if they are really strong enough to handle it.

She catches the significance of having a land of one’s own. She can say it to Sophie to understand the expectations of the black community of the town in the creation of a Black Paradise. Everybody has reasons to get rid of the whites from different perspectives, all of which are really valid in terms of humanity.

“MISS LEAH That’s cause some of them ain’t never had nothin’ that belonged to ‘em. Some of them come cause they can’t stand the smell of the city. Some of

them just tired of evil white folks. Some of 'em killed somebody or wanted to. All everybody got in common is they plunked down twelve dollars for a piece of good land and now they tryin' to live on it long enough to claim it." (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 76)

Throughout the play, she has some flashbacks. She remembers everything she has experienced vividly and she is the one who has the most painful practice within herself. All her utterances about the loss of her children, the behaviour of the overseer on her and even the only love she has do not let her forget even for a moment the importance of one and only thing they have in this world. The last line of Miss Leah shows crystal clear that the lives were really hard to endure. They are the people who have no value or dignity. She chooses the name Samson from the bible for her baby who was born in the field while she was working. The name that she has chosen for her son and the explanation that she has uttered to the overseer make him laugh as if it is something for fun. The writer makes a biblical allusion to show the strength of the character via her baby, still the difference of two separate sides for a baby reveals the cliff of thoughts and lives.

"MISS LEAH These young women wouldn't have lasted a minute before the war. Overseer make you squat right down beside the field and drop your baby out like an animal. All ten of my sons was born after sundown cause that was the only way to be sure I could lay down to have 'em.

FAN How did your babies know it was night time?

MISS LEAH I knew it! If I felt 'em tryin' to come early, I'd hold 'em up in there and wouldn't let 'em. Bad enough bein' born a slave without that peckerwood overseer watchin' 'em take the first breath of life before their daddy done seen if they a boy or a girlchild.

FAN I think Miz Baker will be all right. I think she was just scared and lonesome for her mother. She can't be more than twenty.

MISS LEAH I wadn't but fourteen when I had my first one! Got up the next morning and strapped him on my back and went back out to the field. Overseer didn't notice him 'til the day half over. What you got there nigger? He say to me. This here my son, I say. I callin' him Samson like in the bible 'cause he gonna be strong! Overseer laugh and say, good! Colonel Harrison always

lookin' for strong niggers to pick his cotton. I want to tell him that not what I got in mind for my Samson, but I kept my mouth shut like I had some sense. I ain't never been no fool." (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 79-80)

It is the life that makes you hide everything from the overseers and masters because you want to have less oppression on your life. The women are the ones who are obliged to have babies from the other slaves and also the masters would have more people to work on the fields. It can be concluded that as being in need of compassion and care, they endure the pain twice when compared to the men.

"MISS LEAH (Resumes her braiding) I was only thirteen when I got my first one. They wanted me to start early cause I was big and strong. Soon as my womanhood came on me, they took me out in the barn and put James on me. He was older than me and big. He already had children by half the women on the place. My James...(A beat) But that first time, he was hurting me so bad and I was screamin' and carryin' on somethin' awful and that old overseer just watchin' and laughin' to make sure James really doin' it. He watch us every night for a week and after the third one I hear James tryin' to whisper somethin' to me real quiet while he doin' it. I was so surprised I stopped cryin' for a minute and I hear James sayin' "Leah, Leah, Leah..." He just kept sayin' my name over and over. (A beat) At the end of the week, I had got my first son"... (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 94-95)

There is a sexual harassment, abuse which is witnessed by the white for pleasure. The description is so vivid and embarrassing that the name uttered at the end creates a sense of identity and affection for Miss Leah.

Having the role of a grandmother at home, Miss Leah is a treasure and bridge of past, present and future. She helps Fan record the events in the past as being the only eldest in the family. For her, the colored people are the ones who cannot forget any detail of their lives. The misery of the people is so unprecedented that even if they try hard to draw a veil on it they cannot. Because of that, she continuously wants Miss Leah to talk about her childhood and adolescence to record them from the first person. She does not want to spoil any detail before they are replaced by newer memories inside the mind of Miss Leah.

“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” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 81)

“MISS LEAH Everybody knows them stories I got. Colored folks ain’t been free long enough to have forgot what it’s like to be a slave.” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 90)

Another line which made by Miss Leah play the role of a grandmother comes in the event of Minnie and Frank. Her interference to the family relations is an important part of AA culture which also helps their salvation. When Minnie got beaten by Frank, even though he knows that she will be the mother of his child, it is Miss Leah who helps her get over it by providing physical and psychological support. She is the most experienced person as a mother and as a slave, under the control of a master. She knows the importance of sharing the same gender, to be a woman, to be a part of sisterhood to protect themselves from the male dominancy and destruction. She is aware that the restlessness stems from Frank’s not feeling any sense of belonging to his own people. Miss Leah will prevent him from hitting Minnie again and the grief he has later clearly displays how the sense of a secure family is threatened.

“MISS LEAH Colored women ain’t got enough sisters to be cutting each other off so easy, I’d say.” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 103)

While the reader is approaching the end of the play, one can imagine the importance of a family for them. Family is unique, so you must keep an eye on and cling to it tightly. The play shows openly that it is not easy to find such a secure atmosphere with your own sisters and your own people. At the end of the play, Miss Leah starts talking to her grandchild, the daughter of Minnie. She knows that the way taken by them to these days was not an easy one. She uses the power of her past as a resolution for the problem of Frank and this makes the unification of a secure family that she has been longing for many years. She remembers the recipe of an apple pie which includes secrets in itself that cleans the obstacle that blocks the sisters’ full liberation.

“MISS LEAH Yes, my granddaughter. We got plenty to talk about, me and you. I’m going to tell you about your Mama and her Mama and her gran’Mama

before that one. All those strong colored women makin' a way for little ol' you. Yes, they did! Cause they knew you were comin'. And wadn't nobody gonna keep you from us. Not my granddaughter! Yes, yes, yes! All those fine colored women, makin' a place for you. And I'm gonna tell you all about 'em. Yes, I sure am. I surely am... (MISS LEAH rocks the baby, crooning softly to her, SOPHIE continues to spin slowly in the moonlight as the lights fade to black)" (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 115)

With the speech she has at the very end of the play, she links the generations to each other. She is the oldest showing the way to the sisters and also the grandmother for the new generation. She starts her education orally to create the identity concept and feeling of belonging. They have done their best to welcome the baby to a secure world.

Another woman character who has the remnants of slavement is Sophie. She displays a great struggle to establish a black town. She has enough courage and wit to carry out her dream for herself, her family and community. She behaves like a sophist and designs everything related to the town. She has the character of a strong woman not in need of a male support and shows this by having a shotgun under her hand to protect the family against the whites. The lines below show vividly what she dreams of.

"SOPHIE 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." (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 74)

The main objective of Sophie is to create a secure place for her family. She tries to convince the people of the town by showing the importance of being together to fight against the supremacy they still feel on themselves with all her heart and soul. She wants to feel that she belongs to her own territory and her own people. For her, land is not the only thing that gives you enough harvest periodically, but it is a feeling of belonging which stimulates the idea of being at the right time and place, which you meant to be. Thanks to her sisters and her own community she hopes to turn this dream into a reality. Scott Giles explains Sophie in her article in *African American Review*;

“Sophie embraces her black identity and the idea of nationalistic autonomy that Nicodemus represents. In defense of the things she loves and believes in, she finds her voice as a woman and a community leader” (1997: 2).

All she dreams of is to have a paradise for black people in which one can easily find his/her way out with the help of the people to whom you are bounded by blood, history and grief.

“SOPHIE We could have so much here if these colored folks would just step lively. We could own this whole prairie. Nothing but colored folks farms and colored folks wheat fields and colored folks cattle. Everywhere you look nothing but colored folks! But they can’t see it. They look at Nicodemus and all they can see is a bunch of scuffling people trying to get ready for the winter instead of something free and fine and all our own. Most of them don’t even know what we’re doing here! (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 76).

SOPHIE: There’d be all colored towns, full of colored people only! That sounded more like heaven than anything else I’d heard in church.” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 92)

Everytime she talks about the black, she uses the notion ‘colored folks’. All the repetition that she uses line by line displays an image of a kinship that she feels comfortable inside. It is not only the sisters and Miss Leah, but the whole folks are part of the secure atmosphere that she longs for.

It is also Sophie who does not want to let any white folks inside her own dream community and territory and she is really against even the idea of one of them. Her oppression against the white people is so strong that she does not allow even her dreams to include a single white person.

“SOPHIE I hope so. I don’t need a whole bunch of strange white folks living that close to me!” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 79)

...

“SOPHIE Two things I’m sure of. I don’t want no white folks tellin’ me what to do all day, and no man tellin’ me what to do all night.” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 80)

She is aware of the truth that it is the education that can pave the way to a much better life for black folks in the future and she is also working hard to keep

teachers for the youngsters in Nicodemus. As she has a strong passion to live her life with the people of her color, she finds it hard to understand her little sister Minnie and her husband Frank. They choose to live in Europe-England where there are not enough black folks that would make them feel like at home.

“SOPHIE How many colored people were there?”

FAN She didn't say.

SOPHIE None! No! Two! Her and Frank. Who ever heard of a colored poet moving someplace where there aren't any colored people?

FAN Where do you expect him to live? Nicodemus?

SOPHIE Why not? I'm giving her the deed to one third of the land we're standing on and she's married to a man who'd rather take a tour of Piccadilly Circus!

FAN Some people are not raised for this kind of life.

SOPHIE Did we raise Min for the life she's living halfway around the world?

FAN Of course, we did. We always exposed her to the finest things.

SOPHIE But why do all those fine things have to be so far away from Negroes?

FAN I think our baby sister is having so much fun out there in the world, coming back here is probably the last thing on her mind.” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 82)

She is aware of the fact that Frank, as a mulatto, wants to be the part of his white inheritance; but unlike his expectations it is not the thought of his brothers to give the share to Frank and accept him as a brother. Sophie has difficulty in seeing the world from another angle like Fan does.

“SOPHIE We have to see everything differently because we're Negroes, Fan. I think Frank is going to find that out when they finish with this business about his father's will.

...

“SOPHIE How many white gentlemen do you know who want to share their inheritance with a bastard?” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 80)

It can be easily identified from the word she has chosen to describe Frank that she knows the real perspective of the white folks towards the blacks. She remembers

all the reasons that make them move to Kansas in a kind of rush as there has been the riots and lynchings against the black.

“SOPHIE ...Colored folks’ lives aren’t worth two cents in that town.”

(Perkins and Uno, 1996: 88)

...

“SOPHIE Well, I knew it was the right thing to do. 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 own houses. Then I heard there were Negroes going west.” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 91)

These experiences motivate Sophie to take a step to find a secure place for her folks and establish a secure environment for them. She thinks the ones who stay in Memphis are cowards. Not all the members of the community find it easy to leave where they have been living for years. They have some worries and maybe do not have enough courage like Sophie and her sisters. This confuses her mind whether the ones who prefer to stay or the ones who launch for a new life are more valiant. In a way, she also blames the black not to take any action for an opportunity for a secure atmosphere, instead they capture themselves into their cowardness.

“SOPHIE Because they haven’t got the gumption to try something new. The day our group left Memphis, there were at least two hundred other Negroes standing around, rolling their eyes and trying to tell us we didn’t know what it was going to be like way out here in wilderness. I kept trying to tell them it doesn’t matter what it’s like. Any place is better than there!” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 89)

The ritual they have with sisters underlines that they are on the edge of their free identity. It is not like one that they already have. They are regaining the souls with their free act. The elements for security are clear in the lines that they repeat loudly. Trust, strength, courage and love. She has all the preparation for her community to create a place worth living as an ordinary person without the oppression and the discrimination.

“SOPHIE We choose this day to leave a place where our lives, our honor and our very souls are not our own.

FAN Say it, Sister!

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.

BOTH With all our trust...

SOPHIE And all our strength...

BOTH And all our strength...

(As they talk, FRANK walks over to the window, smoking. He looks at the women holding hands in the moonlight.)

SOPHIE And all our courage...

BOTH And all our courage...

SOPHIE And all our love.

BOTH And all our love.

(A beat)

SOPHIE Welcome home, Baby Sister” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 93)

She has her ideals to create the free paradise for the black folks. In her new life with a new life style, education at a school is one of the most important key elements to ensure security. The image of family is extended to an image of society. The paradise town has become the microcosm of the whole AA nation. Security can only be maintained by the protection of the land which is obviously stated below.

“SOPHIE I'm writing my speech for Sunday. I'm going to singlehandedly convince these Negroes they have the right to protect their land from speculators and save Nicodemus!

MINNIE Save it from what?

SOPHIE From being just one more place where colored people couldn't figure out how to be free.

MINNIE Are politics so important?

SOPHIE (A beat) Come look at this. (SOPHIE has spread out the plans on the table.) These are the plans for Nicodemus. Here's the store and the post office.

In the same places, but bigger. And open every day, not just two days a week. And here's the blacksmith and the school...

MINNIE Who did this?

SOPHIE I did. We want the school open by spring but the teacher we hired just wrote to say she won't come because she's getting married and her fool husband..." (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 97)

"SOPHIE Of course I do! 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.

...

"SOPHIE It's 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. How are we ever going to be free if we have to spend all of our time doing somebody else's laundry?

MINNIE You used to do laundry.

SOPHIE There's nothing wrong with doing laundry until you start thinking that's all you can do. That's why the vote is so important. We have to help each other stay strong. The rule doesn't say they can't sell their land. It says they can't sell it unless they are prepared to look the rest of us in the eye and say who they are selling it to and why. As long as they have to face each other, nobody will have nerve enough to sell to speculators, no matter what they're offering." (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 98)

The paradise that she tries to establish will not allow any threat including her own color. She gets mad when she discovers that Frank gives harm to Minnie because of his lack of belonging and identity lacking. He blames all the black people because his step-siblings do not let him have a share from the inheritance from his slaveowner father after his death. There is nobody to protect him now. Plus to this, he also takes the deed of Minnie from her hand forcibly. He knows that Minnie is pregnant and even though she needs much more affection than before he does not

stop hitting her. She takes the control as main mission is to keep the family secure. The idea of a woman's getting hurt by a man turns her paradise world into a nightmare.

“SOPHIE This morning, while I was standing in that church painting a picture of the future of this town, he beat her and God knows what else he did to her in this house where she has always been safe. We can't let him do that, Fan. All the dreams we have for Nicodemus, all the churches and schools and libraries we can build don't mean a thing if a colored woman isn't safe in her own house. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 110)

Among the characters of the play, there is another sister called Fan who is really interested in and enthusiastic to create an environment in which one can find himself/herself free and comfortable. Like her name, she gives more importance to the beauties of their own land, the surrounding and the atmosphere of the community-family construction. In the play, we can easily recognize her feelings towards Wil and it is not an unrequited love. She tries to make the house more living and fresh by bringing flowers and decorating the house with them, and she is also a really enthusiastic supporter of Sophie for the construction of the Black Paradise. The most important part for the construction of a secure family can be true if there is love and caring followed by peace and freedom. As it is stated in one of the analysis;

“Flowers are beautiful products of nature, and they represent new life and strength. They also represent a lifestyle above simple survival; having fresh flowers in the house is a cheerful indulgence. Fannie brings flowers from outside and places them in water throughout the house, an act that demonstrates her natural tendency to bring the life and vitality of nature indoors ” (“Guide” <http://www.bookrags.com>).

She uses flashbacks in family relations while she is with her parents. She has the inheritance of her past and she transforms those memories into present and future. She has the time to spend on the furnishing of the place that she is living. By this; she feels the freedom inside and she can easily smell the air of liberation literally and personally.

“FAN My mother loved flowers. Roses were her favorites. My father used to say, “colored women ain't got no time to be foolin' with no roses” and my

mother would say, as long as colored men had time to worry about how colored women spent their time, she guessed she had time enough to grow some roses. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 77)

Reading the lines from Fan makes the reader aware of the past life and its ruins. She conveys how substantial it is to laugh out loudly and freely until the tears come from the eyes. Sophie finds release in a big laughter. It can seem like a really tiny piece of life; but for them it is the cry for freedom and relief. Laughing becomes the symbol of pain, relief, past, present and future in a wide perspective.

“FAN Sophie found her laugh out here. I don’t remember ever hearing her laugh the whole time we were in Memphis. But everything in Kansas was funny to her. Sometimes when we first got here, she’d laugh so hard she’d start crying, but she didn’t care. One time, she was laughing so hard I was afraid she was going to have a stroke. She scared me to death. When she calmed down, I asked her, well, why didn’t you ever laugh like that in Memphis? And she said her laugh was too free to come out in a place where a colored woman’s life wasn’t worth two cents on the dollar. What kind of fool would find that funny, she asked me. She was right, too. Sophie’s always right. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 98)

Fan is also the recorder of the past. She wants everybody to know what happened till the day they were brought to U.S. as slaves; and of course she is gathering the necessary information from the eldest member of the family, from Miss Leah. Her interest is also so prolific about the book that she gives all her attention on what she has said and sometimes she urges her to speak. Fan is a recorder between the past and present and also she has the role of a story collector. She insists to Miss Leah to talk about past to take notes about the change the black has been living. She is aware of the fact that the past should not be forgotten to make the new generation understand the value of the time that they are living in.

“FAN 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. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 90)

Like the book she tries to create, she needs some concrete materials to have a link to her past. She carries the old china which is left from her mother to the West.

Although Sophie sees them just a set of plates, for Fan and also for Minnie, their price cannot be compared to anything in the world. They create the image of belongings from the past reminding them the value of family and the feeling of security.

“FAN These were my mother’s things. Sophie stopped speaking to me for a week when I told her I wasn’t leaving Memphis without them, but I was determined. (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 88)

SOPHIE I should have left you and them standing in the middle of the Main Street. Whoever heard of carrying a set of plates...

MINNIE Mama’s china!

FAN Mama’s good china!

It is not only on the surface but also candidly Fan is raised with the spirit of liberation and belonging. She is in the environment of people visiting their houses to find a solution for the future of her race. She started to feel that she has the real belonging to her society like her mother and father. These people are among the extended family unity for the dependence of whole community.

FAN: That wouldn’t be the word I’d use. No! Of course you do. That’s not what I mean ... I mean, the literary societies and the Sunday socials and the forums. Mama and Daddy’s house was always full of people talking at the top of their lungs about the best way to save the race. And then somebody would start thumping away on Mama’s old piano, begging her to sing something. I used to hide at the top of the steps and watch them until I’d fall asleep right there. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 81)

As being the daughter of loving parents, she believes in the importance of family connection more than any other character. She accepts Minnie’s husband Frank from the family and she tries to make him feel it deep inside. She knows that he is in the middle of an inheritance with his white brothers. She is the one who puts all her heart to the importance of family and being together with the one that you fall in love with. Therefore, she generally tries not to focus on the negative sides of Frank, but on to the positive ones. This makes her speak to Minnie in a mild way unlike Sophie and Miss Leah.

“FAN Well, I just try to give him the benefit of the doubt. Mama said every colored man deserves at least that much from a colored woman. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 83)

...

“FAN Stay as long as you like. You’re family. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 85)

...

“FAN Frank is going through a bad time that’s all, but he’s still Frank. He’s stil that man that swept you off your feet. The man you want to be the father of your children, isn’t he?

MINNIE He scares me sometimes. He gets so angry.

FAN You know who else had a terrible temper?

MINNIE Who?

FAN Daddy. You were too young to remember it, but he did. And Daddy was a good man, but he had that temper and sometimes it would get the better of him. Just like your Frank. Sometimes he used to...not all the time, but...one time they woke me up, fussing about something, and Mama didn’t hear me call her, so I went to the top of the stairs where I could see them without them seeing me. I always sat there... Daddy was sitting by the fireplace and Mama was talking a mile a minute. I could tell he didn’t like what she was saying, and then he got up real fast and grabbed her arm and he just shook her and shook her... I was so scared I ran back to bed, but I could still hear everything... Sometimes we have to be stronger than they are, Baby Sister. We have to understand and be patient.

MINNIE What did Mama do?

FAN Mama always said she was biding her time until we could get these white folks off our backs so she could get colored men straightened out on a thing or two a little bit closer to home, but until then, she said she’d give him the benefit of the doubt.

MINNIE I’ve been trying to do that, too.

FAN You love Frank, don’t you?

MINNIE I used to love him so much...

FAN You still love him. I can see it on your face. You two can work it out. I know you can. For better or for worse, remember? ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 101-102)

She realizes that the enslavement; and it must be the women who should be patient and understanding towards the black men. To make Minnie comprehend the mood of Frank, she talks about an event that she has witnessed in the house. It is hard to endure the life of slavement, and the men are also the victims of that crime. It might be acceptable to show patience to their reactions towards black women.

Minnie is the youngest member of the family who needs the most of the protection and affection than the others. She is away from her community and land for the sake of her husband Frank. She is torn between her new kind of life which her husband obliged her to live in and her past left in U.S. It can be easily understood from her name that she is the youngest both physically and psychologically. She cannot notice the torture she is in because of the love she has towards her husband. She is enduring the physical and psychological harassment of her husband. She seems not aware of the plans of Frank for their land shared with her sisters and the results of his acts to her. After spending some time in England with Frank and witnessing his struggles to be accepted as a white person, she pays a visit to her sisters and their land in U.S. She uses a big hat to hide the bruise she has on her face and pretends that it is her fault because she is clumsy. She tries hard to make them believe in what she says.

“MINNIE I bought a new dress for the trip...and I...wanted to show it to Frank ...and I...the train... I stumbled in the train compartment. You know how clumsy I am. I bumped my head so hard I saw stars! And this is what I’ve got to show for it. Frank made me promise to be more careful. He worries so about me. (An awkward pause. They don’t believe her.) I told him I used to be much worse. Remember that time I almost fell off the roof? I would have killed myself if it hadn’t been for Sophie. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 86)

As her husband is not happy to be among the black people’s town. She tries to calm him down while trying to remind him of being a part of what she used to be and feel like home again in a warm family atmosphere. While talking about the life in England, that she finds it hard to accept that there is no segregation against black

people and they are just living as ordinary as the white people there. The black people used to be inferior to its white correspondence so it is hard to internalize the difference between the two different countries.

“MINNIE Well, it was kind of scary to me at first. So many people and colored just right in there with everybody else. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 87)

At her first morning in Kansas, she wants to fully feel her identity and relive her time with her family so she asks Miss Leah to braid her hair. It is a tradition of the black woman. This will create an image of belonging in the family.

“MISS LEAH Do you ever miss colored people?”

MINNIE I miss colored people so much sometime I don't know what to do!

MISS LEAH Well, that's good to hear. I thought you might be getting as tired of Negroes as Frank seems to be.

MINNIE Frank doesn't mean any harm. He just doesn't feel like we do about Negroes. He might miss a friend or two, but when I ask him if he doesn't ever just miss being in a big group of Negroes, knowing that we are all going to laugh at the same time and cry at the same time just because we're all there being colored, he just shakes his head. I don't think he's ever felt it, so he can't miss it. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 95)

Minnie is victimized by her own husband from her own community. The psychology of Frank makes him give harm to his own wife. It is not easy to get over the hard times of the feeling of unbelonging to somewhere and to someone. Despite the situation is the same for all the slaves, its effects change according to the conditions' severeness and the capacity of one's patience. Minnie protects her husband as she knows what he has been exposed to unlike Sophie and Miss Leah. While Miss Leah worries about Minnie, especially if she will also rejects her own identity or not; Minnie assures her that it is not the identity that she does not feel inside, but the absence of a family belonging to Frank.

“MINNIE None of that matters! Can't you see that none of that matters! This is the land that makes us free women, Frank. We can never sell it! Not ever! ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 104)

To support Frank to his sisters and Miss Leah is not easy for Minnie, since he is the person who does not want to be the part of Minnie's family and the black

community. She endures so many humiliations and physical violence from him and she preserves the land of their freedom more than anything. The land is the microcosm of salvation. When he threatens Minnie to kill her family, she signs the paper of her deed to transfer her rights to Frank. At the same time, she reminds the meaning of the land to Frank loudly.

Frank is a mulatto who has a white father, actually a slaveowner and until the day his father dies, he was under the protection of him. From the day he understands there is a difference according to the color people have, he started to feel anger to the black ones and adore to the hated side. Although it seems an understandable choice when you know all the problems that the black people have faced, the acts of him throughout the play make the reader to feel both sympathy and rage to him. As having a black mother and a white father, he can mistake the people by passing as white and that is what he prefers to be. It makes him feel safe and comfortable when you compare the world that he escaped. All these struggles to belong to the white side and to be accepted by them turn him into a kind of monster even worse than so-called slave-owners. He hates even the color of his ancestors.

“...Trouble begins when Minnie (age 21 and born free) returns from Europe where she has been living with her husband, Frank (age 36 and born into slavery), a successful poet in London. Frank, the son of a white slave-owner, is waiting to hear if he will receive the inheritance his father promised him before he died. A very light-skinned black, Frank “passes” for white, and subsequently loses all his money in a card game with white speculators. When a telegram arrives announcing that his white half-brothers have denounced him and his right to his inheritance, Frank suddenly sees the value in Minnie’s share of the homestead” (Rust, 2005: 3).

Reader first meets him at the train while he was talking business with the whites. At the same time, her wife Minnie, who has much darker skin that cannot make her pass as easy as Frank hovers around him as if he is fragile like a glass. From her struggle to hide the bruise she has on her face, it is clear that he vents his anger on his wife, Minnie. As soon as they reach to Nicodemus, there is something wrong and the atmosphere turns from happiness to tenseness. The moment he steps

out of the train, he wants them feel that he is different from them. He gives a copy of his book that he has published in England, as if it is the exact time to mention it.

“MINNIE That’s just what I told him. We’re family! This isn’t like coming for a visit. This is coming home.

FRANK But we have a home, don’t we, darling?

MINNIE Yes, of course we do. We have a lovely home.

FAN And you’re going to tell me all about...

FRANK (Interrupts her) And where is our home, Minnie?

MINNIE Frank...(He stares at her coldly.) It’s in London.

FRANK So this is really a visit, just like I said, isn’t it?

MINNIE (Softly) Yes, Frank. ” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 85)

While Minnie is happy about returning home, he reminds him that this is not the real place or community that he wants to live his life. He behaves as if these people are the ones who caused him to be in the middle of two identities. He cannot understand the reality and just ignores to see it. By making Minnie to repeat the real place where they actually belong to, he eases himself that he is not a part of that community, culture or lifestyle.

“FRANK Oh, I think one who enjoys a little more...ease than is possible way out here. Although I must admit your home is lovely. This table wouldn’t be out of place in the finest dining rooms.

...

FRANK I admire the ability to adapt to trying circumstances without a lowering of standards. I wouldn’t have expected to see such delicate china way out here.

...

FRANK Oh, I think probably the one about you coming to the door asking to do the laundry and then moving right in. I guess you knew a good thing when you saw one!

...

FRANK I was tracking her like a wild Indian!

...

FRANK (Being charming for the benefit of MISS LEAH) You looked like such a little country girl then. When I first took Minnie to London, I made sure to take her shopping before I introduced her to my friends. But I always knew she had potential. Anybody could see that. And that's why I married her. Because Minnie deserves the best. Doesn't she? " (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 88-89-91-96)

The utterances of Frank have two different meanings. While he praises something about Minnie's family, he despises them at the same time. He wants them to accept that he is not one of them and it is a favor for them to host Frank in their so-called home according to Frank. As soon as he gets married Minnie, he starts with her appearance. He tries to hide the real Minnie behind clothes and pushes her to behave like a white person. In other words, he wants her to change her own identity and adapt the superior identity of white people.

"The character of Frank has "a war inside." Cleage creates in Frank a complex emotional character who embodies the internal conflict that Blacks, and especially light-skinned Blacks were subject to in a society where only the white complexion and things of white culture were valued. Blacks were conditioned in ways that would put them at war with their own race. Light-skinned Blacks who chose to "pass" for white were often faced with denying their own families in order to enjoy the benefits of a "white" life" (Rust, 2005: 8).

"FRANK (Angrily) I want you to put your hair back the way it was.

MINNIE I always wore my...

FRANK You look like a damn pickaninny! We haven't been here twenty-four hours and look at you!

MINNIE I'm sorry..." (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 96)

He does not let Minnie to resemble who she used to be. It makes him so mad at Minnie. It is easy to handle Minnie when she is away from home. Inside the real family of hers, Frank does not want to lose his power on her. In addition to that, she does not want Minnie to behave like one of them. He has started with the change of

clothes with Minnie when they first go to England. The same procedure starts in Kansas with Minnie's braids.

“FRANK I was gambling. A gentleman's game of poker with some of my friends from the train. Ran into them in town. And you know what? I lost. I lost everything. What there was left of it.

MINNIE You were gambling with white men?

FRANK White gentlemen, Min. And I lost every dime. And I want to thank you for that. Things were going fine until one of them asked me about the nigger woman who kept following me around the train. I laughed it off, but my luck changed after that so I know they suspected something. (He stands behind her, touching her shoulders lightly.) But I should have known better than to depend on you for luck. You're too black to bring me any good luck. All you got to give is misery. Pure D misery and little black pickaninnies just like you. (He rubs her arms, stops, keeping his hands lightly on her shoulders. She moves away in fear.)” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 99)

Frank feels himself secure among the white people even if it gives harm to him or Minnie. He is the passionate supporter of white people. He does not let Minnie to call them white people, because in his eyes, they are the gentlemen not the savages like blacks. To feel the belonging to the other side, he does not focus on security. The white people have taken all the money that he has from his hands, but still he confides in them. He feels in the middle of nowhere by heart and soul. This is caused by the fact that; *‘When his father dies, however, the family disowns him, leaving him penniless and desperate. It is this desperation that drives him to the sell Minnie's portion of the homestead’* (“Guide” <http://www.bookrags.com>).

“FRANK Your sisters are sitting on a fortune. That white man on the train? He said speculators are paying top dollar for these farms around here.

MINNIE Sister would never sell this land!

FRANK Of course she wouldn't because she's just like all the other Negroes around here. She's content to live her life like a pack mule out in some backwater town... I never should have let you talk me into bringing you out here. We damn well could have waited in New Orleans like I wanted to. Taking that damn train all the way across the damn prairie. You know what they call

your precious town? "Niggerdemus"! Niggerdemus, Kansas. Don't you think that's funny, Min?

MINNIE Were you passing?

FRANK I was letting people draw their own conclusions. " (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 99)

He cannot realize the importance of that land for the sisters and all he wants to do turn back to England to prove that he is rich enough not to need the money or mercy of his brothers who prevent him from taking the inheritance of his father. He uses the same language of the white people against his community, despises them and does not bear the idea of belonging to this territory and community.

"FRANK Are you? Sorry for what? Marrying a bastard?

MINNIE Don't say that!

FRANK Do you know what this means? This means I've got nothing. Not a dime. Nothing.

MINNIE You can sell your books.

FRANK Don't be so stupid. (Pacing) They think they can make me an ordinary Negro. That's what they think. They think they're going to have a chance to treat me colored and keep me here where every ignorant white man who walks the street can make me step off to let him pass. They think they can pretend I'm nothing and—presto—I'll be nothing.

MINNIE You won't let them do that.

FRANK Let them? They've done it! We don't even have passage back to London. We're stuck here being niggers. Common, ordinary, niggers!" (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 104)

Feeling worthless makes him fight with his destiny and his skin so brute that he cannot see Minnie is the person who really wants to help him get over this situation.

"FRANK (He grabs her arm and brings her up against him sharply.) Don't you ever threaten me as long as you live, do you understand me? Do you? (She nods silently.) I'll kill you right now, Min. I'll break your damn neck before your precious sisters can hear you holler. I'll kill everybody in this house, don't you understand that? You want to know who I told those white men you were, Min? You really want to know? (She struggles again, but he

holds her.) I told them you were a black whore I won in a card game. (He laughs and presses his mouth to hers roughly.)” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 105-106)

His hatred to his own identity is so big that he threatens Minnie and her family. He is in this situation because of gambling with white people. He does not realize that it is his behaviours make him more and more angry. The more he feels anger to himself and his not belonging to anywhere or anyone, the more he gives harm to Minnie, maybe the only person in this world really loves him. As a result, he calls her wife as a black whore and bearing the attitude of white people for the black.

“FRANK She did? Well, it takes a better man than I am to refuse an invitation for a piece of your famous apple pie! (He sits and begins to eat heartily.) Delicious! Well, you tell Sophie she’s not going to have to worry about Frank Charles hanging around getting in her hair. Not me! (Laughs, coughs a little) Soon as we get everything signed and proper, good-bye Niggerdemus! Hello London! They treat me like a human being over there. You wouldn’t believe it. Half the people we know don’t even know I’m colored. I told Min if she was just a couple of shades lighter, we could travel first class all over the world. Nobody would suspect a thing. (Laughs, coughs a little, loosens histie) Don’t get me wrong. I don’t outright pass. I just let people draw their own conclusions. (Coughs harder as Fan watches impassively) Can you get me a glass of water, please? I feel a little....strange.” (Perkins and Uno, 1996: 113)

He prepares his own end with all the acts he has shown from the beginning of his presence at the house of the sisters till the end. They are the real family and they cannot let anybody ruin their security in their land. Fan’s invitation to treat an apple pie to Frank does not stop him humiliating the black people from the general perspective of the white. Along the way to his death, he is still unaware that it is the family or your own heritage will ease the life for you, not the ones that you are jealous with.

In an interview with Pearl Cleage herself, she also makes the reader understand why there is a character having a personality like Frank in the play;

“What I was really trying to do with him was to talk about the self-hate that he has and about the fact that it manifests itself in domestic violence, which is, I

think, a big question that we look at when we look at domestic violence in the Black community - the fact that race is so present in such a negative way in the lives of Black men, that they often manifest their rage at race in domestic violence against Black women and children.[Frank is] such a bad buy, he's such a villain, but he also is such a victim of slavery. The redeeming thing to me about Frank is that he didn't choose to be born in that most extreme strange American circumstance, which is [that] his father owned his mother. I don't know how you get over that, a lot of people did, but a lot of people didn't, and Frank is one of those who didn't.

Frank for me is very important because we have to acknowledge the full range of the experience that slavery was. The temptation is to dismiss him and not to acknowledge that he is as damaged as Miss Leah was. But there should also be that balance where we say, 'would he have been different, if he had inherited the money that was due him?'

A lot of Black literature always has the white villain in the room, so we get to not think about us, because we get to be mad at whoever the evil white male is who's in the play or in the book. What I always try to do is to remove that, for us as viewers and as Black artists participating in the project. To remove that crutch, to say, let's not put the villain who's expected, let's just look at us. How do we behave as human beings, with all of that baggage that race brings, but also all of that baggage that human beings bring whatever color they happen to be?[In the end] the family is guaranteed to go on. They've been able to be as strong enough as a family to reject the danger that was threatening them" (Rust, 2005: 19-20).

5. WHAT LOOKS LIKE CRAZY ON AN ORDINARY DAY

5.1. The Flow of the Novel

It is the first novel of Pearl Cleage and according to her '*this particular story required the novel form to explore the culture of Idlewild and the psychological workings of her characters*' (Enotes.com). In her first novel, she focuses on the developmental emotional conditions of the black women at the turn of millennium.

The story takes its start from an old black wealthy and populous city of U.S. , Atlanta. Although there have been many years from Emancipation and there is no clear segregation like before in U.S. , still there is a bad reputation of the old history which cannot be totally cleaned up from the subconscious of the people. The story takes place in once summer paradise for black people in Michigan. The family house of the main characters stays by the lake into forests that provides the tranquility and peace for the family members who still live there.

The surrounding and the life make the characters to remember so many details about the past, from the all black summer paradise to the reunions of family members. The main character takes her route to Michigan before starting a new life in another city of U.S. and again this is the place where the family reunites.

It is the story of black sisters; Ava and Joyce. One of them is suffering from the results of the life that she has left behind. The other is trying to help the unprivileged people of her community and by this way making her life more endurable. Two of them have witnessed some bad things until the reunification of the family, but they will get through all these troubles by connecting again in their secure family house and atmosphere. The lives of sisters are also affected by the people that they are in touch until the end of the novel. The story is divided into sections with the names of the months from June to November. And the months are also divided into chapters to make the reader follow the flow of change on the characters' personalities and lives.

June is the beginning of the story. It starts at the airport where Ava is waiting for the plane that will take her to Michigan. Along the way, the reader learns that she escapes from Atlanta where she has been working for ten years. It is clear that she was free and happy with her life in Atlanta once, until the day she learns her illness. She is HIV positive. When she reaches Michigan, she cannot see Joyce to welcome

her. While waiting for her to come, the reader has much more information about the life she has left behind. As soon as she learns the fact about her health, she tries to reach to the man that she has made love by sending mails, letters or calling him to warn. One day, a woman comes to her saloon and shouts at her “*I want you to take it back.*”, then she starts screaming “*This bitch got AIDS!*”. This is the time for Ava when everything she has built till now turns upside down. She decides to relax before moving to the West coast in her hometown with her sister. The place where she first takes refuge is her home. It is the place where she goes to feel secure and has felt secure throughout her life. She prefers to turn back to her roots again.

While she is waiting for Joyce, it is Eddie Jefferson who welcomes her. He is a neighbour of them from old days. He is a friend of Mitch, Ava’s brother-in-law. Joyce cannot manage to get Ava from the airport because of the *Sewing Circus* that she has been interested in for the underprivileged and immature young black mothers. She helps them to raise their children in a better world and educates them to understand that they are precious. On the way, Eddie stops at the liquor store while Ava is waiting in the car. All of a sudden, she finds herself inside a violence of a black man towards a black woman who has her baby in her arms. Eddie hits the man and rescues the baby and the mother. After taking them to their house, Ava comes to Joyce’s house, in other words, in her childhood house at last.

At night, Joyce and Ava meet. Joyce is the sister who stays in hometown and has her life there. She has an important loss to endure. While reading, the reader discovers that she has lost her husband in the lake back of the house by drowning. She lives alone in town and fills this emptiness by working for social services. She also educates the young mothers of the town voluntarily at the church. They talk about her group *Sewing Circus* at the church and her social services. In the first month, the reader also learns about the new pastor and his wife Reverend Anderson and Miss Gerry. Joyce is worried about the new comers whether they will make her stop the circus activity or not. The general situation makes her understand that they are not really in favor of youth programmes, instead they prefer more traditional areas of Christianity. That is why Joyce has a dream of having her own place for the youth who are under the danger of domestic violence and of being young mothers.

Ava discovers that Joyce is really busy with the social issues of her town's young mothers and their children's future. She talks about a baby at the hospital who has been left by her mother and she plans to foster her like a mother. Following days, there comes the new member of the family called Imani. Days are passing while Eddie and Ava get closer mentally and spiritually. One day, Reverend's wife with his grandson comes to the house of Joyce. As Joyce is out of the house, they are welcomed by Ava. She has a letter for Joyce to express the disturbance of Reverend about the education of the circus including birth control and AIDS. In the town, there is not just the problem of young mothers or AIDS; there is also the problem of violence. There are some people who break in the houses of elders to steal their belongings. The main reason for this is the widespread use of drugs. At the final pages of the first month, the reader sees Joyce with hotdogs and condoms in her hands while teaching birth control methods to the girls. It is the time when Reverend's wife Gerry Anderson enters into the circus and witnesses the situation as being an inconvenient event. She finishes the meeting and tells to Joyce that this is the last time she can have that kind of a meeting inside the church.

The second month, July, starts with the letter they have taken from Reverend telling Joyce to finish the meetings at the church. Ava goes on her meditation sessions at home with the help of Eddie before leaving Michigan. She has the support of him deeply which also causes her to begin feeling something emotional towards him. She is attracted to Eddie and it is the same for Eddie. Living the life with the struggles of Joyce for the social problems of the town and raising Imani with affection make Ava forget her situation and relax. One day, Ava goes to the pharmacist to buy her pills for AIDS where she encounters with Gerry Anderson. She finds out Ava's illness and she has felt the same kind of eyes looking at her blamingly as in Atlanta. She remembers why she came here again vividly. When she returns home, she sees that Joyce has made the house the new *Sewing Circus* and she needs some fresh air. She goes to Eddie's place and while trying to know each other better, they confess their traumas. Ava is HIV positive and Eddie has killed many people at the war in Vietnam. He also confesses that her girlfriend was such an addict to drugs that she rushes to the man who has drugs to make love in front of Eddie. He feels the anger coming deep inside and kills her. For Ava, it is hard to

react against such kind of a confession. She is just shocked. These secrets of Ava and Eddie just get them more intimate day by day. It is clear that they are in love and accept each other with their mistakes.

In August, Joyce is strong-minded to reconstruct the idea behind the *Sewing Circus* more concretely and writes a list for the free woman to learn. She is so passionate about educating the ones who are in need of help. She wants to be a person like the one who should understand but not judge. While she is searching for a place to have the *Sewing Circus*, Eddie comes with good news. There is a house of an elder folk who feels distracted by the night attacks and planning to sell his house. The money is handed to Joyce by Ava. That is where she begins to realize that she feels like home again.

There are some happy news circulating, however it will not go on like that. Joyce's struggles to create a place for the young girls are blocked by Reverend's wife with a letter telling the youth organization how bad things happening inside the church. Joyce decides to go to the institution to explain her reasons and Eddie is also away for carpentry job for two days. Ava stays alone at home with Imani. She wakes up in the middle of the night with the sound of a car. They are Tyrone, the grandson of Reverend and his wife; and his friend Frank-uncle of Imani- with a young lady. They are drunk and talking loudly. Frank hurls an empty bottle through the front window. With the sound of it, Ava feels really scared and they start the engine of the car and run away. Ava calls the police for the inspection and complains about Tyron and Frank. It will not be easy to put the blame on Tyron and Frank, because Gerry Anderson accuses Ava for inviting the boys into her home. The sisters get puzzled and understand better that she is a really dangerous woman. She is still angry about *Sewing Circus* and tries to take revenge of it. The sisters decide to go to Gerry's house to solve the problem face to face. They see Reverend himself and realize that he is drunk and does not aware of what is going on for days between his wife and them. They leave the house as they cannot transfer anything with the Reverend.

Eddie is busy with the new construction of the house they have bought for *Sewing Circus*. When Ava goes to see Eddie, he asks her to marry him. Ava runs out of the house. When she reaches to Joyce's house, there is a woman waiting for Joyce from Children's services. She is here to take back Imani as the family wants to have

her now. Ava is astonished to hear it. Miss Anderson has made the family take back the baby from Joyce and fooled them to help with the money. Because of that reason, the family wants her back. They let them take Imani compulsorily, but Joyce says that she will wait in front of their house and if something happens she will be there to save Imani.

The next chapter is the following month September. The sisters and Eddie make a plan to observe Imani outside of the house of Frank and Mattie, the uncle and the aunt of Imani. They change shifts among each other. Then some unexpected movements happen around the house. The noise of the song playing on the tape is so high that it prevents Imani's crying to be heard; but Joyce hears Imani's crying and rushes home. Joyce asks for the baby, but they do not let her have Imani. With a gun in his hand, Frank comes to the door and threatens Joyce and Ava that they are trespassing. Ava goes to Joyce's place to get the gun for defense and returns with Eddie. When they turn back, there is an ambulance and Imani is on a tiny stretcher with an oxygen mask. Frank has broken Imani's legs. At the hospital, Ava and Eddie learn the story behind this confusion from Joyce. She says that she waits in the wings around the house to react as soon as possible and she hears from Frank and Mattie some shoutings related to Imani. She breaks into the house and calls the police when Frank notices her inside the house. He has a gun in his hand. They understand that she is calling the police and they run out from the house.

Ava, Joyce and Eddie are in the hospital waiting and hoping for Imani to get better. There is a strange visit from a woman to the sisters' house. She says that she comes from where the Reverend and his wife once worked. She finds out that the Reverend has a close interest in young boys and he even invites them to his house. In addition to that, Tyron's mother has died because of AIDS. That is the reason why they move to Michigan and do not let any youngsters programme inside the church. Learning the secret of the Reverend and his wife Gerry Anderson will be a big triumph for Joyce and Ava to cease the pressure of Gerry on them. Ava meets with Gerry at the drugstore and shows the letter that she has taken from the woman. Gerry scans the letter and understands that now the sisters have discovered the fact of their coming to Michigan. Ava meets with Gerry by sending a letter which asserts that she knows the secret of their past. Ava threatens Gerry that if they do not leave the town,

she will reveal the secret to the newspaper. Gerry hopelessly asks to Ava the reason of doing this against her and gets the answer that this is what Gerry has been doing to the sisters from the first moment they came.

At the last part, in November, there are the preparations for Ava and Eddie's wedding at the church with a new pastor. The plan of Ava's moving to the West coast of U.S. is no longer her real plan. After the wedding, they open up the new place of *Sewing Circus*. They just dance and feel the love to each other. Now they see that what looks like crazy on an ordinary day looks like love.

5.2. The Characters Longing For a Secure Family in the Novel

The novel includes the main characters the protagonist Ava, her sister Joyce and their neighbour and close friend Eddie. There are also supporting characters who are the members of the Sewing Circus, Imani's family-her aunt Mattie and her uncle Frank- and the new Reverend, his wife and their grandson Tyrone.

Ava is at the center of the novel as being the one running from her old life to start a brand new life. She is the major character and finds the relief at her hometown where she already belongs to. She is narrating the story of the characters by utilizing memories from the past. As a colored woman, she has a strong character which gives her enough courage to have her own business and life until the revelation of her illness-AIDS-before the eyes of the client. Everything turns upside down after discovering this unexpected event and she finds the solution to look for a new life in another city of U.S. Her mood is clarified in "Why Can't We Flip the Script: The Politics of Respectability in Pearl Cleage's *What Look Like Crazy on an Ordinary Day*" by Ayana Weekley;

"Ava's inner monologue calls forth the dichotomies of innocence and guilt, only to swiftly deny their explanatory power. Ava, almost defiantly, claims her route of transmission, her agency and her sexuality" (3).

After taking this decision, she takes her first step to her hometown to see her sister and refresh herself for a new start throughout summer. She is so open to herself that even listening to the victims of this illness can make her confess that; whatever has caused her illness does not make her an angel as they are being exposed on television. She knows that she is one big part of that mistake as a woman not as a

saint. She is also aware of the fact that, the thing she has done is only under her own responsibility; but not requiring the sympathy and the support of the people who feel themselves like virgins next to her.

*“I don’t think anything I did was bad enough for me to earn this as the payback, but it gets rough out here sometimes. If you’re not a little kid, or a heterosexual movie star’s doomed but devoted wife, or a hemophiliac who got it from a tainted transfusion, or a **straight white woman who can prove she’s a virgin with a dirty dentist**, you’re not eligible for any no-strings sympathy.”*

(WLLC: 4)

No matter how strong she feels, at first it was also really hard for her to accept the reality and live accordingly. For a while, she takes her shelter in alcohol. She drank too much that this prevented her from deciding if it is really the illness or alcohol that makes her sick. She has a pity for herself, but the anger makes her to drink too much until she gets lost in real life and have no real feelings.

While fighting against the adaptation process of her illness, she also endures the discrimination of the white people. It has been many years since the blacks have gained their freedom from the hands of the whites. However, it is really hard to eliminate it from the eyes and movements of the whites. She is on her way to her hometown with a business class ticket inside the business cabinet. The white who has the right to sit down at the business section by nature has the prerogative to look at her with question marks in their eyes. Deeply, she is just a black woman that does not deserve to be at the same scale with a white person. The choice of business class section of the writer for Ava shows clearly that discrimination is still the issue in U.S. Therefore, the plane becomes the microcosm of white commanders who has slaved the black in history and cannot get rid of this idea.

*“He was surprised as hell when I sat down next to him. White men in expensive suits are always a little pissed to find themselves seated next to me in first class, especially since I started wearing my hair so short. They seem to take it as some kind of personal affront that of all the seats on the airplane, **the baldheaded black woman** showed up next to them. It used to make me uncomfortable. Now I think of it as helping them take a small step toward*

higher consciousness. Discomfort is always a necessary part of the process of enlightenment. ” (WLLC: 5)

Ava is a concious person and she criticizes the folks because of their adaptation to the white world more than expected. She proves this by picturing the appearances of the folks at a reception. Even though that kind of a lifestyle is far from them, she sees that the folks have been already internalised the white way of living. They seem comfortable with the new concept. They pretend as if it is the reality that they are supposed to be in.

“My first week in town, I hooked up with a sister who was going to work for the new mayor, and she invited me to a cocktail reception at one of the big downtown hotels. When we got there, I felt like I had walked into one of those ads in Ebony where the fine brother in the designer tux says to the beautiful sister in the gorgeous gown: I assume you drink Martel? Folks were standing around laughing and talking and pretending they had been doing this shit for years. ” (WLLC: 6)

She also points out that like the discrimination her community has experienced, she has some kind of an exclusion from her own community. After it is a well-known fact that she is HIV positive, the people who have chosen her as the woman of the year or gave her big hand for her success now just turn their heads away. It was the support of the black community which rescued them from the years of slavement. When it comes to millenium, your own compatriots begin to turn their back on you. This hypocrisy is the result of living in a big city where people are getting isolated in time. When she returns to her own little town, she will regain the spirit of her own secure community and family. This is the starting of deterritorialization for the black.

“All those folks who had been giving me those African-American Businesswoman of the Year awards and Mentor of the Month citations and invitations to speak from the pulpit on Women’s Day stopped calling me. When people I’d known for ten years saw me out, they’d wave and smile and head off in the other direction. Everybody knew, but nobody mentioned it. They acted like it was too embarrassing to bring it up in polite company. I guess we were all still supposed to be virgins instead of just stupid. ” (WLLC: 8)

Having witnessed the insecurity and unbelonging in her so-called beloved and free life make Ava realize that she needs a place to take a breath. She wants to be whole again. She needs some time to recover after what she has experienced. The reader can easily guess that it is your own family and blood what make you feel secure again. She chooses to return to Michigan, her hometown, and have some time before moving into another city in U.S. For Ava, she just wants to be accepted as she is, with her mistakes.

“....I wanted to move someplace where I didn’t have to apologize for not disappearing because my presence made people nervous. I wanted a more enlightened pool of folks from which to draw potential lovers. I wanted to be someplace where I could be my black, female, sexual, HIV-positive self. ”

(WLLC: 9)

When she goes to her sister’s house for the recovery, she has already known that the love and security she is going to feel at home will make her full and free again. At first, she was planning to go on her life in another big city; but she will win a new perspective and change her mind. She expresses the joy of meeting with Joyce again in the lines below;

“I was glad me and Joyce were going to get a big dose of each other before I moved three thousand miles away. ” (WLLC: 11)

While passing from one page to another, the author gives the information about the history of once black summer town-Michigan. The development of Ava’s hometown has two different stories which cover the settlement of black folks on the territory. The first one is the story about ‘The Founder’. He was an Indian and one day he has taken all his money and announces that, the part of the land that he has chosen, is under his control. He accepted his blood brothers and sisters to settle and they brought money and new hopes to create an all-black paradise. The other one is the story of Rajah, another Indian. He is also believed to be a real Negro, but there is also the presence of a white wife in this story. Rajah and his wife have a cafe that takes too much attention as Rajah makes the clients feel like ‘royals’. The place is always full. One day, while they are closing the place, there comes a drunk group asking for food and the white woman does not want to serve. They have a discussion with Rajah and she says ‘nigger’ to him. They start to fight and they disappear into

the woods. The two stories are the ones showing that it is always the place of the black community. The dream to create a whole black town is just the shared expectations of the colored people.

As the years have passed from the years of discrimination and emancipation, now there are the new problems for the black folks. The most obvious problem is the situation of the young population who are generally not educated and busy with illegal affairs. They are too rude, violent and angry to each other and this shows up itself the moment when they go to a liquor store. Ava witnesses the rage of a young black boy to a young girl with a baby in her arms. After seeing this, she has her first sentence from Eddie that welcoming her home with his saying: "Welcome Home". (Cleage, 2002: 20).

"I guess I was naive to think that Idlewild could escape all of that. It almost doesn't matter what black community you go in now, the problems are exactly the same. The kids are angry. The men are shellshocked. The women are alone and the drugs are everywhere. " (WLLC: 129)

After noticing the situation's getting worse even in the countryside, she concludes that this is the result wherever you go. It is now not just the matter of segregation; but also the loss of new generation, new hopes. The young are stucked in the middle of two cultures, societies and lifestyles. They try to overcome this in wrong ways. Unfortunately, they have chosen the wrong path to express themselves. Whatever happens, nothing loses her joy of being at home again. It is not just being there, it is to feel the air of family, security and belonging at the same time. The reader can see a new life for her at home.

"Upon her return to Idlewild she quickly realizes that the peaceful, quiet town she left so many years ago is now under siege by the same problems plaguing larger cities including: drugs, crime, poverty, and AIDS. The escape she has planned to Idlewild turns into a period of awakening for Ava as she and her sister take in an abandoned newborn infant and she begins assisting her sister in mentoring young women at the local church" (Weekley, 1).

She feels home with all the aura around the place and she hears the whispering of the house and realizes she is really glad to be home again, but she reminds herself that this is temporary (Cleage, 2002: 22).

Before losing her virginity, Ava has spent some time with black folks. Until she reaches the realization of a man's world as it is today, she fully understands the expectations of men from women. When it comes to intercourse, nobody cares about your colour or history.

“Before I tested, I had been celibate for almost a year. I had had enough of those Atlanta Negroes for a while. They talk so much shit when they're looking for some sweetness, but they got no heart for the long haul. I figured ten years of rolling around with them was plenty. Besides, in spite of what people will try to tell you, Atlanta is still a very small town, and the way I'd been living, it was getting downright ridiculous. I'd walk into a reception and there'd be a room full of brothers, power brokering their asses off, and I'd realize I'd seen them all naked. I'd watch them striding around, talking to each other in those phony-ass voices men use when they want to make it clear they got juice, and it was so depressing, all I'd want to do was go home and get drunk. ” (WLLC: 30)

Ava interiorises the life in her hometown. She starts spending her time for her body and soul. She meditates and goes walking along the lake. She starts a journey in herself to rediscover the woman who she has been uninterested for years of hard work and city life. For this aim, she needs the help of the supporting actors also. Joyce is there for her to ease her passage to fulfill herself again. Eddie is also there to usher her the way to her discovery. It is not only the progress Ava has been through in herself, but also the support of Joyce, Eddie and Imani that help her see the importance and power of being a family. Following the months, remembering her past and present, realizing the truth of being home; Ava is attached to home more and more concretely. The very contribution she has taken from Joyce, the only and unique blood bound she has in life, has changed the direction of her path. While trying to get used to the life that Joyce has constructed here, she finds out that she feels more relaxed and happier than before.

It is the place where she never needs to feel any worries about being accepted. She gets used to the flow of life by seeing the struggle of Joyce for the young unmarried black mothers. Under the name of *Sewing Circus* and under the roof of the church, she tries to make a change in the lifes of these young women. Conducting the

healing center and meeting point for the black folks, the church has its role again. It is not the place where you can feel close to God, but also meets you with the ones who share the same destiny. There is always backing from the people you are linked to as being in a community. These meetings show Ava that she is not alone in having a big problem in life and she is in many ways luckier than them. Giving them a helping hand makes her feel confident and peaceful again. By this way, she can understand the importance of having a family and how much she is in need of that kind of a feeling.

Like the contribution Joyce has made Ava to continue her life, Eddie is another headstone of her feeling secure at home. He shows the way to find peace with his affectionate behaviours. He makes her realize the importance of love and it is not only her who has some secrets in life. *‘Ava falls in love with Eddie almost immediately. He is calm, centered, and understanding’* (Weekley, 7). As being a carpenter, Eddie also constructs the future of Ava by showing how to educate her spirit. It is sometimes the chat they have or sometimes just the silent hours they share and the Eastern spiritual sports like Tai Chi. It is always Eddie who reminds Ava that he is a secure shore for her where she can feel like at home. He makes her feel so secure and provides belonging for Ava. Ava understands that he is a real friend. Below, there are some utterances of Ava and Eddie which show directly how they feel secure and belong to each other.

“So I took a deep breath like they keep saying on this meditation tape and tried to focus on being right in this room, right in this moment, and I actually felt better! It was amazing. I dragged that scared part of myself kicking and screaming into the present moment and it was so good to be there. I started grinning like an idiot. ” (WLLC: 76)

...

“It was a lovely afternoon, and by the time we started back, I felt like I’d found a friend for life. Better late than never. ” (WLLC: 90)

...

“They beat us for a lot of reasons, but I knew they were going to the first time I saw one of those tunnels. We were only there doing time, but they were in for the long haul. They were home. It made them stronger.

.....

If you have to take a stand, home's the best place to do it," he said, and his voice was as soothing as the music. " (WLLC: 103)

"I felt more alive here than I had for years. I had my sister, the lover of my dreams, a role as part of a long-term project that excited me, and a big-eyed, baldheaded baby girl to take on my morning walks. I was meditating morning and evening, walking three miles a day, and I hadn't had anything stronger than a glass of wine with dinner in a month. It was my choice that had brought me back here, and for the first time, it really felt like home. " (WLLC: 141)

"...I could hear the steady rhythm of his heart and I don't think I've ever felt safer in my life. " (WLLC: 154)

"I'm not here to watch you die," he said softly. "I'm here to help you live." I looked up into his face and it looked like home, and all of a sudden, standing there keeping watch outside of that madhouse, I felt like I almost understood. What was important and what was not. What was worth the time and effort and what was just a bunch of bullshit. And the more I looked at Eddie looking back at me, the more it was starting to make sense. Not all of it, but a little. Just a little, and at this point, that was all I needed.

"You remember those tunnels I told you about?" he said, touching my cheek. I nodded.

"Well, that's what we're building, too, except they're different from the ones I saw in 'Nam. You know why?"

"Why?" I said, not caring that I felt tears on my face.

"Because," he said, "those were for war. What we're building are tunnels of love. " (WLLC: 191)

"San Francisco never really belonged to me. Not like this place does. There's something about it. How it started. How it used to be, and how it fell apart. I want to see if we can fix it. " (WLLC: 212)

The baby-Imani- to whom she has felt reluctant to, is at the same house for the summer. She has also made some changes in Ava's feelings. Her emotions towards the baby, the way she takes care of her and knowing that she is inside the house help her realize the importance of having someone that you care in life is an unseperatable

part of being a family. The baby accelerates Ava to feel belonging to her hometown and family again. In some way, she identifies the baby with herself. She stands in her hometown after long years of city life. She tries to adapt herself to her home again. She feels like a baby. Both of them try to survive in life and get accustomed to the new way of life. The love she has for Imani and the affection she has from Eddie have already reminded her that it is love that makes you feel good, happy and complete.

The journey of Ava takes her to a secure family environment which cannot be possible without the contribution of her sister Joyce. She is the elder one who has some burdens in life like losing her children in early ages and her husband in an awkward event. She did not leave her hometown where she was married and started a family. Although Joyce and Ava have never cut off their relationships, the distance they have sometimes makes it hard to back up as much as possible. When the reader reads the life of Joyce in Michigan, her struggle in life is really clear. She is an ex-social worker for the problematic families and their children. She defends her job as being the one who tries to make a small change in the life of her community. After getting retired of her profession, she continues her inner motivation in this way. She organizes a club for the unmarried young black mothers under the roof of the church and by the name '*Sewing Circus*'. Actually it is not the name that she has chosen, but what the elders have labelled referring to past. She explains the name as in below;

"It's not a real circus," Joyce was saying. "The elders just started calling it that because we took over an activity slot at the church that used to be called the Sewing Circle. It was the only women's group that met regularly other than the deaconesses', and I knew I wasn't ready for that." (WLLC: 33)

Believing that the only way to make the future better is to take the first step in education for the young mothers. They will be the old of the new generation. She is so enthusiastic about this that; like her name, she feels joy about what she is trying to do for her sisters. She is really good at organizing the doings at church. Every woman has a duty from babysitting to cleaning of the room when they have the meeting. There is also another young sister who is not married or expecting a baby. Contrary to black sisters who gather regularly at the church, she is really aware of the situation she is in and she studies so hard to achieve her goal. In the end she reaches

her goal and shows that she has also the courage to be free and educated in such a town. The way she manages such kind of a movement in life is caused by the wrong examples she has witnessed in her town. She is a symbol of achievement and hope for the future for the young mother's babies.

Joyce has a life full of struggles for the future, when Ava calls her to give the good news about being with her throughout the summer. All Joyce has concentrated on is her coming home again and she does not pay any attention to her sentences so much. This is a temporary plan for Ava, however for Joyce, this is the unification of family again. She starts reunion by sending Eddie to pick up Ava from the airport. She is so busy with her profession that she cannot find time to welcome her sister. At the time of Ava's arrival, there is a runaway mother-the mother of Imani- who was a crack-addict. What she has left behind will be under the responsibility of Ava and Joyce on the following days. Also, Eddie's going to airport to bring Ava home is the starting point of their relationship and an indicator of his being a part of the family. The encounter of the sisters occur with a big hug of Joyce and with the words of Ava:

"...She turned and ran down the back steps and grabbed mein a big hug.

As soon as Eddie left and we got inside, Joyce threw her arms around me and started apologizing for being late and asking me if I'd eaten enough and apologizing some more until finally I said, "Hold it! This is the part where you get to ask me how I'm feeling and I get to say I'm feeling fine and you get to look at me hard to see if I'm lying and if I'm not, you get to hug me again and say, welcome home, little sister. You look great! " (WLLC: 26)

When they finish hugging and welcoming, Joyce starts to talk about her life in Michigan. Being sisters has already constructed the sense of belonging. While telling her story to Ava about the *Sewing Circus*, it is all clear for Ava how Joyce really feels. She also gives her some information about what she has planned for the girls at the circus. Even though, it is not her own sister or her own problem, Joyce does not overlook on her community's problems; instead she chooses to share the problem like a family who has a cultural heritage from the years of Emancipation. What Joyce has started in the church is the microcosm of the past of the black community and is also an allusion to the years of salvation.

“They have a good sense of humour between each other. While talking about Sewing Circus, one can easily understand how deep she feels about it.

....it gave her a chance to talk to the girls one on one in a setting where they were doing something responsible, by choice, and where they were surrounded by children. ” (WLLC: 34)

“Day after another, they have realized that they can finish the schedule and have a chance to talk about the problems they have in common from men to sex. It allows them to share experiences and to feel like a family that you can consult.A lot of loud talking, which is what people tend to do when they finally find somebody who will listen. ” (WLLC: 35)

For Joyce, the life flows like as it is. Nothing changes in her way of spending the day. She behaves as if Ava was always with her in her own life in Michigan. While she tries to have Eartha's baby to keep an eye on, Ava is not really sure to endure a baby at the house on her summer holiday. Being a mother who has lost her two children, Joyce is really willing about this issue. At the day of Joyce's coming from the hospital with Eartha's baby, Ava is at the phase of cleaning her body physically and psychologically. Like the baby, they are at the trial of adaptation to a new life under the roof of Joyce's house.

“Welcome home, little sister,” she said softly. “You look great. ” (WLLC: 54)

While the sisters are getting accustomed to each other and the new member Imani more usual than expected, the reader can comprehend the importance of having a family. When Ava has the first news about being HIV positive, Joyce is the one who rushes immediately to back up Ava. They go to a shop to buy some informative books and and some therapy books to clear up the black clouds. Thanks to her, Ava accepts the fact easier and not with too many problems. Discovering how little information they have about HIV and AIDS and how common they are among the black sisters, Joyce plans to have a presentation about AIDS at *Sewing Circus*. She has the ability to turn the negative into something positive. Since she knows that this is the part of life, she comes to the black sisters' help to protect them from the possible disturbances. She takes advantage of condoms and hot-dogs to teach how to make love safe with the men. It is, of course, really weird when you look from outside; but it is just a trial to make it vivid and practicable for the girls. If there is a

threat outside their world, there are the black sisters who show the correct path without hesitation.

“.....Gerry’s messing with the Sewing Circus and Imani is still not tied to Joyce by anything but love. I told Joyce she should legally adopt Imani so they couldn’t ever take her back and she said she wants to, but it’s really complicated because they still can’t find Eartha and nobody knows the father. In the meantime, just the possibility of losing Imani makes Joyce very, very nervous. She’s only been with us three weeks and she’s already family...”
(WLLC: 88)

Even though the consequence of educating the young black mothers is negative for Joyce, all she cares is to go on the meetings with the girls. She has a discussion with Reverend and especially with his wife about this issue. The time when she realizes that it is useless, she starts to look for a new place where they can gather and put all her life into this. Being a family and the feeling of belonging reveal with the interdependence of Ava and Joyce. Ava is the financial provider, Eddie is the repairman and Joyce is the brain of the construction of a new *Sewing Circus* building. With this struggle, they represent the image of solidarity, belonging and family. Additionally, the new house will be the symbol of extended family where the black sisters will fight for a more beautiful future.

Joyce is also a role model for Ava by showing the rules of being a free woman. She is so sincerely busy with the progress of the sisters in *Sewing Circus* that she prepares a statement of purpose for what she tries to do at the *Sewing Circus*. She shows how much courage she bears to Ava. This statement causes her to write a list of requirements which will help the women feel free and secure at the beginning of the millennium. When she finishes the list, she makes Ava to read. It proves that she knows what is needed for the woman to feel free and secure.

“Statement of Purpose

To create and nurture women who are strong, mentally, physically, and spiritually; free of shackles, both internal and external; independent of the control of other human beings and dogma, religious or political; women who can take care of themselves and their children financially, choose their lovers

based on mutual respect, emotional honesty, and sexual responsibility; women who raise their children to be contributors, not predators or parasites.

TEN THINGS EVERY FREE WOMAN SHOULD KNOW

- 1. How to grow food and flowers*
- 2. How to prepare food nutritiously*
- 3. Self-defense*
- 4. Basic first aid/sex education and midwifery*
- 5. Child care (prenatal/early childhood development)*
- 6. Basic literacy/basic math/basic computer skills*
- 7. Defensive driving/map reading/basic auto and home repairs*
- 8. Household budget/money management*
- 9. Spiritual practice*
- 10. Physical fitness/health/hygiene”(WLLC: 134-135)*

....

- “1. Don’t fuck men you don’t like.*
- 2. Bring your own birth control.*
- 3. Practice safe sex every time.*
- 4. If it’s hurting you, it shouldn’t be exciting him.*
- 5. Don’t fake—demonstrate.”(WLLC: 137)*

When the reader starts to think that everything will be all right from now on, another problem shows up itself. Upon hearing the news about Imani, this time it is Ava who backs up Joyce. The social worker comes to take Imani to her aunt and uncle’s house as they are the legal conservators. The reason of their asking Imani back is only financial, because the government hands some money for such babies’ families. Ava and Joyce are pretty sure that Imani will not be happy and peaceful with them, but they are obliged to. Joyce only accepts this to watch over the house of Imani’s aunt and uncle. Ava waits with her by changing shifts among Joyce, Eddie and herself. As they try to create the secure family environment for Imani, they also get connected to each other tightly. They know that it is also the right of Imani to be in this atmosphere and they do not let her feel uncomfortable by not leaving her alone at her relative’s house. This decision shows its rightfulness with the action of Frank’s being violent against her by breaking the legs and pointing the gun against

Joyce's face. At the end of all these challenges, they take Imani back home after some time at hospital and they are secure and interdependent now to each other. It can be nonsense to wait in front of the house for a possible problem, but Joyce has already learned how it feels to lose someone in life.

"I've lost two babies," she said, opening her lips but not her teeth. "I'm not giving up another one. " (WLLC: 194)

The shifts of the characters serve the purpose and they rescue Imani from the insecure atmosphere where she does not belong to. They take her back home, real home in which she feels secure and there are people who feel close to her. This event is the beginning of resolution for the novel and it finishes with the marriage of Ava and Eddie. What they have been through for the last six months are the pieces of memories now which help them realize the importance of love. It is the love what connects one to someone or somewhere. They have found the ideal place to feel secure and safe. It can be seen as an ordinary situation for the reader, but it has so many lessons to make the characters convey the meaning of being in a family.

"And it did. And we danced too wild, and we sang too long, and we hugged too hard, and kissed too sweet, and threw back our heads and howled just as loud as we wanted to howl, because by now we were all old enough to know that what looks like crazy on an ordinary day looks a lot like love if you catch it in the moonlight. " (WLLC: 2)

5.2.1. The Power of Love

While reading the novel, the reader can easily understand the main feelings of the characters. It is not said directly almost throughout novel, but what looks like crazy on an ordinary day is the presence of love among the characters. The love can be between a man to a woman like Ava and Eddie; between sisters like Ava and Joyce; from a sister towards the sisters like Ava-Joyce and the young black mothers at the sewing circus and finally from a family towards a child like Ava-Joyce and Imani. All in all, it is the power of love that makes you feel secure and create the feeling of belonging.

In the novel, this can be discovered from the very beginning till the end. In comparison to Joyce, Eddie is much more effective on the journey of Ava's

adaptation to a secure family. As being a main character of the novel, he is the one both appealing to heart and the mind. With his appearance in the book from the first arrival of Ava till the end, he has the power of trust, safety and love.

As a psychological character, Eddie is the one who also has a skeleton in his closet. He has a bad reputation as being a violent and irresponsible young man. He has the memories from Vietnam war and being an addict of heroin. The most important thing what matters for Eddie and Ava is, they both carry some mistakes from the past which cause them to pay a great deal back. It is the same mistakes which make them get closer day by day and understand each other without judgement. Being a carpenter, farmer, cook, musician and a little bit of everything; he is a really good construction worker on Ava's psychology. He helps her to see the importance of only being alive and not giving much attention to the bad sides of life. He is a great instructor who gives his lessons by showing how to deal with those in reality. His being patient and caregiving make Ava to fall in love unlike the relationships she has had in Atlanta. Before, it was sometimes just to get a temporary satisfaction of the relation; but now she learns how to feel the real pleasure. He ushers the way to Ava that; being a family and feeling secure with someone are the most substantial things in life.

Throughout the novel, Eddie is always in the story even if the reader cannot see his presence. His way of living, the things he has been doing for Joyce and the rest make the readers witness the important parts of the mosaic which completes the journey of Ava. Like his way of living, it is also his speech that make Ava discover the unseen part of being a human, having a family or loving and caring for someone. In other words, Eddie is the man who shows the potential of love to Ava.

At first, he shows how strong he is literally by interfering into the fight between a young black woman and Frank. He can easily get the problem of young black brothers even though they live in a small town like Michigan.

"....."All these little towns are virgin markets for these young wanna-be gangsters. People sitting around here with nothing to do and a police force with two cops who share one squad car. They probably don't even know what crack looks like. It's easy money." (WLLC: 21)

Eddie's house is like a paradise where you can get rid of all the burden of your life which is clear to Ava at first glance. Every corner has something that really reveals the lifestyle of Eddie. He has chosen a life according to minimalism which makes someone to be free from the jam of furniture. It is also the place where Ava has confessed her illness to Eddie. With the behaviours and movements of Eddie, Ava starts to feel secure and reveals her secret to him. This is the power of belonging what makes someone belong to a place or a person.

"...Everything was sort of a soothing wheat color, except for a pile of bright red pillows stacked on the floor. There were bamboo mats, a futon couch, and a small table with two chairs. He had a couple of bookcases full of record albums. An elaborate, old-fashioned stereo system sat in the corner looking well used and well kept." (WLLC: 23)

"Eddie's house was as soothing as it had been the first time I was there..." (WLLC: 98)

Seeing Eddie in the role of a carpenter makes Ava resemble him to Jesus. It is not because she is really religious, but the way his handling everything as a professional makes her think he is more than a normal human being. There is the biblical allusion of the writer here.

"Is that what you do?" I said. "Build houses?"

"Houses, fences, furniture," he said. "I'm a carpenter."

"Just like Jesus." I was just being a smart aleck, but I realized that with his hair hanging down around his shoulders, the beard, the sandals, and his penchant for dashikis, he definitely had a biblical sort of look going." (WLLC: 55)

Even watching him from a distance makes her feel comfortable and calm. While talking about the days in Vietnam, Eddie also says the lessons he has learned from being in a war, fighting and killing someone. He resembles the tunnels to a safe place where you can hide and have a minute to breathe. By doing this, in a way he resembles the tunnels of war to some kind of a harbor which means home for people.

"....His eyes were closed, but he looked so perfectly peaceful that I never wanted him to stop and I never wanted to stop watching." (WLLC: 98)

“They beat us for a lot of reasons, but I knew they were going to the first time I saw one of those tunnels. We were only there doing time, but they were in for the long haul. They were home. It made them stronger.” I wasn’t sure what he was getting at and he must have seen the confusion on my face.

“If you have to take a stand, home’s the best place to do it,” he said, and his voice was as soothing as the music.” (WLLC: 103)

“...I’m not going anywhere.” And he smiled that smile. “I’m home, remember?”... (WLLC:104)

The construction work that Eddie is engaged in has also triggered the power of love which allows Ava to be bound to home. Eddie is the lover who has a really tender approach and he is also patient in life. He has adopted Joyce and Ava from the family like “extended family” concept of AAs. That’s why he gets mad about the attack to Joyce’s house when Ava and Imani are present. For him, family is something that you have to protect no matter what comes out as a result. At the army and with the addicts, he has done many wrong things just to make them feel safe and secure. Ensuring security for the family bears much more importance than the army and the addicts. Eddie reminds Ava that he himself stands for home where she needs to feel secure at and he is in charge of providing this to Ava with love and protection.

“He took a deep breath. “I have taken people out because the army told me I had to so that the country could feel safe. I’ve taken people out because some coke dealer told me to so he could feel safe. I’m not going to let some hard head come at my family so they don’t feel safe. What kind of man would that make me?” (WLLC:153)

...

“All the strength and all the courage and all the peace we’re ever going to need starts right here with me loving you, just like this. And you loving me, just like this.”

He kissed the top of my head and I could feel his hair tickling my neck.

“I’m not here to watch you die,” he said softly. “I’m here to help you live.” I looked up into his face and it looked like home, and all of a sudden, standing there keeping watch outside of that madhouse, I felt like I almost understood. What was important and what was not. What was worth the time and effort and

what was just a bunch of bullshit. And the more I looked at Eddie looking back at me, the more it was starting to make sense. Not all of it, but a little. Just a little, and at this point, that was all I needed.

“You remember those tunnels I told you about?” he said, touching my cheek. I nodded.

“Well, that’s what we’re building, too, except they’re different from the ones I saw in ’Nam. You know why?”

“Why?” I said, not caring that I felt tears on my face.

“Because,” he said, “those were for war. What we’re building are tunnels of love.” (WLLC: 191)

...

“And it did. And we danced too wild, and we sang too long, and we hugged too hard, and kissed too sweet, and threw back our heads and howled just as loud as we wanted to howl, because by now we were all old enough to know that what looks like crazy on an ordinary day looks a lot like love if you catch it in the moonlight.” (WLLC: 214)

The supporting characters who take place in the novel show the importance of belonging to a family. The things that Joyce is trying hard to achieve for the young unmarried black mothers display the importance of belonging to a secure society. Eddie’s affectionate behaviours towards the sisters and his construction abilities strengthen the belonging of Ava and the community. The success of Aretha, who goes to university, is a good example for the unmarried young black mothers. It gives hope for the future to the young mothers’ children. Even the spoilt characteristics of Mattie, Frank, Eartha-the family of Imani- and Tyrone-the grandson of the Reverend and his wife- demonstrate the bad side of not feeling any belonging or not feeling secure in black community. It is the love that you feel towards your family makes one a real complete person. This interdependence is priceless which one cannot put aside.

6. PARALLELISM AMONG THE CHARACTERS IN THE DRAMA AND THE NOVEL

Ava-Minnie

Sophie-Joyce

In the play and the novel, there are two sisters who are taking a trip to their hometown and their home, namely their family. Both of the sisters at first begin their trip as a temporary stay, yet they spend more time than they have planned. At the end of two works, both of the sisters choose to stay in their hometown and with their family permanently. They are both younger sisters who have chosen another life in another city. The younger sister in the novel is Ava who lives in Atlanta, a bigger and crowded city where one has more option to be socialized and has the chance not to be recognized by everybody in the community. The younger sister in the play is Minnie who is married to Frank. Because he wants, they go to England to live. It is generally the psychology of Frank which directs her moves.

Both younger sisters are going to their hometowns to pay a visit, but they rediscover the meaning of love and the feeling of security there. Minnie is a character who is abused by her husband and is in need of her family for protection. She feels she is in her real home as soon as she enters Nicodemus. It is hard for her to remain in the middle of her family and her husband. Though Frank is the person who also has that violent character because of being in the fix, it is a must for the family to solve this problem. The place where Minnie feels herself safe is also the place where she can go on living until the end of her life. In the end, it is the home and love of her family members which make her feel safe and gives her the sense of belonging to a place.

Ava is a character who has her phase many years after Minnie. She is the younger sister who lives abroad and returns to her hometown to gain enough power to start a new life. When she comes home, she cannot resist the atmosphere which causes her to feel a cosy connection of family profoundly. She is in need of love of her sister because of the exclusion she has experienced in Atlanta. She needs the affection and care of her sister. It is not only her sister but also Eddie who shows her the power of love and gives a sense of belonging. He shows how secure it is to live with the people he feels like family and in the place where he has his childhood memories.

Ava in the novel and Minnie from the play resemble each other in terms of being sisters who bear real grief. When they feel the secure atmosphere of home again, they cannot leave it behind. It is the support of their sisters that heals the mental pain growing inside. They find the cure, namely love, from the family and from the place where they feel like home.

Being the elder sisters who has got the role of mother for their younger sisters; the two sisters in the novel Joyce and the play Sophie have so much in common, too. Sophie living in the past years following the emancipation; is a really strong character for the family, especially for her younger sister Minnie. She has the determination to protect her from the violent acts of her husband. The time she feels the threat of Frank against Minnie, she grabs her shotgun without any hesitation. Just like Sophie, Joyce pays too much attention to Ava because of the emotional situation she has been feeling since she found out the bad news about her health. Both of the elder sisters are in the role of a mother figure who cares and gives without any expectations in return.

Sophie wants Minnie to stay with them in the place where they have a land called home. Like Sophie, from the time Ava comes to her hometown for summer holiday; Joyce always behaves in the same way as Ava was already there with her and will always stay with her. They are in search for a real family. It is not something that one can feel absolutely, but it is something that needs to be felt deeply. The desire of a secure place to live is stated in both works as natural, so Ava and Minnie are welcomed totally by their sisters.

7. CONCLUSION

The history of Africans in U.S. territory has started in a humiliating way which causes so much burden and death for the Africans. They suffer from slavery and endure inhuman treatment. They have lost their self-confidence, dignity and their honour because of the superior power of the whites. All these troubles have made them much stronger than they expected, both psychically and mentally. In time they started to realize that they are also the people created by the same God.

The way they save themselves from this condition took so many years of struggle and resistance. All the power they have inside themselves was just related to the presence of a family. For them, the family not only consists of parents and children, but also of the black people who share the same destiny. They have the nuclear family and an extended family including the neighbours. There are other slaves that exist under the same roof and the black orphans. They naturally build their own protection under the name of belonging and by this way, they create their secure environment inch by inch.

The aim of this study is to display the importance of a secure family and the longings of the black people. In this respect, an African American woman playwright and novelist Pearl Cleage's two works '*Flyin' West*' and '*What Looks Like Crazy On An Ordinary Day*' have been analyzed.

Theoretical section includes the 1st, 2nd and the 3rd parts. In the first part, the literary world and life of Pearl Cleage is stated. In the 2nd part, historical development of the Africans in U.S. is mentioned. It starts from the first arrival of the servants until the civil rights and voting acts. In the 3rd part, an African American family is evaluated. The elements that form a family in U.S. for the Africans and the meaning of family for the Africans are evaluated.

Application section of the thesis are the 4th, 5th and the 6th parts. At the 4th part, the drama of Pearl Cleage '*Flyin' West*' is analyzed in a detailed way. The analysis includes the background history of those times where the events take place. It is the time of Homestead Act which gives a piece of land to the newly freed slaves. The characters in the drama are the examples of homesteaders. It is followed by the structural information of the drama. From the first speeches till the end the major events are given. Along with the summary, the personalities and the pasts of the

characters are represented. The most important part following the previous part is the dreams of the characters section. It is where the concrete dreams of the characters are displayed. There are black women from the youngest to the eldest sharing the very same aim: to be free forever. While Sophie struggles for the construction of the institutions, Miss Leah generally gives much attention to the security of the family members. She is the one who has the power of past heritage which enables her to solve the problems of Minnie. The main objective of the thesis is the longings of the characters for a secure family. This is included in part 4. The reactions and the expectations of the characters which are similar to each other in terms of longings, have an authentic aim. While Sophie is dealing with the construction of a family, Fan is interested in the beauty of the surroundings. All complete each other in an interesting way.

The 5th part includes the novel. It starts with the summary of the novel according to its divisions. Analysis of the novel and the major characters' longings are displayed in this and is blended with the structural elements stated by the writer. The last part before the conclusion consist of the parallelism of the characters in the play and the drama. In this section, the history of Africans in U.S. is especially highlighted to show the results of the characters's personalities and hopes.

All in all, the longings of the Africans can be easily recognized in the two works of Pearl Cleage although many years have passed between both of works. To understand the inner world of the characters, the work is supported by the historical development of the Africans in U.S. Apart from the analysis of the two works, it will help the reader to appreciate a natural desire for the longings of the characters intimately.

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