Chapter VI

Summation

Gloria Naylor won critical and admired applause for her novels, in her successive novels, including *The Women of Brewster Place, Linden Hills, Mama Day* and *Bailey’s Café*, Naylor gave a powerful and outstanding description of many social issues, including poverty, racism, homophobia, discrimination against women, and the social stratification of African–Americans wholly related to tradition and culture. Vashti Crutcher Lewis, a contributor to the Dictionary of Literary Biography (1978), commented on the brilliance of Naylor’s first novel, as derived from her rich prose, her lyrical portrayals of African-Americans, and her illumination of the meaning of being a colored woman in America. Lewis stated in *A Response to Inequality: Black Women, Racism, and Sexism* (1977):

> Naylor focuses on themes of deferred dreams of love (familial and sexual), marriage, respectability, and economic stability, while observing the recurring messages that poverty breeds violence, that true friendship and affection are not dependent on gender, and that women in the black ghettos of America bear their burdens with grace and courage. (340)

*The Women of Brewster Place* won her instant recognition for its powerful dramatization of the struggles of seven women living in a distressed urban neighborhood. Using interconnecting stories to portray each woman’s life, Naylor skillfully explored the diversity of colored female experience. The 1989 television dramatization of the novel starred Oprah Winfrey, Robin Givens, and Cicely Tyson.

*Linden Hills*, borrowing its structure and theme from Dante’s *Inferno*, deals with the destructive materialism of upwardly mobile suburban colored. *Mama Day* blends stories from
William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* with colored folklore, and *Bailey’s Café* structured as Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* which centers on a mythic Brooklyn diner that offers a sanctuary for the suffering.

Gloria Naylor is perhaps best known for her novels. The Norton Anthology of African American Literature describes her as one of the first African - American women writer, who has studied both her African ancestors and the European tradition. Naylor consciously draws on Western sources even as her writings reflect the complexity of the African - American female experience. She has become one of the most critically acclaimed and popular colored writers. Along with Alice Walker and Toni Morrison, she is one of the key forces in the colored feminist literary movement. At the same time, Naylor has avoided criticism, leveled at her fellow colored feminist writers for their negative depictions of colored men.

Reading became a passion for Naylor at a young age, mostly due to her mother’s influence. Alberta Naylor, struggled to obtain books because, in rural Mississippi, African - Americans were debarred from taking them out of public libraries. After moving with her family to New York in 1949, she made sure her children got an early introduction to the wonders of reading, and Gloria was given her first library card around age four. She read voraciously throughout her childhood, partly because she was reserved and spent a lot of time alone. Since she rarely spoke, her mother gave her a diary that became an early training ground for the future writer.

An excellent student, Naylor was placed into sophisticated classes in high school. Her first exposure to English classics helped to shape the foundation of her later writing efforts. She said that the passion of the Bront and Spell Error’s, the irony of Jane Austen, and the social indignation of Dickens fed her imagination as she read voraciously. However, her development
as a writer was delayed during her senior year in high school as a result of Martin Luther King, Jr. assassination. King’s death had a major impact on Naylor, leaving her confused about the colored community and her own future. Her search for meaning led her to serve as a missionary for the Jehovah’s Witnesses in New York, North Carolina, and Florida for the next seven years.

Naylor left the mission at the age of twenty five and went back to school. After taking nursing courses at Medgar Evers College, she transferred to Brooklyn College to pursue her interest in English literature. She paid for her schooling by working the night shift as a switchboard operator at various New York City hotels.

College was an indispensable time for Naylor. While there her colored consciousness, especially as a colored woman, began taking form and compelled her to discover her creative powers. Her eyes were opened greatly by reading the works of colored female authors such as Zora Neale Hurston, Toni Morrison, and Alice Walker. Perpetuation on these authors as role models, Naylor found her march as a writer and was recognized for her talent soon after she began writing fiction. One of the first short stories she penned appeared in a 1980 issue of Essence, and soon she had an agreement with Viking.

Naylor’s first group of stories progressed into a novel, much of which she wrote while working at hotel switchboards. The end result was The Women of Brewster Place, a saga of seven women of different ages, backgrounds, and lifestyles and how they tackled poverty, racism, sexism, and domestic conflict both alone and together. Highly symbolic, the novel is set on a dead-end street that is cut off from conventional society by a disgusting brick wall, much as colored is pushed into ghettos by white society.

In the first chapter, “Pioneering Individuality”, an attempt was made to study the individuality of Gloria Naylor as an accomplished writer among the African – American writers
of her Diaspora. This was clearly brought out by the analysis of her writings along with her predecessors.

Chief among Naylor’s goals in *The Women of Brewster Place*, was to demolish separation of colored women and demonstrate that their experience is as varied as that of whites. She also wanted to show the flexibility of the exploited in overcoming tough circumstances. It was both a critical and popular success. It is a remarkable first novel, from a gifted colored writer that marks Gloria Naylor’s talent. The novel appeared on the Publishers Weekly trade paperback best-seller list, and was later made into a television movie starring Oprah Winfrey. It is a festivity of the riches and diversities of the colored female experience. She focuses on seven women who consign a victory by simply managing to survive in an impoverished and aggressive neighborhood by bonding with each other and finding a safe haven. The novel received strong reviews, won many awards and was made into a television movie.

The seven women, “Colored Daughters”, fighting to stay alive in a world that has never been kind to African-Americans or women is a compliment to the African-American female experience. Their atmosphere further causes complication in their lives. Brewster Place is a poverty stricken and fear provoking locality. Each woman, in her own way, plays a central part in creating Brewster Place. The women are compelled to rely on each other when the world seems to shut them out. Despite their dissimilarities, the women of Brewster Place are bound by an intellect of community and sisterhood that facilitates them to deal with the everyday stress they face in the male dominated society in which they live. This is best demonstrated in the relationship between Cora Lee and Kiswana and between Mattie and Ciel.

*The Women of Brewster Place* has a simple structure. Most of the scenes take place in the
crumbling apartment complex, Brewster Place. The dwellers expect to go nowhere else. The brick wall that closed their street several years earlier now separates them from the rest of the city and symbolizes their psychological and spiritual isolation. In the closing pages of the novel, one woman removes a brick that she thinks is stained with the blood of a resident recently gang- raped and left to die. Spontaneously, the other women join her and collectively they tear down the wall, experiencing as they do so an inner renewal, a sense of community and unity, and a rebirth of hope.

The novel includes seven narratives, each focusing on a woman and illuminating her present situation while abundant flashbacks reiterate her earlier experience. The dominant woman in one chapter appears as a less important figure in several others, so that the entire book, consisting of related though not always consecutive episodes, emerges as a novel rather than as a collection of stories only. While each of the narratives has its own climax, the book builds toward the most threatening crises faced by the Brewster Place community. The work considered as a novel gains unity through Naylor's use of a single setting, her concentration upon a small number of women in each narrative, her analysis of the major threats to the community in the tragedies of Ciel and Lorraine, and her alternative to the habit of healing in which the characters join each other in expressing their human concern in acts rather than in words.

This novel is a factual fiction and it represents the middle and lower class people in the Brewster Place. All the inhabitants who live there are measured as lower-class, perhaps even below the poverty line. Lack of wealth is one of the most literal obstructions in the way of leaving Brewster Place. Some of the residents struggle to battle their scarcity but in reality they break away from. Through the sensitivity of their joint struggles, these people can find harmony with one another, as they all take caution to survive. Taken individually, each of the seven
women exhibits great potential for compassion, civilization and consideration. It is more precise to place the novel to research under archetypal approach.

An Archetypal Approach is observed in Naylor’s presentation of characters. In the historical record the Phoenix symbolize renewal in general. It also symbolizes the sun, time, empire, consecration, resurrection, life in the heavenly paradise, Christ and Mary, the mother of Jesus Christ. In Brewster Place Naylor depicts this in the repetition of the efforts taken by each character in overcoming their troubles and tribulation through steadfast perseverance and emerging a heroic figure.

Mattie’s succession as an inspiring motherly figure from an impoverished character, Etta’s entrance into a life of hope from an insignificant one, Eva’s transformation from foolish nature to responsible nature, Kiswana’s change of approach towards her own race, Lucielia’s revolution from a pathetic and powerless person to a strong revolutionist, Cora Lee to climb from an unskilled mother to a elegant character, Theresa and Lorraine’s inferiority complex turning to self confidence. All these remind us of Phoenix bird from Greek myth which renew from its own ashes.

Sigmund Freud’s theory of dreams proposes that the various stimuli of our everyday life, force us to react to them with dreams during our sleep at night. But the strain of our routine life enables us to wake up in the morning. This theory is marvelously handled by Naylor, in her novel Brewster Place where an urge is seen in all character to accomplish their dream of enduring themselves from the inequality they suffer in the American society. The same can be said about Naylor’s managing of Jung’s theory of collective consciousness. In her novel, Brewster Place the refined American society sticks to their ancestral belief of treating the colored as slaves.
Naylor’s next novel, *Linden Hills* “Mourning to Deliverance” signifies the suffering of colored because of the impact of their ancestral roots and their struggle to renew their life is clearly seen through the eyes of two little poets. *Linden Hills* was set in a well-to-do colored suburb that would have been considered a major move upward by the residents of Brewster Place. Critical compromise regarded this novel as much more adventurous and broader in scope than Naylor’s first book. Throughout, Naylor made the point that endeavoring to lift in the ranks of white dominated society through economic means results in a shallow victory. Some critics found the symbolism in *Linden Hills* too heavy handed, while others felt the novel’s good points won out over its weaknesses. Michiko Kakutani in *New York Times* (1985) wrote:

> Although the notion of using Dante’s *Inferno* to illuminate the co-opting of black aspirations in contemporary America may strike the prospective reader as precious, one is quickly beguiled by the actual novel—so gracefully does Miss Naylor fuse together the epic and the naturalistic, the magical and the real. (14)

It is a story of resistance and rebirth. It portrays a world in which colored Americans have achieved status and some measure of power, but in the process they have modernized their hearts and souls. It follows Dante Alighieri’s *Inferno* by employing Dante’s moral geography, adapting his narrative strategy as the journey through hell as her main organizing principle and offering an allegory intended to warn and instruct her intended audience colored Americans.

Naylor again confines her scenes to one location, but her tone and outlook are more sardonic and pessimistic. In her criticism of middle class colored society, Naylor here finds little hope for renewal of spiritual values or for a development of communal responsibility or identity among the residents. *Linden Hills* colored are ambitious and selfish; the richer ones live close to the bottom of the hillside; and richest of all is Luther Nedeed. For five generations Luther
Nedeed has controlled Linden Hills real estate and also been the local mortician. Next to the Nedeed home and morgue lies the cemetery. The Nedeed wives in each generation have been so deprived of affection and companionship by their frog eyed husbands that they looked forward finally only to death.

*Linden Hills* has a far more intricate narrative structure than Naylor's first novel. Two young poets, Willie and Lester, in the six days before Christmas, earn money doing odd jobs. Most of the action is seen through their eyes, except for flashbacks related to the past experiences of the householders, who employ them. As they journey further down the hillside each day, they encounter death, suicide, hypocrisy, exploitation, and treachery. The poets agonize and rage over the people, who are living a meaningless, deathlike existence.

Archetypal approach is examined in Naylor’s creation of characters in *Linden Hills*. All individuals share a collective unconscious, a set of prehistoric recollections general to the human race, existing below each person’s conscious mind often originating from prehistoric phenomenon such as the sun, moon, fire, night, and blood. Through this relevance reader can incorporate all the characters with their deep rooted environment of ancestors. Even though they try to beautify with modernity they fail due to this consequence. Moreover, all the characters have been vividly portrayed through the eyes of little poets. Naylor brilliantly organizes the class partition, their attitude and resists suppressing their feeling. The outburst of their uniqueness is very well represented through the simple events. So it is evidently factual that everyone pursues the tendency of ancestors in our unconscious mind.

Naylor’s next novel, *Mama Day*, “The Great Mother” recognize Mama Day as a healer for the island of Willow Springs, and she takes the role of motherhood in all the victims’ life and struggles to tackle the problem both as a doctor and the advisor. It has plot twists and themes
centering on spiritualism and reconciliation, which drew comparisons with Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*. Readers entered the world of Willow Springs, an island off the Georgia coast where a ninety-year-old conjurer named Mama Day serves as a spiritual guide. Mukherjee Bharati wrote in *Review of Mama Day* by Gloria Naylor (1988), “On this wondrous island slavery and race relations, lovers’ quarrels, family scandals, professional jealousies all become the stuff [that] dreams are made on” (11). Mukherjee called the novel an outstanding in its depiction of a host of strange characters ranging from rogues and frauds to martyrs and spiritualists. *Mama Day* was called as astonishing novel by some critics, who have said that its characters were not fully fleshed out. It also suffered from the baggage of a contributory love story that bears a resemblance to the plight of Romeo and Juliet.

In *Mama Day*, the alternate passages in the book develop a kind of antiphonal poetry, with long questions and long answers. The love story is told in first person by the two narrators in alternating sections. Only occasionally and when another person appears in the story does the third-person omniscient narrator speak. The connected monologues begin in New York City and end in Willow Springs. The island of Willow Springs is connected by a bridge to both Georgia and South Carolina, but is not a part of either state. The latter three-fourths of the novel take place at Willow Springs. Most of the action in Willow Springs is narrated in the first-person voice of Mama Day, as are the philosophical or spiritual messages that Naylor seeks to convey.

The folkways, celebrations, and eccentricities of the common people on the island provide an intriguing sequence of events, but the novel ends desperately with a twister and flood that confuses intricate lines of the plots and their intersection. While the extensive symbolism, leads the reader to search for mythic and universal truth in the novel, Naylor raises as many questions as answers. If less carefully structured than Naylor's earlier novels, *Mama Day* is a rich
and powerful novel that shows the influence of both Toni Morrison and Alice Walker in inventing beyond the natural into suggestions of the power of the supernatural and the spirit.

It marks a signal change in her maturity. She uses alternating narrators which both reflects and reinforces the novel’s thematic concerns with reality and truth. The novel is concerned with investigating, deconstructing and redefining the past. Its strongest elements are the bonds shared within the female community and between the generations of women. It is about the fact that the fundamental magic is that the unfolding of the human potential and that if one reaches inside oneself one can create miracles.

Naylor has created a work of a modern love story, an eternal generational tale, a distressingly trustworthy tale of the supernatural, and homage to the redemptive authority of African-American custom. It is a novel that spans two worlds. One is the southern barrier island of Willow Springs, populated solely by the offspring of slaves, a place excused from the laws of nature and culturally prejudiced by the laws of man. The other world is New York City: linguist, multi racial, and administered by stern and outwardly cold blooded convention of love and endurance. Naylor presents each of these worlds in its own description and then she transports them mutually. In doing so, she at the same time discovers and effects several kinds of understanding between the colored rural past and the colored urban present, legend and olden times, folks and society, trust and reason, the existing and the departed. Not least of all, she characteristically reunites the sprinkled children of Africa with their first, true home. The novel determines the disastrous history of Mama Day's descendants as well as the present day in which Mama Day functions as rehabilitator and wise woman of the small community just off the coast of Georgia.
Archetypal approach is observed in Naylor’s *Mama Day* through her portrayal of characters. Mama Day explains about the importance of the tradition and all other characters made to be inspirational in her path. Reader can clearly visualize that all the characters through their acceptance surrender to Mama Day of her opinions and mystical feeling is created by her description of medicinal plants. Here collective unconsciousness is observed, when the sisters recognize the silence. Overall the opening scene of the novel dictates to us that Naylor inherit the imagination from their ancestors and she still has the belief in superstitions.

*Bailey’s Cafe*, “Antidote to Alienation” focuses on Naylor’s fourth novel, which explores female sexuality, female sexual identity and male sexual identity. “The core of the work is indeed the way in which the word ‘whore’ has been used against women or to manipulate female sexual identity” (17) says Naylor in *African -American Literature Book Review* (2011). She also intends to employ the blues and jazz into the novel’s structure by using lyrical language. The characters tell their own stories and sing their own songs, which empower them to generate the hope for necessary living. All the characters try to find out refuge in Bailey’s Café, which they find as a comforting zone by narrating their ancestral roots.

Naylor focused on the intersecting lives of the administrator of a diner and its various customers. The cafe is a magnet that draws a wide variety of society’s accumulation, each with her own story to tell. In this novel, one cannot depart without being touched by the wonder and horror that lie there or fail to be impressed by Naylor’s ability to show it simple. It focuses on women’s sexuality and the ways women are defined by society's perceptions of them. Archetypal Approach is realistic with this book, Naylor hoped to deconstruct the Judeo-Christian thinking about women. To achieve this, she took women characters from the Bible and placed them in the twentieth century to relate their stories. The novel sings the blues of the socially rejected women.
The characters that arrive at Bailey's struggle to find some measure of solace from a brutal American environment filled with racial and sexual stereotypes. The book was a critical success, and was adapted by Naylor as a stage play.

In 1994 Naylor adapted Bailey's Café for the stage, which gave her the opportunity to dramatically display the rhythms of her characters’ lives and speech patterns. Washington, Mary Helen offered a mixed review in The Journal of Women in Cultural Society (1980) “Its allegorical elements,” he said, “which were woven more slyly into the fabric of the novel, have been expanded and exaggerated here, and the play simply can’t sustain their full weight.” Still, he added that “Ms. Naylor is a masterly storyteller, and there’s a rich narrative force to the individual monologues” (96).

Naylor’s depiction of life in a New York pathway discloses the city’s magic, jazz, its wicked stories; its street-lamp spark of conviction. It examines a broad variety of colored women’s lives, while dealing with the complication of an international American society still caught up in preventive ideas of color, gender and culture. It is more literary than polemical, bridging ancient stories and modern problems to create a background for the mutilations women have experienced and liberation for curing their souls.

It shows her continuing experimentation with patterns of narration, definitions of reality, and depiction of the supernatural. Centered on the New York City restaurant of its title and set in the late 1940s, the novel is coordinated by the unnamed cafe owner, who is called Bailey. Bailey and his wife, Nadine, run the all night eatery, which serves as a way station for lost souls of various backgrounds. Behind the cafe is the novel's most mystical realm: a dock on the water that is capable of transforming reality to match the expectations and needs of the wretched folks who come there. Naylor has structured the novel like a sort of blues symphony.
The center of this female solidarity is Eve, who attracts women torn apart by racial and gender conflict of American society. It helps them to have a bond among themselves, strengthening a sense of community and cooperation. This is provided with certain amount of freedom, a strange employment, and a sense of self-fulfillment. Eve represents the collective bond among all these women. Her boarding house acts as a place of consolation and comfort for them. Every character depicted in Bailey’s Café, show a touch of resurrection when each of them, sexually beaten or demoralized finally seek sanctuary at Eve’s place, where Eve helps them raise from suppression to self endorsement.

*Bailey’s Café* addresses female circumcision in Africa as part of a larger assessment of the sexual mutilations inflicted on women in modern society. Naylor’s characters are foundation on archetypes, typically from the Bible but, they are not universalized. The novel takes place in a blues café down a dead end street at the end of New York City, where Bailey’s Café, Eve’s garden and boarding house and Gabe’s pawnshop are located. The novel’s fluid time-sequence concludes in New Years Eve, 1949. As in her other novels, Naylor infuses day-to-day living with an alternate magical certainty.

An Archetypal Approach is observed in *Bailey’s Cafe* which sketches the lives of a host of strange characters; this novel focuses on issues of peculiarity. The unifying thread is the narrative voice of Bailey himself, the present manager of the café who, after relating his own trying tale, introduces the reader to various patrons, whose individual life histories reflects the tradition of the community which constitutes the different chapter divisions. It is appropriately set in 1948, a period of significant transition in American history between the aftermath of World War II and the Civil Rights Movement. Like these characters, the country is, to some degree, in halfway house, having also shed its innocence in the throes of global war, while yet uncertain
about its ability, or even willingness, to move forward, particularly in regard to racial issues. In this compelling novel, Naylor offers a chance for both the country and her characters to mature and realize their utmost potential.

*Bailey’s Café* represented the final chapter named ‘The Wrap’ in Naylor’s “novel quartet,” as she referred to it. “I conceived them as a quartet from book one,” she told the writer in *Black Literature Criticism* (1992):

And I had a purpose for it. I felt that by writing those four books, I would go through an apprenticeship to my craft. Then I would feel, within myself that I was a writer. When I finished the last of that quartet, it was an exciting, exciting moment for me, to realize that I had set that goal and achieved it. (1484)

Naylor’s novels are often linked to the 1940s’ urban protest tradition of Ann Petry and Richard Wright, largely because of their focus on urban decay, the limited economic opportunities available for African-Americans, and a racist economic system which governs one’s destiny. The traditions results from its writer’s common cultural experience as gendered and racial outsiders in a patriarchal white American society. According to the Review of Literature, Naylor's success lies, in part, in the intensity of her presentation of such social issues as poverty, racism, discrimination against homosexuals, the unequal treatment of women, the value of a sense of community among colored, and the failure of some upper middle class educated colored to address racial problems and social injustice.

Naylor’s great merit as an artist is that she has eminently succeeded in giving artistic expression to the multifarious problems faced by African Women in White American Society. It is a mystical realization in Naylor’s world of fiction, where she has dealt with the absolute equality, an identity with the community, a state of ecstasy to enjoy color, takes pride in it and
displays unlimited potential for the rebirth of the self, and the entire community. Colored relationship can be defined as a kind of enhanced, expanded, intensified and deepened awareness of identity and unity.

In *The Men of Brewster Place*, Naylor revisits the territory she explored in her 1992 novel. She gives voice to many of the silent and violent men, who made miserable the lives of the women in that novel. Noteworthy among her creations is Basil, the young man for whom Mattie Michael lost her house when he jumped bail after having killed a man. Naylor revisits a tortured, guilt ridden young man, who tries to make up for past deeds by allowing himself to be used in the present action. Similar efforts in harmony to past actions inform other characterizations, but Naylor also adds a couple of new faces into the mix. Perhaps a response to criticism about her treatment of men in *The Women of Brewster Place* and other works, the companion novel is intriguing, but is perhaps ultimately not as well executed.

Naylor portrays the powerlessness and subjection of colored women in the ghetto. But these are resilient women, who have refused to accept the end of the line as the end of life. They make their stand together to fight a hostile world with love and humor. Naylor explores through her lyrical portrayal of the realities of colored life, the cruelty that poverty breeds and the various ways people can achieve redemption. Naylor concerns herself with examining, deconstructing and redefining the past. Recreating the bond shared by the female community and between generations of women, Naylor seems to also argue that the real basic magic is the unfolding of human potential and that if we reach inside ourselves we can create miracles.

Naylor's important contributions to African-American literature include her expansion of narrative technique and privileging of the supernatural—both approaches similar to those used by Toni Morrison. Naylor's interrelated fictive terrain also resonates with the Yoknapatawpha
County of William Faulkner, whose narrative style she has cited as an influence, especially on *Mama Day*. Gloria Naylor's most lasting contribution to literature may well be her vivid portraits of fascinating and fantastic characters.

Naylor’s text is characterized by rich imagery, which is not surprising taking into account her attachment to poetic realism. Metaphors are quite common in her writing. The story of every character benefits from the vivid or dramatic effect created by a certain metaphor implied comparison by which the image word replaces the object word. Being very interested in rendering the character’s inner life, Naylor uses several effective stylistic devices. The most important is free indirect discourse, which may be defined as the technique for rendering the character’s thought in his/her own idiom while sustaining the third person and the basic tense of the narration, it is also a dialogic technique through which the author’s and the character’s voices become interwoven in various degrees of sophistication.

In general, Naylor uses this type of discourse to render the characters’ thoughts about a present situation, only rarely to render an actual or inner conversation. The effect of this continuous shift among the three types of discourse (direct, indirect, and free indirect) is a more complex and sophisticated character construction. Naylor’s style is essentially characterized by an effort to render the speech as realistically as possible, by rich imagery (mainly due to the use of metaphors), by preference towards bodily sensational expression, as well as by frequent occurrences of free indirect discourse in other words by a rich complication of language.

Naylor’s description of life style and mode of thinking and level of cultural patterns, attitudes, beliefs and practice are the extended dimensions of her personal vision and poise of view. It furnishes the inside view of the group of which Gloria Naylor speaks and to which she belongs. Her novels are essentially of this character and nature because her goal is to give voice
to the social group and community. By using cultural symbolic language and words with a view to communicate with the members of the group, create enhanced consciousness among the readers of the community. Her fiction is written in the first person and the fictive account is communicated as perfect accuracy as if the whole narrative emerges from the personal experience. This makes the reader to visualize the reality while reading the novel.

Wright describes in *Psychoanalytic Criticism: A Reappraisal* (1998):

The melancholic’s plaint as stemming from a real or imagined disappointment with a loved one. Unable or unwilling to become detached from the now broken love relation and to make a new start elsewhere, the melancholic makes an identification with the lost object, obliterating the ego, with the result that, paradoxically, he or she becomes the abandoned object, forsaking and forsaken, now plagued by the superego (43).

Freud formulates in *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* (1973) as a somber description of the situation thus “. . . the shadow of the object fell upon the ego, and the latter could henceforth be judged by a special agency, as though it were an object, the forsaken object” (258). Also, birth itself is a separation within the body, a violent separation from the body of the mother. In the maternal body, excess gives rise to a separation that is material and maintained by regulation that is prior to the mirror stage.

Accordingly, Gloria Naylor claims to have entered the literary scene in response to the marginalization of her group as woman and as Colored. She posits that she was motivated to write in order to restore an apparent inferior depiction of women in literary productions. Page, Philip in *Reclaiming Community in Contemporary African - American Fiction* (1999) also notes that in Gloria Naylor's novels:
External forces of life – particularly the pressures of race, gender, and class – are overwhelming, and such forces usually skew the characters’ identities so that even when change is possible, the characters cannot take advantage of the opportunity. (157)

Naylor reveals in *Contemporary African American Novel* (1999): “I wanted to become a writer because I felt that my presence as a Black woman in general had been underrepresented in American literature” (29). In another interview with Rowell Charles, Gloria Naylor notes:

Everything I’ve ever lived, or ever wanted to live as a black woman comes out in my work. . . . You came of age implicitly being told it is the white male world, and everything that’s been given to us of substance, everything that has lasted, has been just that their buddies kept them in the canon. (368 –369)

So, it is to complement the efforts of other female writers, who Naylor considers her role models that further helped her to realize her potential as a writer. Naylor further states:

I am a black female writer and I have no qualms whatsoever with people saying that I’m a black female writer. What I take umbrage with is the fact that some might try to use that identity—that which is me—as a way to ghettoize my material and my output. I am female and black and American. No buts are in that identity. Now you go off and do the work to somehow broaden yourself so you understand what America is really about. Because it’s about me. (88)

Naylor's success lies, in part, in the intensity of her presentation of such social issues as poverty, racism, discrimination against homosexuals, the unequal treatment of women, the value of a sense of community among colored, and the failure of some upper middle-class educated colored to address racial problems and social injustice. Naylor has been honored for her
excellence. She has won American Book Award, for *The Women of Brewster Place*, 1983; NEA Fellowship Natl Endowment for the Arts, 1985; Guggenheim Fellowship 1988; Lillian Smith Award, 1989.

Naylor finished her first novel, *The Women of Brewster Place*; five years later it was made into a movie starring Oprah Winfrey. Naylor has followed that success with more novels about love and survival in America: *Linden Hills, Mama Day, Bailey’s Cafe* and, most recently, *The Men of Brewster Place*. Misfortune, honesty, transcendence, salvation echoes, perhaps, of her days as a witness takes center stage in her novels. But it is racism and politics that lurk in the wings. She has reason for this. To be colored in America, according to her, is a political construct. Just as it took time to feel she had a voice, she says in her Conversation, that African – American have to feel within that country as theirs.

Most critics have endeavored to identify the motivation of Gloria Naylor’s characters’ actions in the novels under focus often point to slavery, racism, apartheid, colonialism, neocolonialism, sexism, patriarchy, marginalization, displacement and such other reasons that operate at the conscious level of human psyche. But these factors are the outcome of the unconscious factors, which appear more divergent to the characters’ problems, but are often planed over by most critics. Most critics create the impression that in the works of Gloria Naylor for instance, female characters in the various African societies reflected face problems that can only be traced to colonialism, apartheid, neo-colonialism, patriarchy and other social factors. In the same way, most critics identify racism, slavery, discrimination and patriarchy as the factors responsible for the problems of women in the African - American society.

It is clearly visible in the novels of Gloria Naylor that misery becomes an environment and it is identified with the collective fate of the community, despite the fact that self-importance
inspires her individual characters to pursue their separate dreams. Her novels, *The Women of Brewster Place, Linden Hills, Mama Day* and *Bailey’s Café* address themselves to the issues of human relations in a racial context in advanced capitalism. The double consciousness which W.E.F. DuBois established as the root cause of colored suffering is incorporated in the very structure of her novels. All of her novels are situated in an enclosed location, the geographic setting directed over its residents as an impersonal destiny. On closer examination, it can be seen that this destiny is an expansion of the capitalistic framework of modern American society which corrupts individual dreams. By placing her individual characters in such graphically defined geographic settings, Naylor has been able to bring out the dialectic of inconsistency that operates between the separate dreams pursued by the members of the community and its collective destiny, which is in the hands of historical forces. The very factors which contribute towards the economic progress of the colored undermine their identity.