CHAPTER-VII

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The term feminism is an ideology of women liberation as it is beheld that women suffer injustice because of their sexes. And feminist is a woman who recognizes herself, and is recognized by others as feminist. That awareness depends on a woman having experienced consciousness raising, a knowledge of woman’s oppression their difficulties and communalities.

Naylor tries to represent the voice of the black women through her writings—the collective voice of the women who try to empower and nurture each other, who give a little strength to each other as and when needed. In the Women of Brewster Place she projects black women who are totally trapped by the inequitous system. But, later they gain control of themselves such as Neeed women in Linden Hills do. These women appears to be far away from the city life but control their own destiny, in the light of their own experiences.

Gloria Naylor’s Mama Day portrays the story of a conjuring woman, Sapphira Wade and her descendant Miranda, or Mama Day. Abigail, her sister and Ophelia’s baby girl Cocoa and the way all of them come to term with the spirits Sapphira Wade forms the narrative element. The problem for the present generating of women is to continue with the heritage of Sapphira Wade.

The title Mama Day is taken from an insightful practitioner of herbal medicine who is nearly hundred years of age. The place is Willow Spring the mythical sea island off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina, the land of the Gullah slave population. It was deeded
by a slave owner to his slave in the 1920’s at the instance one of them, Sapphira, Wade, the man’s wife and mother of his seven sons. Georgia and South Carolina then fought to get control of the island, but failed. So the island belonged to the foremothers of Cocoa and the black community. Since then the island was dominated by the elderly matriarch “Miranda” or Mama Day, who is indomitable and “can tame lighting and heal wounds” through magic or the ingredients of her magical pot.

In the previous novels of Gloria Naylor, *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills* the geographical situation of her characters are prominent in the title. The world created in the previous novels are like an island in themselves, far removed from the world of other peoples thought, the places are on the mainland. But in *Mama Day* it is the character Mama Day who appears prominent, though literally Willow Springs is an island. In *Linden Hills* life ebbs out gradually, but in the *Mama Day* the dead are as alive as the living in the form of spirits. The novel opens with some information about Sapphira Wade:

"Willow springs Every body knows but nobody talks about the legend of Sappier Wade A true conjure woman satin black, biscuit cram, red as Georgia clay depending upon which of us take a mind to her. She could walk through a lighting storm without being touched; grab a bolt of lighting in the palm of her hand; use the heat of her lighting to start the kindling going under her medicine pot : depending upon which of us takes a mind to her. She turned the moon into slave, the sars into a swaddling cloth, and healed the wounds of every creature walking up on two or down on four. It ain’t about right or wrong, truth or lies . it’s about a slave woman who brought
about a whole new meaning to both them words, soon as you cross over here from beyond the bridge. And somehow, some way it happened in 1823. She smoothered Bascombe Wade in his very bed and lived to tell the story for a thousand days. 1823: married Bascombe Wade, bore him seven sons just in thousand days to put a dagger through his kidney and escape the hang man’s noose, laughing in a burst of flames 1823: persuaded Bascombe Wade in a thousand days to deed all his slaves every inch of land in Willow Springs, poisoned him for his trouble, to go on and bear seven sons—by person or persons unknown.” (MD 1)

To unveil the story of Mama Day, Naylor employs three alternating voices. The omniscient, folksy narrator provides the explosion, relating the activities of the islanders, including Mama Day and her sister Abigail. A second voice belongs to Abigail’s grand-daughter, Ophelia, also called Cocoa because of her light skin. She lives in New York city and comes back to Willow Springs on the occasion of candle walk. There she meets with George Andrews, an engineer without any family. He provides the story’s third voice.

It is the omniscient voice which is interesting. It describes the island thus:

“So who it belongs to? It belongs to—clean and simple. And its belonged to our daddies, and our daddies before them, and them too— who at one time all belonged to Bascombe Wade.... was Norway born on something, and the land had been sitting in his family over there in Europe since it for explored and claimed by the Vikings—imagine that So thanks to the conjuring of Sapphire Wade got it form Norway or there’s about, and if taxes owed,
it's owed to them And the way we saw it, America ain’t entered the question at all when it come to our land Sapphira was Africa-born, Bascombe Wade was from Norway, and it was the 18 & 23ing that went down between them two put deeds in our hands And we wasn’t even Americans when we got it -was slaves.” (MD 5)

It describes, being the owners of the place, that the inhabitants have stood united, ever since to overcome a string of adversaries - natural and man made-noted in the novels beginning:

“Malaria, Union Soldiers, sandly soil Two big depressions. Hurricane not to mention these new real estate developers who think we gonna sell our shore land just because we ain't fool enough to live there”.

(MD 4)

In the novel, Naylor explores the question of self-identity and looks at the contrast not only between the mainstream society and an isolated black community in Willow Springs but also between male and female man and woman.

In *Mama Day* Naylor narrates the story of two black people from strikingly different backgrounds - George, orphaned in the urban North, has grown up in an institution run by whites; and Cocoa, doted on by two black mother figures, has been drenched in the traditions of the rural South. Through the relationship that develops between the two characters, one the product of the white world the other of an emphatically black one, Gloria Naylor deals with the issue of maintaining black cultural identity in the face of attempts by the white world to order, control and define black people
The first half of the book deals with the story of Cocoa and George's stormy courtship. The second half recounts George and Cocoa's fateful summer visit to Willow Springs during which the island is affected not only by a fierce hurricane, but also by even darker, more elemental forces. These are called into play by a woman named Miss Rubby, with Cocoa as the intended victim. However, Mama Day with the help of George acts as a saviour.

Cocoa is a young woman who has left Willow Spring for New York. However urban her life is, she feels an undeniable pull for home. Each August she returns to the island for a visit. When she brings along her husband George, the forces of the island and of Mama Day, are unleashed.

George is the perfect foil for Mama Day: Steady and straightforward, whereas she is mysterious, grounded in present realities. He was raised in an orphanage, where the present was more comforting than the past. He is perfect for Cocoa. A man strong enough to withstand her temper and gentle enough to love her.

When George first comes to Willow Springs, he knows he is entering another world. In it Cocoa's great aunt Mama Day is a matriarch. She has been living for 90 years and the island is as deep rooted in her as she is in it. She is a midwife, wise in the ways of herbal medicine, trusted and respected by nearly everyone on the island. She can read every nuance in the land as well as people's personalities. Not only this Mama Day is reputed to have a second sight. She spends time with her dead ancestors and tries to unlock their secrets.

Unspoken communication is important in Willow Springs. In the prologue an unidentified voice talks about life on the island and the
The thickness of the air, the indefinable smells, are emblematic of a palce where things are really spelled out and the shortest distance between two points is hardly ever a straight line. George who in Willow Spring parlances "beyond the bridge" is used to rely only on himself, while Mama Day lives in a world of ghosts, ancestors, premonitions and deep communion with nature. Cocoa understands them both but as the drama mounts the two world clash and in the end they cannot co-exist.

George, who owns a house on Stalen Island, takes his job as an engineer seriously, and devotes considerable time in watching football. He also loves Cocoa. George does not bear the burden of the kind of heritage that Cocoa has. He was raised in an orphanage. Learnt to think only of the present and learned self-reliance and self-discipline. Clear eyed and imbued with common sense, Georges is opposite in many ways to the mercurial and sensuous Cocoa. Yet, in pullings them together, Naylor has created one of the most appealing love affair.

The main problem in the novel is to come to terms with one's own ancestral heritage. Cocoa, like her great-aunt, Mama Day, has to come to realise ancestral heritage and the spirit of Sapphira Wade.
founder of Willow Spring and her fore-mother. To do so she comes
to Willow Springs and participates in the candle walk, in which people
take to the road candles in hand, greeting one another with a quite
from a spiritual - "lead on with light"- and exchanging gifts Naylor
has subtly enveloped her audience with Willow Springs ancient rituals
and beliefs, so that by the time of the final battle they have accepted
Mama Day's supernatural powers and are annoyed with George for
his inability to do the same.

The novel's climax is a scaring, sad and triumphant Cocoa's
life threatened but saved through the combined efforts of those who
love her best: her grandmother Abigail, Mama Day and George whose
skepticism is overcome by the terrifying illness induced by jelous
Rubey's spell. This victory has its price and Mama Day closes on
the eve of the 21st century with characters wistfully remembering the
loved one lost in that struggle. The earthly culture of Willow Spring
lingers equally for a long time.

As stated by Andrews, female power and wisdom are vividly
incarnated in Miranda. Forced prematurely into a nurturing role in her
family after her mother's suicide, Miranda eventually becomes not only
a mother to her niece Ophelia but a 'Mama' to the whole island com-
munity of Willow Spring. For decades she is not only the community's
midwife but also the guardian of traditions and its central authority:

"Mama Day says no, everybody say no. She is a
powerful conjure woman with sepecial gifts derived
in the communities views from being a direct descen-
dant of Sapphira Wade" (MD 15)

Miranda's womanpower is presented as an expression of natural
force and as an inheritance from the legendary mother of the com-

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munity. When Sapphira Wade liberated herself from her white husband and master, Bascombe Wade, in 1823 she initiated a tradition of female power as well as a religious tradition. She was also legendary for bringing into the open the unresolved tensions between men and women. Miranda feels largely an unconscious sisterhood with Sapphira through various intuitive experiences of knowledge and power. Miranda feels a more conscious bond of sisterhood with her mother.

This female power is there in the legendary past for the females of Willow Springs to learn, to accept and to draw strength from in their own lives. As Willis says,

"for black woman history is a bridge defined along mother lines" (MD 14)

Miranda’s blood sister, Abigail shares some Miranda’s knowledge and the bond between them is, on the surface, the best example of sisterhood in the novel. The two became inseparable after the death of their sister Peace. Both of them work as surrogate parents for Ophelia.

Although Ophelia has been raised in William Springs by Miranda and Abigail she is not fully aware of her foremothers tradition or alert to the evil represented by New York or by Ruby’s jealousy. She resists on hearing the voices at the graveyard. She fails to understand the message of her dream, and she scoffs at Miranda’s power to get her the New York jobs. The knowledge and power of her foremother and tradition are yet to be fully transmitted to her.

When Ophelia’s life is threatened by Ruby, Miranda herself gains knowledge of this traditions. She discovers even more of the continuity in the lives of women than she had known before. She sees Ophelia’s position in terms of the whole tradition of suffering woman.
form Saphira’s slavery to Miranda’s mothers grief. After finding Bascombe Wade’s Miranda is impelled to uncover the well in which her sister Peace had died, in order to confront and understand her mother’s tragic sorrow and suicide. Once Ophelia is restored to life, Miranda feels that there are no more secrets for Miranda herself to learn, and that the past will be discovered by Ophelia. Hence she tells,

"the ray will lay it’s hands of the Baby girl —— once
she learns to listen." (MD 15)

It is in this fashion that Ophelia, Baby girl alias Cocoa learns to listen to the voices that were not able to understand one’s own history which ultimately empowers her. It is in this way Ophelia a young girl who left Willow Springs at an early age and lived in New York becomes conscious about who she is? Thus Ophelia through Miranda comes in terms with her tradition, the tradition of Saphira Wade and becomes conscious of her own past and the past of her family.

Gloria Naylor transforms Manhattan into a “wonderous isle” thereby deconstructing the facile binary of “Civilization v/s Primitivism”. For Naylor (herself a New York City inhabitant) Manhattan is not the antithesis of Willow Springs but it is complement. Seen in the proper perspective, Manhattan is as wonderous as Willow Springs, and cannot be entirely appreciated-- or loved without a full understanding of the other. Each is incomplete without the other (thus George must visit Willow Springs and Miranda makes a hilarious visit to New York at the end). Manhattan is wonderously mysterious to discover the magic in everyday life. The novel begins in a dirty Manhattan coffee shop, and while everything seems plastic, artificial and anonymous, it is here where George and Cocoa meet, eventually
brought together with the assistance of Miranda’s Puckish dust. Although Cocoa at first sees only the surface of New York symbolized by her categorizing people solely in terms of race and ethnicity, George shows her that the categories she creates are arbitrary condescending, and divisive—and that the island is much more like Willow Springs than she thinks:

"The city was a net work of small towns some even smaller than Willow Springs." (MD 61)

In New York city, as in Willow Springs, people play out dramas of love and happiness, grief and loss. George is alert to the human drama played out beneath the surfaces while Cocoa only notices. It is he who understands the great significance people impute to the smallest detail—the meaning of a yellow rose to a florist on Jamaica Avenue, or the significance of a certain candy store in Harlem. George’s sensitivity to Manhattan’s mysterious testifies to Naylor’s own fairness in creating her male protagonist. Speaking to Morrison Naylor says that she is concerned primarily with fairness in characterizing males:

“I bent over backwards not to have a negative message come through about the men.” (MD 579)

Her “positive message” is subtly conveyed—in fact, in danger of being misread. A civil engineer, George at first glance seems the stereotyped male chauvinist: He loves foot ball, he sees woman mechanically, co-ordinated (he thinks) with a twenty-eight day menstrual cycle, he plays simple card games according to mathematics assuming that winning is “the only thing”; he seemingly reduces the woman’s “basic needs” to “water supply, heating, air conditioning transportation”. He is usually dogmatic particularly with woman. George is only
half kidding when he says,

"your keep'em laid and you keepe'm happy" (MD 221)

Yet George nevertheless possesses a deeply literary imagination, a potentiality of responding to the spiritual and emotional dimensions of life. George likes to think of himself as coldly logical and empirical, he declares that he has "a very rational mind."(MD 124)

George is also deeply moved by art and the aesthetic plans of experience (especially Shakespeare); despite his assertion that the "mechanics" of football interest him the most, his interest in mythology and life's hidden pattern is made clear in his fascination with the folklore on Willow Springs. He defeats the rural cardplayers with probabel statistics, but he is so touched by their ovation that he gets drunk with Dr. Buzzard and his friends-- an amusing reinscription of Shakespeare's drunken lower characters in The Tempest.

His love for football symbolically expresses that he is a dominating figure. Unlike cricket it is not played in colonies but in independent countries. It is not a stretchable game but fast and result oriented. Like the game he too can not be dominated ruled out and stretched for long. The loss of his mother predisposes him to construct rationally explicable patterns to protect his psyche, especially when he perceives wholly emotional, non-predictive experiences. For example, he monitors the calendar to anticipate Cocoa's PMS, rather than attempt to understand that her frustration with him may arise from other sources, including his reluctance to face her frustration honestly. He refuses to sympathize with Cocoa's very understandable anxiety in returning to Willow Springs with her new husband though she explains her feelings about her marriage several times to him.
George is Gloria Naylor’s revised Caliban, but George’s condition is the inverse of Calibans. While Caliban resists reason and a patriarchal order, George resists emotionality and Miranda’s womanist vision of life. Like Caliban, George too enjoys ardent sexual desire and refuses the possibility of this transformation. Despite his past as an abandoned child George has risen highly in the world but at a great cost. Clearly the highly competitive egocentric, racist, and male dominated-world of Manhattan requires a certain ruthlessness and focused determination for an Afro-American male to succeed. George becomes the wealthy entrepreneur. His one-sided emphasis on achievement has gained him status and riches but his lack of empathy for and understanding of woman has taken him away from himself.

Gloria Naylor uses the Carl Jung theory of archetypes and seeing the relationship between Miranda and George within a Jungian context clarifies the plots mysterious resolution. George sets out on an archetypal quest to recover an aspect of his own psyche that he has disavowed and discounted through out much of his life. Miranda symbolically challenges George to go to the henhouse to recover his complete self.

Authentic selfhood in the novel depends upon a discovery of one of the most important Jungian archetypes, the anima/animus; the unconscious image represent the “contrasexual” side of the individuals psyche. Gary Stohoff believes:

"human beings have within them the repressed features of opposite sex, that the individual is necessarily a contrasexual figure the male though he may identify himself as “masculine” also possesses a “feminine” dimension in his psyche that he has been taught to deny in a patriarschal society through the
socialization process. In this way he cuts off an essential aspect of his own humanity.”

Naylor also shows the same aspect through George. He has been given more opportunities than woman to experience in fields like commerce politics, technology and science. He is found to be more aggressive, logic, rational, forceful and dominating. These features are distinctively masculine and give a sexist cooling and are identified by western culture. The makes conscious self is described as masculine. The male of the novel is socialized into a male dominated culture, he is taught to accentuate those qualities and his culture deems “masculine”. But he discovers them and keeps himself at a distance from those attributed his culture stipulates as “feminine”.

This distancing leads George to a psyche disharmony. In *Mama Day* this psychologica...
George is asked to acknowledge the symbolic potency of eggs but he says,

“I turned the whole nest over, eggs burting and splattering into straw.” (MD 30)

This reveals Georges attitude towards woman and his selfness.

“I went thrash that coop slamming the cane into feathery bodies, wooden posts, straw nest-- it was all the same.” (MD 301)

George fails because he lacks faith to “let Cocoa go”. In favour of Miranda’s wisdom his masculine will is essential to his survival as abandoned child and later as successful CEO, proves to be tragically inappropriate. But his distrust on women, on Miranda makes him a failure.

Mirand’s life has a symbolic egg which implies her commitment to Willow Springs, her love of nature, and her work as midwife--helping the women to conceive. But George has his domination and his male spirit cannot honour a spirit beyond his own will.

“When things were under control-- and I lived my life so that was usually the case-- there was no need to think about having to deal with some presence that might be governing what was beyond my own abilities” (MD 225)

He suppresses the feeling for women, their qualiteis (the intuitive, emotional and imaginative dimension) and by doing so he fail to complete his quest and dies Inspite of all torturnes and insults from Gerge, Miranda grief’s over George’s death. It expresses the great Shakespearean theme of reconciliation that pervades The Tempest. For Naylor, tragic loss is inevitable for all human beings. it is world
wrenching and it is not possible to reconcile oneself to the loss

In subtle ways, Georges play out this male role to the end of the novel. The scene in which, after an argument, he carries Cocoa back to his bed “where she belongs”. (MD 252) This shows his masculine power. Though this comes from any movie familiar to Hollywood and Bollywood but is foreign to Willow Springs. This banter with Cocoa about how she got there, “on [her] hands and knees”, (MD 253) begging him over and over is another revealing indication of his power over the weaker sex.

George acts a male role which is more seductive and more complex. His fantasies of male superiority are over laid with more superficially attractive (but equally inappropriate) white ones. Like Prince Charming, convinced that only he can save Cocoa, he kisses her to bring her out of her deathly sleep. Misinterpreting Mama Day’s statement that there, “is more than my blood flows in her and more hands that can claim to her than these” as mere “metaphors” (MD 294) like the fanciful ones in the white literary masterpieces he knows, he plays the role of a traditional romantic hero trying to single-handedly save “his woman” form evil forces with absurdly futile schemes to swim across the sound-- “Quiet a feat” he admits “since I couldn’t swim a stroke” (MD 263), or to row a leaky boat to the mainland. Frustrated at his lack of control, George fashions these scenarios more to prove his manhood than to save Cocoa. While he selflessly and heroically views,

“. I knew what I was going to do. It was an issue of priorities I’m getting up at day break I thought, and I’m going to repair that boat. I’m going to put the oars into the oarlocks and begin to row across the sound. That much I can do for her” (MD 282)
He unwittingly reveals that the self-affirmation of the trial is more important than the goal that he claims motivates him. While George acts like a chivalrous "real man" admired in the white world, notions of masculinity are depicted as infantile ones in the novel.

Naylor creates one of the most outspoken characters about the problem of the colour in Ophelia, Cocoa Day. Cocoa is from the island of Willow Spring located in the South of US coastline, but belonging to no particular state. The island belongs to the black people who live on it and who have lived on it since given the deed in 1823 by Bascombe Wade, a Norwegian. So the island if it belonged to anyone other than the freed slaves, belonged to Norway.

"...been trying since right after the Civil War to prove that Willow Springs belong to one or the other of them 'cause Willow Springs ain't in no state. ... Look on any of them old maps they hurried and drew up soon as the Union soldiers pulked out and you can see that the only thing connect us to the mainland is a bridge -- and even that gella be rebuilt after every big storm." (MD 4-5)

The US had no power over the island and its people. The people of Willow Spring had their own "rules and laws" which were never needed to be written down as the U.S. constitution. Because they were closely connected to the land and to the ancestors, that they were the rulers since birth.

"The laws about slaves not owning nothing in Georgia and South Carolina don't apply 'cause the land wasn't then-- and isn't now-- in either of them places .. we paid our taxes to the US .. we paid taxes on the telephone lines and electric wires run over The sound Ain't nobody here about breaking
The black slaves of the island were tortured. They were not permitted to work on the land though they paid all the taxes and revenues. They had to struggle to live whereas the white claimed to be the owners of the patch because of their superiority due to the white skin, that they possessed by virtue of birth. The white were on the top position at work. They were the owners, the executive builders, high paid managers etc. They were always worried about community “upliftment” and “better jobs” and this they achieved. But the case with the blacks was not the same. They had to face oppression by the white.

“The only dark faces you see now in them vaca-
tion paradises is the ones cleaning the toilet and cut-
ting the grass” (MD 6)

The blacks were made to do only menial jobs. They had to face the abuses, insults and rebukers at no mistake of theirs. The only fault done on their part was to have a dark pigment. Moreover, the women were not even regarded due respect nor previlage. They too were kept in the same boat as the men, besides the physical assaults they faced the racial oppressions and sexual insults. They were taken for granted and were treated as useable comodity. Unlike the white women they were the second hand, used items which were for lower jobs used for fun and thrown. They had no voice to give words to their sufferings rather, they were taken for granted as though it was in store for them by birth.

“Not that he called it being dumb, mind you, called
it asserting our cultural identity inverting hostile
social and political parameters ‘Cause, see being we

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was brought here as slaves, we had no choice but to look at everything upside down. And then being that we was isolated off here on this island everybody else in the country went on learning good English and calling things what they really was— in the dictionary and all that— while we kept on calling things as backwards.” (MD 8)

Though the black women took it as a natural occurring, but their inner feelings of dissatisfaction, depression can be well understood on seeing that they named their children as Peace, Hope, and Grace. They hoped that by the grace of God there will be peace unity love and equality among male and female, black and white. This will not be a physical satisfaction but an emotional internal feeling and expression.

The first time we meet Cocoa she is on her way to an interview at Andrews Stein Engineering Company where George Andrews asks her name, she replies,

“I'm used to answering to Cocoa. I guess we might as well start now because if I get the position and anyone here calls me Ophelia, I'll be so busy concentrating on my work, it won't register.” (MD 29)

Her reply makes her appear self-confident but she is nervous enough. Because she knows in the city the interviews for the blacks is meant to have fun and merriment, to insult and laugh on the black women. A formal interview gradually steps to unformal set of questions that makes difficult for the black women to answer. Still she does not reply Cocoa, but also goes on to discuss her tenacity as a worker. George, fascinated by the nick name wants to know more about its origin and not about her qualifications.
"So you pecked up this nickname at your last job-Omega Home Insurance?"

No I've had it from a child---in the South its called a pet name. My grandmother and great-aunt gave it to me, the same women who put me through business school in Atlanta where I ended up graduating at the top of my class-A's in statistics, typing, book keeping, B plussess in-----"

"That's fascinating. How do they decide on the pet name?"

"They just try to figure out what fits". "So a child with skin the colour of buttered cream get called Cocoa. I can see how that fits." (MD 29)

George is more interested in Cocoa's name than in her qualities and qualifications. Cocoa does not like to discuss the origin of her pet name Cocoa, by being born with light skin represents the interracial mixing of blacks and whites and all aspects of how the mixing took place including rape and proof of white superiority. Because the people of the island love her, they nickname her "Cocoa" a word connotating darkness to emphasis her blackness rather than her whiteness. Along with colour oppression we find there are times when the female characters expose their hidden desires:

"I don't need a job right now, I need a man though the women are bold but still possess the feminity.-----

"Home You can move away from it, but you never leave it. Not as long as it holds something to be missed." (MD 50)

Inspite of male oppression The femaleness persists in the women. They remain helpful and kind, forget and forgive inspite of their feelings getting hurt they continue to pay them due respect George
behaves to be truthful, talks of “using” Cocoa and is not bothered if he is “accepted into her body” or not. But that was not a problem to worry for him or to be sad or tense. As he knew he was a MAN and could do anything. It was not only colour or male oppression suffered by them but the luck also did not favour them. In the family tree the earlier generations had only boys and no girls and when the girls came very few survived.

“No not much luck at all. it was peculiar when she thought on it. You all of the boys had thrives her own daddy being the youngest of seven boys and his daddy the youngest of seven. But coming on down to them it was just her, Abigail, and Peace. And out of them just another three girl, and out of them, two. Three generation of nothing but girls, and only one left alive in this last generation to keep the Days going—- the child of Grace”. (MD 39)

Though the novel is dominated by the conjure women still Gloria Naylor feels her women characters are not independent enough to stand upright without the male support. She fears that their support may not drop down and they are not left all alone by their husbands. She knows that no man can be trusted to be loyal. It is essential for the women to hold him. Miranda is worried that Cocoa must find a husband she feels Miranda is too slow in this,

“She better get herself a husband first, and she’s been slow as molasses about that. You done heat her out long ago on that scope To what end, if I can’t keep him” (MD 65)

She does not approve of a man leaving his wife and living. She feels male have a complex and to satisfy their male ego they
can do open violence and can sink to degrading displays in public.

The women patient is also not left unbounded by the male doctors oppression. Dr. Smithfield gives Bernice no fertility pill but some other drug which become very harmful for Bernice. It in flames her female parts and pus is formed within. It Mama Day would not have gone on the call of Ambush things would have taken a very bad shape. She is able to judge her uterus and remove the false diagnosis of the white Doctor, that Bernice’s can never be a mother. As per Mama Day’s analysis of Bernice’s anatomy her uterus was good and strong to hold triplets. The doctor remains unconcern and is still at ease when informed about Barnice’s health. When he comes on his visit to Bernices house and sees Mama Day he accuses her of stealing his patients. He goes to the extend of expressing his ignorance about the drug that Bernices was taking. There is no guilt on the fatal mistake made by him nor is he sorry for that.

The women of the island Srping Willow are not left untouched by sexual tortures. Since the past generations we find the women gave birth to many children. Rather we can say the women spent her life in concieving and delievering. The rest of the time was spent in taking care and looking after the children. So there was not much time left for her to spend on herself. This young generation too feels that ‘Nature’ is responsible for all the childbirths.

"Nature’ll take care of that too. Daddy’s Mama had seven boys and her times were even rougher than our”.

"Guess thats why they had such big families back then-kept the woman too worn out to say no”.

"Or if she said so no, she was too damn tired to stop him" (MD 96).
Gloria Naylor brings forward the various stages where women has to suffer in justice. Throughout her life woman struggles, fights and opposes the differences she comes across in her life. These oppressions can not only be visualized but can be felt, they do not require words or actions but behaviour and feelings too can cause the same depression. They are not only on the individual or group but on personal relationships. It can be done purposefully or can occur unintentionally also. And if so happens the woman are left alone to set themself free from many male blows. The women enters the cells of torture in a very natural womanlike way. Their actions appear very familiar and natural but unknowingly they sink into the mashy male soul take up many emotional decisions to curb their instinct of a wife mother and of a weaker sex. Cocoa too decides firmly:

"to be with you (George) for the rest of my life
whether I could or not was seriously open to ques-
tion but the desire was certainly there" (MD 123)

At the same time she felt, most women are so insecure in the beginning that they need male support to lead their life. By thinking this Cocoa proves to be emotionally weak and shows the path superior to the ladies. The women now become victims of emotional harrassment. George has a very rational mind. When he gets irritated or angry with Cocoa he does not respond to her telephones or messages. He does not disclose any of his secrets. Very slowly and with long intervals he tells about his parentage. Cocoa is very much despresed that George does not make her his partner in his life, But you’d never talk about you feelings surrounding any of that. But George brushes her queries by insisting that present has potential. This does not satisfy her rather sows the seed of doubt and suspicion whether there was the band of trust and faith still persisted beetween
the two. Gloria Naylor through the characters of Cocoa and George give out the message that men are rational hence more practicable and women are emotional and live in their world of fantasy. Cocoa feels very bad when she finds that George has left the T-shirt presented by her. He keeps his phone switched off, neither does he call her up nor answers to her phones:

"you didn’t call me that night, and you didn’t answer that phone... And when you get back I would have to make the first call anyway. I suppose I owed you an apology, but there was something that you owed me” (MD 128-129)

The woman has to be the sufferer of emotional harrassment because of her being too sensual. The male has the privilege to use harsh and hurting language. He oppresses her by the words he chooses while talking. He has the right to show his temper and mood but does not possess the patience to tolerate her feelings. He can show the season like change with his temper.

“I’m not going to start with you, ophelia, okay? That part of my life is over --- she knows it. I know it, and your know it I don’t know anything George. Not one god Gommed thing. You see nothing about your life is relevant to me. I’m just someone. You fuck when you have a mind to --- have I should start charging.” (MD 173)

George wants to have a dual relationship and does not feel ashamed or guilty of exposing his a cheap character. He feels there lies no difference if he continues his relations with other women. Whereas if the same behaviour is extended by Cocoa it becomes intolerable. A mere talk with any male becomes a seed for suspicion.
George like other males is fully aware the female anatomy. He studies about their ovaries, womb, fallopian tube and about their cycles. He feels:

“Women stayed on an emotional roller coaster, between being premenstrual, postmenstrual and menstrual, they were normal only about seventy two hours out of each month” (MD 141)

He disagrees with the lady doctor who request the men to show tolerance with women during those days. He finds it “tampon complex”. The inequality between men and women is not only a social creation but God too feels that man is powerful and strong. This is evident on seeing their sexual organs that reminds of the biological trick. And is not hesitant to say women as miserable human beings, shrews and not only their harmones but their minds are also incredibly complex.

Cocoa observes George very closely. For her, he is a God and can not even dream of thinking about any other male to enter her life. She doubts on his sincerity hence asks him,

“George if something happened to me, would you get married again.” (MD 143)

George like his co-parteners raplief, “That depends”. He could not make any commitment to her. He does not approve of her studies further as he wants to have children. He too feels women are child bearing mashines and wants Cocoa to start having children immediately. He did not like changes of any things such that Cocoa did not even have the freedom to shift the bottle of medicine from one place to another. His temper flared up when on one occasion Cocoa shifts the bottle of medicine. It is not only with George and
Cocoa but with Junior Lee and Ruby, Ambush and Bernice that we can see the male dominance. They the husband are loving and caring for their partners but within them they have the dominating characters. It makes them more of a jailor than a husband. They like to have their own ways and do not much like to compromise or adjust as per the need and desire of the women. Dr. Buzzard though a bachelor too feels and thinks like the young men. They all are over possessive and demanding.

In the second section of the novel we are introduced to a few of the other male characters they are - the minister and school principal. They too are in no way different than the previous ones. Dr. Buzzard or Mr. Rainbow Simpson is,

"a can astir, bootlegger. Buzzard was a shiftless, no-good, skew-footed, twisted-mouthed slimmy-backed..." (MD 191)

No one wants to become friendly to him. He has professional rivalry with Miranda. Hence he plays all foul games to bring down the reputation name and fame of Miranda. He tries to dominate her profession by misleading and confusing her. In the game of cards too he cheats and wants to prove his victory. Along with Parris he finds it amusing that Mama Day could ever think of winning them. He does not even compromise inspite of being physically weak with the advancement of age. His arrogant behaviour bossy attitude whip-like tongue continues attack so as to prove his supremacy and to satisfy his ego that the women are the weaker ones.

Male oppression is shown by Gloria Naylor at all stages of life. It grows from the age of King Cesar to the ripe age of Dr. Buzzard and it persists ever after death in the graveyard. The tombstones varied in shape and size. The men had big stones in comparison to
women. Thus proving that they are superior even after their death.

Thus in the novel *Mama Day* feminism is evident not as presented traditionally by the black women writers in other novels. There is much of psychological oppression by the male through language action and behaviour. The women is on and off being oppressed not as in *Linden Hills* or in *The Women of Brewster Place* but emotionally. She is shown very powerful, independent and with self identity, still has to face insults, rebukes and tortures from the male members of the society.

The dark colour had its great impact at the back of the mind of the women dwelling at Willow Springs. Gloria Naylor, makes it very evident that the white is the dominating colour. Beauty, qualities, attractiveness looks all were possessed under the white skinned ones. The "soft brown girls, or burnished ebony girls with their flashing teeth against that deep satin skin. Girls who could summon all the beauty of midnight by standing, arms akimbo, in the full sun. It was,

"a torture competing with girls like that." (MD 233)

Moreover, Ophelia feels that it was due to her colour that she was always distrustful of the black men and not the ideal for George. As George spent all his time running around with a woman who happened to be white. And he feels that there is a difference with a huge distinction between the two. At the same time he feels,

"Only a fool would spend his life looking for some
dream woman. The right woman is the one you can
live with, not the one in your head." (MD 234)

But his sexual instinct reminds him to take a woman with "dimple and curves, so that every palce he touched there was a round-
ness that was warm”. Naylor, created female characters to disapprove of apologizing at first, “yeah, always the woman”. But Nalyor makes their surrender as their victory and power.

“Cause we got more going for us than them. A good woman is worth two good men anyday when she puts her mind to it so the little bit we gott a give up, we don’t miss half as much.” (MD 240)

Still the male ego flares up in George. Cocoa, herself approaches George, she talks to him very casualy and lovingly as though there has been no exchange of hard words between the two. He continues to ignore her and keeps on talking. When Cocoa agrees to all what he is saying he stops abruptly in the middle, flat out, and waits for her to finish. He does not even look at her, pickup where he left off as if she was not there. This male domination gives a psychological and disturbance on Cocoa’s mind. Inspite of facing all insults from George Cocoa does not loose her mental power of reasoning. She does not take revenge from Junior Lee nor does she encourage him in his sexual activities. She pushes him away when he tries to fiddle with her private parts she losss her self-control and allows her frustration to roll down her eyes. Whereas Junior Lee when caught by Ruby puts the blame on Cocoa’s head, “she tricked me out here.” (MD 241)

Bernice addresses the menfolk as a “living nightmares”. According to her the quiet ones are the ones one should keep a watch on. They are the most dangerous ones as they move with a double personality and a dual face. Before everyone they appear to be saints like Anbush or carefree innocent like Junior Lee but in reality they are not even half-way known by the public. They all tred on the same road and get their ways done, some openly while some from the back
door hiding like a hypocrite or a coward. Rubey apologizes for Junior Lees behaviour at the party. This moves Cocoa and she finds the basic difference between a man and woman. Inspite of being at fault George finds it humiliating to say sorry to Cocoa. Whereas Ruby a woman asks Cocoa to forgive him at no fault of hers but that of her husbands. She calls Junior Lee “a dog” an “out-and-out-dog”. She says

“She’d let him run loose too long. You had to watch your men folk when they were weak like him, given to all kinds of temptation.” (MD 246)

Gloria Naylor presents the sexual weakness of man, their greed for sexual desire and unsatisfied sexual thirst that makes them wild like hounds. They forget their respect prestige and position They reveal their lack of control over their instincts. They claim to be powerful and strong to the women but are unfortunate to overcome the sexual needs. It weakens them inwardly and they surrender.

We can conclude that though the society is ruled the so called Gods of the society they are nothing but hypocrytes who can not check control or curb their desires. They want to dominate the weaker sex on petty subjects like colour sex expression behaviour language and attitude. They psychologicaaly torture of the woman and women has no other option but to suffer the injustice. In the end its pathetic when Miranda begs George to give her a single moment, even a finger-tip to touch her. She needs George but he does not need her. He does not trust her, still she is willing to help and guide him safely through the extra mile where the others had stumbled. The chains of relations do not make any barriers or control over the male dominacy. Be it is a son or a father or a husband. The HE in them never dies. It persists till the end and the women has to fight, overcome and get over this injustice on her at all levels and at all fields.
CHAPTER-VII

REFERENCES


2. Gary Storhoff *The Only Voice in Your Own* Gloria Naylor's Revision of The Tempest P 40

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