

**FEMINIST VOICES IN GLORIA NAYLOR'S FICTION**

**Ph.D. THESIS**

*by*

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**DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ROORKEE  
ROOREE-247667 (INDIA)  
JUNE, 2016**

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A THESIS

*Submitted in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the award of the degree*

*of*

**DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES**

*by*

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## CANDIDATE'S DECLARATION

I hereby certify that the work which is being presented in the thesis entitled “**FEMINIST VOICES IN GLORIA NAYLOR'S FICTION**” in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy and submitted in the Department of Humanities of the Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, Roorkee is an authentic record of my own work carried out during a period from July, 2010 to June, 2016 under the supervision of Dr. Rashmi Gaur, Professor, Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, Indian Institute of Technology Roorkee, Roorkee.

The matter presented in the thesis has not been submitted by me for the award of any other degree of this or any other Institute.

**(RICHA SHRIVASTAVA)**

This is to certify that the above statement made by the candidate is correct to the best of my knowledge.

(Rashmi Gaur)  
Supervisor

The Ph.D. Viva-Voce Examination of **RICHA SHRIVASTAVA**, Research Scholar, has been held on .....

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## ABSTRACT

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The thesis proposes to investigate the structures of oppression of women within their family and work roles as illustrated in the novels of Gloria Naylor. In comparison to historical or ethnographic accounts, fiction provides a very singular imaginative space from which to scrutinize the issues pertaining to the intertwined oppression of women within their family and work roles – in the context of Gloria Naylor, the perspective of race is also organically related with such evaluation. Historical or ethnographic modes of representation often provide snapshots of certain episodes in women’s lives. Consequently, issues are complicated by the compromises that simply have to be made to maintain relationships or work conditions. In clear cut juxtaposition to these modes, fiction allows for issues/ resistance to be intricately and calculatingly constructed in terms of metaphorical convolution, narrative resolution and ideological conquest. The workiness of realities is creatively bypassed to create an uncluttered space of liberation and truth. The novels of Gloria Naylor, the famous American novelist, thus become extremely significant in the context of the African-American/Black womanhood. Bell Hooks has remarked that the position of Black women is “unusual”.

White women and Black men can be both oppressed and oppressors. White women suffer from sexist biases but racism allows them to discriminate against the Black people; whereas Black men have to suffer racist discrimination but their gender enables them to subjugate their women (Hooks 16). In her novels Naylor has portrayed the family and work roles in the lives of Black American women in different time zones. Recurrent themes in these novels are oppression of women, social stereotypes of gender, and the construction of femininity/masculinity. Her novels showcase the quintessence of women bonding and mothering of different generations.

Known for her strong and admirable depiction of African-American women, Naylor has authored five novels; viz., *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), *Linden Hills* (1986), *Mama Day* (1988), *Bailey’s Café* (1992), and *The Men of Brewster Place* (1998). Her sixth book *1996* is a fictionalized memoir. It is a staggering depiction of how offensive incursion of privacy can prove to be traumatic and ruin one’s life. One can sense the presence of the author’s sensitivity to issues of racism and work-ethics in her memoir also, though the thesis focuses on Naylor’s five novels only.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Chapter 1.1

### DEVELOPMENT OF FEMINIST DEMANDS, ACTIVISM AND MOVEMENTS

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The early feminists were called “defenders” or “advocates” of women. The term ‘Feminism’ was first used in United States in the beginning of twentieth century. Linda Kealey, has remarked that the term feminism was used by 1890’s to refer to the New Woman (Kealey 6-8). In her research on feminism and suffrage, Ellen Du Bois suggests that the term ‘feminism’ had been in use since 1910 to describe political movement. Lisa Tuttle describes that the term ‘feminism’ has been taken from the Latin word ‘*femina*’ means woman, defined as, “having the qualities of females” (Tuttle 107, 108). The Merriam -Webster’s Dictionary 11 th edition edited by Fredrick C. Mish defines the term ‘feminism’ as: (a) the principle that women should have political rights equals to those of men; (b) the movement to win such rights for women. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary further explains that the term feminism expresses the belief that women are oppressed and exploited because of their sex. Feminism opposes women’s subordination to men in family and society. (Fredrick C. Mish 461)

The term feminism has been defined in various manners as it is rather difficult to define the term in any straight jacketed manner. A.M. Jaggar suggests in *Feminist Politics and Human Nature* (1983) that Feminism “asserted the uniqueness of women, the mystical experiences of motherhood and women’s special purity” (Jaggar 5). He further remarks that the term is concerned with women in multiple ways. The period from 1550–1700, considered as early feminism, aimed at the improvement of conditions of women. They criticized misogyny and male defamation of female. “The events of the period 1550–1700 presented women with grounds upon which to challenge the inevitability of patriarchal authority” (Gamble 4). These feminists had to face criticism by patriarchal agencies for their opposition of established social norms and practices. Elizabeth A. Flynn, in *Feminism, beyond Modernism* (1944), explains feminism as a movement that has been influenced by other traditions, and in turn has its influences on issues related with class, race, ethnicity, culture and sex. There has always been a misunderstanding

within and beyond feminist movement owing to its relationship with other traditions and movements. Those who feel threatened by feminist movement respond to it in negative way. Feminists devote time and energy to make clear that considerable work has to be done if woman want to achieve equality. Furthermore, Elizabeth A. Flynn, in *Feminism, beyond Modernism* (1944) discusses “Feminist responses to the problems of misunderstanding and negative representations of its traditions, however, sometimes been problematic. At times, feminists have seen strategic value in representing feminism to a resistant audience as a unified movement with clearly identifiable goals”. (Flynn 2)

Mary Wollstonecraft (1750-1797), John Stuart Mill (1806- 1875) and Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815- 1902) are some major writers and thinkers, who played an important role in shaping the feminist ideology. They raised their voice against gender discrimination. They raised their voice that women must have same rights as men. At that time women were not allowed to participate in public and were debarred from political meetings. The right to franchise was also not meant for them. They were only provided with the basic education. They were concerned about deprived status of White women.

In *Feminism beyond Modernism*, Elizabeth A. Flynn discusses Maggie Himm views, according to Himm, first wave feminism began in the eighteenth century with the work of Mary Wollstonecraft. Basically first wave feminism is concerned with inequalities. Second wave feminism is to differentiate between the inequalities of the women in patriarchal relation (Flynn 2).

Third wave feminists were the groups of women feminists between 1980’s and 1990’s. These feminists were heirs of the cultural and political transformations of previous decades. This generation had the benefits of the women’s liberation movements of the 1960’s and 1970’s. In 1980’s and 1990’s the privileged identity of black women was challenged by whiteness, masculinity and social class through two decades. Feminists of third generation understood socially constructed inequality.

Mary Wollstonecraft was an early advocate of women emancipation. She expounded the need of providing equal rights to women. The European women in her time were granted minimum liberty. They could not access higher education or pursue any profession

independently. Her entire life and her works express her concern about and protest against the denial of an identity to women except those permitted by men. Her bitter experiences about 'hardships of women' and her views are presented in her book *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), which was criticized for its 'contaminating influence' on women. However, it remains to be a precursor to several contemporary ideas and demands. She writes:

I love man as my fellow; but his scepter, real, or usurped, extends not to me, unless the reason of an individual demands my homage; and even then the submission is to reason, and not to man. In fact, the conduct of an accountable being must be regulated by the operations of its own reason; or on what foundation rests the throne of God? (Wollstonecraft.net)

In 1869, John Stuart Mill published *The Subjection of Women*, in which he advocated absolute equality for women. He argues in favour of their legal and political rights maintaining that women deserve them as they constitute half of the population. In his opinion the exploitation of women is wrong, unethical and immoral. Mill's attitude was sympathetic towards women. He believed that liberty of individual was necessary for the development of society. He also contested that the masculine domination in the family has a corrupting influence over boys as it allows males to dominate females of their family. He claims that what is now called "the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing" (qtd. by Gamble 18). He considers femininity as artificial and insists that men and women must be treated as equals. He had also supported women's right to vote stating that there is no justification in denying a right to women if it is being extended to men. He opposed the theory of 'biological determinism' which perpetuates traditional roles and superiority of men within family and society:

The principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes- the legal subordination of one sex to the other- is wrong in itself, and now one of

the chief hindrances to human improvement and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other (Mill 3).

It can be said that Mill predicted the idea of femininity not being natural or biological. In his work he foreshadows the idea of cultural constructs. He claims that the "true nature and capability of women must remain unknown in the highly artificial conditions in which modern societies were living." (Gamble 18).

The systematic feminist movement in the west began with the first women's rights convention at Seneca Falls, New York in 1848. A formal resolution demanding women's suffrage was passed in this convention, and for next seventy years this demand became the central focal point of the feminist movement. During the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the earlier decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the feminist movement attempted to win more political rights for women. The right to vote was won by American women in 1920 and by the British women in 1928. The leadership provided by Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony in the fight to win the suffrage is significantly recorded in the feminist history. Leta Stetter Hollingworth and Helen Thompson Woolley are other feminist thinkers of the era. However, these critics and activists did not essentially challenge patriarchy; they also did not include any discussions on the plight of women independently. The plight of the Black women at this stage, was not even a circumspect sub-category, and perhaps was written off as an outcome of imperial designs. Though they voiced their protest against social inequalities and consequential exploitation of women, they conceded that the inherent biological differences between the male and the female result in different behaviors, leading to the propagation of the notion that homemaking and child-care should be considered as primary occupations of women. This phase of feminism is known as the first wave feminism and is contrasted with the second wave feminism on several counts. Marsha Weinam Lear has used these phrases - first wave and second wave feminism - to trace the development of the feminist movement and to clearly charter ideological break through and differences within a broader chronological framework ("First Wave Feminism".net).

These waves were offshoots of feminist demands, movements and activism. The first wave of feminism is initiated from 1830 – 1920. This period, also known as the period of Victorian feminism, is known for Women's suffrage movement and women enfranchisement.

The first organized movement of Women's Rights can be said to have begun with the first Women's Rights Movement's convention at the Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments and Resolutions in 1848. The contribution of Elizabeth Lady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony cannot be undermined in Women's Rights Movement. They both worked and formed Women Suffrage Association in 1869. At this time, demand for the woman's suffrage was made and a formal resolution was passed which centred the women's movement for next seventy years. First wave feminists' movements deal with the right to vote, legal rights of property ownership, education etc.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) in her book *A Room of One's Own* (1929) analyzes the oppressive structures of patriarchy Men have confined women within patriarchal traditions, marginalizing their voices. In her opinion, female dominating ideas of the patriarchal society thwarted women from realizing their creativity and potential. She states that the right to earn a living is the solution to all problems of women. Virginia Woolf explained that women writers had to go against the restrictions of society. Her narrative about the imaginary sister of Shakespeare is salutary. Woolf thinks that this poet who never wrote a word and was buried at the cross roads still lives, "She lives in you and in me, and in many other women...for they are washing dishes and putting the children to bed. But she lives, for great poets who do not die; they are continuing presences; they only need the opportunity to walk among us in the flesh" (Woolf 105-106). Later on Alice Walker used its structure to highlight how Black feminist criticism can introduce fresh sets of meanings. Walker's story of the Black poet Phillis Wheatley, who was sold into slavery at the age of seven, introduces the Black woman into literary history, as well as, in the white woman's discourse.

Second wave of feminism developed, after the Second World War in several countries. Margaret Walters discusses in *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction* (2005) that women's liberation movement was the beginning of the second wave of feminism. Whereas the first wave of feminist movement deals with the right to vote, legal rights of property ownership, and education etc. the second wave of feminists talk about socio-cultural conditioning. Second wave feminists inquire the relevance of the fixed roles regarding men and women in fulfilling the familial and societal responsibilities. Among the critics of the second Wave of Feminism, the most famous writer is perhaps Simon De Beauvoir. Her seminal book *The Second Sex* (1949)

accentuates on worldwide circumstances of women, “One is not born a woman, rather becomes one” (Beauvoir 295). She explains that while the biological differences are basic between men and women, conditioning of the sexes is more significant for generating different and mutually exclusive paths for them later in the life. She has appropriately pointed out that cultural and historical construction of women as ‘Second Sex’ or ‘Other’ is the basis of gender theory. Her views inspired feminists and gender critics, in areas of feminism and gender studies. Beauvoir was the first to present the view that ‘becoming’ of a woman is made possible by sustained, systematic and meticulous social conditioning. The social roles which women perform are a consequence of culture. Beauvoir maintains that the distinct qualities of males and females are formed on the basis of historical construction and cultural influences. Patriarchal society considers woman as ‘other’:

She is defined and differentiated with reference to man and not he with reference to her; she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute – she is the other...The category of the other is as primordial as consciousness itself. In the most primitive societies, in the most ancient mythologies, one finds the expression of a duality – that of the self and the other (Beauvoir 16).

Patriarchy implies certain societal customs on all biological women. Patriarchal norms and standards prove that developments of ‘feminine’ qualities are ‘natural’ in women. Certain women overcome these restricted lives of doctrines and dogmas set up by patriarchal interests. Those women are considered as ‘unfeminine’ and ‘unnatural’. Patriarchal belief is that essence of femaleness is in ‘femininity’, but it is not essential for females to be feminine. “Thus the passivity that is the essential characteristics of the ‘feminine’ women is a trait that develops in her from the earliest years. But it is wrong to assert that a biological datum is concerned; it is in fact a destiny imposed upon her by her teachers and by society” (19). Even she discusses about the social construction of femininity at most of the times though her focus is not limited up to femininity. Beauvoir suggests that a renegotiation of patriarchal values is necessary if women want to negate the destiny of a sub-ordinate existence. This demand gains validity as according to Beauvoir social environment profoundly affects the individual development. Challenging the deeper structures of patriarchy, she focused attention on the multiple challenges women have to

face to create their own self - they are viewed not only as a social category, but also, they are given a culturally conditioned subjective identity to which they are encouraged to conform.

In a similar vein, Betty Friedan has talked about the construction of femininity. Friedan comments on the cultivated nature of femininity in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), analyzing how the image of a happy suburban wife was cultivated as a project. Coming from a background of radical politics, she inspires women to participate fully in the society in equal partnership with men. Her comments on the educational and career choices of young women are ruthless but accurate:

“...girls would not study physics: it was “unfeminine”. A girl refused a science fellowship at John Hopkins to take a job in a real- estate office. All she wanted, she said, was what every other American girl wanted to get married, have four children and live in a nice house in a nice suburb.

The suburban house- wife was the dream image of the young woman and the envy; it was said, of women all over the world”. (Friedan 60)

Betty Friedan’s book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) suggests that the happiness of White American housewives is a myth. She describes it as ‘the problem that has no name’. There is nothing different done by White American housewives. They are discontented with their lives, having glorified their roles as “Occupation: Housewife”. They did housekeeping, and worried about their children and husband. However, it did not provide any happiness or sense of achievement in their lives. Betty Friedan comments on the restricted lives affluent middleclass women had to live. They were frustrated by the lack of privacy in their routine, and the confinement of family life. Friedan insisted that each woman must ask herself what she wishes: then she would understand that “neither her husband nor her children nor the things in her house, nor sex, nor being like all the other women, can give her a self” (Friedan 464).

A similar view is offered by Kate Millett in her book *The Sexual Politics* (1969). Millett defines sexual politics as arrangements which allow a group of persons to control the other. According to Millett, the stereotyping of the female – as prostitutes, virgins, unchaste women, or sexual anorexics, results in patriarchal domination; and these controlled/conditioned sexual relationships extend into the domain of ideology, biology and socio-cultural institutions like

family, religion, educational institutes and work place. She has pointed out how in the Christian mythology Adam is treated as the racial type, whereas Eve is a mere sexual type. Eve eats the forbidden fruit of life and goads Adam to do the same. However, it is the fall of Adam, the male that leads to the fall of humanity. Kate Millett has also argued that women's oppression is rooted in social conceptions of femininity.

Germaine Greer discourages marriage and nuclear family in her book *The Female Eunuch* (1970). She comments that women are categorized as 'an object of fantasy' which derogates their image. Therefore they have to take the duties of cooking, caring and other household chores; while taking care of their beauty and attire. Greer terms them as monotonous and anxiety producing activities for women. She hopes that a new breed of women would come upon the earth for which her analysis of sex oppression in the developed world of 20<sup>th</sup> century would be irrelevant. She remarks that all women prefer the freedom of not being conscious of their bodies, freedom of not doing the duty of a wife, freedom from being spied, stopped or followed on the street. No society should be such where women might be teased by their male co-workers, classmates, colleagues and bosses and they should be able to live with dignity, respect and nobility as women. She is aware nonetheless that it remains a dream yet.

Juliet Mitchell in *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* (1974) remarked:

When Freud first formulated the 'castration complex' it explained all there was to know about the difference between the sexes---it defined the girl and made the boy abandon his incestuous wish for the mother. The girl felt totally inferior, because she lacked something, and the boy felt temporarily inferior to his more phallicly powerful father. The castration complex ended the boy's Oedipus complex and therewith his infancy. It seemed to lie behind all neuroses, to dominate all dreams and perversions, to account for the social inferiorization of women... and for the glorification of men. (Mitchell 75-76)

Mitchell links women's oppression to four essential social structures, viz., production, reproduction, sexuality and socialization. She suggests that even though women are the most oppressed people, they also have the most revolutionary potential. They narrate their problems and frustrations on various platforms not to merely articulate their problems, but to seek



solutions to their grievances. In these all feminist activities, females share the same platform as *women*, notwithstanding the differences of their race or class. Eisenstein remarks in this context that one can see:

...an element of visionary, futurist thought. This encompasses a concept of social transformation that, as part of the eventual liberation of women, will change all human relationships for better. Although centrally about women, their experience, condition, or 'estate', in Juliet Mitchell's formulation, feminism is also fundamentally about men and about social change. (Eisenstein xiv)

Margaret Walters writes in *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction* (2005) that Twentieth century has witnessed a growing awareness related to woman regarding their desires, sexuality, self-actualization and destiny. Whereas the first wave feminists limited their demands to political and legal rights without challenging the status quo in terms of gender relations; the second wave feminists termed the gender relations as artificial cultural constructs while retaining the earlier demands of social, political and legal equality. The second wave feminists questioned the validity of pre-fixed gender roles and believed that the patriarchal social organization has always had a bias in favour of men. They questioned the authenticity of the prevalent notions of gender and demanded equality with men in terms of social, political and economic rights, so that women can eschew cultural constraints and can define their own preferences in life.

The post 1968 woman's Liberation Movements saw the emergence of the group known as *Psych ET Po*. This group emphasized that existing culture and language had repressed women's sexuality.

Woman's difference is located in her sexuality as compared to men. Their sexuality has been repressed by patriarchal culture. They looked to the patriarchal culture and male language. White upper class woman do not achieve liberation by sacrificing their sexual differences. The group's philosophy was greatly influenced by psychoanalysts especially Jacques Lacan. Freud believed that women can glorify them in femininity only. (Psychoanalysis and politics 56) This group tried to explore feminism but it has been in misdirection by patriarchy.

During 1980's, the third wave of feminism begins; it is influenced by post modernism. Third wave of feminism challenges the notion of "universal womanhood". Post modernism

asserts that there is no one truth that could be claimed. It asks the question what is basis for universal. It has challenged the concept of patriarchy. Post modernism believes in the concept that the whole society is 'controlled by males'. This is the 'truth' in which concept lays. Postmodernism displays plurality in art. Postmodern feminists are deeply related to sexism, racism, classism and other forms of exploitations. Under the influence of postmodernism, feminist theorists attempted to accommodate the differences among women based on race, culture and class.

Craig Owens suggests a number of points of convergence between the two. Both feminism and postmodernism argue that the 'grand' or 'master' narratives of the enlightenment have lost their legitimating power. Not only, they would both suggest, have claims put as universally applicable in fact proved to be valid only for a man of a particular culture, class and race;..... . (Thornham, Sue & Editor Stuart, Sim 39).

The ideals under which these claims arise are 'objectivity', 'reason' and 'self' which is partial. Owens points out; women have been represented in countless images throughout western culture often as symbols of 'Nature, Truth, the Sublime, and the Sex'. These representations could be rarely seen as legitimacy. These representations of the west are seen as one way representation of the male subject.

Society has one vision of women as object. They present a critique of binary's that means one thing in opposition of others in which women have been devalued. Women are subject as well as object of the feminist theory. They represent themselves as self which in other way is 'relational' to man. In *Feminism beyond Modernism* Elizabeth A. Flynn explains, "A metanarrative of postmodernism is difficult to construct because postmodernism, resists the creation of metanarratives, has arisen in diverse locations and has been defined in relation to a number of different intellectuals, social and political traditions (Flynn 11). Even the displacement of metanarratives demands a social criticism which can be local and contextual. This would clearly be case with the feminist response.

Many feminists have find out the previous accounts of the exclusion of race, class and sexual orientation can be seen to group the identity of women. Bell hooks points out that the race

is discussed in a postmodern context; black women are not mentioned in the merit of postmodernism. Postmodern critiques of notions of identity and subjectivity are effective for black people. Critiques of racism have not been concerned with class mobility in collective identity of feminists groups, “Postmodern feminism challenge modernist beliefs in the objectivity and the neutrality of the observer or interpreter..... if traditional academic discourse is modernist in its pretence of objectivity and neutrality. Post-modern feminist discourse asks what difference race, class, gender and sexual orientation make in the process of reading and writing” (Elizabeth A. Flynn 4). Postmodernist feminism without sorting out the role of relativism and subjectivism, it investigates the role of reader in interpretation process. Postmodern feminism challenges modern feminism without rejecting it.

Postmodernist theory in the written works seems to be seldom any mention of black people or people of colour specifically black women. There are no references to work done by black women?

To comprehend contemporary feminist criticism, it is crucial to differentiate between the three different terms of ‘feminist’, ‘female’ and ‘feminine’. Critics have used these three terms in multiple ways. Toril Moi defines ‘feminism’ as a political position, ‘femaleness’ as a matter of biology and ‘femininity’ as a set of culturally defined characteristics. Toril Moi in her book *Modern Literary Theory* (1986) discusses about “Feminist Literary Criticism”, “The words ‘feminist’ and ‘feminism’ are political labels supporting the aims of women’s movement of the 1960’s” (Moi, 204). Feminist criticism is a specific kind of political discourse: a critical and theoretical practice committed to the struggle of women against patriarchy and sexism’. It is not merely a worry for gender in literature. Therefore feminist criticism and theory are relevant in gender studies. Like feminists, gender critics are also pluralistic in their preferences. Toril Moi also alerts us to the ever present impact of cultural conditioning telling us that, “All ideas, including feminist ones, are in this sense ‘contaminated’ by patriarchal ideology” (Moi, 205).

Marilyn French in her treatise *Beyond Power, On Women, Men and Morals* (1986) views feminism as a revolutionary movement through which political powers aim at feminizing society. They want a change in society by seeking cooperation from men for the betterment of human moral values. Lynne Segal, another feminist of Australia, holds similar view. In her study, *The Future Female? Troubled thoughts on Contemporary feminism* (1987) she

challenges marriage, female aspirations and motherhood. She suggests that feminine virtues must be treated uniformly in the same manner in which masculine virtues are treated.

Judith Butler in her famous book *Gender Trouble* (1990) argues that 'women' are a group with common interests. The feminism encounters the assumption that, "The term women denote a common identity. Rather than a stable signifier that commands the assent of those whom it purports to describe and represent, women, represent in plural, has become a troublesome term, a site of contest, a cause for anxiety". (*Gender Trouble* – 6) For example, if one is a woman, definitely all women are not that, the terminology is in-depth. To discuss a pre gendered person within the purview of gender, therefore, "gender is not always constituted coherently or consistently in different historical contexts. And because gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities". (*Gender Trouble* – 6) There must be a universal basis for feminism that must be comprises of in an identity. Rather feminism has closed the position of opening their identities. Feminism has failed in forming the individual identity. It has grouped the female as "women".

Butler in her book *Gender Trouble* (1990) cites the argument of Luce Irigaray to underscore her point further; Irigaray has commented that "women constitute a paradox, if not a contradiction, within the discourse of identity itself. Women are the "sex" which is not "one". In other words, women represent the sex that cannot be thought" (*Gender Trouble* - 9). Irigaray further comment about the absence of representation of women in language, in her opinion language is controlled by and within the patriarchal structure. Linguistically women are absent and opaque, in opposition to Simone De Beauvoir, for whom women are the *others*; Irigaray depicts women as opposites of men. Irigaray maintains that the feminine "sex" is absent in linguistics. The contemporary feminists debated on essentialism and they raise question on if there exists the universality of female identity. Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous have acclaimed works on Simone De Beauvoir's details of women construction as the 'other'. Their views on sexuality is distinguished from Simone de Beauvoir, her views are sexual differences are constructed in by language. Similarly Simone de Beauvoir, they consider that "each of the apparently gender neutral systems of thought – law, science, religion are actually expressions of male thought, representing a masculine world view" (Waugh 333).

The influence of postmodern theories encouraged critics to write from the perspective of black women. Black feminists also become sensitive to the differences within the community which earlier was treated in a blanket manner. This position is best understood by citing Germaine Greer, who candidly remarks that “The book *The Female Eunuch* does not deal with poor women (for when I wrote it I did not know them) but with the women of the rich world, whose oppression is seen by poor women as freedom (Greer 11)”. Black writers like Bell Hooks, Gloria Joseph, Audre Lorde, Maria Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman have drawn attention towards the inadequate representation of black women in the literary tradition and the institutional non – existing practice of racism. The historical realities of black women are that they faced suppression and repression in white dominant society. In history, Black women were not able to read and write, so African – American women were not able to represent them. Thus, earlier the practices of racism on black women were non – existing. Currently, black literary tradition propagates the suppression of blacks by the dominant culture. In present, black feminist criticism foregrounds the idea that the institutional practices of racism by white patriarchal power structure abetted by black men have refused to acknowledge black women historically.

In *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers (1943)*, Barbara Christian has traced the emergence of Harlem renaissance and its impact on black women’s writing. Referring to the life and works of Zora Neale Hurston as a case in point she comments that Zora Neale Hurston’s work celebrates the traditional identity of the black people. She embraces African – American culture, black folk and their expression. In her novels she depicts intricacy of character into amazing tale. She is at first a story teller who is succeeded in liberating culture of her folk. Her heroines are not women of cities. They emerged in myths of South which is base of her race.

Adam David Miller (October 8 1922 -) is an African – American writer. Like, Naylor, several black writers displayed image of black women in African – American writings. The essay “Images of Black Women in Afro – American Literature: From stereotypes to Character” (1975) interprets the analysis done by Adam David Miller for the establishment of his thesis. “Africans wanted to know more about their brothers and sisters in North – America” (*BFC-1*). This essay was written by Adam David Miller depicts Afro – American Literature published in *Black feminist Criticism*, editor is Barbara Christian. This essay does not describe the depth of

historical investigation. He exploits that a tradition of Afro – American women writers exist. There is little discussion of Jessie Fauset or Alice Walker. There are sections on Paule Marshall and Toni Morrison is the nubs of works by the writer Adam David Miller. The significant books published on Afro – American Literature since 1975 come in the development of the new views. Until 1940’s the black women in the Anglo and “Afro – American Literature have been usually assigned stereotyped roles – (BFC 1) these images being a context” for whole dilemma as the problems addressed by Black women. These problems and dilemma cannot be resolved by the society. The novels of southern white literature are set to further craft the submission and the conflict between the black man and women. This image could not be confronted by Puritan society.

Different images of black woman are also revived in the work of Dr. Maya Angelou (4<sup>th</sup> April 1928 - ), Angelou is a well – known poet, novelist, memoirist and civil rights activist. She wrote her autobiography *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969) records her experiences of racial discrimination. She has taken up the values of African – American family, community and culture in her work. In this context it is significant to note that autobiographies are also testimonies to contemporary contexts.

In a *New York Times Magazine special issue James Atlas* (1996), that diverts attention to how much writer writes about their age. Writer Maya Angelou talks about succeeding rise of literary memoir and autobiography to “culture of confession” which is a robust as cultural remedy. Gayatri Spivak affix’s, is also linked with “culture of testimony” wherein the subaltern gives witness to oppression to a less oppressed others (7). Theoretical connotations of autobiographies are also significant. An Autobiography is judged within a fragment of a theory”. Quoted Abshavi, Mojgan and Ghosh, Nibir K. Editor, “Daring to Hope: Maya Angelou’s writing the Self”, *Re – Markings*. 5.2 (sept.2006): 83 – 85. Print. Feminist demand focuses on personal narratives and women in autobiography as they discuss self – representation of personality in a given context. Theoretical framework enables us to interpret their fragmentations and trauma.

Toni Morrison (Feb 18, 1931 - ) .Toni Morrison has written about the African – American literary tradition fabricating works on the experiences of blacks in America. She has published nine novels, two books for children, two plays and one volume of short stories. In 1977, she has been awarded for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Beauty finds its

representation in Toni Morrison's first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970). Its emphasis is on western beauty and it comes to self-destruction when people of colour especially women of colour. 'Sula' again sees dark colour as ugly which helps her in maintaining unusual relationships. In *Beloved* (1987), instead of celebrating the birth of Beloved rather it leads her mother to an act of infanticide and violence because of her lack of beauty.

Toni Morrison explores her stories in novel *Love* examine the integration of common black people. From beginning to aftermath her novel gives experimental and spatial expressions to blacks from slavery to the freedom movements of the blacks. It is love which could bring change in the entire future of humanity and integration in America. Humanness is as important as blackness. Furthermore Barbara Christian exalts black culture and questions Toni Morrison's stance, in his novels Toni Morrison asks whether there is black culture that functions in today's present western community. Is colour a camouflage? (*Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers* 69).

Alice Walker (Feb9 1944 - ) A 'womanist' is defined as African – American feminist or feminist of colour, one who is woman centred. A womanist fights black woman's battle for economic, social and political rights. Walker's term does not separate the terms 'womanist' and 'feminist', but the womanist is a sub group within the feminist movement. The struggle of black women as women of colour continued in twentieth century, 1980s and 1990s. Black critical and creative writers talk specifically about womanism. The term was coined by Alice Walker to focus especially on the conditions and concerns of black women. Womanism opposes all oppression based on race, sex and class. It deals with the black women suffering pertaining working environment biases, inequality of salary and wages between males, white females and black females, sexual harassment. African – American woman also follow the maternal ancestral lineage. Furthermore Alice Walker describes what "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender" (In Search of Our Mother's Garden xii). The black feminist movement of today provides the outlet and audiences for African – American women to explore the unlimited arenas of criticism and theory of African – Americans.

Like, gender has been constructed, similarly sex has been constructed. Postmodernist black writer bell hooks was a name adopted by Gloria Jean Watkins. She examines the issue of race, class and gender in her works, *Ain't I a Woman? Black Women and Feminism* (1981) and

*Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre (1984)*. She has dedicated her works to the black feminist movement which has had a positive impact on the US society. She criticizes that like white women, all their repression is not because of gender oppression. She suggests many arguments based on construction of masculinity and femininity. Sexual exploitation is the root cause of women suppression under patriarchy. “When we talk about “Men” in general, the word refers to “white men”. When we talk about “Women”, the word refers to “white women”. The term “black” is synonymous with “black men”. The black women were the victims of sexist – racist oppression”. (*Ain’t I a Woman* – 8?)

Such patriarchal and racist practices conventions have had a de – humanizing impact on black women. Such attitudes also conditioned them to accept discrimination and prejudices against them with a sense of equality. Bell Hooks in *Ain’t I a woman* has commented that black women were encouraged to accept a version of American history that to uphold and maintain racial imperialism in the form of patriarchy is somehow their fate. These educational institutes implanted the seeds of the racial imperialism in their psyche that would keep them forever in bondage. The black children were taught to embrace the system which oppressed them. Even those children were taught to support this system, to vow for it and even die for it. How the black folk could dismiss, change or defy a system which blacks would have been taught to admire, to love, to believe it? White teachers taught black children to embrace the white system, encouraged them to support it, to stand for it. Such theoretical grounds enabled black women to give attention on themselves rather all women. Bell Hooks has quoted the St. Pierre Ruffin Josephine who demanded black women should resolve their own problems. She organized women’s movement, so they could address the concerns of all women.

Such movements and critical theories supporting them encouraged black critical and creative writers to talk specifically about womanism. Alice Walker (Feb 1944 - ) the term ‘Womanism’ was coined by Alice Walker to focus especially on the conditions and concerns of black women. Womanism deals with the economic problems of women pertaining working environment biases, inequality of salary between black males and black females, unequal wages between white females and black females. Furthermore Alice Walker describes what “Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender” (In Search of Our Mother’s Garden’s xii) the black



feminist movement of today provides the outlet and audiences for African – American women to explore the unlimited arenas of criticism and theory of African – Americans.

Another Major black feminist writer, Patricia Hill Collins (May 1st 1948 - ) Professor Collins is a social theorist whose research and scholarship have examined issues of race, gender, social class, sexuality and nation. Her first book *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the Politics of Empowerment* won the Jessie Bernard Award of the American Sociological Association for scholarship in gender (Quoted. Patricia Hill Collins, *Sociology*.www. google.com. 2012 Web 1<sup>st</sup> July 2012).

Patricia Hill Collins in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and Politics of Empowerment* (1991), explains about Fannie Barrier Williams brought our attention towards the hierarchal inequalities within the community of black women. “African American women knowledge was often suppressed by White leading groups. Subordinate groups they people of colour act in collaboration of Whites, these people of colour face repression by their own victimization. Blacks are marginalized and repressed by own community and society. This critical aspect had developed the social inequalities. The rich tradition of African – American women existed but it remained invisible in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In different countries black women were invisible because they were speechless.

Collins has also raised the issue of sexuality in the *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and the politics of Empowerment* (2000) Collins writes as Evelyn Hammonds pointed out “Black women’s sexuality is often described in metaphors of speechlessness, space or vision as a void or empty space that is simultaneously, ever – visible (exposed) and invisible, where black women’s bodies are already colonized” (1997, 171). In response to their portrayed image, they remained silent. The longstanding silences among African – American black women lie within black feminist thought. Black feminists think their lack of access to positions of power in U S social institutions. These institutes are schools, new media, churches and government; those repress black women’s voice. Dominant groups constructed black women as “the embodiment of sex and the attendant invisibility of black women as the unvoiced, unseen everything that is not white” (Hammonds 1997, 171).

Black women's sexualities often ignored or included in relation to African – American men's issues. In black critical concepts where black women struggle, they get gender oppression which is accepted as important, theoretical concept of black sexuality (Collins 1993b; 1998a 155, 155 – 83). Black women are interested in making coalition among women of different races which pre-existing feminist's frameworks. U S black women have been discouraged from speaking about such topics. Paula Gidding identifies another important factor namely, the “last taboo” of disclosing “not only a gender but a sexual discourse, unmediated by the question of racism” (Gidding 1992, 442). Within this taboo it is considerable to talk about white racist construction of black women.

Another significant black writer Angela Y. Davis (January 26, 1944 - ) is known for her work internationally to combat all forms of oppression in U S over the years and abroad. She has written seven books including her Autobiography that is *Angela Davis: An Autobiography: Blue Legacies and Black Feminism; and Are Prisons Obsolete*. Angela Y. Davis depicts that sexism and racism have their roots in class oppression. Women are dominated by patriarchal economic system. Class oppression can be eradicated by destroying patriarchal economic system. Patriarchal system inflicted earning responsibility towards black woman for their family and children. “Black women could hardly strive for weakness; they had to become strong, for their families and their communities needed their strengths to survive. Evidence of the accumulated strengths black women have forged through work, work and more work...” (*Women, Race and Class* 231) To overcome more and more working conditions, Antony's revolution played an important role in the life of black working women from 1868 to 1870 during its publication. They demanded for eight hours work a day, they raised voices through an anti – sexist slogan, “equal pay for equal work”. Once they achieved the right to be paid for the work, these black women raised demand for higher wages, “Thus, compelling the capitalists to undertake the industrialization of house works” (Davis 140).

According to Angela Y, Davis, another repression is the sexual harassment of black women. The sexual abuse of black women has not been apparent in public violence. Racism has been enacted upon the black women and their white abusers. Men took it as a natural process. Such insults about black women have been agreed by politicians, scholars and journalists. Black women were depicted immoral by literary artists. Even the writer Gertrude Stein described one

of her black women character as ‘promiscuous immorality of black women’ (Quoted - Stein, Gertrude, *Three Lives*. New York: Vintage Books, 1970. First Edition: 1909. 86. Print.)

Under the influence of post – modern critical theories, black women writers also started to deal with the issues of homosexuality and gender. Conventionally, black influence like other patriarchal societies, encouraged hetero – sexuality to ensure reproduction. However, writers like Audre Lorde, Gloria Naylor and others deal with homosexuality. Audre Lorde (1934 – 27<sup>th</sup> Nov1992) describe herself as a ‘black lesbian feminist mother lover poet’. A work of queer theory, she wrote and published poetry in 1960’s for civil rights movement against the Vietnam War. She saw feminism had been blind to classism and being involved as lesbians. She considers herself as lesbian but she avoids confrontation of the drawbacks of homosexuality.

“I am a Black Feminist. I mean, I recognize that my power as well as my primary oppressions comes as a result of my blackness as well as my womaness, and therefore my struggles on both of these fronts are inseparable”. Lorde emphasises homosexuality. “To Be and Be Seen”, she feels, “I have come to believe over and over again that what is most important to me must be spoken, made verbal and shared, even at the risk of having it bruised or misunderstood”. She accepts her homosexuality, “It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize, accept, and celebrate those differences.” – Audre Lorde Quoted (“Audre Lorde Quotes: Women’s History”.*About.com* 2012).

The concept of Gender studies which emerged in 1980’s recognizes that there are as many as differences among woman and man as so much between women themselves. Braidotti connects gender in relation to feminist theory as “theoretical inadequacy and its politically amorphous and unfocussed nature”. (1994:36). It can be summed up by the argument that gender conceptualizes the exploration of the manner in which male and female selves are produced by and within a society. Rachel Alsop, Annette Fitzsimons and Kathleen Lennon in their book, *Theorizing Gender* (2002) emphasize views about gender, “The term gender refers to the production of male and female selves” (Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lenon 3).

Judith Butler in his book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) discusses ‘gender’. Butler is famous for challenging the idea that sex and gender do not differ from one another. She considers “sex” and “gender” as underlying realities. “Sex” is

considered as primarily a “biological realm”. “Gender” is considered as secondarily a “cultural realm”. According to Judith Butler, sex and gender are socially constructed. “Perhaps this construct called “sex” is as culturally constructed as gender; indeed, perhaps it was already gender turns out to be no distinction at all” (Butler 1990a; 7). Franke effectively argues that sexual harassment is the exemplary allegory for the production of gender. If “one” is a woman, this is sure that one does not have all the qualities of a “woman”. “Person” just does not acquire “all” as the attitude of women, because of its gender. The considerations of gender are not always comprised coherently in historical context. Judith Butler explains gender intersection as, “Gender intersects with racial, class, ethnic, sexual and regional modalities of discursively constituted identities. As a result it becomes impossible to separate out “gender” from the political and cultural intersections in which it is invariably produced and maintained” (GT 3).

Gender is explained literally. The literary assumption is that there must be a universal base for feminism, in which the identity of ‘women’ must be assumed cross – culturally, which accompanies the notion about the women oppression. Women oppression has been universalized in the form of patriarchy and female domination. The notion of patriarchy has been criticized in recent years on the account of gender oppression in the cross – cultural contexts in which it exists.

The domination over female produces women’s common subjugated experience. Universally patriarchy does not enjoy the same status as it did. The question arises, is there a specific women culture that is independent of the subordination by masculine cultures? Is there a “feminist region”? There may be an unmarked universality of women. The masculine and the feminine are in binary opposition to each other. They constitute that binary specific attributes which is not in challenge to political inequalities. Masculinity can be separated from femininity in race, class, gender and other power relations. They both comprise a single identity, different from each other.

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Furthermore, this view is enhanced by Michael S. Kimmel in his book, *The Gendered Society* (2000) discusses that the man and women consider them poles apart from each other. They think, they are from unique planets. They have distinguished brain organizations, varied hormones. They have contrast anatomies which chances to distinct destinies. They have

distinguished voices. As well as they perceive each other disparately. Man and women have similar working environment. They are evaluated in the same criterion for rise in salary, promotions, and terms of occupation. Male and female students are analyzed on the basis of same grading in schools and colleges. The distinction lies in inequality. The division of labour in each society is unequal. Every society divides social, political and economic resources between the genders unequally.

Major gender psychologists are Ecknes, Thomas, Trautner, M. Hanns. In their book, *The Developmental Social Psychology of Gender (2002)*, relates gender role theory with Psychology. They have stated their view through the example of Alice Eagly (1986) in regard to gender. In gender role theory Alice Eagly claims that boys and girls learn appropriate behaviours and attitudes from the family and overall culture in which they are grown. Non – physical differences are a product of socialization. Experiences, expression and emotions can be measured through an effective intensity measure. Women have more positive and more negative effects than man. Women are accounted to experience more recurrently a sense of humiliation, blame, disgrace, sadness, irritation, fright, envy and distress. Expression of pride is more recurrent in men than women. Masculinity and femininity could be differentiated in how females and males communicate with others. For example females disclose about themselves more than males. Man makes friendship with other men on the basis of common interests. Female makes friendships on the basis of mutual support. Friends of George and friendship of Cocoa is concerned in *Mama Day* written by Gloria Naylor. Women are empathetic, more emotionally expressive and responsive towards others. Women are more receptive than men. Men are passionate with sex. Men get overcome by women expression of emotions. Men express more anger than women.

Alice Eagley discusses gender role as a theory. Susan A. Speer describes gender as a subject. Susan A Speer in *Gender Talk: Feminism, Discourse and Conversation Analysis (2005)* discusses gendered subjects. Gendered subjects are positioned by the general content of words or by speech delivery and discourses. The powerful social arrangements, standards, beliefs and customs form and restrain individual action. Individuals act on the basis of an internalized system based on social norms and standards. They are active participants. People act according to social order. They interact with one another in decision making process in society. They are engaged in interaction, interpretation and concluding the meaning with one another. In our

society we daily talk about ideas, discuss with each other our thoughts. The ‘men’ and ‘women’ communicate in different ways. Men talk about sports, cars and women critic or appreciate relationships. Women are troubled by trivial matters. Men speak to women to provide support to them. Men assert, women submit. Such ideas are circulated in society and culture. These beliefs about men and women constitute supreme thoughts in our mind. This reveals to us the social position of men and women in society:

Gendered behavior like ‘speaking like a lady’, ‘boys don’t cry’, these statements tells us how men and women behave in the society. To behave differently from the gender is seen as sanction able and immoral in society. Are there sex differences between men and women? If women and men have different position in society, so we must work for the betterment of the society by changing the gender based roles.

Hare – Mustin and Mareck treats gender as a relatively fixed trait residing in an individual speaker. The approach is constructionist one where gender is categorized as a complex and social construct located in interaction. Different approaches about ‘gender’ construction emerge in different countries.

Furthermore distinguished African – American writer Ifemeji Chilka Sylvika in “Gender – Based Domestic Violence in Nigeria: A Socio – Legal Perspective (2012)” explains her perspective about African countries:

Gender based domestic violence is deeply rooted in many African countries, like Nigeria. The social context of such violence in Nigeria is linked to traditional African patriarchal society that determines the gender power structure. For instance, according to Ifemeji (2008, 57 – 61) Quoted, Nigerian citizens are predominantly in polygamous marriages under customary law, and custom demands that the husband exercises exclusive sexual rights and obedience from his wives.

This tradition grants the husband to exercise full control over his wife. If she fails to fulfil her duty, he could beat his wife and demand obedience from her. The powerful cultural and

traditional forces hamper the removal of gender based violence including: dehumanizing widowhood practices, dispossession of property rights of women and girl child.

While significant critic Amy C. Wilkins describes gender on the matter of inter – racial gender relationships. Amy. C. Wilkins in her article “Stigma and Status: Inter – Racial Identities among Black College Men (2012)” states black society is a patriarchal society. They prefer male child over female child. The right of inheritance is given to the first male child. The female children or widow of the deceased has no right to become heir of either father’s or husband’s property.

Males see themselves as masculine. Masculinity is central to the development of gendered identity. Manliness distinguishes men from women. Moreover gendered concepts of masculinity and femininity are enhanced. The article “Gender identity and its implications for the concepts of masculinity and femininity (2012)” further explains these two concepts of gender. The term masculinity and femininity have rarely been defined; they appear to have two types of meanings. First meaning is confirmed by psychologists and other by the culture and community as society. Masculine and feminine have an experiential meaning. Masculinity and femininity are the terms used to identify particular object, event or quality based on specific culture. From these organized qualities in a society, the ‘gender’ is associated as masculine or feminine. Masculinity and femininity are hypothetical constructions that refer to the understanding of individual’s self-concept. Masculinity and femininity are conceived as bi – extremity totally opposites. Men have a psychological strong sense of their masculinity. All women sense their inert feelings of femininity.

Sex – role identifications and assumptions are based on the hypothetical theory of feminine and masculine constructs. Masculine and feminine qualities and their gender roles in the society are two different constructs. For instance, Seval Arslan in his book “Educating Rita: The Muted Woman Raises Her Voice” posits that “the patriarchal worldview structures society on the separation of the mind and body from a sexist perspective. Within this structure, man represents the mind while woman is pre-destined to be the symbol of the body” (2015, 111). The concepts of masculinity and femininity are represented by the structure of gender determined characteristics. As cultural construct, they lack validity. “Masculinity and femininity or such related terms as manliness and womanliness are highly meaningful and personally significant



concept to most individuals” (Spencer 64). Men exercise their full control in maintaining relationships with many women without being questioned. Women have no such liberty as men. Male overpowers female in decision making process. Decision about sex making is taken by males. The fear of violence leaves women not in a condition to ask for precautions from their male partners. The safe partnership among both the sexes becomes impossible or difficult. Men’s behaviour about gender relations with women must result to the benefits and welfare of women by men. The masculine gender must reflect cordial relations with feminine gender. These are the aims of gender related programs.

The black men, for boasting willpower and confidence building, sought the approach of white counterparts. Black men through their sex role characterized black gender relationships asserting their supremacy over black women and repudiating the convention of matriarchy. Black women essentialized her in black traditional society through expanding community and exercising black culture. Black female gender identity is displayed through their contribution in Civil Rights Movement. Black nationalists added for black women that their role in decision – making in nationalist movements have been counter – revolutionary. Black women responded positively to committed relationships. Black matriarchs do domestic works in the homes of whites. They also worked as employed labours in fields or produced home products in industries. They earned wages while black males remain jobless. Black matriarchs supported their home and family through their wages. In America Black males are jobless and black females are working. American domestic policy created differences in their relationships. The Americans altered history, politics, and public administration to affect the sexual, economic and social relationships between the blacks. In Post – Jim Crow America the black men in search of masculinity has been led to de – masculinity. The jobless black males give rise to crimes in America. The masculinity is considered as have been defined by white males. Owing to black community suffered in terms of loss of conventional cultural mores. The brunt of the situation was mainly faced by women.

Black women suffer worst conditions in ghettos. John Rex in his book, *The Ghetto and the Underclass: Essays on Race and Social Policy (1988)* discusses African – American ghettoized societies. The nature of American society was that the racial conflicts perpetuated in the Inner City circle of the ghettos. These conflicts had a racial dimension. In the urban ghettos of the North, the surplus population from the South had migrated. This had led to the full incorporation of democratic capitalist society. The immigrants have arrived from Europe in

different times, after the hundred years of the Civil War. These immigrants had won rights in the social and political situation. The blacks of the South residing in ghetto had to realize the terms of rights in the political system. The Blacks of the South living in the ghettos had to gain the rights entitled for them in the constitution. A long procedure of struggle had started to win the rights for the 'black people' in the 1950's. Black people have to resist racism, "After the passing of the 1969 Race Relation Act and with the abatement of the housing shortage in the public sector, the fact is that....immigrants had been forced into making long term housing commitments and quasi ghetto conditions had emerged". (*The Ghetto and the Underclass: Essays on Race and Social Policy (1988)* 31)

Blacks have to win rights for their racial uplift. A note on "The Racialized Urban ghetto (2012)", relates the situations with U S ghetto on account of racial segregation. The racial segregation has been imposed on the dark skinned and black communities. This racist segregation is reflected by the schools of their children. The inhabitants of the Inner City had the under privileged schools for the 'black children'. Majority of black and dark children were drawn in this school from Irish and African groups. The education which is racially segregated is inherently unequal. Black and Asian children had special problems in White schools. If seriously dealt with the problems, Blacks and minority children needed remedial classes. The minorities of Black children are not able to perform better in White schools. Most of the Black parents are illiterate so they could not support their children in studies. The minorities of Black children in the 'White schools' were dealt badly. The majority of Black children in the 'Black schools' were both dealt harshly and abused. Few strategies are made to overcome black Children's difficulties. "Strategies for dealing with the educational problems of these children are poorly developed and the process of segregation is not something which has been planned for the advantage of students concerned" (*The Ghetto and the Underclass: Essays on Race and Social Policy* 32). The racial – segregation and inequality were related with Black and minority wards. Furthermore, Karsada explains in *US Racialized Urban Ghetto (2012)* that working class had the similar situation in the nineteenth century. Services in match with the education:

The decline of manufacturing and the rise of the high skilled service economy meant mismatches between the educational levels of the urban poor and the education and skill levels demanded by this new economy. The number of jobs

available for those without a high school education dropped dramatically in most urban areas, while good jobs became increasingly available in the high skilled service sector that was being driven by new technological innovations, and even as more urban dwellers finished high school, these improvements did not keep pace with the increasing skill demands of the new economy. (Karsada 1992) (U S Racialized Urban ghetto (2012) 9)

In the twentieth century, last three decades, most inner city communities of the U S faced a large number of the drawbacks. This drawbacks and problems included the societal worsening in the terms of unemployment, poverty, violence, disease, drug trafficking and degradation in housing and environmental conditions. There were scarcity of educational facilities and degeneration of proper health and social services. In the fall of 1980's, the public concern about these facilities, degenerated even greater than that had been during the war on poverty during the 1960's.

Their work added to their drudgery – it did not provide economic independence. The image of black women has been projected in slavery and reconstruction literature. There have been many slave narratives and women slaves who considered themselves as common folks. They spent most of their lives in slavery, “Even in this genre the image of black mammy persists. She is always there as cook, housekeeper, nursemaid, seamstress, always nurturing mammy, she is cunning, prone to poisoning her master, and not at all content with her lot” (Christian 5).

One of the important black writers Barbara Christian exemplifies renowned black revolutionary Sojourner Truth. The black women were abused, beaten and sold. They were used as breeders, nurses, nursemaids, mid – wife and were put to everlasting works. They were beaten with whipping block and degraded. These black women slept outside the white mistress room's door. These black women used to take care of mistresses children. They very often fed mistresses' babies. Despite working continually, black women never gained economic self-sufficiency. Even after the abolition of slavery, the patriarchal structure of society pushed them into subservient roles. In the latter half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, feminist criticism became aware of such gendered practices within the economic structure of the society.

It is pertinent to quote Betty Friedan she gives an account of economic conditions of white woman. In *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan represents her view about American Women, “the second half of the twentieth century in America, women’s world was confined to her own body and beauty, the charming of man, the bearing of babies and the physical care and serving of husband, children and home” (Friedan 83). These were the only editions of women’s magazine because they had only secondary school education or college’s graduate degree. These women were confined to their biological activities in America. Women were housewives; they were not interested in daily public and political affairs. They were interested in education for their children. The housewives searched the possibility of future career for themselves. If it was not possible for housewives to become independent, they searched a future career for their daughters. The housewives always wanted their daughters to become independent and go out in the world which has been denied access to them. ‘Career’ means more than job. It means to do something, to be you, not just to exist through others. Women were independent. These women worked as nurses, teachers, artists, actresses, copywriters, sales women. The men were drawn to these women, because of their character and looks which appealed to men. These women were marching towards their ambition. They struggled from the problem at their work force. The new working woman was the ideal of yesterday’s housewives. These new working women represented the yearning for identity. The whole world was laid open in front of American women. The future of 21<sup>st</sup> century women was to be different from 20<sup>th</sup> century women. The future women were attractive, these women loved men and they were loved by men. Future of women is described by Betty Friedan. Still the omission of any direct reference to the economic plight of black women by Betty Friedan comments on their marginalization. Similar opinion is noticed in Germaine Greer also. However their views can be cited to better understand the situation of black women.

Similarly, major writer Germaine Greer details account of future woman. *The Female Eunuch* (1970) by Germaine Greer has been written in the second wave of feminism. Old suffragettes of the movement have suffered their confinement at home so that they could enter into professional world. These women tried to enter into professions, instead of granting them freedom from patriarchy. Women attempted to get into academics to gain degrees while waiting for their marriage. The spirit of revival has been spread in younger women. According to Mrs. Hazel Hunkins - Hallinan leader of six point Group, these young women were sexually frank.

She stated to their ecstasy, “Ladies of two generations ago settled down to work of consolidation in hosts of small organizations, while the main force of their energy filtered away in post – war retrenchments and the revival of frills, corsets and femininity after the permissive twenties, through the sexual sell of the fifties, ever dwindling even more respectable”. The emphasis has been different. Sophisticated middle class women stood for reform. While unsophisticated middle class women wanted revolution, their wish for revolution has been desired before their want of women liberation. Women emancipation has failed. Women professionals were in minority; females employments were underpaid, women worked as menial labourers to support their families. Even today there are feminists who follow the instructions decided by the suffragists. Even the suffragists know they are gaining the support at grass root level. The causes of all such new activities were “sexual sell was oversell”.

The house wives waited for their liberty, they have been disgusted from the economic hold of one man family earning member. Women had no blue print of utopia. Women could not change the world but they have to reassure them. Women were earlier forced to seek the advice of religious leaders and men. They were not able to focus on their life situations because of plight of women were so desperate that they had to come forward themselves. Their enemies blamed women for female discontent. Therefore females looked forward for economic activities. As Seval Arslan writes in his book “Fall of the Absent Mother in Tracy Chevalier’s *Falling Angels*”, “Imprisoning women within the boundaries of home, men have claimed themselves the authorities of the social and economic life. Eventually women have been bound to home, and this submission of hers to domestic affairs has caused her loss of a free female identity.” (2015, 89). Also, as Malik describes, “the cultural gender inscription over the centuries has straitjacketed women into saint, witch or whore” (Malik 41). Naylor’s novels deconstruct the patriarchal stereotypes and provide “new perceptions of gender roles and show a shifting sense of gendered space” (Malik 40, 42).

It is with Angela Y’ Davis, that we have some concrete critical inquiry into the economic aspects of black women. In *Women, Race & Class* (2011) she states economic activities of women. “The economic importance of women’s economic activity has been realized. The women were active accomplished workers with economic activity outside home”(Davis 227). In 19<sup>th</sup> century the women were full – fledged within the home supported market. They

manufactured most of the products required by their families. Women also looked after the health of their families and communities. They were the care takers of their own communities. “Women ground eyeglasses, made netting and rope, cut and stitched leather goods, made cards for wool carding, and were house painters” (Davis 227). Black women earn income. “Black women could hardly (231).

The post revolution flow of industrialization resulted in the starting and spread of new factories. Spinning and weaving were traditional house women occupations, so they recruited women in the handlooms. As industrialization progressed, the economic production of home made goods, shifted from home to factory. Women’s traditional jobs had been taken away by factories. The entire economy moved from the home made products to the factory produced products. In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, factory also produced textiles, soaps and cosmetics. Even bread, butter and other products had been produced by the factories.

Even when the factory produced goods were in the market though housewives were burdened. The main concern of capitalist countries is the plight of housewifery. Feminists represent household tasks as a matter of female suppression as stated by Angela. Y. Davis “because it is unpaid labor” (*Woman, Race and Class* 232). Woman’s movement for realisation of unpaid wages directs black woman towards appeal for rise of wages. Thus black feminists demanded increase in salary. “A weekly government pay check, its activist argue, is the key to improving the housewife’s status and the social position of women in general”. (*Woman, Race and Class* 232)

Furthermore, Naylor’s writings feature the racist and gender oppression of black women in regard to their socio – economic perspectives. White and black feminists mark the objectification of black women, because of their patriarchal structure of society. Black women overcome patriarchy through female bonding. Black woman oppression, repression and suppression results them to rise against their exploitation. Their mutual support and female bonding reasons them to overcome their problems as feminists. Various writers and critics have put their cumulative voices to strengthen the views of Naylor on feminism.

In “A Conversation with Gloria Naylor” (1993) from *Gloria Naylor: In Search of Sanctuary*, her’s statement to Virginia C. Fowler is “Feminism to me is political, social and

economic equality of all human beings”. (Fowler 124) Fowler’s work contains views on feminism; her study includes an interview with Naylor focuses on spiritual and black feminist perspectives. Naylor simply states the definition of feminism, “the simple belief all human beings, regardless of gender are equal”. In her works *The Woman of Brewster Place* (1982), *Linden Hills* (1985), *Mama Day* (1988), and *Bailey’s Café* (1992) fits the discourse of Fowler. It also fits the view proposed by Arimbi in his book “Finding Feminist Literary Reading: Portrayals of Women in the 1920s Indonesian Literary Writings” states “Finding Feminist Literary Reading: Portrayals of Women in the 1920s Indonesian Literary Writings” that “feminist literary critique may question, among other things, the ways a particular text represents women, how it portrays gender relations, how it labels sexual difference, how it terms power-relations between different gender roles, and so forth” (2009, 16). Each of her novels depicts the interconnection between race, class and gender. She explores Shakespeare to provide her approach regarding racism. Virginia Fowler *In Search of Sanctuary* (1996) explores the influence of Naylor’s religious background. Her work largely comprises of bible.

*The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), *Linden Hills* (1985), *Mama Days* (1988), *Bailey’s Café* (1992) and *The Men of Brewster Place* (1998). The women of these novels are cut off from American society. There are critical books published on Gloria Naylor’s works. These criticism books are *Gloria Naylor: Critical Perspectives Past and Present* edited by K. A. Appiah and Henry Louis Gates Jr., in the Amitstad Literary Series (1993) contains reviews and essays on the first three works of Gloria Naylor. Catherine C’ Ward has depicted the aspect of spirituality in detail by discussing Dante’s Inferno in *Linden Hills*. Her analysis of Dante Inferno is in comparison with hell. *The Critical Response to Gloria Response* (1996) in an interview with Gloria Naylor, written on, “The Human Spirit is a Kick – Ass Thing”, feminism aspect has been discussed with other perspectives. Her perspectives are on that feminism and female centeredness differ from each other. In Michelle C. Loris and Sharon Felton’s Collection, Naylor answered, “Feminism as believing in social, economic and political equality for all human beings” (Sharon Felton and Michelle C. Loris 139). African – American women have been neglected from white feminist leadership. The post modernism approach in Naylor’s novel depicts the minority subjugation of black women. Black feminist theory examines the limitations of white feminist theory and critically explains the ideas of some African – American women

writers who have contributed to black feminist theory from different ideological perspectives. Views of these writers are stated below.

Francis Beale in her essay “Double Jeopardy to be Black and female” (1970) condemns that white feminist movement is concerned with the white woman. It is of not much importance to black women. For, black women, she details, “any white group that does not have anti – imperialist and anti – racist ideology has absolutely nothing in common with black women’s struggle”. (351) White women are oppressors and black women are oppressed. White patriarchal society oppresses white women, but white women themselves are oppressors of black women. White women do not suffer from racism and they have better economic perspectives than black women. Naylor’s novels show that whites oppress blacks. The novelist attempts for the up gradation of black women.

Gloria Naylor’s fiction depicts the objectification of black women. White and black male literature justifies the fact that they are treated as objects in a capitalist economy. Males are treated like subjects. Black women are considered as others. Naylor has represented this aspect in detail. Larry R. Andrews in “Black Sisterhood in Naylor’s Novels” explores black women formed bonds to overcome their gender oppression. These black women have strengthened their woman bonds to overcome gender oppression. There are requirements of black feminists to uplift the situation of African – American women.

In Criticism and interpretation about *Gloria Naylor’s Early Novels* was published in 1999. Margot Anne Kelley edits the book *Gloria Naylor’s Early Novels* with an introduction. She has discussed the important aspects of Gloria Naylor’s novels in this book. In Gloria Naylor’s Poetics of Emancipation: Emerging Impossibilities in *Bailey’s Cafe*, Karen Schneider states that in “Miss Maple’s blues”, “is on one level a familiar tale about a black man who cannot find a job suited to his qualifications because of racial discrimination. At the same time, however, this story (impossibly) manages to destabilize both gender and cultural boundaries even while it affirms the manhood of systematically emasculated black male (*G N E N -7*)”.

There are several activities performed by the similar man and woman in different situations in a different way. Naylor’s men are de – masculinised and Naylor’s women feel oppressed in her novels. Her men are de – masculinised because of dehumanization practises on black men by Whites. Her women face gender oppression because they are demoralized so they



feel frustrated. Man and woman are differentiated based on sexism and biological distinctions. Sexuality is the root cause of patriarchy to treat a woman inferior than man. Differences in sexuality causes woman to have it and silences their voice to rise against patriarchy. Universally, manly qualities are violence and anger while womanly qualities are politeness, ignorance and meekness. In Naylor's novel, her ignorant and docile black woman characters face violence and aggression exhibited by men in their contacts. Gender and sex are in construction culturally and socially. Gender boundaries are porous. Through social stereotypes of gender both man and woman could trespass gender boundaries. Foucault phrases, "discourse transmits and produces power; it reinforces it, but also undermines and exposes it fragile and makes it possible to thwart it (101). By acquiring position, women are able to overcome patriarchal gender oppression.

Barbara Christian in her essay "Naylor's Geography: Community, Class and Patriarchy in *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills*" exhibit Naylor's black female empowerment in *The Women of Brewster Place* and black women emancipation in *Linden Hills*. She states in her essay, "because of the consistency of forced displacement in our collective experience, we know how critical where we are to the character of our social creations, of how place helps to tell us a great deal about who we are and who we can become" (106). White supreme power signifies racial distinction in Naylor's novels is interred – related with ghettoisation or dingy living places of blacks. Barbara Christian signifies the situation of home in context to work. The location of work and home affected the identity of and status of characters, which in turn affected all the character's life. That's why Brewster ghetto consisted of black working women. "Community held together primarily by women, while *Linden Hills* is characterized as a group of houses that never becomes community, a showplace" (106).

In *The Women of Brewster Place* home and work both were the location of oppression and repression of Brewster women. Maxine Lavon Montgomery, Patricia Hills Collins and Paul Marshall present home is important for security. Home is a place of resistance against negativity and the negative image portrayal of blacks by whites. Maxine Lavon Montgomery in his review, "Good Housekeeping: Domestic Ritual in Gloria Naylor's Fiction". Further reveals about home "Whereas the home place in *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) is a potential revolutionary site revealing black feminist survivalist tendencies.

Margaret Whitt's *Understanding Gloria Naylor* (1999) contains Naylor's most recent novel *The Men of Brewster Place* (1998). The lives of Men of Brewster Place have impacts relating the lives of Women of Brewster Place. Many critics have criticized her work. It provides an introduction to Naylor's novels. Naylor attempts to investigate and challenge patriarchal norms and practices in this novel. The literary texts, mythical novels, fictions are supposed to construct the ideologies necessary in the promotion of social and cultural norms of gender. Naylor scrutinizes patriarchal norms and standards of revealing her conceptual knowledge in these artificial novels and fiction. These myths interrogate, "myths and rituals" reinforce "the suppression and control of women in male dominant orders (Hogland and Frye 7). Naylor also reveals in her fiction "women have been victims of gendered ideologies" (Hussein). She has provided the detailed account of construction of femininity and construction of masculinity. She has revealed in her present novels that gender not only confines women to sexuality but also man through stereotypes of gender enslaves her. Patriarchal society is exploitative for women, but it also confines men to be authoritative with no emotional output. Parson suggests, men are also exploited in patriarchy that, "Men too have become subjects to patriarchy, being trained to carry out violence and aggression against women which it requires for its sustenance, a role which also damages their emotional and psychic lives". (51) Gloria Naylor questions the familiarization of very essential feminine and masculine traits. For instance, why "good women are equated with Mother Nature; bad women are associated with all things synthetic" (Hamdan 78).

For Naylor gender in itself has been defined through 'heterogeneity' in which femininity and masculinity are not single defined categories. They are rather the sum total of appearances (Scholl hammer 6). According to Perchuk, "These appearances vary by class, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, age and physical ability (15) resulting in different masculinities and femininities, "All fragile unfinished and incomplete" (Scholl hammer 6). On the '*Will to Change: Black Man' and Masculinity* (2004)' Bell Hooks writes about the black man. She said they have been de – masculinized so they have lost their patriarchal power.

According to Bell Hooks in *Ain't I a Woman* (1981), the 'powerlessness of the black male' made him feeling emasculated and crippled? As long as white males were in the executive power, black men felt crippled. They could gain recognition in their families by becoming a dominant figure. When women do not affirm black males' dominant figure by adopting a

subordinate role, they express hostility and contempt towards non submissive women. On one hand whites embraced the matriarchy myth and used to urge that black women were more submissive. On the other hand, they assumed black manhood was survived because the black man used brutal force and physical exploitation to subjugate black women.

In Celeste Fraser's essays, she writes about *The Women of Brewster Place* in Mohniyan report and motherhood experiences. Fraser again points out the myth of black matriarchy against the power and position of the state, it confirms, "in breaking the power of black matriarchy" in the article "Stealing Black voices: The Myth of Black Matriarchy and The Women of Brewster Place". The woman finds the reason beyond black poverty. Referring to Moynihan Report, which locates the cause of poverty within the black family where the head of a family is a woman. In which Murray blames black females for "moral fecundity ----- which drains federal funds" (94). Naylor indicates matriarchy within the black females is not responsible for the cause of poverty rather them, "illicit partnership between government and commerce that cause ghettos". Black females dismantle the wall in *The Women of Brewster Place*, "tears down the definition of African – American women attempted by makers of the myth of the black matriarchy". (103)

Margot Anne Kelley in "Framing the Possibilities: Collective Agency and the Novels of Gloria Naylor" depicts the Naylor's characters of her novel *Bailey's Cafe*. Margot Anne Kelley represents women characters differently. *Bailey's Cafe* women are in representation within distinct frames, not represented in a similar manner before. These women reside in Eve's boarding house. Eve's boarding house is in representation as home for these women. In "Spiritual and Moral Sanctuary in Gloria Naylor's Fiction," Virginia C. Fowler exemplifies Naylor's novel *Bailey's Cafe* provides shelter to prostitutes from this racist and sexiest society. This novel represents survival of black unsecured women. They are hidden from this world of tyranny. This sanctuary unites African – American women with woman bonding. This woman bonding "generates hope and provides healing, enabling her characters in the words of Mama Day's father, to "just live on" (Mama Day 226)" (142). Larry R. Andrews in her writings of "Black Sisterhood in Naylor's Novels" depicts the women bonding and the sisterhood relation between African – American women. Larry R. Andrews in her essay "Black Sisterhood in Naylor's Fiction" affirms the life connections between Ophelia, as the power inherited by her from Miranda by the knowledge of her foremothers.

In *Mama Day* the power comes from folk tradition, from “for mothering”, and from nature, as Naylor moves into the realm of matriarchal mythmaking. At its best this bond among possibility of its achievement grows in the course of the three novels. But although it is dramatized in the novels as clearly desirable, the success of female friendship, of the black womanhood, remains limited and potential. (Larry R. Andrews 285 – 301)

There are very useful essays on Naylor’s work. For example, *Philip’s Page’s Reclaiming African – American Fiction* (1999) which exemplifies the crushes of Naylor’s characters in the beginning and further empowers them. The chapter is dedicated to her characters and readers into, “life at the edge of the abyss but willing and able to accept its inevitable tragedy and still endure” (137). The critic Mary Helen Washington has said, “The quest for black men to achieve manhood always inspire the highest respect, but the equivalent struggle of the black women has hardly been acknowledged except by black women writers” (quoted in Giddings 354). For example, writers like Toni Morrison, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker and Gloria Naylor have written about black women and the problems they face in African – American Society. The plights of such women have been acknowledged in *The Women of Brewster Place*. *The Linden Hills* and *Bailey’s Cafe*, depicts black women’s struggle on the feminist, gender discrimination, racist and economic grounds. Naylor’s work reflects Jean – Louis Chevalier views; “the identity crisis of Black American women is that sorority still inheriting or experiencing rape, demanding liberty and happiness”. (63)

Naylor advocates black women bonding to stand together to overcome women oppression, gender discrimination, racism, sexism, economic problems and patriarchy prevalent in American society. *The Black Family: Essays and Studies* (1978) consists writings of the relationship between black women and black men. Critics’ arguments are Naylor’s works depict black feminism, well – known feminist work is: Michele Wallace, his book *Black Macho and the Myth of the Superwomen* (1999). Patricia Hills Collins’ *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and Politics of Empowerment* put through interesting insights have been about the plight of African – American women. Joseph Campbell in *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* analyses Naylor’s characters and their quests for salvation and self – realization. These characters through knowledge attain spiritual empowerment. Whitt and Fowler methods also

transfigure in these characters through their achievements direct them to their spiritual development.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Chapter 1.2

### GLORIA NAYLOR: LIFE AND WORKS

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Gloria Naylor was born on Jan 25, 1950, in New York City. She is the daughter of Roosevelt Naylor, a transit worker and Mc Alpin Naylor, a telephone operator. Naylor grew up and attended schools in New York. Naylor became a fervent reader and started to write poems and short stories as a child. Naylor studied creative writing. She read the most influential book *The Bluest Eye* (1970) written by the black feminist Toni Morrison. She inspired her to write fiction that focus on the realities of black women. In 1981 Naylor received her B.A. in English from Brooklyn College, and then she moved on to Yale University to complete her M.A. degree. While at Yale she published *The Woman of Brewster Place* (1982), which in 1983 won the American Book Award for the Best Novel. Gloria Naylor's first four novels – *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), *Linden Hills* (1985), *Mama Day* (1988), and *Bailey's Café*(1992) – constitute her quartet of novels. These are the books which stand as the foundation of her career. *The Men of Brewster Place* (1998) was her fifth novel where she focuses the men who reside in Brewster place, or whether they have an impact on the lives of these women, who took the centre stage in the novel *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982).

Gloria Naylor success most probably comes from her examination of the African-American culture. She wants to "... help us celebrate voraciously that which is ours," she tells this line to Bellinelli in the interview series, *In Black and White* (1992). She stresses that African Americans must maintain their identity in a world dominated by whites. She says this with pride as she is Afro- American writer. She wants Afro-American writers to write for the black woman, her nation and African culture.

Naylor's novels depict each woman has a personal identity. Naylor's statement to Virginia C. Fowler is "Feminism to me is economic, social and political equality of all human beings". Fowler's work contains views on feminism; her study includes an interview with Naylor focuses on spiritual and black feminist perspectives. Naylor simply states the definition of

feminism, “the simple belief all human beings, regardless of gender are equal”. In her works *The Woman of Brewster Place* (1982), *Linden Hills* (1985), *Mama Day* (1988), and *Bailey’s Café* (1992) fits the discourse of Fowler. Each of her novels depicts the interconnection between race, class and gender. She explores Shakespeare to provide her approach regarding racism. Virginia Fowler *In Search of Sanctuary* (1996) explores the influence of Naylor’s religious background. Her work largely comprises of bible.

Structurally the thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter One is divided into two sections. The first section, entitled “Development of Feminist Demands, Activism and Movements”, traces the development of the feminist consciousness, demands, ideology, and criticism; focusing mainly on the conceptual growth of Black Feminist criticism. Feminist literary criticism alerts the reader to the need of challenging patriarchal assumptions about women, which were considered to be universal, and presented as such historically by male authors. Major feminists’ writers who explained economic and social equality of opportunities to both sexes are Betty Friedan, Kate Millet and Germaine Greer. However these critics had not talked about the intersections of race and feminist demands. Black Feminist movement grew out of, and more importantly, in response to, the Black Liberation Movement (itself an out-growth of the Civil Rights Movement), and the Women's Movement taking place in the United States and the West. *All the Women are White, All the Blacks are Men, But some of us are Brave*, (1982), edited by Gloria T. Hull, Patricia Bell Scott, and Barbara Smith appositely illustrates the sentiments behind the need for the development of the Black Feminist Movement. Black women were being marginalized and openly discriminated against in both movements, and they were finding it difficult or impossible to build solidarity with those who were also acting as their oppressors. All too often, "black" was equated with black men and "woman" was equated with white women; and the end result of this was that black women were an invisible group whose existence and needs were to be ignored. Frustrations over this led to the formation of the National Black Feminist Organization in New York in 1973. Thus, Black Feminism is a coping mechanism or a tool to be utilized by Black women who are racially oppressed within the Women's Movement, and sexually oppressed within the Black Liberation Movement, as well as within the patriarchal system of the Black community, which simply mimics the sexist ideas of the larger society. Black feminist theory is defined, described and manifested in the critical and

expository writings of Anna Julia Cooper, Zora Neale Hurston, Alice Walker, Barbara Christian, Bell Hooks, Angela Y. Davis, Patricia Hills Collins and Sheila Radford Hill. Black feminism emerged as a literary movement around 1970's. It argues that sexism, class oppression, gender identity and racism are inextricably bound together. Black feminist criticism encourages us to look at the intersections of race, gender and social class Afro-centric and feminist consciousness (Patricia Hills Collins, ix).

Chapter two, entitled "Racial Oppression: Women Characters in *The Women of Brewster Place*", discusses the first novel by Gloria Naylor. Naylor had started to write about Black communities while she was an undergraduate student. She wrote her first story "A Life on Beekman Place" after reading Morrison's novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970), and submitted it to *Essence* magazine. Encouraged by the magazine, Naylor received a publishing contract for her first novel *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982). She won the American Book Award for Best First Novel, as well as the Distinguished Writer Award from the Mid-Atlantic Writers Association for this novel and it definitely put her in the category of Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, and Zora Neal Hurston. Naylor's first novel, which is analyzed in the second chapter, structurally parallels Alice Munro's *The Lives of Girls and Women* (1971) and can also be read as independent story cycle. However the stories are united by their setting and cross references. Collectively taken as a novel, it narrates the shared strengths of seven black women who have to live and share a common fate in the decrepit rented houses of a walled-off ghetto, which is a dumping ground, not only for the racial and economic out-castes, but also for the used women. Etta Mae Johnson, Kiswana Browne, Lorraine, Ciel and other women have faced disappointing relationships, gang-rapes, and personal disasters which often push them to a path of self-destruction. Still, Mattie Michael, the matriarch of the group, is a source of comfort and strength for them. At the end of the novel, the women demolish the wall that separates them from the rest of the city embodying the self actualization tradition of the Harlem Renaissance and determining the course of their own lives.

Chapter three, entitled, "Silence of Women in Gloria Naylor's *Linden Hills*" analyzes Naylor's second novel *Linden Hills*. It continues with the themes of her first novel in many ways. It portrays how women suffer insensitivity and violence at the hands of men from their own



families and communities and weaves their despair and betrayal in a succinct tale of love and loss. *Linden Hills* also takes up the issue of the suppression of women within and outside familial structures and puts it within discussions related with the construction of genders and the economic consequences of such constructions. The story line of the novel maps several generations and puts across the socio-economic changes in the lives of Black American women over a passage of time, enabling us to interpret the novel as a contemporary writing, while simultaneously making it a new-historic commentary on the shifts taking place in the lives of black women in a capitalist democracy. *Linden Hills* becomes a particularly poignant novel as it focuses on the victimization of Black women by Black men. The novel records the unnatural silences of the needed wives which result from circumstances of being born in the wrong sex, race and class. The Needed women in *Linden Hills* are unable to maneuver away from the silence which has imprisoned them. Their struggle to retain their lives and sanity allows them no scope to negotiate their unvoiced incarceration. Willa's "self – sacrifice" towards the end of the novel not only envisions cleansing of the (original) sin wrought on the world (of Linden Hills) by a male, Luther Nedeed, but also, "in a larger racial/ political sense, it (re) establishes strong black womanhood at the centre of black liberation struggle and discourse" (Okonkwo 131).

The fourth chapter entitled "Matriarchal Lineage in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*" scrutinizes Naylor's third novel *Mama Day* (1988) is also a confluence of past, present and future; narrating a story in flashback, a story which takes up the matriarchal lineage in a remote island Willow Springs as a significant fact of the African-American experience. In addition to the spiritual dimensions of the work associated with household chores, the racist aspects of work, as well as what work means for black women have been taken up in the novel. The feminist notion that "work liberates women" is not necessarily true in the context of the Black women, as to be able to work and to have to work are two very different matters (Hooks 96, 97).. The work done by colored women does not necessarily help them to overcome racist and sexist biases. Whereas the condition of black women in the novel suggests that compulsory work should not be equated with liberation, the character sketch of George brings forth the fact that the racist reservations still continue. Black women are acquired for blue collared jobs, whereas White women are required for white collared jobs. Cocoa is hurt by the subtle racist nuisances while job-hunting in New York. She feels that employment would be easier in New York City, if the employers have specified "Blacks" and "Whites" in their advertisement. Black women found

that even after their migration, their substantial importance had remained the same. If in olden times they were housekeepers, cooks and cotton pickers, in the new era they emerged as domestic maids, garment factory workers and prostitutes – ‘they became the hard bottom of the labor market’ (Christian 8). Cocoa’s struggles to establish her financially and socially in New York can be taken as representative of her race. Cocoa’s final come back to Willow Spring reasserts the continuity of the matrilineal society of the island. Miranda ruthlessly decides to sacrifice George to keep this legacy intact.

The fifth chapter studies the next two novels of Gloria Naylor, viz., *Bailey’s Cafe* and *The Men of Brewster Place*. Published in 1992 and structured in the manner of a jazz performance, *Bailey’s Cafe* narrates a magical place where lost souls can find “some space, some place, to take a breather for a while” by suspending time. Not situated in any particular location, the cafe features a back door that opens onto a void where patrons re-create scenes to help them sustain life, or, alternatively, to end it. *The motif of the uncanny silence of women is repeated in this novel also. Characters of Sadie, Esther and Eve portray how difficult it is for women to speak: repetitive whisper or a lament of a line "We won't speak about it, Esther" in the novel represents the poignancy of this silence.* Naylor chooses to locate the novel within a specifically cultured and gendered context where voice and all of its associations are directed toward subverting the myriad forms of authority patriarchy legitimizes and constructing a new world order among partially dispossessed women. The second part of this chapter analyzes *The Men of Brewster Place* (1998). A counterpart of her first novel *The Women of Brewster Place*, it takes up the male characters from the previous novel and weaves a world- with some poetic license- in which they struggle to create a life of their own, despite their inherent limitations, follies and disillusionments. In the previous novel they have been shown as bullies and ingrates, who now long for affirmation and atonement. Relegated to the margins, Basil, Brother Jerome, Eugene, Moreland Woods, C. C. Baker, Abshu and Cliff Jackson try to fight back to make some sense of the bits and pieces of their lives. Though the novel is about men, the voices of the women are only just below the surface. It would be apt to refer to the 1998 review of The New York Times which had mentioned that the men of Brewster Place need women to make sense of their lives (net). The novel rewrites the canonical patriarchal narratives and foregrounds the hypanesthetic limitations of such identity, deconstructing the conventional norms with the integration of multiplicity of narratives.

Finally, the sixth chapter 'Conclusion' summarizes the whole discourse carried on the repressive practices which the Black women have to face and their resistance to them within the spheres of their family and work roles, as depicted in the novels of Gloria Naylor, along with their mechanisms of bonding against such practices. Naylor has candidly and imaginatively depicted different facets of the lives of Black women in her novels. The denouement of her novels questions the existing arrangements based on racial and gendered identities. Naylor has not only thoroughly analyzed the family and work roles of Black women in her novels, but also assessed their impact in domestic, interpersonal and economic domains and unequivocally suggested that women have to circumvent, crush and conquer conventionally restraining practices and factors in order to retain agentic subjectivity and selfhood.

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## Chapter 2

### **RACIAL OPPRESSION: WOMEN CHARACTERS IN *THE WOMEN OF BREWSTER PLACE***

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Gloria Naylor's first novel *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) depicts a series of interconnected stories of seven African-American women in a dead end Boulevard of a ghetto. These women experience insensitivity and aggression. These subjugated and demoralized black women survive harsh realities in their lives and injustice from the patriarchal world outside. The major themes in the novel are fiscal obstructions and monetary obstacles, women subjugation and gender stereotypes. The themes of resistance and defeat, truth and disloyalty, anticipation and misery are unified in *The Women of Brewster Place*. Independent chapters of the novel focus on the lives, affairs and racist practices which Naylor's characters have to face. These women live in a ghetto cut off from urban areas by a wall. The wall symbolises separation of Brewster ghetto from the city which signifies white racist practices to discriminate blacks as subaltern and deprived. Ghettoisation of black women encounters them to suffer from poor economic conditions; this is the reason beyond their sufferings and depravity. They shared grief together, they love their men; they love each other and stand together in the time of utter despair. These black women co - operate with one another with a strong sense of women bonding. This bond assists them to survive and protest against the patriarchy, class differences, racism and sexism. Various other thematic motifs like homosexuality are also taken up. This chapter highlights women bonding, motherhood, racism, religion and spirituality. The black spirituality paves the way to overcome mental harassment and adopt moral values.

The book opens with a poem named *Dream Deferred* by Langston Hughes. This poem is an internal jacket to the book. Naylor quotes from Langston Hughes to underscore the themes of this novel. "What happens to a dream deferred? Does it dry up like a raisin in the sun? Or fester like a sore and then run? Does it stink like rotten meat? Or crust and sugar over like syrupy sweet? Maybe it just sags like a heavy load. Or does it explode?" (Hughes 1) Naylor, the novelist, utilizes poems all through her manuscript as a medium to assist the reader appreciate what she is attempting to express about diverse women. The opening verse informs us that this

book is about unrealized dreams of the women of Brewster area. The poem challenges the reader to respond to the questions about each woman's story.

The final emphasis of the dream refers to the women characters of Naylor's novels. *The Women of Brewster Place* is Naylor's novel begins with the end of the poem, that is: "What happens to a dream deferred?" (Hughes 1) This novel about Brewster Place tells us the stories of seven women characters. Brewster Place is a ghetto. It is in these grim narratives, that Naylor has woven the themes of women's struggle for economic sustenance, their desperate attempts to seek love and companionship. Her women characters Mattie Michael, Etta Mae Johnson, Lucielia "Ciel" Turner, Melanie "Kiswana" Browne, Cora Lee, Lorraine, and Theresa are chronicled in the novel.

Jean Chevalier and Alain Gheerbrandt in *The Penguin Dictionary of Symbols* explains that dreams are, "symbols of the individual experience, so deeply lodged in the depths of consciousness..... We view them as the most secret and uninhibited expressions of our very selves. (Chevalier and Gheerbrandt 310) Naylor's women characters dreams have been destroyed. The poem suggests that one's deferred dreams, unfulfilled desires and broken hopes bring despair in life, Virginia Fowler states in her book, *Gloria Naylor: In Search of a Sanctuary* (1996) that even after these consequences, the result is "however, the women still continue to dream" (Fowler 23). It will be appropriate to refer to the concluding sentences of Fowler's book in her way, "with the dream and then the little codicil of "Dusk" where the street is still waiting to die" (Fowler 23). According to Naylor, "It wasn't anything about to be spectacular I was trying, to celebrate, common lives and common love, and the way most women live. My philosophy is if you manage to survive, you have committed a victory" (Fowler 23). So that is all she tries to explain in *The Women of Brewster Place*.

Mattie Michael is the main character of the story. Mattie suffers physical and mental abuse by her father, her son and the father of her son. Mattie's voyage to Brewster Place begins in the rural pastoral village of Tennessee. Mattie suffers physical and mental abuse by her father, her son and father of her son. Mattie's father is an epitome of patriarchal rule. Surekha Dangwal and Savita Bhandari in, "The treatment of Multiple Marginalities in Rohinton Mistry's *The Ghost of Firozsha Bagg*," stated that, "In patriarchal societies, man is central and woman is the other, repressed, ignored and pushed to the margins". (qtd. In Dangwal and Bhandari 21).

“Fowler comments in *Gloria Naylor: In Search of a Sanctuary* that “Mattie’s life before her encounter with Butch has been lived within strict and conventional guidelines. Her future and her sexuality are in control of her father” (Fowler 28). Her father had repeatedly warned her against Butch. He does not have good name in the society. No good women in society would ever go with him, because Butch is, “a no – ‘count ditch hound and no decent woman would be seen talking to him” (*W B P* 9). On that day Mattie’s parents were out of home, so, he invites her to go with him to pick herbs and sugarcane in the sugarcane field. Butch is a sexually appealing man. He attracts her. Mattie is a, “Woman who doesnot believe in just being”, but is essentially a woman. (Purohit 30). Mattie is tempted to go with him. Butch offers Mattie sensuality with pleasure. In the woods, “On the edge of the thick, tangled dogwood, and the deep green basil and wild thyme” that formed, “a fragrant blanket on the mossy earth” (*W B P* 15). She had fallen prey to Butch in sugarcane field and conceived his baby. He had lasted long in her memory like sweet sugarcane syrup of molasses. Butch lures Mattie by, “strong lean body, muscled arms glistening with sweat and the hardness of his chest”, (*W B P* 14) which impresses her to realize, “disquieting stirrings at the base of her stomach (*W B P* 14).

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hardness of his chest”, (*W B P 14*) which impresses her to realize, “disquieting stirrings at the base of her stomach (*W B P 14*).

Mattie reminisces about Butch Fuller but she does not worry about her parents. Mattie is the only child of her parents. Their love for her had been a legend in place of county where they resided. Her father liked Fred; he wanted him to marry her. She was permitted by her father to meet Fred Watson he, “was the only man in the church that her father thought good enough for her” (*W B P 14*) When her father came to know about her pregnancy there was torturing silence in the home. He supposed it was Fred’s baby so he was about to talk to Fred to marry her. Somehow, Mattie’s father realizes it is not Fred’s baby, he asked “Whose is it?”, “And he came towards her, grabbed her by the back of the hair, and yanked her face upward to confront the blanket of rage in his eyes” (*W B P 22*). She was asked whose baby was it; she did not reveal the name of Butch fuller. Mattie’s act of sensuality represents, “her one experience of freedom, just as it constitutes the single exception to her unquestioning obedience to her father” (Fowler 28). Her violation of patriarchal power is defiance against patriarchy. In patriarchal system men control women sexuality, reproduction and childbirth. She has rebelled against the patriarchal rule of her father. Mattie feels gladness after her intercourse with Butch Fuller. But it is compulsory here to discard the traditional myth prevalent in society that women’s, “Marriage is traditionally the destiny offered to women by society. Most women are married or have been, or plan to be or suffer from not being” (Beauvoir 413). When Butch Fuller does not accept Mattie as her wife, she feels passive and sexless. Beauvoir decodes the reason of sexual frigidity of women to be “resentment” (Beauvoir 413). Furthermore, she reveals in patriarchal society because of social conditioning woman is observed as, “only as object, She is described as warm or frigid, which is to say that she will never manifest other than passive qualities” (Beauvoir 397). According to Luce Irigaray in her book *This Sex Which is Not One* (1985), she writes that “Female sexuality has been conceptualized on the basis of masculine parameters”. (Irigaray 23) Germaine Greer in her book *The Female Eunuch* (1971) explains social conditions of woman as, “She [woman] is the sexual object sought by all men, and by all woman. She is neither sex, for she has herself no sex at all. Her value is attested by the demand she excites in others”. (Greer 67) Kate Millet in her book *Sexual Politics* 2000 details the sexual dominance of men over women their sub ordinance and passive “sexual behavior” is almost the product of their learning.



As the product of a long series of learned responses – response to the patterns and attitudes, even to the subject of sexual choice, which are set up for us for our social environment”? (Millet 32)

Virginia C. Fowler explains the patriarchy in Mattie’s family, then she explicates, “Samuel Michael is the only member of the family for whom Mattie’s pregnancy represents dishonour and shame; as the patriarch of family, he and only he has the power to decide whom Mattie’s sexuality will belong” (*Gloria Naylor in Search of a Sanctuary* 28). Her father has beaten her badly with a broom and when the broom gets broken with a stick.

Mattie’s body contracted in a painful spasm each time the stick smashed down on her legs and back, and she curled into a tight knot trying to protect her stomach. He would repeat the question whose is it with a blow from the stick, and her continued silence caused blows to come faster and harder. He was sweating and breathing so hard, he couldn’t talk anymore so he just pounded the whimpering girl on the floor (*WBP* 23).

“Stealing Black Voices: The Myth of Black Matriarchy and *The Women of Brewster Place*” is an essay written by Fraser, she observes that, “as the beating of the daughter by her father suggests, male violence in *The Women of Brewster Place* occurs not in connection with the sexual appetite but with attempts to subject black women to patriarchal authority” (Fraser 98). Her mother prevents her father from beating Mattie. Mattie’s mother cautioned her father with a shotgun blast. Mattie suffered the woman oppression. She took Butch’s side, as she knew her father would go out and release her. Mr. Michael would grab his shotgun and blow Butch Fuller into pieces. All men in novel support patriarchy over women. Bell Hooks in her book *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, And Love* (2004) defines patriarchal rule as “Patriarchy is a political – social system that insists that males are inherently dominating, superior to everything and everyone deemed weak, especially females, and endowed with the right to dominate and rule over the weak through various forms of psychological terrorism and violence” (Hooks 18). Mattie understands patriarchal rule of her strict father. Therefore she accepts his beatings. Mattie had to leave the town because of her father's wrath she is forced out of patriarchal house. Her father, Samuel’s reaction to her no response is out of proportion her extensive voyage from Tennessee lastly finishes in a little dwelling of Brewster Place. After leaving home, she gives birth to a baby. The oppressive system of patriarchy governs and conditions the mentality,

ideology and sexuality of a woman's life, as analysed in the seminal text of Simone De Beauvoir *The Second Sex* 1949. Mattie's life reveals that she has chosen her partner with her choice that is against the sexual norms of patriarchy. Though Mattie remains true to only Butch Fuller, she did not fulfil the social obligation of marriage because of her father's hatred towards Butch Fuller. Neither she does marry her whole life nor did she have any other lover. During Harlem renaissance, the African society is a marginal society. On the purview of respect they do not accept unmarried daughters having children. Mattie rebelled; she had a baby out-of-wedlock. She nostalgically remembered the smell of basil and wild herbs during her brief seduction. She names her son Basil after the memories with Butch in sugarcane field. She only cares for her son; she brings up Basil as a single parent because Butch was an irresponsible person he has left his beloved earlier.

Mattie is a single mother; she works full time and at two working places to provide education and shelter to her son. Mattie has no social life because of her two jobs. As a single mother therefore she has to work twice to make up income of Basil's mother as well as her father. She would have already got the earnings of Basil's father if they both would have got married. This is Naylor's vision that an irresponsible man leaves his economic responsibility on a woman to take over monetary responsibility of herself and her kid. Thus this black woman such as Mattie Michael has to compensate for Basil's father income and her low paid job. Black women characters Naylor portrays in her novels are often derogated and are provided with low income menial jobs. Moreover at this time after Harlem Renaissance the white woman was paid less than a man. Naylor fictitious female characters are low income group, they earn 40% to 60% less than the white woman. Paula Giddings writes in her book, *When and Where I Enter: The Impact of Black Women on Race and Sex in America* (1984), "It is no wonder that black women had to work at two jobs in order to be able to offer their children somewhat of an acceptable life style, just barely above the poverty line" (Giddings 144). In fact, Dianne K. Lewis in her essay, "A Response to Inequality: Black Women Racism and Sexism", (1977) she writes that, "In 1963 White women were paid 41% less than white men, and black women 39% less than White women (Lewis 351). This is a matter of concern about inadequate black women income.

Mattie's friend is Etta Mae Johnson likely, Mattie; Etta has sexual relationship without marriage. Etta defies patriarchal rule, and she had a spirit of her own. She has defied patriarchal rule, she is also against gender discrimination. She attaches herself with the man she likes and

then she moves on to other man. She is a rebellion in America, she exhibits rebellious attitude towards the oppressive system of patriarchy. Determining near in the beginning that America is not until now prepared in support of a daring, positive, intellectual black woman - Etta Mae Johnson who was unwilling to follow rules, she “was not only unwilling to play by the rules, ... she challenges the very right of the game to exist” (*W B P 59*). She “claims the right to her own sexuality” (Fowler 50) she expresses her long journey:

Rockvale had followed her to Memphis, Detroit, Chicago and even to New York. Etta soon found out that America was not ready for her yet- not in 1937. She has taken her talents to the streets. And she learned to get over, to hook herself to any promising rising black star, and when he burnt out, she found another. (*W B P 60*)

After changing several boyfriends, Etta understands not only in Rockvale but Memphis, Detroit, Chicago and New York in all these places women face same attitude of gender oppression. Naylor universalizes Etta’s experience when she expresses in every place women are suppressed and their freedom are curtailed, Etta Mae faces the world because she “claims the right to her own sexuality” (Fowler 501). Female sexuality is controlled by patriarchy. Patriarchs do not allow either their wife or mother or daughters to exercise sexuality with female’s willingness, Patriarchs do not consider females’ willingness for sex compulsory. She finds the similar outlook of patriarchal power everywhere. This has been revealed in the poem that begins simultaneously with the story of Etta Mae Johnson:

I love my man  
I am a lie if I say I don’t  
I love my man  
I am a lie if I say I do not  
But I will quit my man  
I am a lie if I say I do not  
But I’ll quit my man  
I am a lie if I say I won’t  
(*W B P 55*)

It is elucidated in this narrative that society and culture confine men and women by their construction of masculinity and femininity. Men are considered to be aggressive, repressive and capacity to commit crimes, while women are considered as passive, submissive, meek, docile and friendly. Millet reviews her book *Sexual Politics* in a critical manner, “aggression, intelligence, force and efficacy in the male, whereas passivity, timid behaviour, “virtue and ineffectuality in the female”. (26) The novel not only fixes the different attributes to men and women to their biological sex but also differentiates the gap in sexual construct between men and women’s social conduct considering men superior and women inferior in patriarchal society.

My man wouldn’t give me no breakfast

Wouldn’t give me no dinner

Squawked about me out of doors

Had the nerves to lay

A matchbox to my clothes

I didn’t have so many

But I had a long, long way to go (*W B P* 56)

Etta remembers the words of this abovementioned song, “I love my man I am a lie if I say I don’t” (*W B P* 55). Etta Mae is the alone female characters in the novel who celebrates sexuality. She is in full control of her sexual instinct. In black patriarchal society, her behaviour is against patterns of patriarchal structure and racial discrimination. Black women are taught to respect their men, even when black men do not care for these black women. Black patriarchal structure does not allow black women to practise their sexual instincts. They are subduing to form sex relations according to social conditioning under patriarchs because either Brewster women are uneducated and dependent on men because they could not earn money or their weak financial status. So they undergo sexual exploitation. Etta joins Mattie after leaving her many love – affairs with several men. Etta wanted to look for a good man and to settle down with him for all over her life. She is insecure and she wants to be economically secure and gain social status. Fowler points out that Etta’s, “desire for spiritual comfort, as much as her material security, seems to prompt her fantasy of being a respectable wife of a church official” (*W B P* 33). Therefore economic self – sufficiency is her main motive. Etta Mae Johnson searches

America to find a rich man for herself. Kalpana Purohit in “The Echo of Humanistic sentiments in Tagore – A Glimpse”, remarks that “Patriarchal society exists us through various voices that the ultimate truth is man..... his intellect or his possessions”. (Purohit, “Echo of Humanistic” 03) Similar character portrayal of Reverend Moreland T. Woods is portrayed by Naylor in *The Women of Brewster place*. Mattie took her to the church. There Etta met with Reverend Moreland T. Woods. Maxine Lavon Montgomery writes in her book *The Apocalypse in African – American Fiction* 1996 He is “a streetwise preacher, a charlatan who is concerned only about his maternal gain and carnal lusts”. (Montgomery 95) She wanted to be the wife of a famous preacher like him. For Sunday congregation in church, Etta wears a transparent dress which is very little dress and shows off much bosom. She already knew intentions of Reverend Woods, James Robert Saunders writes in his essay “From the Hypocrisy of the Reverend Woods to Mama Day’s Faith of the Spirit” (1995), published in *From The Wayward Preacher in the Literature of African American Women* about “What Helga Crane inadvertently achieves when she dons her red dress and wanders into the storefront church in Harlem” (Saunders 105 – 124), so she appears pleasantly in front of Reverend Woods. She attracts Moreland than after she agrees to go for date with Reverend Woods after his sermon. He speaks to Etta, “I’ll meet you outside” (*W B P* 69). Beforehand, “She had finagled a Cadillac out of a married man”. (Saunders 105 – 124). Woods Moreland is in a powerful and respected designation. No one could inform his wrong deeds because he has been son – in – law of sheriff. Father of Reverend Wood’s wife could not think of Woods as mischievous sheriff so unfaithful towards his daughter. Hence Reverend Woods Moreland could not leave his wife and Etta is unaware of it. “Obviously, she is adept at some of the vicious games that people are capable of playing with one another. So why is it that she has no chance of playing the game she plays with Moreland?”(Saunders 105 – 124). Moreland leaves back Etta to Brewster ghetto.

Their short affair is over. She walked down the street with a broken spirit. She realizes that in society, there exists gender distinction between men and women. The boundary that limits women because of gender distinction has not to be crossed. Bell hooks in her book *The Will to Change: Men, Masculinity, and Love* (2004) discusses the gender distinction as “that men come to relationships looking for sex and not love and that women come to relationships looking for love and not sex. Most men think that sex will provide them with a sense of being alive, connected, that sex will offer closeness, intimacy and pleasure”. (Hooks 75) “Etta laughed softly

to herself as she climbed the steps toward the light and the love and the comfort that awaited her” (*W B P* 74). Mattie was waiting for Etta in her home. She was playing “loose records”. She would tell Mattie that there was a petite upset stomach because of fry up onions with the purpose of remains her off from slumbering. Mattie would take care of her. Renee Khay writes in “The Ties that Bind: Female Relationships in the Works of Gloria Naylor” is a work contribution in Yahoo.com yet not published, this work is about Naylor’s female characters relationship, “Etta’s broken spirit could be mended by Mattie with her true bond of spiritual and emotional healing which exhibits the powerful and preserving quality of female friendship” (Khay NP). This relation between them is glanced as woman bonding and friendship. These both women arrived in Brewster buildings because of gender and racial discrimination. Etta is with Mattie after her failed love – affair. She is betrayed by a married man. While Etta attempts to gain happiness from Reverend Woods, she is hopeless in Brewster Place indeed she roamed at many places.

Etta also suffers from the racism practised on coloured women. The women of colour have been explored, in the below mentioned lines:

Nutmeg arms leaned over windowsills, gnarled ebony legs carried groceries up double flights of steps, and saffron hands strung out wet laundry on back- yard lines... They stood together – hands on hips, straight – backed, round – bellied, high – behind women who threw their heads back when they laughed and exposed strong teeth and dark gums. They cursed, badgered, worshipped and shared their men. (*W B P* 4, 5)

These multi- ethnicity women belonged to African origin. Their destinies are as disparate as the colour of their skin – nutmeg, ebony, saffron and black. Their body structures are straight-backed, round – bellied, high – behind women. They share and worship their men. These are the characteristics of the black women. The black people faced the problem of racism whose residence is Brewster Street. These women resisted against racism. Some of them are marginalized, in their struggle to protest against racism. Cora Lee is one of them. Cora, who as a small child desired no other toys than a new baby doll every year, she becomes a woman with large demanding family. She persists to fancy the fragrance and feel of her new infants than to get into nerves the testing of her developing children. She has a dozen of children without male supporting hands. She has no husband and she is unable to cope with her children. Cora’s dream

projects a static world in which the mother – infant relationship must never be ruptured. In her childhood, "...I talk of dreams which are the children of an idle brain....."(Shakespeare 4). Cora Lee feels affection for new infant toys. Her dolls were hence faultless and little; she breathed in its' fresh odour. Her blood relations express amusement on her happiness every Christmas while she opens her fresh kid toys. Cora Lee is simple to gratify; a fresh baby doll is the entire she wishes for Christmas all times. Her parents invested in expensive porcelain dolls.

Cora's parents cared for her very well. Then after it comes her turn as a wife and as a mother. A question was raised to Cora Lee in the novel was Shakespeare the Black? Could you think of black Shakespeare? Let us proceed with the novel to discuss this issue. Cora becomes Kiswana's friend. Kiswana is going to change Cora's life and open her eyes and starts inviting her to a black production of Shakespeare's play. Cora goes to the play with all her eight children. In the last scene the cast invited the audience to come up on the stage and join them on wedding dance. Her children wanted to join the dance with pleasure, but Cora holds them back. She do not want to be seen their clothes under the bright lights. These lines are from the last scene of the play:

If we shadows have offended,  
Think but this, and all is mended:  
That you have but slumbered here,  
While these visions did appear.  
And this weak and idle theme,  
no more yielding but a dream.....  
(*The Women of Brewster Place* 126)

Subsequent to looking at the play, she could only dream wonderfully for her children's future. After watching the play Cora dreams of good jobs for her older children "in insurance companies and the post offices", homes in Linden Hills- a simple catalogue of a middle class family. When her son asks her whether Shakespeare is black, she replies, "Not yet," remembering guilty how she has beaten him for writing rhymes on the bathroom walls. She came to know that no Shakespeare can be nurtured in this environment which she provides for her children. The men which come in her life are like mere 'shadows or reflections of men'. These

men – who come in the night and showed her the thing that felt good in the dark, and often left before the children awakened” ... (*W B P* 113). The realism in these lines are, if everything is fine and these shadows have offended her life, then in her past life she has been careless and she has no vision for her future life.

Cora Lee finds out that “What’s wrong with the children”? While these shadows do their deed and go away. She is alone with her children. They are not able to give father’s affection to her children. She is solely responsible for their needs and education. The schools in which children of these black women study are solely confined to ghettoized society. These schools are starved of resources and are likely to produce poor results. As Cora’s children are weak in studies. The educational under privilege is inefficient teachers and lack of resources. To improve this area is to place efficient teachers and other non-human resources. John Rex in his book *The Ghetto and the Underclass: Essays on Race and Social Policy* (1988) the condition of African – American children. ‘There had been acrimonious debates about “whether the alleged failure of West-Indian descended children is the ‘fault’ of their family and community or the ‘fault’ of racist teachers in the school” ’ (Department of Education and Science 1981) (Rex 12).

Further else Mattie is the nurturer of their community. Kiswana is the social reformer of the community of Brewster Place, to fight against racism. She wishes to serve her African – American community and assert her African identity. She is from Linden Hills. Further on, Kiswana moves to Brewster place with her boyfriend to organize special activities for the neighbourhood and to protest their rent. She resides in the sixth floor apartment. One of the most powerful scenes is between Kiswana and her mother. When her mother comes to meet her, she knocked the door with the name “Melanie”. They begin a conversation that turns into an argument about Kiswana's name change. Mrs. Browne tells why she named her daughter Melanie (after her grandmother), and tells the story of her grandmother's strength when facing a group of angry white men. Other women from the Brewster building reveal bruises inflicted either by men in their lives, or by world in general.

Barbara Christian writes in her essay “Naylor’s Geography: Community, Class and Patriarchy in *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills*” (1993) that Kiswana “feels repressed, both communally and sexually in her natal home, Linden Hills she sees her sojourn in



Brewster Place as binding with her people, black people”. (Christian 112) She criticizes her parents for selling out to “white brain washing”. Her mother admonishes her and asks her to improve economic conditions of blacks; she does not have to live in slums. *In Gloria Naylor: A Critical Companion* (2000) Jr, Charles E. Wilson writes that Mrs. Browne explains Kiwana:

In a conversation about the definition of blackness, Mrs. Browne alerts Kiwana to the fact that blackness has no specific criteria, that Kiwana is no blacker for living in Brewster Place and Browne’s are no less black for living in Linden Hills. Mrs. Browne, quite proud of her heritage, insists that “black isn’t beautiful and it isn’t ugly – black is! It’s not kinky hair and it’s not straight hair – it just is” (86) (Wilson 54).

Mrs. Browne does not consider blackness as a criterion for ghettoized residence. Mrs. Browne is offended by Kiwana’s insistence to reside in Brewster area. R.K. Dhawan in “Manju Kapur’s *Difficult Daughters* : An Absorbing Tale of Fact and Friction”, in *50 years of Indian writing* suggests that, conflict between mother and daughter is inevitable and I suppose I was a difficult daughter”. (Quoted in Dhawan 107). While comparing the situation between Kiwana Browne and her mother, Mrs. Browne in *The Women of Brewster Place*, is similar with “Manju Kapur’s *Difficult Daughters* : An Absorbing Tale of Fact and Friction”, her mother remarks, “The conflict carrier on through generation because mothers want their daughters to be safe. We want them to make the right choices – ‘right’ in the sense they are socially acceptable. My mother wanted me to be happily married; I want my daughters to have good jobs”. (qtd. in Dhawan). Kiwana’s mother is concerned about her daughter. Barbara Christian in her essay “Naylor’s Geography: Community, Class and Patriarchy in *The Women of Brewster Place and Linden Hills*” depicts “But finally, it is Mrs. Browne’s willingness to visit Kiwana in Brewster Place. The fact she is concerned her daughter’s welfare despite their disagreements that it is an indication of the strength of their bond” (Christian 113). Larry Andrews finds conflict between Kiwana and her mother healing because, “Kiwana Browne is “healed” in her conflict with her mother by coming to identify herself with her mother as a woman” (288). Christian further adds, “Kiwana’s meeting with her mother is an amplification of a major chord sounded throughout this novel, for Brewster Place women mother one another”. (113) The Brewster Area is separated

from the city by a wall. The separation wall considers the Brewster situation as a ghetto. The spread of rioting by C.C. Baker along black groups areas have caused many problems. These ghettoized minorities in North America's cities have been largely come across crisis and other grievances because of black men gang violence. They face such problems because they have been isolated from the society. The wall separating Brewster ghetto from the main avenues of the city serves several important purposes. Following its initial creation, wall comes to symbolize the isolation from the rest of the city, with which Brewster location is treated by men responsible for its creation. Because of the wall, Brewster Street is economically and culturally isolated from the rest of the city. For the residents of Brewster ghetto, the wall of Brewster Place will be the end of their residing place. Their lives will go no further, regardless of how much they may hope or dream. Afro- Americans are either failed by opportunities or by a series of misfortunes in their lives.

Every inhabitant desist Brewster Ghetto because their dreams are crushed. The dream of the last chapter ends with the death of Lorraine and destruction of Brewster Place. After the rape of Lorraine every women feels angry. They damage the wall but all most readers feel that the real destruction of Brewster Place never takes place. The last chapter begins with a description of the heavy rain that follows the death of Ben. They are confined in their small places; the rain prevents the inhabitants of ghettoized Brewster Place from meeting and talking about the tragedy. Instead they are faced with clogged gutters, debris, trapped odours in their apartments and listless children. Men become aggressive and drink too much. In this way in Brewster ghetto racial discrimination, poverty, insecurity and male inadequacy prevail.

The portrayal of Ciel as a character describes her dearth and insecurity. Ciel, the grandchild of Eva Turner, also ends up her journey on Brewster Street. Her chapter begins with the return of her boyfriend, Eugene who has left her eleven months before with a one month old baby; the name of their baby is Serena. Ciel takes care of baby: Serena. Ciel missed Eugene. Everything was meshed for her with unexplainable hate for his leaving home. Naylor depicts Ciel's condition as " It was all there: the frustration of being left alone, sick, with a month old baby; her humiliation reflected in the caseworker's blue eyes for the unanswerable you can find me to have it, but can't find to take care of it" (*W B P 81*). When Eugene comes back home, she

has unexplainable love for his coming home. She is relieved to have him back, and she is still in love with him, so she tries to ignore his irresponsible behaviour and mean temper. Ciel's boyfriend is Eugene, he is unemployed; he is not able to support his family. He is denied access to respectable jobs because of their ethnicity and skin colour. The weak economical condition of Eugene has frustrated him, so he is unable to take care of his family.

When Eugene comes back home, Ciel is pregnant again. Eugene is not able to take proper care of her because of poor economic conditions. He loses another job. He is angry with Ciel and blames the babies and bills:

“I lost my job today,” he shot at her, as if she had been the cause....

“.... So now, how in the hell I'm gonna make it with no money, huh?

And another brat comin' here, huh?”.....

“..... Sick of never getting ahead. Babies and bills, that's all you good for.”....

(*W B P* 94)

He complains that he will never be able to get ahead with her and two babies to take care for, as his responsibility. She has maternal feelings for the coming child and she wanted to bring the baby in this world. Although she does not able to manage it, she gets an abortion because of existing monetary problems. She was in a great shock, when Eugene got a new job and he left home. Larry R. Andrews further added in her essay, “Black Sisterhood in Naylor's Novels” (1993), “Generally, therefore, the men abandon the women to double burdens of work and domestic life without support”. (Andrews 291)

Black women suffer monetary obstacles and they are also victims of sexism. Feminists explore feminism to explore women obstacles. Definitely *The Women of Brewster Place* is a perfect novel to explore the major concepts of feminism and feminist criticism. In all the chapters, Naylor has discussed her black women characters' sexuality. As well as she questions whether their sexuality plays what kind of role in defining them as a person or woman? The main character Mattie Michael is reluctant to assert her sexuality and thus Naylor defines her by sexual denial. Other characters in the novel are: Etta Mae is defined by her willingness to assert sexuality. According to her, sexuality and love both equates, but she is never able to find a suitable match. Miss Eva has enjoyed many relationships with men but within the confines of marriage. In regard to her, she takes sexuality positively because she has retained sexual control

all over her life – time. Sex is the cause of Ciel’s sufferings because of her sexual encounters her daughter Serena dies. Similarly, because of her weak economic conditions bring forth abortion of her baby. Cora Lee is concerned about sexual abuse because men take no responsibility or very little responsibility for bringing babies into the world.

On the other way, Kiswana Browne is free to live her life in her own ways. She is in full control of her desires. She has resisted against patriarchal power. She is rebellion against patriarchs, and she celebrates her sexuality. Racist and patriarchs are not approved of Etta’s behaviour. Etta’s freewill is reflected in the below mentioned paragraph:

There ain’t I nothing I ever do  
Or nothing I ever say  
That folk do not criticize me  
But I am going to do  
Just what I want to, anyway  
And don’t care just what people say  
If I should take a notion  
To jump into the ocean  
Ain’t nobody’s business if I do..... (W B P 57)

Jr, Charles Wilson writes in his book *Gloria Naylor: A Critical Companion* that “The other couple is Lorraine and Theresa are only defined by their sexuality, as.... they are lesbian” (Wilson 61). One night after an argument with Teresa, Lorraine decides to go and visit Ben whom she considers a paternal figure. As she passes through the alley near the wall, she is attacked by C .C. Baker and his friends, teenage boys who terrorize Brewster Place.

Lorraine found herself, on her knees, surrounded by the most dangerous species in existence – human males with an erection to validate in a world that was only six feet wide.

“I’m gonna show you somethin’ I bet you never seen before”. C.C. took the back of her head, pressed it into the crotch of his jeans, (W B P 170).

C.C. accuses her and beats her up. Thereafter he brutally rapes her and then the rape is followed by rest of his gang. They stuffed a paper bag in her and continue the rape almost till she is unconscious. When they all have completed the activity, they leave her dying in the alley. The rape was over; this has been the cause of Lorraine's death.

[C.C.] slammed his kneecap into her spine and her body arched up, causing his nails to cut into the side of her mouth to stifle her cry. He pushed her arched body down onto the cement. Two of the boys pinned her arms, two wrenched open her legs, while C. C. knelt between them and pushed up her dress and tore at the top of her pantyhose. Lorraine's body was twisting in convulsions of fear that they mistook for resistance, and C.C. brought his fist down into her stomach. Better lay "the fuck still, cunt, or I'll rip open your guts" .....

The sixth boy took a dirty paper bag lying on the ground and stuffed it into her mouth. She felt a weight drop on her spread body. Then she opened her eyes and they screamed and screamed into the face above hers – the face that was pushing this tearing pain inside of her body. The screams tried to break through her corneas out into the air, but the tough rubbery flesh sent them vibrating back into her brain, first shaking lifeless the cells that nurture her memory. Then the cells went that contained her powers of taste and smell. The last that were screamed to death were those that supplied her ability to love – or hate. (*W B P 170*)

In Naylor's representation of rape, the victim ceases to be an erotic object. Lorraine's, direction is outward; it is the rapist on whom the reader has focussed, the violator is denoted with his charge of rape. Victim is depicted with enormous pain and humiliation. Victim's silence is because of rape. Naylor's representation of Lorraine's silence is not absence of voice but to regain the voice which oppressor C. C. Baker has silenced her from violence. Celeste Fraser writes in her essay "Stealing Black Voices: The Myth of Black Matriarchy and *The Women of Brewster Place*." The rape is a way of "silencing through sexual terror" (Fraser 101). Thus, this horrendous violence is "an attempt to force "The Two" back into a patriarchal structure" (Fraser 100). "The Two" are Lorraine and Theresa lesbian couple. To facilitate portrayal of the victim's pain in words, contained by sentences to refer her condition. Naylor twirls account of violence.

The victim's ache is explained only through negation. Her pain is experienced in reader's imagination:

Lorraine was no longer conscious of the pain in her spine or stomach. She couldn't feel the skin that was rubbing off of her anus from being pressed against the rough cement. What was left of her mind was centred around the pounding motion that was ripping her insides apart. She couldn't tell when they changed places and the second weight, then the third and fourth, dropped on her – it was all one continuous hack sawing of torment that kept her eyes screaming the only word she was fated to utter again and again for the rest of her life. Please. (*WBP* 171)

Her thighs and stomach had become so slimy from her blood and their semen that the last two boys didn't want to touch her, so they turned her over, propped her head and shoulders against the wall, and took her from behind. When they had finished and stopped holding her up, her body fell over like an unstrung puppet. She didn't feel her split rectum or the patches in her skull where her hair had been torn off by grating against the bricks. Lorraine lay in that alley only screaming at the moving pain inside of her that refused to come to rest. (*WBP* 171)

In her delirium and pain she sees movement at end of the alley; she perceives that movement as a possible threat from those gang boys, she picks up a brick to protect her. In utter confusion she beats drunken and oblivious Ben to death, her only friend, before Mattie can reach there and stop Lorraine. The "objective" picture of a battered woman scraping at the air in a bloody green and black dress is shocking. Lorraine as a human being who becomes a victim of violence, we recoil from the unfamiliar picture of a creature who seems less human than animal, less subject than object. As Naylor's representation retreats for even a moment to the distanced perspective... the objectifying pressure of the reader's gaze allows that reader to see not the brutality of the act of violation but the brutalized characteristics of its victim. In this violence, the erotic object is not only transformed into erotic but the object of violence suitable to violator. After rape victim is damaged and discarded. The authority of the rapist is introduced for this very brutality he has destroyed her. C.C. Baker and his gang boys are violating the rules openly in a

nation like America. Afro-American women are subject to exploitation. Women irrespective of their race and colour are ought to come and stand together to fight this brutality. “Furthermore in an interview with Fowler, Naylor says that she writes the rape seen. So that people may observe that “what’s raping this woman, among other things, is society’s conception of manhood and their low evaluation of women...’. It was how he was taught he could be a man by society” (154).

Naylor confines all men to the role of sexual predator. At this juncture race, class, and social status as distinct entities collapse, as all women become grouped together in an antagonistic stance against all men. Though C.C. Baker and his gang are to be despised for their actions, Naylor is careful not to place their dehumanized nature only on black men, or poor men. She reminds the reader that the most “civilized” of European men must act out the same fantasies. The only difference is that they have the resources and the power to execute their desires (Wilson 62).

Ciel’s relationship with her boyfriend results into conception and birth of a baby. Ciel’s baby daughter, Serena saw a cockroach she perceived it as a new plaything. She throws her toys – blocks at it. The insect moves and it finds security in an electric wall socket. At first, she tried to put her fingers in that electric socket. Then to access her plaything, she finally picked up the fork flattened it in electric socket. She got electrocuted. Her parents’ heard a scream from Serena. Serena died. The death of Serena has worst impact on Ciel. She has aborted her second baby with suppression of her maternal feelings to have her boyfriend, Eugene back in her life.

People had mistaken it for shock when she refused to cry. They thought it some special sort of grief when she stopped eating and even drinking water unless forced to; her hair went uncombed and her body unbathed. But Ciel was not grieving for Serena. She was simply tired of hurting. And she was forced to slowly give up the life that God had refused to take away from her (*WBP 101*).

After child's death, Ciel almost dies from grief. She stops eating and refuses to take care of herself but Mattie do not let her die and finally Ciel faces her grief. Mattie protects her, “like a Black Brahman cow desperate to protect her young; she surged into the room, pushing the

neighbouring woman and others out of her way” (*W B P* 103). Naylor in this novel describes Mattie’s strong sense of women bonding:

She sat on the edge of the bed and enfolded the tissue thin body in her huge ebony arms. And she rocked. Ciel’s body was so hot it burned when she first touched her, but she held on and rocked. . . . . Ciel moaned. Mattie rocked. Propelled by the sound, Mattie rocked her out of the bed out of the room, into a blue vastness just underneath the sun and above time. She rocked her over the Aegean seas to clean they shone like crystal, so clear the fresh blood of her sacrificed babies torn from their mother arms and given to Neptune could be seen like pink froth on the water. She rocked her on and on, past Dachau, where soul –guttled Jewish mothers swept their children’s entrails of laboratory floors. They flew past the spilled brains of Senegalese infants whose mothers had dashed them on the wooden sides of slave ships. And she rocked on (*W B P* 103).

Readers find here, that death of her two babies is compared to sacrifice of them with their fresh blood to Neptune. It seems as she has dashed her babies on the wooden sides of slave ships. So she could abhor their lives from slavery, poverty and racialism. She does this all to overcome , Maxine Lavon Montgomery in her book *The Apocalypse in African - American Fiction* (1996) writes, “the psychological destructive effects of temporality, the cycle that has led to the almost overwhelming tragedy Ciel now faces” (Montgomery 91). Mattie has healing powers. She becomes Ciel’s mentor and nurturer:

She rocked her into childhood and let her see her murdered dreams. And she rocked her back, back into the womb, at the nadir of her hurt, and they found it –a slight silver splinter, embedded just below the surface of skin. And Mattie rocked and pulled – and the splinter gave way, but its roots were deep, gigantic, ragged and they tore up flesh with bits of fat and muscle tissue clinging to them. They left a huge hole, which has already starting to pus over, but Mattie was satisfied it would heal” (*W B P* 103 – 104).



Mattie's moving ritual of bathing and cleansing would lead her to salvation. According to Hindu epic salvation could be granted to only three kinds of persons, True devotee, martyr and one who serves the society. Mattie is one of them. Her nurturing and nursing her community sisters could lead her to salvation. Only her love and care takes Ciel out from great grief to comfort. "This story thus presents the pain and grief of betrayal, as inescapable but bearable when women bond together" (Fowler 44). The woman bonding among all women of Brewster Place facilitates them to survive in street. They are able to overcome gender oppression through woman bonds. They support and share their experiences against the male supremacy society of their residence. Black women form strong bonds on the basis of matriarchal society.

Women work themselves, they earn their own living, feed their children and they live in a ghetto. The motherhood theme created in the Mattie's Michael story is that she is a matriarch. Whitt calls Mattie, "the willing surrogate mother for each of Brewster's Place's woman in need" (52). Mattie's mother sustained her, even during when she conceived the baby without marriage. Miss Eva has also shown woman bonding and maternal love towards Mattie. This maternal love generated the bond of affection between them. Miss Eva had earlier warned Mattie to reprimand Basil's mistakes in childhood. She had been protective for Basil. In a paragraph, Naylor matures Basil to a young man. Mattie looks towards Basil at breakfast table.

Plump legs only reached to the top rung of his chair. And when they reached the second rung, Miss Eva would be dead. .... While Basil's legs pushed down toward the third rung. Mattie would be working two jobs to carry the mortgage on the house. Her son must have room to grow in... It would all be for him and those to come from the long, muscular thighs of him who sat opposite her at the table (*W B P* 40).

Mattie's son, Basil is in jail as he committed a crime, his acquittal was certain; this was his first major offense. He kills a man and he is arrested and jailed, he fierce Mattie with the graphical description of jail, even after his ill behaviour Mattie cares for her son Basil. She goes to a good criminal lawyer and asked for his bail. The lawyer Garwin said:

"It's a great deal of money Mrs. Michael and don't have the ready assets for something like that".

Mattie replied: “I have got my house: it’s mine and paid for. Can’t I put take up for bail”?

“Well, yes, but you do understand that bail is only posted to insure that the defendant appears for trial. If they don’t appear, the court issues a bench warrant for the truant party and you forfeit your bond. You do understand that?”

“I understand” (*W B P 49, 50*)

It took Mattie’s whole life - work earning to purchase Eva’s house. For his bail she has to sell the house at once which was her only possession and then she had to move in Brewster Place. Mattie had been the Matriarch of her community with unconditional love in the novel. Gloria Wade – Gayles portrays the black mother in her book *No Crystal Stair: Visions of Race and Sex in Black Women’s Fiction* (1984). She depicted black mothers as, “poor and pious women whose outstanding characteristics are self-sacrifice, hard work, and fierce maternal love” (Gayles, Gloria Wade 60). Finally the novel synergies the message in the story of Mattie, Etta Mae Johnson and Ciel Eva Turner that “getting a man” is not essential in life but “getting love, affection and assistance” is necessary in life. This love, affection and assistance are shared by strong bonds of the Women of Brewster Place.

The strong bonds of Mattie with other woman headed her to gain spiritual content in life. Mattie took refuge in home of Eva Turner. Mattie asked for the room to Miss Eva coldly. Mattie knew the questions which had been coming to her. When it was asked to Mattie,

“Where is your husband?”

Mattie knew this question was coming, and she was tempted to say that he had been killed in the war, but that would be a denial of her son, and she felt nothing shameful about what he was.

“I ain’t got one.” And she bent down and picked up her suitcase.

“Well” the old woman chuckled,

“I’ve had five – outlived ‘em all – So I can tell you, you ain’t missing much”.

“Since you have done already picked up your valise, you might as well come on in and get that boy out the night air. Got plenty of room here. Just me and my grandbaby”. (*WBP 32*)

Mattie could not think of more than one man in her life. Moral principles in religious books indicate that a woman must not marry more than once in her life but Mattie has only one lover in her life who didn't marry her. The mystical element is Miss Eva had lived with five men. This resembles the mysterious element of the great epic Mahabharata. Draupadi had married five husbands and she lived with all of them. Sometimes many African women do not find a single husband in their life time. Either they stay with their masters or their lovers. The men with whom they are related do not take care of them.

Furthermore, Brewster women and their lives with men are depicted in novel. Mattie Michael appears in many chapters because she is the main character of the story. She appeared in chapters those are dealt with Etta's, Ciel's, Cora Lee's, Lorraine's and Theresa's story. She is also depicted well in block party. Mattie's role is inevitable in this novel. , Valerie Smith, Lea Bachiler and A. Walton Litz (eds) opinionated in their book about *African American Writers, Profiles of their Lives and From the 1700s to the Present* (1993) that Etta is, "the life force at Brewster Place", and "puts her clearly bought wisdom at their service, becoming mentor, mother, nurse and confidante" (Smith 269).

As the novel starts in flashback, Mattie arrives in Brewster Place. She again begins friendship with her old friends: Etta and Ciel. All Brewster women are friends of Mattie have high opinion of her vigour, honesty, and ethical values. Again her capacity to endure the mistreatment, defeat, and treachery she has suffered is stated by Critic Jill Matus, in *Black American Literature Forum*, describes Mattie as the community's best voice and sharpest eye.

At this juncture is description of Mattie's story, "Sugarcane and summer and papa and Basil and Butch. And the beginning of her long, winding journey to Brewster Place.... All these men are responsible for sending Mattie to Brewster Place". (*W B P* 8) Mattie is charmed by Butch Fuller. He has strong built up as he worked in field. Mattie replied to Butch Fuller:

"I heard you the first time, Butch Fuller, but I got a name, you know".

She said without looking in his direction.....

"Well 'cuse us poor, ignorant niggers, Miz Mattie, mam, or shoulds I say Miz Michael, mam, or shoulds I say Miz Mam, mam, or shoulds I . . ."

And he threw her a look over his bowed shoulder that was a perfect imitation that they used on White people.

“Her father would kill her if he heard she been walking with Butch Fuller”

“Of course, now if a big woman like you is afraid of what her daddy might say”?  
(*W B P* 10), Butch has said to Mattie Michael.

Mattie Michael’s father has high opinion about his daughter. Samuel Michael is Mattie’s father. He believes in God. Samuel loves his daughter Mattie. Samuel Michael is very protective to his daughter., Vincet O. Odamtten in her essay “Reviewing Gloria Naylor: Toward a Neo – African Critique” published in the book *African Perspectives on African – American Writers* (1996) states that Mattie lives in protection with her caring father, as a man whose, “possessiveness was not only restrictive of his daughter’s maturation, but contributed in no small measure to her subsequent fall” (Odamtten 18). He would not tolerate disobedience. Mattie allows herself to be seduced by Butch Fuller. Samuel thinks Butch is worthless. When it is revealed to Samuel that Mattie is pregnant, “Mattie’s father had not spoken a word to either her or his wife in two days. The torturing silence in the house was worse than the storm that Mattie had prepared herself to take when her mother had told him about her pregnancy”. (*W B P* 19) He speaks to no one, “reading his bible till late night” (*W B P* 20) Mattie wanted to choke. She felt as if the entire universe had been formed into a ball and jammed into her throat. Samuel loses patience. Then he beats Mattie and throws her away out of home. Mattie gives birth to Basil. Basil is her child so her whole world revolves around Basil. As a child Basil represents to Mattie, “her one experience of freedom, just as it constitutes the single exception to her unquestioning obedience to her father” (Fowler 28).

She has purchased her home from Miss Eva. It took Mattie’s life time earnings to purchase that home from her money. Basil is send to jail. Mattie mortgages her home her only property for his bail. Basil gets bail from jail. When Basil leaves home to avoid his court trial else he might be jailed. As a result, he jumps off his bail up till then he has already left home. She avoids everything in her residence that reminds her about Basil. She avoids keeping her woollen in front of closet as, “there was an extra jacket of his in the front hall closet which would not be there” (*WBP* 53). When she faces her loss of house, Mattie sits down, “trembling, with her

head in her hands” (*WBP* 54) she is deceived by her son who is made up of her blood, “Basil’s absence takes on a weight that Mattie takes with her to Brewster Place” (Whitt 22). She is emotionally hurt by her boyfriend Butch and her son Basil but previously, she is oppressed by her father.

For example, Mattie loses her home as a result of Basil’s careless attitude. She is helped by women in her childhood by her mother, during adulthood Miss Eva helps her. After her maturity she provides help to Etta Mae; and also, aids Ciel who loses her desire to live. This is the bond which supports the continuity of life on Brewster Place. Margot Earley Whitt describes in her book *Understanding Gloria Naylor* (1999) about Mattie’s community of women, “of which Mattie is hub,” (Whitt 24). Mattie learns to withhold women bonds together through her mother Fannie Michael. When Fannie Michael comes to know about Mattie’s pregnancy she advises her there is nothing wrong to be a mother. She tried to protect her daughter; Mattie during unwanted pregnancy, her mother Fannie Michael prevented her from her father’s thrashing and beatings:

“She heard her mother rush from the kitchen.”

“That’s enough Sam”.

“Stay out of this Fannie”.

“He picked up the broom” .....

“..Oh, God, oh, God,”

Fannie chanted feverishly as she got up on her bruised knees” (*WBP* 23).

Fannie picked up a gun and she triggered the gun with the gun’s blast the edge of the fire place exploded. The reaction of blast on Samuel Michael is explained, the blast stunned him for a moment and he looked forward toward his wife with sweat and blood dripping down his face:

“So help me Jesus, Sam”.

She screamed, “Hit my child again I’ll meet your soul in hell”.

Fannie saved Mattie from her father's brutal beating. When Mattie left her house, "And she did n't want to think about the home that had been lost to her or her mother's parting tears..... (W B P 25)

Mattie meets Etta Mae after departing from her mother's home. Etta Mae Johnson becomes Mattie's friend. Etta Johnson is in love – affair with Reverend Woods. She wishes to be deacon's wife. Fowler points out that, "desire for spiritual comfort, as much as her desire for material security, seems to prompt her fantasy of being a respectable wife of a church official" (Fowler 33). Though her desire is not fulfilled but it changes Etta's perspective towards life. Mattie is there:

She quietly turned her back and started down the steps. There was no need to defend herself against Etta's accusations. They shared a hundred memories that could belie those cruel words. Let them speak for her.

Sometimes being a friend means mastering the art of timing. There is a time for silence. A time to let go and allow people to hurl themselves into their own destiny. And a time to prepare to pick up the pieces when it's all over. (W B P 70)

As Mattie is left by her own father, her partner, Butch Fuller and her son Basil, Mattie is a matriarch as well as a spiritual person in this novel. Mattie has accepted, "the loss of her house at the hands of Basil, and has accepted her fate in Brewster Place" (Wilson 40). She did not disclose it to anyone the circumstances responsible to arrive in Brewster Place. Even then she provides mental and spiritual healing to others. She is the mentor and guide to all bewildered woman in the novel.

Mattie Michael's nature is opposite to Cora Lee. Cora Lee cares for creation and to give birth to babies, in fact she does not in actuality very fond of males. Her tale begins with a depiction of her pleased adolescence. A submissive girl, Cora Lee obtained first-rate ranks in class and find irresistible engage in recreation with babe toys. Then Cora Lee turned thirteen, and she gets mature. Nevertheless, her parents are aware of with the intention of she was too older for babe toys. They presented her a Barbie. While Cora Lee notices that sexual characteristics femininity and masculinity bring into being babies, she initiates to have sex with the purpose of

obtaining pregnancy. She has numerous juvenile kids whilst Kiswana find outs her and make a decision to assist Cora Lee to fetch transformation in her existence.

Naylor writes about an autumn hour during Kiswana's mother visit. This is a story about generational differences between mother and daughter set in the early 1970's with abundant references to the civil rights movement and the growing popularity of reclaiming African roots. Kiswana to her mother "You ll never understand, will you? Those bourgeoisie schools were counterrevolutionary. My place was in the streets with the people, fighting for equality and a better community (*W B P* 83). On one level Kiswana is trying to live on Brewster building and help her people, but on a deeper level Naylor expresses the simplicity of her awareness. Kiswana is dropped out of college even though in her own defence she refers to her education in bourgeoisie school? However, she has enough college education to understand Marxist theory at a rudimentary level and consequently has chosen to identify with the wage earning classes, people whom she believes inhabits Brewster Place. She spends her college duration fighting in the movement, which focused its energy on securing voting rights, access to public accommodations, and better educational and economic opportunities for blacks through nonviolent protest. The irony of the fact that she has opportunity to be in college- one of the goals of the movement- and those she chooses to drop out of college, therefore opportunity is lost by her. Barbara Christian's essay "Community, Class and Patriarchy in *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills*" that is published in the book *Gloria Naylor: Critical Perspectives Past and Present* (1993) describes the character Kiswana Browne, "She sees her sojourn in Brewster Place as bonding with her true people, black people" (Christian 112).

All Brewster women bond together at the time of Ciel's utter despair. Mattie's greatest service is provided to Ciel. She is the granddaughter of Miss Eva Turner. Eugene is Ciel's husband, he has lost another job. She is already mother of Serena. Eugene discusses his financial burden with Ciel. There family atmosphere is tense. Eugene talks with Ciel, "I lost my job today as she had been the cause". (*WBP* 94) The problems approached in Ciel's life:

The water was turning cloudy in the rice pot, and the force of the steam from the faucet caused scummy bubbles to rise to the surface. These broke and sprayed tiny starchy particles onto the dirty surface. Each bubble that broke seemed to

increase the volume of the dogged whispers she had been ignoring for the last few months. She poured the dirty water off the rice to destroy and silence them, then watched with a malicious joy as they disappeared from the drain. (*W B P 94*)

She faced difficult circumstances again and again. Yet she ignored all their financial problems. Eugene is very angry with Ciel because he already bears the financial burden of Ciel and Serena. She is pregnant again. As well as he has to bear the financial responsibility of coming baby, so these monetary obstacles make him anxious. Finally, Eugene convinces Ciel for abortion to overcome monetary obstacles; Ciel asked Eugene:

Turning to him, she silently acquiesced.

“All right, Eugene, what you want me to do?”

He wasn’t going to let her off so easily.

“Hey, baby, look, I don’t care what you do.

I just can’t have all these hassles on me right now, ya know?” (*W B P 94*)

Ultimate destiny of Ciel is in detail. Ciel feel affection for her husband, Eugene, albeit he mistreatments her out loud and intimidates bodily damage. Her time turns around her liaison with her partner. Desperately, she endeavours to gratify him. She be familiar with Eugene does not wish for her second pregnancy. In subsequence to this she terminates her second pregnancy. She experiences repentance and starts on to realize the type of being Eugene exists in reality. Finally, he leaves home for another job.

Mattie is aware of Ciel’s problems, she also reminds of Etta’s destiny. They both are opposites in nature but provide comfort to each other during difficult times. Their friendship is for many years. Mattie knew she could not stop Etta from Reverend Woods. Etta thinks her happiness depends upon a perfect man. Etta is unrestrained in her sexuality. She does not shy away from making fun with gents. She faces sexual confrontations; therefore she is in control of her own destiny. Etta is bold in her approach. “Although in her early life chasing dreams and men, she seems oblivious to validation from men” (Wilson 49). She flirts with Reverend Woods. She is emotionally involved with Reverend Woods. Through her interactions with Reverend Woods, she is attached with him. She makes an opinion of getting married with Woods. She yearns to be respected wife of him. Mattie observes his activities are, “Why it had been nothing



but the opening gestures to a mating dance. Mattie had gone through the same motions at least once in her life, and Etta must have known a dozen variations to it that were a mystery to her” (WBP 70).

Etta belongs to Brewster building. All these Brewster women are congealed with one another. These seven women who live inside the boundary of wall survive in Brewster Street. These Brewster women form woman bonds for mutual understanding, support and love. These woman bonds help them to stand in male supremacy world.

According to Annie Gottlieb in “Women Together”, a review of *The Women of Brewster Place*, published in *The New York Times*, Aug22, 1983 "... all our lives those relationships had been the backdrop, while the sexy, and angry fireworks with men were the show... the bonds between women are the abiding ones. Most men are incalculable hunters who come and go." (Gottlieb N A) All through *The Women of Brewster Place*, the women sustain individual and all, thwarting the aggression of their fathers, boyfriends, partners, and sons.

An important character in the novel is Ben. Mattie influences Ben at times, while he is alive. For a week after Ben's demise it rains endlessly, and even if they will not acknowledge it to each and every one furthers, these women delusion of Lorraine's death that week. The sun comes out on the day of block party. Kiswana has been arranging the block party to make up funds and capture the proprietor to courtyard. The gathering appears wonderful and triumphant, and Ciel still come backs to glimpse Mattie. Yet Ciel, who doesn't be acquainted with what has occurred by partition, she reports to Mattie that she has nightmares of Ben and Lorraine. The rain starts on to drop again and Kiswana struggles to search out in community to set up, however they appear desperate to go on the party. Everyone knew this block party is important after the death of Lorraine and Ben. It is a way forward for looking at this tragedy. As it begins to rain, women specially get involved in Brewster community, the dream of collective community party gets turned into night-mares' despair. Wall has been stained red with Lorraine's blood. The wall of Brewster Place represents the distinction between the residents of Brewster Place and the White world. The residents of Brewster ghetto resist against supreme Whites, Hooks points out in his write up *Understanding Patriarchy* (2012) about “White – supremacist capitalist patriarchy”

(Hooks 2). These women formed cohesive bonds to resist against patriarchal powers. Throughout the novel “The wall has symbolized the barriers of racism and sexism that circumscribe the women’s lives” (Fowler 54). During rain Brewster people started cleaning the wall:

The first light misting of the wind hit Kiswana on her arms as Cora Lee melted in front of them.

“Sonya! Anybody seen Sonya?”

The little girl was crouching in front of the wall, scraping at the base with a smudged Popsicle stick. Cora’s swollen body flowed toward the child.

“I been looking all over for you – put that down! I ain’t got enough worries without you playing with filth in the streets”. She bent over to snatch up the child and spank her hand. (*W B P 185*)

In Mattie’s dream, like the biblical claim- a little child shall lead them- Cora Lee’s youngest, Sonya, is the child who discovers the stain of blood on the brick, which she tries to scrape up with the Popsicle.

“Blood--there’s still blood on this wall,” Cora whispered...

“Blood ain’t got no right still being here.”

As she yanked the brick out.....All of the men and children now stood huddled in the doorways. Cora ran to Mattie’s table and held out the brick.

“Oh, Miss Mattie ---look! There still blood on the wall!”

(*W B P 185*)

Under the control of Mattie’s dream, Cora Lee delivers the brick to Mattie. By this time, however, all men and children are standing still in doorways, out of the rain and out of way.

“There’s no blood on the bricks!” Kiswana grabbed Ciel by the arm. “You know there’s no blood – it’s raining. It’s just raining!”

Ciel pressed the brick into Kiswana’s hand and forced her fingers to curl around it. “Does it matter? Does it really matter?”

Kiswana looked down at the wet stone and her rain – soaked braids leaked onto the surface, spreading the dark stain. She wept and ran to throw the brick spotted with her blood out into the avenue”. (*W B P 187*)

The action centres on with women, while men stand on sidelines. Brewster’s women took control of the moment, passing the stained bricks from woman’s hand to woman’s hand until the bricks are out of Brewster Place. Kiswana, the serious one, one who is on Brewster Place by choice, resists involvement at first, but upon accepting the brick into her hands from Ciel, accepts these women as her equals; their fight is her own.

Cora Lee delivers a brick to Theresa; she joins the other women with vengeance. When she throws out for first brick, it bursts into a cloud of green smoke, that’s the colour of Lorraine’s dress. “She grabbed the bricks from Cora and threw one into the avenue, and it burst into a cloud of green smoke” (*W B P 188*). The body of bricks is shattered, but the spirit arises, like ebony phoenix, so in this way Lorraine, too, appears within her shattered body and her spirit arises, then she dies. In Mattie’s dream, all women contribute to tearing the wall, smashing through the barrier that cut them of job possibilities and economic activities. Smashing up of the wall denotes their resistance against gender oppression, female domination, racism and ghettoisation.

The novel talks about decay of Brewster Place in other words it also talks about moral decay that causes despair and destruction. The last line of Langston Hughes’ poem epigraph, “Or does [the deferred dream] explode?” is demonstrated in violently graphic depiction. The answer is a resounding “Yes”. But to explode is not to be destroyed. These women, as a community, will carry their dreams into another day. While Mattie wakes from this dream. The sun was shining.

Brewster Place had given what it could—all it could – to its “Afric” children, and there was just no more. So it had to watch, dying but not dead, as they packed up the remnants of their dreams and left –some to the arms of a world that they have to pry open to take them, most to inherit another aging street and the privilege of clinging its decay (*W B P 191*).

Brewster Place is a setting for several stories. We are introduced to Brewster Place as first character and it becomes the quiet background of novel that never changes through all the generations that come and go. It is a quiet grandmother, never evaluating, always permitting those who live within her and whatever substance those bring to her. Here there is no protection but only sterile ground where the lives of black women and women of colour continues. They may meet will grow, grow up, leave, then come back, grow old, and die all in Brewster location. Christian further adds in her essay “Community, Class and Patriarchy in *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills*” (1993) that is published in the book *Gloria Naylor: Critical Perspectives Past and Present* (1993) “nurturing, communality, concern with human feelings are central to Brewster Place’s survival” (Christian 118). In Brewster locality women have always shared their mutual experiences on patriarchy and racial discrimination. Women of Brewster locality have adopted rebellious attitude towards sexism, classism and racial discrimination. Henceforth, the chapter justifies feminist voices might be raised through affirmation of woman bonds. By spirituality, black women bonds lead to overcome patriarchy. The general consensus of critics is that Naylor possesses a talent that is seldom seen in new writers. Critics like her and appreciate her efforts to deal with oppression of gender and social stereotypes of gender themes present in her novels.

In this thesis special preference is given on economic aspects of black women which have not been done in earlier in any other works of Gloria Naylor. Black women in the novel *The Women of Brewster Place* must first recognize their professional goals for economic security like Mattie Michael works on two jobs to provide economic security to her son Basil and to owe Miss Eva’s home. Miss Eva looks after Mattie’s son so she could perform two jobs effectively. These all Brewster women must form legitimate relations with black men after marriage so this would give them their stand in the society. Thus, sexual relations after marriage would assume them to authority, responsibility, education and opportunity for respective jobs. Black women bonds support these women to bring up their children as matriarchs. Their spiritual practices strengthen their women bonds to support maternity. This has been illustrated in the novel, while Mattie provides relief to Luceilia Eva Turner after her abortion and child’s death.

Black feminists have formulated their life style and provided vision to career oriented education for black women as Kiswana Browne does in the novel as a social reformer. Black

female characters all the seven women have been socially conditioned to household works in the novel. They have hardly to do anything with respectable positions and higher education. So they were drudged working in the homes. Those women like Mattie Michael and Kiswana Browne who worked hard in job; they were in a lower position with lower wages, so they have been sufferers in their respective jobs. Although they struggled for their improvement in economic perspectives but they could not rise up because they were socially conditioned to work roles of mummies and nannies. Due to lack of education and no professional qualification in their society, they could not rise above their economic status from household maids or factory workers or slaves.

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### Chapter 3

#### SILENCE OF WOMEN IN NAYLOR'S *LINDEN HILLS*

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*The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), the first novel of Gloria Naylor, has been represented for the T V serial. First published by Ticknor and Fields in 1985, *Linden Hills* (1985) is the second novel written by Gloria Naylor. The publication of *Linden Hills* (1985) is under Penguin Groups. The themes which are important in *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) are also depicted in *Linden Hills* (1985), because of their relevance. These recurrent themes are oppression of women, stereotypes of gender, femininity, masculinity and sexuality. The related themes regarding racism and economic aspects of gender have been discussed in both the novels. The women bonding, motherhood, religion and spirituality are the common perspectives on part of *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) and the *Linden Hills* (1985). These are novels reinforce about the condition of black women in America during 1950's. The novels also indicate the marginalized issues of African – Americans. On the one side, the ghettos of blacks have been described in *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982). On the other side, there had been no ghettos in novel *Linden Hills* (1985).

Situation of the fiction is often more important to African – American women writers, as the women task is both inside and outside home and community. The geographical fictional world of Gloria Naylor is first set in the Brewster Place and then in Linden Hills. The Brewster Place and the Linden Hills are located in the same area. Both these areas are the residences of black people. The characters in these novels are interlinked as neighbourhoods are “Linden Hills”, “Miss Naylor’s second novel also uses a confined geographical setting to construct a tale about the interconnected lives of a group of black characters” (*The New York Times Book Review*). Linden Hills is resided by bourgeoisie. While the people who could live nowhere reside in the Brewster Place. Linden Hills is the pinnacle of success for the black community, while the Brewster Place is the nadir of failures. Linden Hills is associated with Brewster Place as the community owned by black women. On other hand, in Linden Hills are built the showcase homes and the elegant lawns, owned by black patriarchal families. Melanie Browne is a character from *The Women of Brewster Place*. she has left her parents home from Linden Hills

where resides a gentry of bourgeoisie. She is shifted to Brewster ghetto to earn her own living. Melanie Browne has been influenced by the revolution of the 1960's. Then, she changes her name to Kiswana Browne. Melanie Browne leaves her home in Linden Hills and goes to live in Brewster Place. Her family members have tried to provide her the college education that separates Melanie, from the other people of Brewster Place. The Brewster Place is a ghetto which is considered as “the bastard child of clandestine meetings”. In contrary, Linden Hills have been developed as ‘an ebony jewel’ of successful Blacks.

*Linden Hills* takes up the concern of the suppression of women within and outside family and puts it within arguments related with the construction of genders and the economic consequences of such constructions. The story line of the fiction brings forth several generations of Luther Nedeeds. Thereby puts across the socio-economic changes in the lives of African-American females over a passage of time, enabling us to read between the lines the fiction as an up to date writing, while concurrently, making it a new-historic commentary on the shifts taking place in the lives of black women in a capitalist democracy.

In the writings of Gloria Naylor realism subordinates the allegory. Naylor utilizes locations in an extremely evocative manner. Naylor devised the geographical setting of Linden hills to construct a tale about the interconnected lives of black characters. She portrayed her characters to emphasize their efforts to overcome poverty and anguish. Though Linden Hills is a fiction, there are continuous vacancies of home in Linden Hills, while there is no new home built and no one has left home of Linden Hills, but there are untimely deaths. It represents the controversial subject with originality, Sherley Anne Williams considers ‘The Linden Hills’ as “The better class of colored people”. It is often suggested that *Linden Hills* (1985) has been written on the theme of *Dante’s Inferno*. Naylor creates is the gentry of the black affluent rich families in novel. Her understanding of the black bourgeoisie is less perfect than her depiction of black underclass and black middle class. Linden Hills explores the lives of affluent black families; they have attained dream of African Americans material success, but at the cost of spiritual values. Therefore, African – American success has negative consequences.

Racial discrimination results in black female domination, Naylor in the novel *Linden Hills* discusses the oppression and subjugation of Afro - American woman. The situation of *Linden Hills* emerges as a symbol of the marginalization females and also of the repressive

power structures within the black society. As Dangwal affirms in her book *Between Nativity and Globalization: Negotiating the Politics of Cultural Narratives in Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine.* that “it is not only displacement and dislocation but her sensitive handling of vital issues therein that has made her a global writer”(Dangwal 44). The novel showcases how the combination of patriarchy and socio – economic forces adds newer dimension to the suppression of women within black culture. *Linden Hills*' fiction introduces all Luther Nedeed's, in the beginning of the novel the aspiration of the first Luther Nedeed has already been realized. Linden Hills is different from the other black residences because of its prosperity. It comprises of showcase homes with lush green lawns, which are the resorts of wealth. “Somehow making it into Linden Hills” meant “making it” (*LH* 15). No one knew what could be the precise qualifications of getting home in Linden Hills' area. Each one has been aware only elite gentry avail homes in Linden Hills. The black communities wanted to live there and they wished to be amid them. “Linden Hills – a place where people had worked hard, and saved hard for the privilege to rest in the soft shadows of those heart shaped trees” (*LH* 15). There is a different class division exists within this society. When individuals enter at Linden Hills their search continues for a dwelling on Tupelo Drive. The ferocious is the pinnacle of attainment and noticeable success in this locality. There have been untimely deaths of denizens at Linden Hills. No one knew the cause of the death because it has been the secret killings of people by Luther Nedeed that's why the pinnacle of success is Tupelo Drive with most elegant homes. No one could observe that the homes on Tupelo Drive return on sale rapidly; no one could perceive why there was frequently opportunity for home at Linden Hills. Individuals howsoever are not aware that the economic strength of Linden Hills stands on an absolute oppression of women. The turnover of the owners of Linden Hills, the Luther Nedeeds, has originated from the basic facets of patriarchal practices.

*Linden Hills* portrays the cruelty of men towards women. Generations of men – owners of Linden Hills – have imprisoned their women and wives in the basement; their purpose having been limited to the production of an heir to the Nedeed property. The helplessness of Black women has often been pointed at by many feminist critics. Bell Hooks has remarked in *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* that the position of black women is “unusual”. White women and Black men both could be oppressed and oppressors. In patriarchal societies, “man is central and woman is the other, repressed, ignored and pushed to the margins” (qtd. in Dangwal and Bhandari 21). However, here, while white women suffer from sexist biases but racism allows

them to discriminate against Black people; whereas Black men have to suffer racist discrimination but their gender enables them to subjugate their women. Hooks comments in this context:

As a group, black women are in an unusual position in this society, for not only we are at the bottom of occupational ladder, but our overall social status is lower than that of any other group. Occupying such a position, we bear the brunt of sexist, racist and classist oppression. At the same time, we are the group that has not been socialized to assume the role of exploiter/ oppressor in that we can exploit or oppress.” (Hooks 16)

In Bell Hooks, *Ain't I a Woman*, Black leaders' both male and female did not consider black males as the oppressors of black females. At the times have been, black males took steps as the sexiest oppressors of black females. Mentality of female domination prevails in fictions of African – American nation. Similarly, *Linden Hills* encourages women to think woman as a devalued being and they can obtain value by relating or bonding themselves with men. Even after bearing exploitation and oppression, females consider males' superior to themselves. Such examples of female suppression are stated by Bell Hooks:

*Linden Hills* piquantly underscores the truth of Bell's argument. The absolute isolation of Black women can be witnessed in the following letter of Luwana, written to herself in the margins of an old copy of the Bible, “It seems so unjust that I am barred from having friends among the white wives because of my husband's color and among the colored because of his wealth” (*LH* 120).

Naylor adds to elements of women suppression, “use of houses as primary symbols of female imprisonment,” “ladylike veils,” “locked cabinets, drawers, trunks, strong boxes and other domestic furnishings” (Landra M. Gilbert, and Gubar, Susan – 85). Willa is locked inside her house. She discovers Luwana's veil, she covered her dead son within it. Luwana, Evelyn, Priscilla and Willa suffered exploitation because of their status and position

Luwana Packerville was an Octoroon wife of Luther Nedeed I. She was a slave bought by Luther Nedeed I. He once sold his first Octoroon wife and he has six children from her for the acquirer of land in Linden Hills to the Cajun saloon Keeper. He visited Mississippi again and

brought back an octoroon wife, Luwana Packerville, who produced a son who grew up to become heir to his father's name, appearance, and trade. It was buzzed that he had purchased his wife as the girl in housekeeping does not look more than eighteen years in age. His eighteen years old purchased wife was Luwana Packerville, she was bonded legally to Luther Nedeed I. She is a slave who had a male child from his master. Her master, Luther Nedeed I was always cruel to her. He always tried to frighten her. "When the child, Luther II, was able to consume solid meal, Luther I had gone to the solicitor to draft free papers for the baby. Afterwards Luwana was possessed by his son as a slave. She was required to cook food for the celebration of her son manumission. Luther Nedeed I had celebrated the occasion. Eventually Luther I had freed her. Luwana's child had been instructed to desert her by Luther Nedeed I. As Angela Y. Davis puts it, "The housewife, according to bourgeoisie ideology is her husband's lifelong servant". (*Women, Race and Class* – 225) Luwana Packerville has written in her bible she thought that after marriage she would set herself free. Soon she confirms that there was no law in the country to free slaves. She had been imprisoned alone in the basement. Consequently, Luwana was split in personality. She wrote letter addressed to her own, in the New Testament of the bible. Luwana wrote in her Bible, "Since I was brought from a place where I had no mother or father, no sister to call my own, to whom could I send my blessings for good health, God's faith, love – and from whom could I receive them"? (*LH 20*)

"As a black woman, she could not leave home so she was forced to survive. Neither her son, nor her master responded to her. For doing the work they have kept a house keeper". (*LH 124*). To count the times, she had opened her mouth; Luwana used a hat pin and dipped it into the ink to carve a line on her stomach and chest. She rubbed the mark until bleeding stopped. Once the wound was healed, the mark was affixed permanently. About Luther's I behaviour, she noted in her Bible that white slave owners were more lenient with their slaves than Luther I with his wife. A similar destiny was meted out to her daughter – in – law, Mrs. Evelyn Creton, the wife of the next Luther Nedeed. She had been aggravated by no love granted and no attention paid to her by her husband. Evelyn turns herself to purgatives, "with her recipe books chronicling her retreat into insanity" (Montgomery, 1999, 62). She has purged herself too much with purgatives. She has "committed suicide on the occurrence of Christmas Eve by intake of roach poison mixed in the vanilla ice – cream. Evelyn was his victim and this is how she escaped from her abusive husband. Angela Y. Davis states in *Women Race & Class* that "Within U.S. Black Feminism,

race, class, gender and sexuality constitute mutually constructing systems of oppression”. (Davis 2011)

The black male sensational poet Willie Mason tried to support black women. He tried to understand Willa’s oppression:

Willa, wife of the fifth Luther, becomes the chronicler of the Nedeed wives. Imprisoned in the basement with her son, whom she has witnessed creeping painfully and slowly towards death, she stumbles on the letters written by Luwana. Her silence is so complete that it is not even noticed, she writes letter to herself to hold on insanity. (Dr, Gaur, Rashmi & Richa Shrivastava 136)

Willa’s son is near death her loud cry turns into mournful screams. Willie and Lester first hear the mournful screams of Willa Nedeed, her son dies. She begins to wish death for herself, while looking for a shroud for her son; she finds the diary of the depressed Luwana Packerville Nedeed in a basement trunk. Willa examines the recipes of her predecessor the ill-fated Evelyn Creton Nedeed. Willa reads Evelyn’s grocery purchase as well as her recipes. Virginia C. Fowler comments that Willa ought to, “bring Evelyn’s life into clear focus by learning to read her notes with intelligence and empathy” (Fowler 84). As she has lived with Luther Nedeed she understands her anguish. Willa read, “The relentless accuracy with which this woman measured her anguish” (*L H* 190). Therefore, Kubitschek suggests “Willa becomes not only an audience for Evelyn but (her) creator. From Evelyn’s details, Willa constructs an entire character” (Kubitschek 121). Patricia Hills writes in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness and Politics of Empowerment*, “African – American women’s confinement to domestic work revealed how race and gender influenced Black women’s experiences” (Collins, 1991, 245).

Judith Butler supports analysis of Simone De Beauvoir on gender construction under cultural conditioning:

According to Simone de Beauvoir, “one is not born a woman, but, rather becomes one”. Concurrently, Simone de Beauvoir states that gender is “constructed”. A gender in the formulation could be an implied gender; it somehow can take on

some other gender. “Beauvoir is clear that one becomes a woman but always under a cultural compulsion to become one. And clearly, the compulsion does not come from sex.” (Beauvoir 12)

White race woman has different cultural compulsions than black race people or coloured woman. Luther’s V, wife was pale, she had given birth to a white son. Her dilemma started after the birth of her son. “Luther V looked at the whiteness of this male child as the ruin of five generations of black Luther Nedeeds. The child was unnamed and he had been keep away from his father. The father disliked his son. Results to “.... a ghostly presence that mocked everything his fathers had built. How could Luther die and leave this with the future of Linden Hills? He looked at this whiteness and saw the destruction of five generations..... Luther tried to discover what had brought such havoc into his home”. (*L H* 18) Furthermore, Luther had always considered that traditions were sacrosanct and if continued, would guarantee similar results as they had given in the past, “He had done that – it was followed to the word. Like every Nedeed before him, his seed was released at the vernal equinox so the child would come during the Sign of the Goat when the winter’s light was weakest. It had been infallible for generations, so what was wrong now?” (*L H* 16, 17) When Luther Nedeed verified the dates with the birth of the son, he faced the humiliation of seeing a doctor. He consulted doctor that there was nothing abnormal in his reproductive system. The medical reports turned positive and healthy. Luther held the written evidence that there was no way that the child could be his own son. The wife of Luther Nedeed V has been described as Mrs. Luther Nedeed in the novel. Her name is revealed at the end as Willa. He wanted to know her, why she had been brought to Tupelo drive, Nedeeds’ home? Obviously he thought, he had allowed “a whore into his home but he would turn her into a wife” (*L H* 19). The irritation was festered in mind of Needed V. He would have divorced Willa but no one in his family was a divorcee.

Luther Nedeed has been representative of black race. He was not ready to accept his white son from his pale wife Willa. Accordingly Luther, Willa’s white son cannot be representative of black gendered world. The superiority of white gendered world is because blacks and third world societies are considered inferior. Gendered world must be discussed. Barbara Christian explains about “Alternate Versions of the Gendered Past: African Women Writers vs Illich” from *Black Feminist Criticism* (1982) that black domains were broken not by

economic pressure or industrialization but by colonialism. “Most of the black societies were broken by colonialism and gendered spheres of the colonizers.” (Christian145) Before Illich’s “gendered Seyths’ theories, many myths were created by blacks to reconstruct the past societies. Illich was interested to improve the content of black women’s lives. In the negritude movement of the 1920’s and 1930’s black intellectuals glorified all African things and despised all European things. This led Africans to articulate their cultural identity. The African cultural identity is different from the Europeans. Many black male have oppressed their own people. African writers today are correcting the truths of pre-colonial history. African writers are challenging the class and sex hierarchy which have been damaged earlier. Illich states “We should return to a world of gendered spheres for our domains were broken, not by economic sex or industrialization, but by colonialism and enslavement (Christian145).

Black feminists have raised voice against gendered oppression to enhance economic activities. While discussing Charlotte Perkins Gilman and her utopian social vision. Hamdan and Vengadsamy in their book “Herland and Charlotte Perkin Gilman’s Utopian Social Vision of Women and Society” claim that “feminism is interested in the fact that society has a powerful influence on how humans behave... if a society is androcentric, than the men and women will have androcentric behaviour, tendencies and beliefs” (5). Gloria Naylor’s novel makes it clear that she has created fictional *Linden Hills* to provide the feminist voice in black community where every feminine dream is denounced. In this novel tropes of gender exhibit “a graphic description of the difficulties” which crop up after marriage and it is often seen no better than “a cage by the modern woman with independent ideas and views” (Sharma 349). Through the institutions of marriage, motherhood and sexuality, Naylor sharply reacts against the “social and moral norms of the traditional society in which women are caught up in a paroxysm of neglect and humiliation” (Sharma 350).

These women have their brain as for their own imagination. Mrs. Luther Nedeed, Evelyn Creton’s writings could be found in the form of recipe books and grocery books. Mrs. Luther Nedeed V, Willa read in the final section of Evelyn Creton’s recipe that she had been telling to herself that there was nothing wrong in what she was doing. She used to spend too much time in the kitchen. Evelyn Creton used to prepare her own recipes. “The women cooked as if she were possessed. What drove her to make that kitchen her whole world” (*L H 141*). She had always



been covered under the stiff corsets, high – necked collars and heavy shirts. Evelyn Creton Nedeed is a sensual woman. Willa envisages Evelyn Creton as a graceful woman. Through her writings her actions and dressing sense are exhibited that confirms her dignity. “She was dressed too well to be somebody’s maid, Perhaps, somebody’s daughter?” (*L H 188*) She did not use much time to lure her husband. Evelyn Creton had been denied the pleasures of married life. Luther Nedeed left her, after the birth of his son, next Luther Nedeed. Sandiford points out, “privately [Evelyn] struggles with the ache of her husband’s personal neglect and desertion of the marital bed” (205). Her emotional needs were not satisfied. She has been denied the sexual pleasure in her marriage, she substitutes on her cookery ability and therefore adheres to old whispered tales of herbs and roots which can act as aphrodisiac if blended in food.

“The amaranth seeds, snake root and dove’s heart that Evelyn Creton kept mixing and measuring page after page, month after month. A little more of this, a little less of that. His coldness and distance, the feeling that things weren’t the way they should be must lie in something that she just wasn’t doing right. If she hung in there long enough, he would change” (*LH 148*).

Germaine Greer has quoted Friedrich Engels’ “The Origin of the Family” in her seminal book *Female Eunuch*, stating that the modern individual family “is founded on the open or concealed slavery of the wife...within the family he is the bourgeois and his wife represents the proletariat” (Greer 247). Feminist literary critics like Greer “have long been dealing with various issues in the last decades concerning their politicization of sexual writings or readings. How is women’s literary subjectivity constructed stereotypically, positively or banally, how can representations be constructed, deconstructed or reconstructed are questions primarily dealing with feminist sexual politics of ‘re-vision’ what it means to read, and how reading may relate to critical understanding”(Arimbi,2009,15). Most of the life of Priscilla McGuire is depicted through the photograph. She had “ ‘compassionate eyes’, ‘woman’s heavy hair, wavy hair was parted in the middle and swept down the sides of her ivory face into a French knot’ ” (*L H 205*). ‘Large, oval wells with a bottomless capacity to absorb any seen or unseen challenge’ (LH 205-06). She had ‘narrow chin’ and ‘slender arms’. Luther stands with his hand, “firmly planted on the bride’s shoulder” (*L H 206*). This is a very clear case wherein “fiction becomes a manifestation in which its various forms are subjective to the ways societies comprehend and

identify themselves and the world they live in or imagine” (Arimbi 2014 152). His hand planted on his wife depicts his full control over her. According to De Gravelaine in *Encyclopédie pratique des prénoms* (1996):

Priscilla has the ability to deal with life humorously. The first pictures of Priscilla are those of a young woman full of life and happiness. The crooked pinkie finger on her wedding picture also shows her sense of humour. De Gravelaine takes his analysis further by suggesting that the etymology of the name Priscilla is from the Latin Priscus and the Indo – European Priya, both of which mean well loved, wife and she who is owned (De Gravelaine 158).

Priscilla McGuire Nedeed, similar to all her mother – in law’s Nedeed wives is under patriarchal rules. She is under her husband ownership to give birth to a male child, next Luther Nedeed. Priscilla Mc Guire first photograph depicts her as newly married. “He stood posed beside the girl” (*L H 206*). Luther Nedeed’s hands were on her shoulders. After the birth of his son, in the next picture, Luther Nedeed left her shoulder. Every year in the birthday of the son, her identity was being faded. As imaged in the photograph, “she was leaning too closely toward the son, causing herself to be lost in the shadow” (*L H 208*). As Luther her son grew up, he was 21. She was totally absent from the picture. Willa confirms, “Luther: 20 years. He had gotten no taller, so why was the veil now across her bottom lip? And in the next, it had finally crept up to cover her mouth. She had to know what was happening. Luther: 21 years. She has been no longer recording the growth of a child; the only thing growing in these pictures was her absence” (*LH 209*).

In her article Gloria Naylor’s: A Modern “Inferno” Catherine C. Ward has argued that the Nedeed women have betrayed themselves:

Each has cooperated with her husband’s denial of her Luther’s silent victim, who renounces God instead of renouncing her husband’s treatment. Evelyn tries to earn her husband’s love for a while, but finally gives up and destroys her own body. Priscilla is worse. Without a fight, she watches as the shadows of her husband and son blot out her soul. (Ward 80)

She holds these women accountable for their own obliteration, comparing them with the three arch-traitors whom Satan chews on in Circle Ten of Dante's *Inferno*. She however overlooks the finality of their situation which has left them without any tools to fight the tyranny of their husbands. Traditional gender roles also assign certain power or its lack to men and women in any society. Economic dependence of women in the given setting, as well as the cultural norms of the society, compels women to accept their inferiority as fact. The issues of race are further aggravated by gender related constrictions as female psyche is conditioned to accept her inferiority within power relations. These differences/priorities are so ingrained in the psyche that even Sigmund Freud maintained – as quoted by Alsop et al. – that “conventional gender position provide the best defence the individual has against painful and inhibiting neurotic symptoms because they fit with the requirements of culture; they are therefore comfortable to live with” (Alsop et al. 47).

The individual fits in culture with painful and inhibiting neurotic symptoms as the black culture required Willa to do so in *Linden Hills*. Likely, Gloria Naylor, several black writers displayed image of black women in African – American writings. The essay “Images of Black Women in Afro – American Literature: From stereotypes to Character” (1975) interprets the analysis done by Adam David Miller for the establishment of his thesis. “Africans wanted to know more about their brothers and sisters in North – America” (Christian 1). This essay was written by Adam David Miller including in Afro – American Literature. This essay is published in *Black Feminist Criticism* editor is Barbara Christian. This essay does not describe the depth of historical investigation. He exploits that a tradition of Afro – American women writers exist. There is little discussion of Jessie Fauset or Alice Walker. There are sections on Paule Marshall and Toni Morrison is the nubs of works by the writer Adam David Miller. The significant books published on Afro – American Literature since 1975 come in the development of the new views. Until 1940's the black women in the Anglo and “Afro – American Literature have been usually assigned stereotyped roles (Christian 1) these images being a context” for whole dilemma as the problems addressed by Black women. These problems and dilemma cannot be resolved by the society. The novels of southern white literature are set to further craft the submission and the conflict between the black man and women. This image could not be confronted by Puritan society. As Arimbi writes: “literature may function as a means to promote political agendas,

either against or pro prevailing ideologies but that does not automatically mean that it contributes to one's understanding of political agendas" (Arimbi, 2009,15).

Naylor also describes marginalized masculinity models and its belittling influence on human character in *Linden Hills* through the characters of Lester and Willie, who are poets. Lester has published few poems. Willie has composed many poems and he recites it. Willie, "He said his aim was to be like the great slave poet. Jupiter Hammom, who memorized thousands of verses because he couldn't read" (*L H* 29). By the time novel, *Linden Hills* begin, Willie has memorized 665 poems. Willie has rejected a modicum of success -his ability to read at a junior high level. Lester and Willie used to do odd chores in Linden Hills to collect money. They could not earn enough money through their profession of being poets. Lester and Willie both supported them through odd jobs in Linden Hills. Lester's lack of interest in taking a path to get material success is a cause of worry for his mother; his mother suffers in her embarrassment. While, as, Ed. R. K. Dhawan writes in his book *Indian Women Novelists*, "conflict between mother and daughter is inevitable" (Dhawan 107), but after the conflict both continued the jobs of cleaning in Linden Hills at special social events. Naylor was disapproved of the masculine zed and female domination culture in African – American community. Jasmina Lukic, Joanna Regulska and Darja Zavirsek in their book *Women and citizenship in Central and Eastern Europe* reveal "novels highlight a gender aspect of women's personal narratives" (Lukic, Regulska, and Zavirsek 63).

Further information about African - American cultural conditioning is provided by Bell Hooks. Bell hooks overviews the de – masculinity of black men, in *Feminist Theory from Margin to Centre* (1984). Simultaneously, black males proceeded as the sexiest bullies of black females. The exaggerated affect of racism resulted to de - masculinity of black men. Through there two characters Lester and Willie Naylor portrays how black men emerged as an effeminate, enfeebled and crippled. The women more focused in obtaining the equality as the class privilege. Women struggled to eradicate sexism and sexist oppression. Men sensed that women would analogous to detach them from men because they necessitated equality of opportunity. Many black women could not separate them, either from black men or white men, since they were fiscally depended on men. "The separatist notion that women could resist sexism by withdrawing from contact with men reflected a bourgeoisie class perspective." (Hooks 1984, 76) The "men as

enemy” of women retrieved their attention away to relationships. The men centred on the progress of relationship between men and women. The men accentuated women to work together and get away from hurting each other. Black men and black women both in unity resist racism.

Black knowledge and thought have been shaped by oppressive white system which considered them inferior to white race. Black women do not want only equality with men. As well as, these black women believes in the transformation of society through revolution which will direct them to bring a change in racist and gendered biased society of America. The feminists attempt to move beyond the unequal realm of life. These black women had gone through the sexiest and the racist brainwashing which considered black women to regard themselves as ‘others’. While Bell Hooks in *Ain't I A Woman* believes that “American women have been socialized, even brainwashed, to accept a version of American history that was created to uphold and maintain racial imperialism in the form of white supremacy and sexual imperialism in the form of patriarchy” (Hooks, 1981, 120).

Gloria Naylor in *Linden Hills* depicts the black land ownership. Black and White racial discrimination perspectives have been highlighted. Linden Hills is developed on the valueless soil. The ex – slave Luther Nedeed was the founder of Linden Hills. It has been built because of racist practices. Barbara Christian stated in *Gloria Naylor: Critical Perspectives Past and Present* that “Luther Nedeed who in the 1820’s has the secret dream of developing ‘an ebony jewel’, a community of successful blacks who could stay off the racism of America and exhibit their fine houses that members of that race can be powerful” (Christian, 1993, 108). All Luther Nedeed belonged to black race. There is colour variation with the son of black Luther Nedeed V. Luther V did not follow the pattern of purchasing and bringing the Octoroon woman into home. He rather had “married a pale – skinned woman. He knew his fathers had chosen those wives for the colour of their spirits not their faces. They had been brought to Tupelo Drive to fade against the boards of the Nedeed home” (*L H 18*). These women were brought home to conceive and give a son to the stamp and will of the father. Charles E. Wilson in *Gloria Naylor: A Critical Companion* critics about *Linden Hills*:

Every generation chooses a light-complexioned woman, yet each man wants her to produce a dark-skinned male like him. To be sure, the Needed men want to prove the potency of blackness over any complexion less than black, but at the

same time, they are placing the women in the position for blame if this potency is not proven. The woman finds herself in an impossible situation, harkening back to slavery days. When Willa Prescott Nedeed produces a light-skinned son, her husband accuses her of adultery (and perhaps with a white man), but if she, like the other Nedeed brides, is of light hue, then a lighter strain is coursing through her veins and could easily reveal itself. That such has not occurred in previous generations is no guarantee that it cannot happen in the present day. But the present – day Luther will not consider that fact. (Wilson 78)

Everyone in Linden Hills knew the patriarchal authority and evils of Luther Nedeed in their residence among black gentry, white male supremacy on the basis of racism. It is evident that everything connected to the Nedeeds is evil and insidious and that the residents of Linden Hills are misguided people because of Nedeed's psychotic game of domination over females. Firstly, Nedeed dream is represented as an effective response to race discrimination. Secondly, it is an attempt to provide blacks with a sense of security, self-definition, and purpose, Charles E. Wilson details:

The paradox implied here is the focus of the text. If blacks succumb to racism, they are doomed; yet when they resist oppression they are fated for pain as well. Very subtly Naylor suggests that when fighting the evil of racism, by whatever means, one is destined to partake of a measure of that evil, especially when one loses focus on the purpose of the fight. (Wilson 76)

Black gentry have purchased their residence in Linden Hills. African – American's relied on Luther Nedeed for their residence in America. There black gentry comprises of, "Murderers, root doctors, carpet baggers and bootleg preachers who were thrown out of the South and needed the short memory of the dead and the long shadows of the lindens for their left-of-center carryings-on" (*L H* 5, 6). Luther Nedeed, the owner, with his son next generation of Luther Nedeed promptly received the payment on first of every month. Luther's business thrived well in hills. "When the area within five acres of the funeral home became populated, he constructed artificial lake (really a moat)" (*L H* 6). Those black gentry who could live nowhere resort to live in Tupelo Drive of Linden Hills. In the novel, *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), the black folk who could live nowhere resided in the ghetto of Brewster Place. In the novel *Linden Hills*

(1985), the black people – “murderers, root doctors, carpet baggers and bootleg preachers,” (*L H 5*) those were thrown out of the society lived in Tupelo drive of Linden Hills, instead of a ghetto.

Furthermore, Luther Nedeed owns the Tupelo Realty Company, which holds the mortgages and leases on all the residences in Linden Hills, and is the undertaker for the African American society. Luther Nedeed resides at the bottom of hill. All well-off families resided, at the nadir of hill, the privileged family lives on the high hill. Luther Nedeed I bought Linden Hills from its white owners. Earlier, white owners of Linden Hills sold the land to black community because the land is unfertile for farming. After realization that the nadir of hills is surrounded by cemetery that is a place for cremation process of dead. Nedeed took the responsibility of undertaker. He constructed shacks on the hills for renting houses to black community.

All Luther Nedeeds were undertakers and caretakers of Linden Hills. Luther Nedeed is the fifth of his line; the original Luther Nedeed came from Tupelo Mississippi, and founded the area in 1820, he had moved from Tupelo, Mississippi to buy property in an unspecified site. The land ownership is with him and later on his sons for more than a hundred and fifty years. In Linden Hills:

The Nedeeds’ have always lived there. Luther’s double great – grandfather bought the entire northern face of the plateau, descending from what is now First Crescent Drive to Tupelo Drive – which is really the last three of a series of eight roads that ring themselves around the hill. But Luther’s double great – grandfather, coming from Tupelo, Mississippi, where it was rumoured that he’d actually sold his octoroon wife and six children for the money that he used to come North and obtain the hilly land, named that section Tupelo Drive (*L H 2*).

In detail, owners of Linden Hills are Luther. The first Luther – his son and grandsons bore the same name they all had similar physical resemblance with him. He has opened a funeral parlour and later on rented the sections of land to black community.

Nedeed, seeing that the government and real estate developers wanted his land so badly, decided to insure that they’d never be able to get their hands on it. So he went throughout the hill with his son beside him and, starting with First Crescent Drive all the way down through Fifth Crescent Drive, sold the land practically for

air to the blacks who were shacking there. He gave them a thousand – year – and – a – day lease – provided only that they passed their property on to their children. And if they wanted to sell it, they had to sell it to another black family or the rights would revert back to the Nedeeds, (*L H 7*).

Luthers' are authorized to provide property on lease. Luther I left his business to his only son. "When old Luther died in 1879, he hadn't died at all, especially when they spoke to his son and especially glanced at those puffed eyelids and those bottomless eyes. He too, brought an Octoroon woman into his home who gave him one son - another Luther Nedeed" (*L H 5*). There had always been generations of old Luther Nedeeds and young Luther Nedeeds'. Young Luther Nedeed and his father mature Luther Nedeed going together on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month for collection of money. "There was another generation of big frog and little frog going through the hills together every first of the month to collect rent" (*L H 5*). "To him the land symbolized not only Black achievement but also his abhorrence of the Whites and one – up man ship in social hierarchy. Naylor posits how Linden Hills was not only "one cry of dark victory for blacks" (*L H 16*), but also a "wad of spit in the white eye of America". (*L H 8*) The black gentry tried to copy white Life – style.

Laurel Dumont is a free spirited lady. She strives for ambition in the white world. Laurel Dumont mother had died. She has a step – mother, so she spends her summer vacation with her grand ma, Roberta Johnson. Mrs. Johnson lived in the rural Georgia. Laurel has gained love from her grand ma. Laurel Dumont has achieved success in her career. When she was young her mother has died. Her father remarried. She suffered a sense of alienation with her step – mother, so she started spending holidays in her grandma's home. As D' Emilio has explained on the particular familial structure coincides rather all capitalist relationships of Production. "Ideologically capitalism drives people into heterosexual families. Each generation comes of age having internalized a heterosexist model of intimacy and personal relationships" (D' Emilio 1992, 473). The society and economic status of Linden Hills is according to heterosexual relations. She feels a sense of self – alienation from her step – mother. Then she is also separated from her father. Laurel has achieved success physically but mentally she strives for human emotions. She has achieved her personal goal. Laurel has been regarded in her life as a winner. She was a swimmer. Laurel has enhanced her swimming skills. Laurel was self – affirmed that



she could not drown, she told to her grand ma about her father's confidence on her. "He told me I was his brown sugar baby. And sugar don't drown. Grandma, it melts in the water and makes it sweet" (L H 217). Roberta perceived, Laurel drawing her thoughts from the 'private valley' that she visited so much that summer. She was unbeaten. She owned a home and a swimming pool in Linden Hills. Laurel was a free – spirited lady. She was emotionally detached from her husband. It was a great blow to her, when after 10 years of marriage, her husband decided to divorce Laurel. She faced self – alienation. When Luther tackled her, she found herself empty in the inner core of spirit. This ended Laurel to commit suicide by diving in an empty pool.

In similar manner to Laurel Bell Hooks describes the real condition of African – American woman. Bell Hooks, in *Feminist Theory from Margin to Center* (1984) explains African - black women do not share economic, political and social equality with black men. Sexism allowed black men to have power over black women. Feminism as a movement affected the social and economic equality of white upper and middle class women. All women who organized the feminist movement were not satisfied with women's liberation movement on the grounds of women only gaining social equality with men. Feminist perspectives focus on also getting equal freedom and equal opportunity with men. Feminism is a struggle to get rid of sexist oppression and male – supremacy. Feminists' writings depict friendships among women.

Friendships among women help them to take care of their children. By maintaining strong bonds between women they support themselves for protective upbringing of their children. Despite of Luther Nedeed V rejected Willa, she is a successful mother. The white child of last Luther Nedeed loves his mother a lot. The child always worries because his black father, last Luther Nedeed does not love his white son. Willa has deep affection for his son. On Christmas Eve, Willa ascends upstairs to prove herself as a devoted wife and mother. Her discovery of self and the mothers – in – laws as predecessors of Nedeeds family give her strength to overcome the troublesome situation and avenge her husband. Consequently, her ascent to home comprises only partially a victory over Luthers' patriarchal generational rules. Willa as a wife ends to destruction of Luther Nedeed and self – destruction. The novel *Linden Hills* ends with the death of Luther V, his wife Willa and their son. The novel is written on the gendered version of self – sacrifice in the context of black feminism. Willa's death is a self – sacrifice on the death of her son. Her self – sacrifice is struggle against the oppression done by Luther

Nedeed V and his patriarchal predecessors. Okonkwo, Christopher N. in “*Suicide or Messianic Self – Sacrifice? Exhuming Willa’s Body in Gloria Naylor’s Linden Hills*” Rev. of *Linden Hills*, by Gloria Naylor. *African American Review*, in this article she discusses, “Willa’s “self – sacrifice” not only envisions cleansing of the (original) sin wrought on the world (of Linden Hills) by a male, Luther Nedeed, but also, in a larger racial/ political sense, it (re) establishes strong black womanhood at the centre of black liberation struggle and discourse” (Okonkwo, Spring 2001, 117 – 131).

Furthermore black womanhood and motherhood is described in accordance with postmodernism. The postmodernist views of feminine roles are related to housekeeping, childrearing and economic production for consumption. Katheryn Allen Rabuzzi in her women’ experience that the works of women domesticity are of repetition and waiting. The male role through one of the historical time is of quest. According to Sara Ruddick mothers are forced into the reality of the child. Ruddick does not confine “Mothering” to childrearing. She proposes the maternity as ‘childrearing’, ‘mothering’, this establishes emotional bonding and care taking.

Sushila Singh in her book *Feminism: Theory, Criticism and Analysis* clarifies that “Maternal thinking” grows out of “maternal practice” which requires responding to the reality of the child, another who demands preservation and growth” (Singh 43). Many factors are involved in child rearing. The excessive control defeats the purpose of child’s growth. Then, the mother has to adopt a passive attitude. This is described by Ruddick as waiting mode. The passive attitude is governed by keeping over acquiring necessities of child. Conservation and maintenance of the child is necessary for his life.

Children are brought up by their mother, grand – mothers and other women of family also take care for kids. Most woman bonds exist because of child care as deciphered by Gloria Naylor in her novels. Many writers have represented strong friendships between women. The examples of such woman bonding have been represented in Toni Morrison’s ‘*Sula*’ (1973) and the Alice Walker’s ‘*The Color Purple*’ (1982). Woman bonding exists in these novels, in spite of violence and competition. Though in realism, woman bonds between white women and black women betrayed because of physical exploitation of black women by white husbands of white women. The weak socio - economic conditions were prevalent with black women so they could not overcome the sexual harassment of white men for their financial gains. The relationships of

white men and black women resulted in wives of white men these are white women to overlook black women. The black women bonding exist. There also exist white women bonding. There is no bonding between black men and white men. Racial imperialism overshadowed white men and black men bonding. In the novel *Linden Hills* (1985) woman bonding existed despite of different generations through writings. The mother – in – laws of each generation have left behind the notes either in diaries or the Bible. For Willa Prescott Nedeed:

Her marriage to Luther Nedeed was her choice, and she took his name by choice. She knew then and now that there were no laws anywhere in the country that forced her to assume that name: she took it because she wanted to. That was important. She must be clear about that before she went on to anything else: she wanted to be a Nedeed. (*L H* 278)

Willa Prescott Nedeed is pale in skin, but she bears a fair skin son. The son is light skinned because of his maternal grand – mother genes. Luther locks her and his son in suspicion. He restricts limited supply of cereal and water to them. The son dies, but Willa survives. Willa had been different from her mother – in laws. She had coped with the situation. They were crazy. She enjoyed changes, but her mother – in – laws never changed. When she came to knew about the history of her mother – in – laws:

Anger began to scratch at the scars in her mind and she trembled as fresh blood seeped through the opening wounds. That's why Luther never talked about them: there wasn't a normal one in the bunch. But there was nothing wrong with her. She remembered loving the seasons, loving life. And there just couldn't have been anything wrong with what she had wanted. A home. A husband. Children. That was all, and that was so little. To ask for so little and to have it taken away. No, it wasn't wrong. It wasn't sick. If there was any sickness, it was in the house, in the air. It was left over from the breaths of those women who had come before her. The Luwana Packervilles, Evelyn Cretons, and God knows who else. Blood from the open scars dripped down behind her eyes as she looked around the basement, futile and bewildered. This didn't happen in a moment or even in a marriage. This had happened a long time ago (*L H* 204). Arslan, Seval in the "Fall of the Absent mother in Tracy Chevalier's *Falling Angels*", states that the boundaries of home,

and their submission of hers to domestic affairs has caused her loss of a free female identity. (Arslan 2015 89-100)

The tasks done by Nedeed wives destroyed Luwana Packerville to madness, Evelyn Creton to solitude and Priscillia McGuire to despair. Despite of their college educations and professions, most of Nedeed women were in susceptible condition in Linden Hills. A sense of their woman bonding is realized by Willa Nedeed, when locked mourning the death of her child. These women bonding between Nedeed mothers– in – laws and their daughters – in – laws draw its power from the sense of isolation with their husbands. These black bourgeoisie Nedeeds' women as housewives were isolated from their families. These women mental and physical mistreatment by the Luther Nedeeds of different generations destructed them to suffering. The reason beyond that all her mother's – in – laws were unable to stand against patriarchy and bring positive changes. This resulted in their depression and dejection, so they all Nedeeds' wives lost faith in Christianity as their religion.

Grandma Tilson preaches religion to her grand – child. According to Grandma Tilson who teaches her grandson that one should not devote his soul to God. She emphasized that one should devote his soul to the highest bidder. All generations of Luther Nedeed were the highest bidder. As Luther, is the highest bidder of Linden Hills, he is not God, similarly he considers the highest bidder is Lucifer. Lucifer is the representative of Satan. All generations of Luther in comparison to Lucifer also represents Satan. Lucifer as Satan's subordinate has been stated in the *Paradise Lost I* (1667) of John Milton. It is Grandma Tilson who first gives her expression in the epigraph.

*Grandma Tilson I'm afraid of hell.*

*Ain't nothing to fear, there's hell on earth.*

*I mean the real hell where you can go when you die.*

*You ain't gotta die to go to the real hell.*

*No?*

*Uh uh, you just gotta sell that silver mirror God*

*Propped up in your soul*

*Sell it to who – the devil?*

*Naw, just to the highest bidder, child. The*

*Highest bidder.*

(Linden Hills, epigraph)

Nedeeds' have purchased the northern face of Linden Hills plateau. The plateau begins from the First crescent drive. The curved road starts running in the form of rings, up to the end, that is from First Crescent Drive to Tupelo drive. In "*Linden Hills: A Modern Inferno*". Rev of Linden Hills, by Catherine C. Ward and Gloria Naylor published in *Contemporary Literature* describes "The Luther Nedeeds are the Satans or anti – Christs. Each one has been both an under taker and a real estate developer" (Naylor 67 – 81).

*Linden Hills* is a model of Dante's inferno of hell in which souls are damned to hell on earth. These souls do not commit offense against God. They have sold their silver mirror god buttressed in their souls. They have doomed them to highest bidder; they are five Luther Nedeeds. Thus committing offence against own souls. The use of mirror in the novel is to symbolize freedom. In Linden Hills the mirror becomes a symbol of self – knowledge and self – representation. The absence of mirror means absence of self-introspection. Denial from self – introspection leads to damnation. Since the residents of Linden Hills have "sold their sense of who they are – that which gives them integrity – to achieve material success" they have deliberately or inadvertently damned themselves. (Fowler 77) Naylor feels who we are? To whom we should consent our souls is the question of highest seriousness according to Christianity? Christianity as a religious system believes we must give our souls to God's concern to attain salvation. Naylor in opposition to salvation depicts 'Linden Hills' as the price paid by American blacks for their economic and social 'welfare' for their well being. In "Gloria Naylor's *Linden Hills: A Modern Inferno*", Catherine C. Ward overviews Naylor's spirituality:

Gloria Naylor's second novel, *Linden Hills*, is a modern version of Dante's *Inferno* in which souls are damned not because they have offended God or have violated a religious system but because they have offended themselves. In their

single-minded pursuit of upward mobility, the inhabitants of Linden Hills, a black, middle-class suburb, have turned away from their past and from their deepest sense of who they are. Naylor feels that the subject of who- we-are and what we are willing to give up of who- we- are to get where- we- want- to- go is a question of the highest seriousness – as serious as a Christian’s concern over his salvation. (Ward 67)

Gloria Naylor chooses the spiritual element of salvation in Linden Hills through the example of Dante’s *Inferno*:

Naylor could not have chosen a more suitable framework for *Linden Hills* than Dante’s *Inferno*. The Dantean model emphasizes the novel’s serious moral tone and gives a universalizing mythic dimension to what otherwise might be considered a narrow subject; the price American blacks are paying for their economic and social “success”. (Ward 67)

Jewelle Gomez gives a detailed account of “*Naylor’s Inferno*” in *Revision of Linden Hills*, by Gloria Naylor published by *The Women’s Review of Books*. Quarterly, 2.11(Aug, 1985), “The *Inferno* motif shapes the narrative which is fine, as the lives of black people are more than suitable for epic legends – but it often feels like a literary exercise rather than a ground breaking adaptation”. (Gomez 7-8)

Jewelle Gomez gives a detailed account of “*Naylor’s Inferno*” in *Revision of Linden Hills*, by Gloria Naylor published by *The Women’s Review of Books*. Quarterly, 2.11(Aug, 1985), “The *Inferno* motif shapes the narrative which is fine, as the lives of black people are more than suitable for epic legends – but it often feels like a literary exercise rather than a ground breaking adaptation”. (Gomez 7-8). “*Inferno* from *La Divina commedia* (c. 1320; *The Divine Comedy*) as a source for the narrative structure of this novel is evident. The topography of Linden Hills resembles Dante’s hell, with the evil angel, Luther Nedeed, residing at the bottom, surrounded by a frozen lake”. ([www.enotes.com](http://www.enotes.com) 3)Naylor creates the most important description row just about Willie and Lester’s odyssey from beginning to end of the mounts, put side by side their escapades with the tale of Willa Nedeed. The forenames Willie and Willa are purposely alike. Willie and Willa’s expeditions throughout anguish are placed in dissimilar fonts to emphasize

the similar themes. Since Willie get ahead of all the way through Linden Hills, he makes out and analyzes the ethical breakdowns of mislaid characters he convenes. “At the end of Willie and Lester’s journey, they have a spiritual awakening, realizing the significance of all they have seen and heard. Willa also has a spiritual awakening, realized through her discovery of the tragic lives of the previous Nedeed wives”. ([www.enotes.com](http://www.enotes.com) 3)

All Luther Nedeed’s are responsible for tragic lives of all Nedeed wives. Luther Nedeed is the criminal of the narrative. His worship for control offers the catalyst for the downfall of humanitarian moral principles and the coup of covetousness in the subsistence of the folks of Linden Hills. Akin to the fiend he allegorically symbolizes, his pleasure is in the devastation of existences of the residents of Linden Hills. The original Luther Nedeed exists on in the being of all offspring who bear his name; they as well bear his behaviour and his corporeal form. “Willa’s son, who inherits the recessive genes of his light-skinned grandmothers and does not look like his father, serves as the catalyst for the destruction of the Nedeed dynasty. The modern Luther’s inhumanity and selfishness are revealed through his treatment of his wife and son.” (enotes.com 2) Throughout Linden Hills his pleasure is in the devastation of the survivals of the dwellers of the inferior areas. Luther is powerless to decide on a mate likewise that his antecedents do owing to transformations in the position and prospects of women in modern-day civilization. “Therefore, he waits until his college reunion to pick from the single women uncomfortable with their independent status and desperate enough to consider marriage to him. The purpose of Luther’s matrimonial search is simply to find a woman to bear him a son, who must be conceived in a ritual prescribed by his ancestors”. (enotes.com 2) subsequently, he has denial to sexual touch with his spouse.

In contrary to Luther’s wife, Laurel Dumont marries with her own choice:

Laurel Dumont’s story ...serves as a tragic reminder that material success is not always accompanied by happiness. But this character is developed to shed light on other narrative concerns as well. For one, Laurel’s story serves as contrast for Willa Nedeed’s story. As the reader learns during Laurel’s tale, Laurel and Willa, prior to the novel’s opening, had formed a friendship, not an equal sisterhood per se, but one whereby Willa seemed awestruck by Laurel’s confidence, poise, and sheer independence in the face of all odds. And Laurel enjoyed the fact that she was the envy of the unofficial first lady of

Linden Hills. However, as the novel reveals, each woman's life would take a different turn. Even though both will die by novel's end, it is Laurel who falters in her struggle while Willa ascends, both literally and figuratively, the steps towards redeeming herself and shedding the weak persona that formerly identified her. In addition, Laurel's story helps to foreground the theme of fragmentation. As Linden Hills resident historian Daniel Braithwaite, in a brief analysis of Laurel's suicide, suggests to Willie and Lester, "[T]hat personal tragedy today was just a minute part of a greater tragedy that has afflicted this community for decades" (*LH* 257), a community, also according to Braithwaite, "as broken and disjointed – as faceless – as laurel Dumont's body" (*LH* 261). Laurel's confusion, then, underscores the increased confusion, for the past thirty or so years, of Linden Hills residents who have aspired to attain a black power without white encroachment, only to discover that to sustain their community even minimally, most of them would have to enter the white world and, ironically, invite (if only unwittingly) the white world into theirs while each day just a bit more of their blackness, and thus purpose, is stripped away. (Wilson 72 - 73).

Other character of story is Willie Mason about him a brief description is given. The novel *Linden Hills* resembles with topography of *Inferno*: "The *Inferno* covers five days in the life of a twenty-year-old black poet, Willie Mason. Like Dante, Willie analyzes the lives of the inhabitants of the hills". (enotes.com 2) Willie works from zenith to nadir of mountain. He works as a handyman. When he escapes from the frozen lake at the nadir of mountains, finally he renounces his senselessness. Moreover he acquires charge of his life:

Dante's model universalizes the novel and also gives a mythic dimension to what otherwise would have been a narrow subject. Naylor's bow to Dante's work puts her within a long literary tradition. *Linden Hills* is also a part of an explosion of noted works by African American women, including Naylor and her prominent contemporaries Alice Walker, Toni Morrison, and Paule Marshall. (enotes.com 2)

Naylor portrays the character Luwana Packerville. Each Luther Nedeed married fair skinned women. Luther Nedeed produced a carbon copy of them. Luwana Packervillie, Evelyn Creton, Priscillia McGuire were all previous Nedeed wives. Charles E. Wilson states in his write up *Linden Hills*, "For example, Luwana Packerville Nedeed married the first Luther Nedeed in



1837 only to discover that she was also his slave, that in fact he had purchased her and that she had absolutely no rights as a free woman” (Wilson 71- 72). “The first Mrs. Nedeed, Luwana Packerville, was bought as a slave and never manumitted, although her husband saw to the legal freedom of her child” ([www.enotes.com](http://www.enotes.com) 3). After producing a Nedeed heir, these black women were separated from their husband. All became no identity within their household. These women writings about their oppression became Willa’s sense of woman bonding with them. Willa Nedeed discovered Luwana’s Bible in which Luwana wrote to Luwana “There can be no God”. Luwana was split in personality. “Her days are spent writing imaginary letters to an imaginary sister she also names Luwana. Nevertheless in writing to herself and engaging in introspection, she manages to remain relatively stable” (Wilson 71- 72).

Luwana’s daughter – in – law is Evelyn Creton. And then there is Evelyn Creton Nedeed who, prepared her recipe in such a way that emphasized she was obsessed of cooking. This ended Willa understood that Evelyn suffered intensely as a woman. Evelyn Creton’s:

According to the narrator, “must have been a bewildered woman.” In order to cope she is “[d]riven by the need to spend so much time in that kitchen. To be sure that she never ran out of ingredient for the excuse to keep large round bowls between her thighs and long wooden spoons in her hand all day” (*LH* 188), Evelyn always maintained a stockpile of supplies. (Wilson 72).

Daughter – in law of Evelyn Creton is Priscilla McGuire. The belongings and writings of each generation of Mrs. Luther Nedeed created the source of women bonds within Mrs. Nedeeds:

Or in the case of Priscilla McGuire Nedeed, survival means reconstructing her role in life once her former role is denied to her. When Willa initially begins perusing Priscilla’s photo album, the early pictures (always of Priscilla, husband Luther, and son Luther – the men are always named Luther) suggest a charmed life for the woman. (Wilson 72).

Priscilla’s son grows and matures in the successive pictures. She is thereby becomes less noticeable and loses her identity. Finally, in the story narrator observes, Priscilla “was no longer recording the growth of a child; the only thing growing in these pictures was her absences” (*LH* 209). Consequently, Priscilla takes care of her son’s growth. In addition to, she diverts her

attention to gardening and feels herself active at the verge of her husband's complete denial to Priscilla.

Likewise, Priscilla McGuire Nedeed's image fades from view as her son's image grows in succeeding years, negating her physically and spiritually into a mere blur on family portraits. Willa's awakening comes when she recognizes her spiritual kinship with these women, which she first denied by labeling them as crazy. ([www.enotes.com](http://www.enotes.com) 3)

Priscilla McGuire's daughter – in – law is Willa Nedeed. Willa as Nedeed V wife has found the stories of all Mrs. Nedeed. No one else but Willa has imagined the lives of Luwana, Evelyn and Priscilla. These women were victimized by Luther's Tyranny. Willa has portrayed the stories of Nedeed wives and reconstructed their identities. In return she has resurrected her own identity. Willa Prescott Nedeed is the wife of the last Luther Nedeed and the vehicle of his destruction. After being locked in the basement with her son for her supposed adultery with white man, she find outs the dilemma of her ancestors while looking for a shroud to wrap the body of her son. Willa somehow is different from other Mrs. Luther Nedeed's, no doubt she is mentally strong. She is definite about her tastes and preferences and she loves her son and weeps for his hopeless and unfair death. From beginning to end glancing at the diaries and images of the Nedeed wives, she gets the daring to go up the steps in an effort to take control of her destiny. Thus, we could find out the character development of Willa Prescott Nedeed:

Willa Prescott Nedeed's development is easily charted in her narrative movement from victim (or object) to agent (or subject). Early in the novel even before she is formally introduced, Willie is presented as a suffering victim in a most horrific circumstance. On at least two occasions prior to beginning their search for work, Willie and Lester overhear what seems to be the plaintive wail of an injured animal echoing from the depths of Linden Hills. Not until later does the reader realize that it was Willa Nedeed's cries upon discovering the untimely death of her son, some days after she and he are forcefully banned to the basement. But as her sub textual narrative develops, Willa emerges, not as an object to be shuttled about at Luther's whim but as willing and capable agent determined to control her own fate. (Enotes.com 2)

In “reading” these stories Willa ultimately emerges as a composite of these three women. She takes their stories and makes them her own, but like her namesake Willie, Willa does not record any of her thoughts. She preserves them for herself as tools to assist her preparing for her future:

Willa’s growth is brought about in part by her daily ritual of “reading” (interpreting) the lives of three of the Nedeed wives who preceded her. Scanning the letters of one, the recipe ledgers of another, and the photographic journal of yet another, Willa comes to understand that perhaps she has not suffered nearly as much as these other women, yet somehow they cultivated enough strength and resolve to survive the emotional assaults levelled by their respective Luther Nedeed. (Wilson 71- 72)

“It is with renewed sense of determination that Willa does in fact mount the steps, with her dead son in her arms, and attempts a return to her life as Mrs. Luther Nedeed”. (Wilson 72). Willa as a wife dies at the end of novel. She dies with her husband Luther Nedeed and son Sinclair. It “is less significant (at least when considering only Willa) than is her transformation from beginning to end, as one who formerly saw herself as helpless but who ultimately sees herself as capable indeed”. (Wilson 72).

Gloria Naylor positively deciphers her character Willa. Naylor has written about various perspectives of her age. Mel Watkins in his write up describes the novel “Linden Hills (1985)” about Harlem Renaissance. In the Harlem Renaissance (1917 – 1939), the black bourgeoisie was the literary matter which perpetuated fiction written by African – Americans. During this period Langston Hughes was the renowned English poet. Zora Neale Hurston, Sterling A. Brown and Langston Hughes by this time have enjoyed the verbal and musical culture of black society and their tradition. Black middle class is the remainder of their backward ideas and identity that reminds their slave past. Naylor portrayed the history of slavery. The subdued blacks have countenanced the repressive past.

Blacks’ repressions have been portrayed by black writers. Other writers like Frances E. W. Harper and W. E. Bois in their fiction have emphasized on the racial uplift of black middle

class. They considered black people's identity "too primitive" to stand by side of white people. In mid 1930's more Afro – Americans writers treated black bourgeoisie with scorn and ridiculed them with intellectual phoniness. Blacks were portrayed with gorgeous consumption and ashamed of slave past. Their culture, physique, colour and features linked them to African warm climate country.

Other major writer, Barbara Christian writes on "Alternate Versions of the Gendered Past: African Women Writers vs Illich (1982)" in *Black Feminist Criticism: Perspectives on Black Women Writers* about the domination of black man and black woman by white man gets them ahead to eloquent their individual survival. Blacks have chosen their own implements for the occupation they did. Black men moved from specialized fraction to potential completeness. No more black men are fragmented and neuters. Black men are accompanied by black women in their work force. Black woman also work as home maid in white man's home. There is also possibility of being free, independent and completely together black women in new arenas of economic activity. The humiliation of African woman and man have shown them path to protest against their long-established society that denounced woman on the way to an imposed fate of survival, subservience and stillness in biased human race. In favour of these women authors the African female is not only a prey but also a player who is racially brutalized by whites. There is strength and adaptability in black male and black female. Western feminists are ethnocentric not as a consequence of their pressure on impartiality. They take no notice of the narrow ideas of the western account. Western feminists do not perceive bigotry as categorical oppression and racial discrimination as ascertained ladder of domination. Devoted to black people black women writers see "devaluing women ideas and creativity and their sisters as burdened by the anguish of a life akin to that of a mule."(Christian 147) Gloria Naylor appropriates the view of Barbara Christian in Naylor's novel *Linden Hills*.

Moreover Naylor associates the novel with black nation. Naylor has emphasized on masculinity and the Linden Hills as black nation in the 1960's. Linden Hills as an African – American nation had strength of the formation of African – American upper middle class gentry. The Linden Hills is inhabited by black bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie class of Africans in Linden Hills has actualized their dreams about cultural materialism. They have achieved success on the basis of patriarchal rule. In *Linden Hills* (1985) Naylor advocates societies' injustices of race and

gender upon poor black women. The black women's tragic domestic situation is that they have to proceed against the benefit of them and their children. In *Linden Hills* the epitome for success results in family fragmentation. There is women abuse as one of the theme in *Linden Hills* (1985). All Luther Nedeed wished black male child. All the former generations of Luther Nedeed were black except Willa bears a white son. Willa is harassed by her husband. She is deemed blameworthy for being immoral. The black female victimization of Mrs. Nedeeds by their husbands all Luther Nedeed, for example as in the case of Willa Nedeed has been addressed by Naylor. The masculine harassment of black women has been practiced also by black males among blacks' gentry. When black men achieve success in Linden Hills, they are then bereft of their wealth. This is the punishment of racism on them. Smyth tries to conceal his racial identity through his impulses. There is no discussion of ghetto in *Linden Hills* (1985).

Discussion of Willa and her son is in detail. The death of Willa's son results Willa to avenge the death of last Luther Nedeed, Willa is disappointed at the demise of her son; also six years of her being, nevertheless she decides to rescue her life. Moreover, she is attentive that she owns an identity, a selfhood, which is independent of her prestige as wife and mother. At the instance of her alertness, she makes the decision to go in, get back her home and her own identity. Willa thinks because of her identity she could blame no one.

No, she could no longer blame Luther. Willa now marvelled at the beauty and simplicity of something so small it lived unrecognized within her for most of her life. She gained strength and a sense of power from its possession. (LH 280)

Upstairs, she had left an identity that was rightfully hers that she had worked hard to achieve. Many women wouldn't have chosen it, but she did. With all of its problems, it had given her measure of security and contentment. And she owed to damned apologies to anyone for the last six years of her life. She was sitting there now, filthy, cold, and hungry, because she, Willa Prescott Nedeed, had walked down twelve concrete steps. (LH 280)

As in *Linden Hills* (1985) Willa cleans the downstairs area. She also wishes to cleanse all their past wrongs. She enters into the house carrying her son's corpse. Luther dismisses Willie and Lester. Luther tries to block Willa's path. As a gesture in contempt,

she strikes out at Luther. The lace material covering the corpse catches fire in the fire place. At this end, the authority of the Nedeed men is defeated. Decease of the Nedeeds' dynasty by fire ensues. Charles E. Wilson critics the novel *Linden Hills* in the contents of *Gloria Naylor: A Critical Companion*. The bodies of Luther, Luther's white son and Willa catches fire, it turns out into an inferno. This results to ultimate destruction of their house. Willie and Lester looked at the burning home fire from outside:

When they realize that the Nedeed house is burning, and with Luther, Willa, and Sinclair inside, they attempt to alert nearby Tupelo Drive neighbors, all of whom ignore the repeated requests for assistance. Helplessly watching the house burn to complete destruction, Willie and Lester are dumb – founded at what they have just witnessed: the total abandonment and inhumanity of Linden Hills residents in regard to the Nedeed plight. In several of the last lines of the novel, both a stunned Lester and a baffled Willie repeat, “They let it burn”. (*L H 304*) (Wilson 71)

The novel ends with Willie and Lester to ponder on what has happened. Naylor's novel displays the pessimistic effects of response to Americans' trance. Those African – Americans wish to realize this dream in cost of their Black history and culture. Naylor represented the black middle class who have sacrificed their black identity to gain material success. The black gentry have regarded Luther Nedeed as their representative. Women in Linden Hills are silent because of patriarchal forces of Nedeeds'.

The silence of women in *Linden Hills* is a notifying commentary on connections of race and gender. It showcases how the patriarchal powers can combine with socio – economic foundations and add to their cruelty towards women. Gendered norms and practices, on the one hand strengthens the Nedeed women to remain silent in their endurance, and on the other made the Nedeed men relaxed in their cruel behaviour of their wives. Willa's willpower also gives emphasis to the message that women have to negate their silence with the purpose of having any vision of straight life. The novel accounts that the power, finance and tradition of patriarchy triumphs over racial oneness and that the gender issues have to be uttered about separately within the gambit of race.

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## Chapter 4

### MATRIARCHAL LINEAGE IN GLORIA NAYLOR'S *MAMA DAY*

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*Mama Day* (1988) is the third novel of Gloria Naylor. *Mama Day* (1988) was first published by Ticknor and Fields of United States in 1988. *Mama Day* (1988) firmed Naylor's status as one of the leading authors of the African-American women's fiction. Gloria Naylor's revival to get along with *Mama Day* (1988) with her preceding and subsequent novels starred her consequently to Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and others. The recurrent themes in her these novels are woman oppression, social stereotypes of gender, femininity and masculinity. Tender feelings of motherhood and struggle on economic aspects are the subsequent themes of novel. These novels are framed as quintessence of women bonding in incongruent generations. Naylor in her each novel contrives one step forward towards black spirituality. Naylor confluences past, present and future fixes this story of *Mama Day* (1988) in flashback, with reality, unreal and magic realism. Thus she mingles natural with supernatural.

The elements in Naylor texts simulate the distinct realities of black women. Black feminists influence masses to inter – link race with gender. Naylor's novels endorse education and black domesticity. *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), fictionalizes the psychological tension concerned by women to overcome their marginalized life as they remit heed to domestic tasks. In her context, as a woman Cora Lee is socialized to the conduct of mother. She rendered stiff seven children by six distinct men. Her relationships with these men were provisional ones. If she failed to resort to household tasks, these men were vehement and brutal towards her. In Cora Lee's plight, she is confined at home as an instance of black domesticity. She is aided monetarily by 'public assistance'. The work of aforementioned such many women is not outward home because of political conditions. The community influenced by the political system restricts the women at their "home". 'In the words of Stephen Henderson (1969), "survival motion", "Theirs is an attempt to negotiate a way through the strictures of bureaucracy that is white and patriarchal"' (*G N E N* 56). Naylor centre is on the lives of marginalized women, those works in private homes either of their white counterparts or black bourgeoisie. In *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) Mattie Michael's professional hours and drudgery could prove her necessity of

economic security. She remained frustrated from her occupation even after alternating countless jobs. Mattie is a solitary mother. As Mattie's son, Basil grew up; she worked on two jobs to owe her mortgaged home. The character Kiswana Browne desist her college education in affiliation to the Marxist movement. The proletariat society activist Kiswana Browne is not drudged in domesticity. For women, participation in travail force is fundamental prerequisite to appropriate immutability for proletariat society. Naylor created a community where these women slog outside home for their emancipation. Their desire for economic stability stimulates the women to slog outside home.

*Linden Hills* (1985) illustrates women inside home that is the perils of domesticity, varied from empowering the black community. The household works' that Nedeed wives enacted for domesticity result them to manias, desolation and degradation. The 'women domesticity' is revealed in this novel through manuscripts of Nedeed mother – in – laws. Evelyn's Nedeed wedlock turned depreciating, cooking turned into duress for her. Evelyn advertences to cooking of comestibles that gave her way to over eating and purging. Her recipes iterated her to cooking manias. The Nedeed wives were powerless to conduct positive changes. After the death of Willa's son, she transpires destructive for others and self – destructive to herself. In Willa's house – keeping, it ends to the doom of Nedeed family. Willa's contempt ends the entire Nedeed family and Willa in vain to devastation.

In the next novel *Mama Day* (1988), Cocoa preferred to subsist in old Willow Springs than in New York City. In Willow springs male inhabitants' chattered no better than New York men who were with better sense of humour. Cocoa moved to New York for education. Furthermore in Cocoa's life after rendering back home from New York to Willow Springs, during vacation she perceives household tasks. She performs tasks associated with cooking and household chores as depicted by Kathryn Rabuzzi like "housework as ritual enactment" (1982, 96). In Gloria Naylor's fiction "The home is not a neutral space", (*G N E N* 67) household tasks are performed as rituals in religious manner as it resolves for the struggle against women oppression. Homemaker gains respect for her work. Tasks associated with domestic works are later on affect political dimensions for women to stand for their rights. Women struggle for freedom is to acquire liberation from patriarchal authority. Their aim to achieve fraternity within women community across time and space is feminist demand in global sphere. Naylor

fictionalizes world fraternity both manhood and womanhood in global and worldwide perspectives. There must be inclusion of feminist voice for women liberation internationally. In *Gloria Naylor's Early Novels*, Maxine Lavon Montgomery details "Naylor texts imply that routine tasks such as cooking, cleaning, and mothering can be means of furthering the cause of freedom, and her novels chronicle an expansion of her artistic and political vision as women move – without moving – from margin to center" (*G N E N* 67). She explains about black women in detail in her novels.

Furthermore, end of the novel *Linden Hills* (1985) ensues in the inception story of the *Mama Day* (1988). Cocoa, OpheliaDay, as her epithet recognizes to her grandmother's family. Cocoa is solitary child left alone of her grandmother. In a conversation Cocoa explicates her employer the need of vacation. Cocoa laments, she has lost her cousin, Willa and their family last year.

*George: "The whole family? That's really terrible – what happened?"*

*Ophelia: "Did you read about the fire in Linden Hills this past Christmas?"*  
*"Well, that was my cousin, Willa and her husband and her son. It upset us all a lot."*

*George: "I did read about it. It was an awful, awful thing - and on Christmas of all days" (MD 31).*

The way of Naylor's depiction is "Naylor's own magic as a storyteller makes the unbelievable believable. Mixing lyrical delight with stark horror, her vividly imagined world is mesmerizingly authentic. Listen, her narrators beckon, and our truths of the spirit will set you free". – Southern Magazine.

"One is quickly beguiled..... so gracefully does Miss Naylor fuse together the epic and naturalistic, the magical, and the real". – The New York Times

Moreover Naylor explicates on the island of Willow Springs stays Mama Day, aged lady, as a matriarch with magical powers. Mama Day could raise lightening storms. Mama Day has also watched secrets in dreams. Mama Day has set her magical powers into practice, when her great – grand niece, Cocoa is under dilemma. The life and soul of obstinate Cocoa Day was in

quandary, because of Ruby's magical practices. *Mama Day* (1988) has become a powerful generational saga. The story of *Mama Day* (1988) is full of suspense and tender. One needs to apply wit with common sense to understand the magic realism in *Mama Day* (1988).

Diah Ariani Arimbi writes in, "Finding Feminist literary Reading Portrayals of Women in the 1920's Indonesian Literary Writings" that "Fiction becomes a manifestation in which its various forms are subjective to the ways societies comprehend and identify themselves and the world they live in or imagine." (Diah Ariani Arimbi, 2015 152) Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day* (1988) is a fiction. This fictional precinct of *Mama Day* (1988) is geographically defined on the Georgia sea island of Willow Springs, in accordance with Gloria Naylor. In *Mama Day* (1988) novel characters revere their ancestors whom arrived in Georgia Island as slaves. God has generated the universe within six days, according to Christian mythology. Gloria Naylor has created the world of Willow Springs in *Mama Day* (1988). Miranda Day is known as Mama Day. She was born in 1895. Mama Day is recognized in island as a women healer and a spiritual old lady. Folks confided that Mama Day is over 100 years and she is the true heir of Sapphira Wade. She is the great – aunt of Cocoa Day, the third generation woman central character of the novel. Cocoa in *Mama Day* (1988) cannot desert her past cultural heritage. Albeit she has surpassed her past manifold years in New York, she retrieves to Willow Springs, in her island with her husband George. George is an orphan. He is abandoned as an infant by her mother who is a prostitute. He has completed his education from New York. Ancestral grand - mother of Mama Day is Sapphira Wade. She countenances oppression because she is a slave lady, her description:

*Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> Day August 1819*

*Sold to Mister Bascombe wade of Willow Springs, and negress answering to the name Sapphira. Age 20, pure African stock Limbs and teeth sound. All warranty against the vices and maladies prescribed by the law do not hold forth; purchaser being in full knowledge – and affixing signature in witness thereof – that said Sapphira is half prime, inflicted with sullenness and entertains a bilious nature, having resisted under reasonable chastisement the performance of field or domestic labor. She has served on occasion in the capacity of midwife and nurse, not without extreme mischief and suspicion of delving in witchcraft.*

*Conditions of Sale*

*One – half gold tender, one – half goods in kind*

*Final*

*(MD)*

(Mama Day, beginning of the novel)

Slave narrator in *Linden Hills* (1985), Luwana Packerville narrated the theme of women oppression therewith Bible. Correspondingly, the slave of White Bascombe Wade and the Great – Grand mother of Mama Day, Sapphira Wade confronted woman exploitation. “Sapphira is legendary on the island. She is said to have been a conjure woman, capable of all kinds of black magic. Her descendants, the landowners and residents of Willow Springs, are able to earn a comfortable living farming the land and fishing, although some go to the mainland to work, and some have even moved to the mainland”. (Bookrags.com 7) In Willow Springs all the inhabitants communicates in relation to her that Sapphira was a conjurer woman. “She could walk through a lightning storm without being touched: grab a bolt of lightning in the palm of her hand: use the heat of lightning to start the kindling going under her medicine pot: depending upon which of us takes a mind to her”. (MD 3)

She could be defined as a domestic black female slave. Her bill of sale proclaims Bascombe wade as her purchaser. Bascombe Wade brutalized Sapphira Wade. Bascombe Wade as the master of Sapphira Wade instructed her to heavy menial labour in her acclimatizes life. Black women were required by their masters to be strong as masculine as their men. Black women performed labour as White men and Black men. Black women worked aforementioned as suggested by their masters. Angela Y. Davis in her book *Women, Race and Class* (2011) writes about black woman harassment. Some Black women were inwardly “broken and destroyed, yet the majority survived” (*Women, Race and Class* 11). Utmost of women overcame the destruction of their hopes and entails, “These black women acquired the qualities considered taboo by the nineteenth century ideology of womanhood” (Angela Y. Davis 2011). Sapphira Wade is the perfect example of one of those women. These black women even then affirmed self - pride, though they laboured and accomplished domestic tasks under the pressure of whip. These

black women had the enormous capabilities to provide labour and procreate. For, as Karl Marx put it, “labor is the living, shaping fire; it represents the impermanence of things their temporality” (*Grandrisse der kritik der Politischen Okunomie* 266). Thus black woman has learned to enunciate refrain from the woman oppression practiced in their everyday life circumstances. White racist masters conduct result black women to resist the accustomed dehumanization endured by bonded labourers and human slaves. Black women inordinate capability for hard slog may have built their high confidence level to struggle against black women oppression, black male de – masculinity, and to strengthen their families, their societies. Miss Richa Shrivastava and Prof. Rashmi Gaur compare their article Matriarchal Lineage in Gloria Naylor’s *Mama Day* (2013) with Toni Morrison’s novels *Beloved* and *Mercy*:

It is tempting at this stage to draw a comparison of *Mama Day* with Morrison’s novels *Beloved* and *Mercy*. These novels take up the insightful human features of the slavery system through powerful women characters. Victims of their master’s whims and aware of the total absence of any escape-routes, these women characters still wish their children to be somehow free, making motherhood to be a dominant trope. *Beloved* takes up these themes from the perspective of Sethe, a mother and slave in ‘Sweet Home’, a farm in Kentucky who comes to realize that definitions belong to definers. Determined to protect her children from a future which will unfold only as a repetition of her traumatic past, she tries to kill her children instead of surrendering them when she sees the School-master and the Sheriff approaching the house. (Gaur 106)

“...when she saw them coming and recognized the school teacher’s hat, she heard wings. Little hummingbirds stuck their needle beaks right through her head cloth into her hair and beat their wings. And if she thought anything, it was No. No. Nonono. Simple. She just flew. Collected every bit of life she had made, all the parts of her that were precious and fine and beautiful, and carried, pushed, dragged them through the veil, out, away, over there. Outside this place, where they would be safe” (*Beloved* 200).



In *Mercy* Floren's mother had to cast her daughter off to save her from a repeat destiny of commoditized exploitation. All these three novels hauntingly capture the emotional wreckage of those mothers who abandon their children to strangers, attempt to kill them or kill their masters and commit suicide. They do it out of love a helpless love, and a hope, pale and faint, yet still a hope. These acts cannot be judged from the standards of white liberated motherhood. Morrison and Naylor journey back into the past to re-inscript the history. These multifaceted fictional narratives of enslavement foreground the emotional complexities of the silenced or the repressed history of the early days of a country. (Shrivastava, Richa & Prof. Rashmi Gaur 105 – 117)

The female slaves were suppressed because of their gender. Judith Butler in her book *Gender Trouble* (1999) explains gender culturally. Women solidarity is constructed to invoke the feminist subject to distinguish between sex and gender. Biology is defined which formed sex. Gender is not the result of sex nor is it fixed as sex. The construction of gender is socially determined. Gender is determined on the basis of anatomically differences about bodies. The bodies are understood as inexorable rules about culture. According to Judith Butler “When the relevant “culture” that “constructs” gender is understood in terms of such a law or set of laws, then it seems that gender is determined and fixed as was under the biology – is destiny formulation. In such a case, not biology, but culture, becomes destiny” (*G T* 11, 12) (1999, 11; 12). Though, sex by all definition will come along with gender in relation to sexual characteristics. The body is considered as an instrument and medium through which culturally set meanings are communicated. Body in itself is a construction. “Bodies” constitute the domain of binary polarity themes. Bodies could not have significant existence without sexual characteristics on the purview of gender. Judith Butler questions to his readers, “the question that emerges: to what extent does the body come into being in and through the mark(s) of gender” (*G T* 12, 13)? Gender or sex is a free function as the subjects of study. Gender or sex is needed to limit the analysis that safeguards under the tenants of humanism. Humanism is a presupposition to verification of gender. The untraced centre, whether “sex” or “gender” foundational in very meaning of the “construction”, provided a clue up to what extent “culture” is responsible for analysis of “sex” or “gender” construction. The limitation of cultural possibilities may and might

not be further mobilized for future analysis. “The limits of the discursive analysis of gender presuppose and pre-empt the possibilities of imaginable and realizable gender configurations within culture. This is not to say that any and all gendered possibilities are open, but that the boundaries of analysis suggest the limits of a discursively conditioned experience” (*G T* 13). Culture is because of imagination and realization of hegemonic discourse. Within the boundaries of analysis the hegemonic cultural discourse is predicted on basis of binary structure of language there is distinction lies of in language. The fact that binary structured language applies as universally built rationality. The imagined domain of ‘gender’ is constrained by ‘language’.

In her review on *Mama Day*, according to Rachel Hass, “Language identifies people with their own particular history. Naylor uses the island dialect and modern English to place her novel on Willow Springs or in New York in doing so she brings separate world onto the same page without explanation or translation, and demands co – existence of the past with the present” (*G N C P P P* 23). Naylor bestows everyone an identity beyond gender trouble. Cocoa is the upholder of the vigour of Willow Springs. The mentality of George is that of opposite to Cocoa. In orphanage, the orphaned lads have learnt this by heart, that “Only the present has potential”. George belonged to such English attitude, as he is from New York. Cocoa as herself, “Before she met George, Cocoa identified persons of different ethnic groups by the food(s) associated with that group, a mode of reference offensive to George” (*G N A C C* 88). George persuaded Cocoa with his ideology to transform her retrospection about New York City. After the few weeks of engagement, Cocoa engaged less in stereotypes of gender. She engaged in worth and wealth admiration of New York diversities. In the novel *Mama Day* (1988), author does not come in light who narrates the story. As narrators island dialect identifies Cocoa’s feminine gender and modern English represents George’s masculine gender in the novel. After alteration of her perspective about New York, she has rummage about a new home for her in New York City. George and Cocoa walked down the aisle after their marriage in 1981. Thus, this is the initiation of a new relationship. Cocoa deemed their relationship as perfect. George’s insensitivity towards Cocoa results her upset about their relationship. She cogitated that she be bothered too much about George and their relationship. George’s opinion is, “You had the most disconcerting habit of calling me back and picking up a conversation where we may have left off two hours or even two days before”. (*M D* 121) Most often George even didn’t heed Cocoa, because she often picked up quarrels about his watching football games. George replied with a giggle to all her

angriness and he phrased her irritation as ‘woodwind instrument’. Furthermore George reminds of their first meeting:

“Cocoa meets George in August 1980 when she goes to his engineering firm, where he is co-partner, seeking employment as a receptionist. She is not awarded the job, but George, unbeknown to Cocoa, helps to secure Cocoa a job with one of the firm’s clients” (*G N A C C* 88). Thus, George plus Cocoa together maintains intermittent get in touch with each other. Although both contradict a passionate feeling with one another, Cocoa assumes George also diffident and detached. George deems Cocoa excessively exacting. Nonetheless, once almost immediately Cocoa joins in her latest employment, George requests her to feast. “The interaction is strained at best, unsalvageable at worst. However, George still wants to see Cocoa, mainly because he wants to convince her that even after seven years, she has not come to appreciate the real New York. In short, he wants to introduce her to this world, not as an outsider or a tourist, but as a participant”. (*G N A C C* 88) Subsequently, George intended for numerous weekends to serve up as Cocoa’s host because he endeavours to alter her estimation about metropolitan New York and the public over there. Prior to her meeting with George:

Cocoa identified persons of different ethnic groups by the food(s) associated with that group, a mode of reference offensive to George. Within a few weeks of their “courtship”, Cocoa engages less in stereotype and comes to appreciate the wealth of New York’s diversity. Suspending her former belief system in favour of George’s perspective of the city, Cocoa uncovers and discovers an entirely new home for she, and just as she embarks on a new relationship with George. By January 1981 Cocoa and George are married. (*G N A C C* 88, 89)

The initial period after their wedding is full with the distinctive modifications: to get involvement together, to gain freedom from loneliness, dividing homely tasks, controlling household monetary expenditure, whereas every time it’s difficult to maintain personal distinctiveness. “And for the first four years, George still insisted on their taking separate vacations, he to the Super Bowls every January and she back to Willow Springs for her annual August homecoming”. (*G N A C C* 88, 89) Cocoa would have chosen to take a trip in the

company of George; however she carries out to remain insightful to his zeal for games, which she does not contribute to, and to his fascination in the midst of job assignments (most important ones that at all times emerged during August). Ultimately, during 1985 George concurs to escort Cocoa on the way to Willow Springs, evermore, a choice that would facilitate to be a cause of their transformed lives.

His decision is to accompany Cocoa because he has been in love with her. George's first gaze for Cocoa, "the feeling is so strong, it almost physically stops me: *I will see that neck again*. Not her not the woman but the skin that is tinted from amber to cream as it stretches over the lean bone underneath" (*M D 27*). George assays to memorize hard that he has ever seen this woman before. It endeared George a few seconds when he glimpses her high cheek bones, pointed chin, slender profile. He was erroneous. He has never seen Cocoa before. George reminiscences, he was not able to descry her – "until the neck bent over the newspaper" (*M D 28*). Cocoa takes care of her. "I actually enjoyed polishing my nails or washing my hair and sitting in front of mirror to admire the effect – for myself. Anything that gave me pleasure wasn't a waste of time" (*M D 58*). Cocoa considers her as highly mannered, she believes to live without manners is to live lifeless she considers her meeting with George as to be a two minute debt to her upbringing:

George is a native New Yorker, and unlike Cocoa who was raised by family (her grandmother and great-aunt), George was raised in an orphanage. And though his early life was not as harsh as it might have been, he was raised with little opportunity for frivolous activity. His was a practical upbringing, and everything he does subsequent to leaving the orphanage has been planned, focused, and determined. Cocoa, on the other hand, has been catered to be her grandmother Abigail and even by her great-aunt Miranda (Mama Day), though Mama Day has also enforced discipline. (*G N A C C 88*)

Cocoa's hair allured George. He recollects the first time he saw her. "*And just imagine, Miss Day, when I passed you I said to myself, wouldn't it be funny if I saw her again?*" (*M D 28*) It's a wonderful experience for George as Cocoa approached and first strides into his office as a natural ice breaker for the interview. He hates being forced to judge others, for their qualifying talent and job aptitude. Cocoa sat down for interview. She sprint her fingers anxiously on the

curve of her neck “pushing up a few loose hairs and pushing me smack into a confrontation with fate” (*M D* 28). Cocoa did this unconsciously. George opined that “Someone had stuck a knife into my gut, because that’s the way I felt” (*M D* 28). This caused George to fall in love with Cocoa.

Cocoa allures George because of her super - fine manners. The magic realism has been used with imagery in *Mama Day* (1988). Cocoa strides so proud, “a sunflower against the arms over hers, the sweat flowing from the reddish gold hair and absorbing every bit of available light to fling it back against those high cheek bones, down the collar bone, on the line of pelvis, pressing against the thin summer cotton”( *M D* 47). Cocoa had lean thighs, she took long strides which present an image of “flashing light between the blur of strong legs – pure black” (*M D* 48). Abigail and Miranda Day were the matriarchal figures. They have taken after the sons. The men on this Earth have formed the lineage of Day family. These men were hard and dark brown. Baby girl brings forward the lineage of Great Grand Mother that is Sapphira Wade. Miranda Day and her family ruminates about Cocoa that:

We ain’t seen 18 and 23 black from the time till now. The black that can soak up all the light in Universe, can even swallow the sun. The silly children didn’t know that it’s the white in us that reflects all these shades of brown running around Willow Springs. But pure black woulda sucked it all in – and it’s only an ancient mother of pure black that one day spits out this kinda gold. (*M D* 48)

George is mesmerized by Cocoa’s beauty. George as black orphan, he is entangled in the cultural replication of the White Stereotype man. White cultural imitation is illustrated in the novel. George was segregated from his roots in his relationship with Cocoa which exhibit his conversion to white culture. He pondered about his love for Cocoa in adherence to White fictional world. He confesses his follies and foibles for Cocoa:

Conjured up images of jasmine – scented nights, warm biscuits and honey being brought to me on flowered China plates as you sat at my feet and rubbed your cheek against my knee. Go ahead and laugh, you have a perfect right. I had never been south, and you couldn’t count the times. I had spent in Miami at the Super

Bowl - - that city was a humid and pastel New York. So I did the same myths about southern women that you did about northern men (*MD* 33).

Cocoa deals with George consistent with the imagery of White world. The laconic communication between George and Cocoa is appropriated to White scripts of drama. George replicates him as modern Shakespeare. He exhibits the white culture, while he sends enticement to Cocoa with roses for dinner. On his note, he eagerly urges Cocoa to dine, “There are only eleven roses here. The twelfth is waiting on a table at Il Ponte Vecchio if you would like to retrieve it one evening” (*MD* 58). This White cultural flaunt lasts in Cocoa, she envisions, “Now, what kind of fudge stick asked a woman out like this – who’s this Guy used to dating Mary Tyler Moore?” (*MD* 58) George as a man had no prior apprehension; he “wants nothing from her but honesty” (*MD* 58) that’s his anticipation from Cocoa.

Cocoa ruminates about their relationship in this proclamation. “Grown women aren’t supposed to believe in Prince Charming and live happily-ever-after. Real life isn’t about that – so bring on the clouds” (*MD* 119). Cocoa is afraid of that their relationship may not get over like white Princess or Cinderella tales. George assumes himself is to inhabit with a female is a daily balancing act. He has taken pleasure in this challenge by dwelling with Cocoa. From the times, he has become right, Cocoa is different, and she has made him feel all the differences in his world. George’s foresightedness is that only a fool would squander his life looking about a perfect dream woman. He insights the right woman is that one with her, a man could spend his life. Not the one in his head.

In *Mama Day* (1988), George and Cocoa destine to disembark at the Southern island of Willow Springs. The relationship of George and Cocoa is put in test when they are home coming. George’s whose only apprehension of “miracles and immortality comes from football” (*MD* 124).

Even through George does not meet Abigail and Mama Day for four years, he has spoken with them numerous times on the phone, and he has favoured them with gifts and money he has ingratiated himself with the older women, who have since the marriage admonished Cocoa not to badger George about his busy schedule. Satisfied that George is a decent and sincere man, who loves Cocoa

unconditionally, they have content to meet him in his own time. Needless to say, when the day finally arrives, all of Willow Springs is abuzz with excitement, though Mama Day tries to mask her enthusiasm. Never to be outdone or outwitted, she maintains a calm demeanour while Abigail is practically manic as the time approaches. (*G N A C C* 89)

These both old women Mama Day and Abigail gave Cocoa and George warm welcome in their old ancestral traditional manner. The ancestral lineage of Mama Day has conveyed their cultural heritage to Cocoa. George inherits this black cultural replica. His voyage to Willow Springs crafts him “entering another world”. The meteoric dominion of Willow Springs is classified with a set of cultural beliefs and faith. The beliefs and faith intermingles to confront scepticism. Ultimately, their ritual practise is a cause which results to sacrificial death of George. However, *Mama Day* (1988) sensationalizes the heroic – tragic death of George’s sacrificial love towards Cocoa. Peter Ericson suggested in his Essay, “Shakespeare’s Black? The Role of Shakespeare in Naylor’s Novels”, ‘In spite of his failure, George initiates and shares the total peace: “there was total peace”’. As Mama Day envisages, his union with Cocoa is protracted after his death, in the course of her ongoing communication with him: “Whatever roads take her from, they’ll always lead back to you” (Shakespeare’s Black? The Role of Shakespeare in Naylor’s Novels – 239, 240). (Ericson: 1993).

In this novel, Mama Day and Abigail persist with their feminine struggle to keep their grand niece Cocoa Day alive. Bell Hooks manuscripts about feminist struggle to combat racism in her book ‘From Margin to Center (1984)’. In anticipation of their movement, feminists empowered the notion, “work liberates women”. Mostly marginalized women, working class women of colour and non – White women ascertained a large number of reasons to organize feminist movement. Women campaigned “wages for housework”. The organizers of these feminist movements brazen out the economic structure of capitalism but they could not fight half of the battle to earn economic security. Barber made a point that these women have a desire to relinquish their jobs. The work done by these women do not enfranchise them from racism and sexism:

Among many poorer Americans, liberation means the freedom of a mother finally to quit her job – to live the life of a capitalist stay – at – home as it were. Of course work for her has meant scrubbing floors or scouring toilets or sewing endless buttons on discount smocks, and has more to do with self – preservation than self – realization. Even the most debasing sort of menial labor can, it is true, be perceived as an escape from the pointed dilemmas of leisure – providing it is not compulsory. To be able to work and to have to work are two very different matters (Bell Hooks 96, 97).

These marginalized working-class women familiarizes that they neither have work satisfaction, nor the nature of work shown them the way to racial liberation. Their work either could be termed as ‘exploitative’ or ‘dehumanizing’. Their suspicion has arisen about bourgeoisie women assertion that “women would be liberated via work” (Bell Hooks, 1984, 96 – 97). Marginalized, poor, black women, women of colour felt menaced because they apprehended that new white collared jobs are generated for the masses of white women. These white women have sought to ingress new skilled jobs. These poor, black women, women of colour experienced that white women might qualify the white collared jobs of their black men and the men of black race might lose jobs.

Rita Mae Brown reveals on the black world of “*Mama Day* (1988)” published in the newspaper of *The Los Angeles Times* at 6 March 1988. Rita Mae Brown expresses Naylor’s views about racism. Naylor has manifested the vainness of White world to control the Black world. Black women and White women are distinguished by the colour of their skins in employment opportunities. Black women are acquired for Blue collared jobs, whereas White women are acquired for White collared jobs. After exploring for employment, Cocoa seeks out that looking for employment would be easier in New York City, if the employers have specified “Blacks” and “Whites” in their advertisement. She contemplated about racial segregation, because it brings forth clarity in the minds of job seekers and employers. George has logical mind because of his upbringing in an orphanage. George is an engineer by profession. Although George is black rather than his belongingness to black cultural materialism, his ideas are derived



to Whites world. Cocoa used kumquats, tacos and bagels as these short hands are regarded to black race. These short hands discriminated Cocoa as a black woman.

George does not compare himself with Cocoa. Even though George has been educated in English as because of White education system in New York but he is determined to find out his belongingness of black cultural materialism. George is firmly determined to locate his Willow Springs on map. He misallocated the longitude as 18 and 23. He misinterprets the location according to white system of education. "... but he done still made it to the conclusion that 18 and 23 at all - - was really 81 and 32, which just so happened to be the lines of longitude and latitude marking off where Willow Springs sits on the map. And we were just so damned dumb that we turned the whole thing around" (*MD* 7, 8). The islands of South Carolina and Georgia have turned into the Blacks world. The descendents of Sapphira Wade and Bascombe Wade are the owner of this land. Sapphira bore seven sons from her master, Bascombe Wade. She stabbed her white master, so the land could be freed from her master to her sons. Either she escapes to Africa or to death by catching rapid fire turning into the flames. After murder of her white master the land belongs to her sons. Furthermore, the fictional island of Willow Springs is empowered by the populace residing over there, that no outsider could own the land in Willow Springs. Naylor in her novels creates the Blacks' world of national importance and patriotism.

As Willow Springs is fictional island inhabited by Black Nationalist and patriotic people. Columbia and Atlanta were considered non – American. "America ain't entered the question at all when it came to our land. Sapphira was African – born, Bascombe Wade was from Norway, and it was the 18 and 23ing that went down two put deeds in our hands" (*MD* 5). There resided the off – springs of Bascombe Wade and matriarch Sapphira Wade. Then the whole island is inhabited by black people. No racial prejudices prevailed in fictional world of Willow Springs. That is why ghettos do not exist in Willow Springs of the novel *Mama Day* (1985).

During 1970s blacks become ethnically separated. Deprived blacks resided within the interior urban, ghettos of promoted lodging within America. At the same time as whites moved towards the prosperous neighbourhood of America. During the 1980s, a few of the blacks were advantaged by the economic gains. The increase in service resulted blacks to assurance blue collared jobs as African – Americans.

The first time, a large number of Blacks; African - Americans have the middle class status. A few of them moved into flourishing white neighbourhoods, most of them established their own communities, like those Naylor states in *Linden Hills* (1985). By this new progress, many Blacks writers including Gloria Naylor apprehended that Blacks middle – class community were happened to disassociate by their roots. They started adopting white values and beliefs as delineated in the novel *Mama Day* (1988). (Bookrags.com 37)

In the novel *Mama Day* (1988) black economic aspects are depicted. Sheila Radford Hill in her book *Further to Fly* (2000) discusses about black economy and trade policy in America. In the 1980s, few blacks have obtained the effects of the positive fiscal conditions and they obtained benefits from the economic boom. The reduced unemployment resulted to secure high-paid jobs for blacks. George in *Mama Day* personifies prosperous black gentry. He is black in colour, but practices white's standard of living. Some blacks become learned gentry but the mass of black people is yet of illiterates and uneducated. Black economic apprehensions inhibit black gentry into politics. Social consequences that exhibit economic decline are the flight away of capital from black people. White as well as black feminists have not given adequate attention towards the black economy declination. The capital is not in the hands of black people because of American trade policy towards black women. Although black and brown feminists have contemplated on the social issues of race, class and gender rather than focus analyses on economic framework.

This novel focuses about economic aspects and gender through its characters. George is the heroic character in the novel *Mama Day* (1988). His upbringing is of an orphanage named Wallace P. Andrews. In this boys' orphanage, when boys ever whined to state inspector about their castigations in their residence, nothing was ever been done for orphaned boys. The boys nurtured in Wallace P. Andrews. They could prepare their meals, paint own dorms, make most of the furniture; sew curtains and bed – sheets. Those all who turned out from the orphanage were not encumber some to the state. George added, “I don't know of anyone who became a drug addict, petty thief, or a derelict” (*MD* 26). No one grew up with the chimeras in their mind about oneself or about the world. Most of the boys as apprentices went from Wallace P. Andrews to

either trade or college. Those who could draw became draftsmen. Those who were interested in music learned to tune the pianos. Those poor kids, who were left, joined Arts College.

In the 1980's blacks had the better state of employment opportunities currently then previously. George the African – American consequential male character owned 'Andrew & Stein' the production and design company as a partnership firm. George with a new manager has to perform ground work for implementing Ray Hopewell's new piping system. George in his company is in partnership with Bruce. Bruce has done more than his major share of work in partnership account. The rest of the work is to be performed is left with George. George's work is paper file work with Ray Hopewell's piping system. In addition to this, George has responsibility of two more projects. George and Bruce have appointed one secretary who could not spell her own name without chewing a gum and a manager in assistance to their work. Finally George and Cocoa both are introduced:

Once she enters his life George is challenged to become less rigid and more flexible. Even the single act of meeting Cocoa begins to transform George's world from one of normal absolutes to one of mystery, imagination, and the unknown. George and Cocoa officially meet when she enters his firm to inquire about an advertised job, but they encounter each other earlier in the day at a coffee shop not too far from the firm..... Right away Cocoa forces George out of his "only the present has potential" mode. In considering these various "meetings" with Cocoa, George is dismantling the fixed boundaries between past, present, and future. For the first time in his life George is considering the possibility of spiritual connections, mystical alliances that defy explanations and logical conclusions. (*G N A C C* 92)

After Cocoa's marriage with George, she brings change in herself. She has been the only child of her grandmother. Abigail, her grandmother has brought up her. She feels "A particular obligation to make this parentless child happy, Cocoa is somewhat spoiled and self-centred, though not in an irredeemable way. Also instrumental in her life has been Mama Day, who has tempered Abigail's leniency with discipline and structure". (*G N A C C* 93) Subsequently, Cocoa

develops into a self – depend female. She leaves her maternal home of Willow Springs to make a living which typifies the reality about her shifting home to New York.

Furthermore, George provides Cocoa with an economic opportunity. He grants her the environment to grow and prosper. This is evident from Cocoa's written letters to Mama Day. Mama Day comments on George's courtship to Cocoa, "She's hard-headed and she's spoiled, and this is one who won't let her have her way. I'm starting to like him already". (*MD* 109)

Mama Day is certain that there must be something special about this new boyfriend, because George is the first man whom Cocoa has introduced to her family, even via letter. And Mama Day, pleased that Cocoa has met a man who will not relent to her every desire, appreciates the fact that Cocoa's continued development as a person and as a woman is contingent on her being challenged and defied at every opportunity. (*GNACC* 93)

Moreover, George and Cocoa begin dating. She examines his love for her by often playing childish games. She has no reasons to put him into tests:

She insists that he prove over and again his love for her. George is passionate about sports, especially professional football. During the season, his only request is that Monday nights be honored as his television night. However, Cocoa complains that if he loves her, he would be willing to forgo those nights every so often. But when George presses her on the issue and asks if she has some specific request for Monday night out, Cocoa demurs. (*GNACC* 93)

He thinks Cocoa is insensitive. Evidently, he proofs that she tortures him. There is as such no explicit reason for accusing him, as he is not a requirement to her if on Monday night. They must not get engaged in offending each other by hypothetical discussions. The novel represents their great expectations from each other:

"Still another significant link made in the novel is the one between the past and the present. Of course, Mama Day constructs such a link when she visits the ancestral home located at the other place, even stronger links between past and

present are made in the plight of Bernice Duvall and in the plight of Mama Day's and Abigail's mother Ophelia (for whom Cocoa was named)". (G N A C C 99)

Black slave females babies either died overboard or were killed with the will of their white masters. White slave owners and industrialists were open about the employment of the black women in their enterprises. Female slave workers were most income generating than either free workers or male slaves. They employed black female slaves and their children to reduce the production cost. The black female slaves required the lower cost of capital investment than black male slaves. The outcome production resulted in lower labour costs. This situation brings forth Black matriarchal society. According to prevailing ideology, black people were incapable of intellectual advancement. Black women and children were considered inferior than Whites, so they were predicted to neither have desire nor capacity to accomplish knowledge through studies. Black off - springs study need not have been assumed to be made compulsory. Black people have always exhumed furious impatience to seek inside educational institutes and colleges. Black children and women had always yearning for acquisition of knowledge. In the similar way, novel *Mama Day* (1988) emphasizes on the efforts of slave mother, Sapphira Wade to own land for her seven sons. Mama Day endeavours for Cocoa that she should forgo further education in New York. Further on, Mama Day helps to procure a job for Cocoa. In Generations of Day family black woman bonds exist.

Sheila Radford Hill details the various aspects of black women bonding in relation to thematic issues discussed. It is true about black woman bonding, that they have to empower themselves. Although decline in the support of black women empowerment rather than progressive social transformation in the black economy and society. Feminists defy thinking in the areas of race, class and gender. There has been decrease in implications of black Women Associations. Today the need has arisen for women bonding to exhibit the changes in economic condition and economic policies for blacks in the global context. Black women have already skipped many opportunities to strengthen black women bonding, to integral black women economic and social identity. Through, black women bonding would show the way to improve black women quality of lives. Therefore, black woman bonding is needed to be strengthening economic policies and to bring change in economic conditions of black labour force. Again,

Black women empowerment includes fulfilling the needs of their poor black children. Reduction is required in the issues of exploits of black children and black families for social conservation. To usurp the family values and morality a significant role is to be played by formulations of woman bonds for example black sisterhood. Black sisterhood has been stated in *Further to Fly* by Sheila Radford.

In other feminist novel, this novel portrays matriarchal society. Sapphira Wade is the ancestral matriarch of the Day's family. Juhasz, Suzanne has stated in her paper, 'The Magic Circle: Fictions of the Good Mothers in Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*' that "Sapphira Wade is the mother of this island, and if this novel is about mothers, it is the true story that puts its emphasis on maternal power". *Mama Day* (1988) is a fiction which includes true maternal love with her grand – child. Mama Day has no child as she never thought about her marriage. Abigail's, sister of Mama Day, had three children. Cocoa is the granddaughter of Abigail and she is grandniece of Mama Day. As for Mama Day, Cocoa is "a little ball of pale fire" who "kicked her right in the eye as she brought her up to her lips to suck the blood and mucous out of her nose" (*M D* 39) . On that time there were no aero planes and no automobiles. All that time nursing women had only tasks of bathing, clothing and mothers were feeding their children. "A voice dancing on the fading night wind, Mama and Child, Mama and sister" (*M D* 89). Mama Day has acted as a nurse for many children among the black folk. She could not count them. "I've had – Lord, can't count them – into the hundreds. Everybody's Mama now" (*M D* 89).

As title character and as matriarch of the Days, Mama Day serves as foundational character for the entire novel. Even before the focus moves completely to Willow Springs in the second half, Mama Day's presence is felt consistently in the New York segments, not only because Cocoa's visits to Willow Springs are interspersed in these segments, but also because Mama Day observes, assesses, and even impacts Cocoa's life from afar. She is an integral part of all that affects Cocoa. (*G N A C C* 94)

"Cocoa could always depend on Willow Springs to be her childhood sanctuary". (*G N A C P* 89) Mama Day not only brought up Cocoa, but we observe Cocoa has been delicacies by Mama Day. Cocoa has no parents from early childhood so Mama Day exhibits motherhood

stances. Mama Day props up Cocoa, when she goes for further education to New York. After her education Cocoa applies for job, she receives employers answer in affirmative. While Cocoa makes her initial visit to home subsequent to her interviewing for the occupation at George's firm, she withholds her opinion to Mama Day as well as to her granny Abigail so far as she might not acquire the employment as the bosses would have liked her to initiate job right then but she will be away:

Since she simply would not forgo her annual trip to Willow Springs, she knows they will not hold the job for her. Nevertheless, Mama Day urges Cocoa to write to the firm, thank them for their consideration, and inform them that she is still interested in employment. Though Cocoa thinks this will do no good, she, at least in her estimation, humors Mama Day and writes. Completing the task, Cocoa gives the letter to Mama Day who insists on mailing it herself. (*G N A C C* 94)

Once he receives the letter, George acknowledges Cocoa's letter is facilitating him to remember her. Already he has forgotten about Cocoa, The maternal love of Mama Day reoccurs while she inserts the powder in George's letter, which results him enigmatically to select Cocoa for job that assures her future compliance with George:

When he opens the envelope he notices a fine power has been sprinkled inside. Unable to identify what it is George finds himself reluctant to brush it away. From all indications the letter (the writing to which Mama Day initiated) has potentially served a dual purpose: sparking George's memory of Cocoa and renewing his affection for her. It is obvious that Mama Day sprinkled the mysterious powder in the envelope. Unbeknown to Cocoa, then, Mama Day, with her mystical prowess, is partially responsible for Cocoa's relationship and ultimate marriage. From the very beginning of the novel Mama Day is presented as forceful woman who perhaps possesses supernatural powers. (*G N A C C* 94)

Their accompany reveals "a movie being played in reverse frame to frame" (*M D* 34). After a wrangler in Cocoa's apartment, George soon leaves away her apartment. George waits all night to see Cocoa outside the building of her apartment. When Cocoa comes out from

building, she appears in front of George. His angriness at her, speaking, “My mother was a whore. And that’s why I don’t like being called the son of a bitch”. George pulls Cocoa near to Harlem stone which was beforehand used to indicate a whore house. He had been born there. His mother has left him, as she was fifteen years old. A man approached, he found George enfolded in a newspaper. That man has left George to Wallace P. Andrews. George goes on speaking about his mother abandonment to him. He remarks his status that he has “No Mother”. Then Cocoa asked George to marry her. Finally, he has anticipated his feelings to Cocoa. He has also left his thoughts which remembers him his past. Consequently, the grand – daughter of Abigail, Cocoa is involved with George, in her love – affair relationship. Her love story with George is sensational and enigmatic. “Although George has his problems too, George suffers from congenital heart syndrome. Cocoa attempts to accumulate in George’s idea of painting “The picture of a small rural community and (her) life with grandma and Mama Day. So it seemed like any other small southern town and they two old ladies doting over the last grandchild” (*M D* 126). Especially, Cocoa is incapable to think her destiny in cities. Cocoa is baby – girl, she is the only child alive to continue her generation going on

*Mama Day* (1988), maternal lineage and female bonding is essence. Naylor constructs three main maternal lineage bonding relations within women community. They are Sapphira Wade, her grand – daughter Miranda Day and her grand – niece Ophelia Day. Miranda is recognized as Mama Day and Ophelia responds to the name Cocoa Day. Mama Day has healed many inhabitants of Willow Springs. Her magical powers are inherited from her ancestors. Her Great – Grand mother. Sapphira Wade is a conjurer woman. She has served as mid – wife and nurse. “She could grab a bolt of lightning in palm of her hand”... “Turned the moon into slave” ... “healed the wounds of every creature walking up on two or down on four” (*M D* 5).

Mama Day as the character of novel is absolutely associated with women bonding. Mama Day is gifted child of John Paul. Abigail was not adept to seize her home and herself after the death of her baby daughter ‘Peace’. Abigail is not as strong as Mama Day. Mama Day hands are gifted, the folk recognized, “Gave to everybody but myself. Caught babies till it was too late to have my own” (*M D* 89). Mama Day has never married. She has proceeded as nurse in the delivery of children of other women. Up to it was too late for her to get married and have children. Mama Day has assisted Bernice as mid – wife for the efforts to conceive, deliver and bring up the baby. In the novel *Mama Day* (1988) women are strong to inbuilt and retain their



culture. The endeavours of Day family to instruct the descendents of their family, is to affirm their generational oneness with their matriarch ancestor Sapphira Wade of their island. Larry R. Andrews in her essay 'Black Sisterhood in Naylor's Fiction' affirms the life connections between Ophelia, as the power inherited by her from Miranda by the knowledge of her foremothers.

In *Mama Day* the power comes from folk tradition, from "for mothering", and from nature, as Naylor moves into the realm of matriarchal mythmaking. At its best this bond among possibility of its achievement grows in the course of the three novels. But although it is dramatized in the novels as clearly desirable, the success of female friendship, of the black womanhood, remains limited and potential. (*G N C P P P* 285, 301)

In novel *Mama Day* (1988), Willow Springs is inhabited by a divine woman, Mama Day. George an urbanite from New York came to Willow Springs. His wife Cocoa is a resident of Willow Springs. In *Mama Day* (1988), the household tasks enacted by women are described as rituals. Candle walk is the main festival of the fictional island of Willow Springs. According to black custom and religion Candle Walk is celebrated by black community in lieu of Christmas celebrated by White gentry. Candle walk is celebrated on December 22<sup>nd</sup> of every year, as they memorialize of their liberation in 1823. Sapphira Wade is a conjurer magical matriarch of the island. In memorial to Sapphira's death is celebrated as Candle Walk. Women works such as preparing meals and cooking, baking cakes are described in grounding for candle walk. They prepare orange potpourris, cakes and cookies. After many weeks of cooking, women are unified for Candle Walk. Their tradition is to carry the gifts and candles in the evening to their friends and relatives. Gifts are exchanged among islanders in respect of paying homage to their ancestral matriarch Sapphira wade. This confirms their oneness with their ancestor Sapphira wade. In *Mama Day* (1988), women follow the indigenous culture. They maintain their home as a part of spiritualism. When Mama Day was a child, folk met in the main road, linked their arms and raised candle. Black folk prayed Great Grandmother of all Sapphira Wade, to lead them with light. These folk sung ancient song. There were strings of light moving through the last woodland. Finally the light would bluff into the ocean. When Mama Day's father, John Paul was

a child, they worshipped his grandmother Sapphira Wade, who has freed them from the White Bascombe Wade. Through his grandmother they got the possession of island on this day so islanders celebrate Candle Walk, these people accumulated with feast and candle. Later on in the novel, Mama Day thinks that Candle Walk may not be celebrated with such pomp and show by future generation. She expects the festival Candle Walk would continue in the forthcoming generation.

George's life in Willow Springs is sacrificed for continuation of future generation in matriarchal lineage society of Sapphira Wade. In *Mama Day* (1988) home is a place without boundaries and grants the possibility of rebirth and renewal. Women did not consider their work burdensome. Maxine Lavon Montgomery in her research paper *Good Housekeeping: Domestic rituals in Gloria Naylor's Fiction* appraises females "Women's work takes on spiritual dimensions, allowing black women to transcend imposed notions of female place". (*Gloria Naylor's Early Novels* 64). In the novel, the text reveals "Women's expanding sphere of influence, even as it signals Naylor's artistic focus on women's spirituality" (*Gloria Naylor's Early Novels* 64).

In the novel *Mama Day* (1988), spirituality is coincided with the Black spiritualism that existed past in the reality. The real black spiritualism is related with liberation from bondage, ownership of land and religious education. Millions of Black people and especially women have emphasized the liberation towards education as "the coming of the Lord".

'This was the fulfilment of prophecy and legend. It was the Golden Dawn, after chains of a thousand years. It was everything miraculous and perfect and promising'.

'There was joy in the South. It rose like perfume – like a prayer. Men stood quivering. Slim, dark girls, wild and beautiful with wrinkled hair, wept silently young women, black tawny, white and golden lifted shivering hands, and broken mothers, black and grey raised voices and shouted to God across the fields and up to the rocks and the mountains'. (*Women, Race and Class* 99)

By these prayers black people were not offering hymns to religious frenzy. The emancipation meant for the black people to own the land, to want the ballot. They were liberated for the desire of education for their children. Black people have learned that they require emancipation. Their needs are land and political power. They have been denied in academics since centuries. “They would zealously assert their right to satisfy their profound craving for learning” (*W R C* 101). The education was their top priority.

Learning is the priority among black women either it could be education or household tasks. The characters in this novel are portrayed according to black matriarchal lineage. The character Abigail Day is Cocoa's grandmother. She is sister of Miranda Day. Abigail facilitated to bring up Cocoa Day; she is her nurturer and maternal figure. Whereas Mama Day is accountable to control Cocoa by discipline, Abigail is the basis of relieve and encouragement to Cocoa:

Most often coddling and spoiling her granddaughter. In short, Abigail functions as a foil to Mama Day. Early in the novel when Mama Day and Abigail are drafting one of their responses to Cocoa's monthly letters, it is Abigail's responsibility to write and to temper whatever harsh comments Mama Day has made. With painstaking effort Abigail forms euphemisms to mitigate what she considers Mama Day's offensive tone. (Charles E. Wilson, Jr. 95, 96)

When cocoa visits her home she is irritated with Mama Day. She thinks Mama Day would ruin her life. “(Mama Day especially disdains Cocoa's insistence on accompanying her old friends to social clubs) and threatens to shorten her visit and leave, it is Abigail, who must intervene, salves egos, and convince Cocoa to Stay” (Charles E. Wilson, Jr. 95, 96). Abigail rarely emerges on the beginning of novel. She is on the complete scene in the subsequent part of this fiction. While George and Cocoa are shipped to Willow Springs, thereafter her vigour of spirit is disclosed while Cocoa's sickness. “She does not possess the knowledge of the natural and supernatural worlds that Mama Day does, and when Cocoa is deathly ill, she can only sing and hope and try to feed her”. (Bookrags.com 25) To recover Cocoa from her illness she even does not visit even her own home. Furthermore, Cocoa faces worst condition. Abigail is strongly determined to save her granddaughter. “Never attempting to force George to participate in Mama Day's ritual, never badgering him about his obligations as a husband and soul mate, Abigail

simply shows her own concern by caring for Cocoa in a quiet, unobtrusive, selfless manner. And though Cocoa is mostly incoherent during the eight of her ailment, even she appreciates Abigail's fortitude and sincerity". (*G N A C C* 96) "Reflected off the clear brown of her irises" (*MD* 287).

The trustworthiness of Abigail's eyes highlights the loyalty of the woman, and her refusal to shed tears underscores her determination to be a stabilizing force during this tragedy. Resisting melodramatic outbursts, Abigail instead validates the seriousness of Cocoa's illness by not redirecting the focus on her. By the time the novel ends, Abigail has been dead for nine years, having died five years after George. She lived to fulfil her promises, to see Cocoa returned to health. But after she is confident that Cocoa has made not only a physical recovery, but also a reasonable emotional recovery, Abigail finally takes her sleep, as her duty has been fulfilled. (*Gloria Naylor A Critical Companion* 96)

Cocoa Day is the heroine of novel. "As the relationship between George and Cocoa dominates the novel, it is important to note how the theme of "bridging" functions with their story. Early on George and Cocoa are described as being very different, in terms of personality, family background, personal expectations, and general temperament" (Wilson 98). Cocoa carps that George is moreover challenging in his conduct. Cocoa proves he is not imaginative about dilemmas of others. On the other way George disputes so as to just sharing room with a lady is a dare.

Yet as different as they are, an inexplicable quality draws them to each other. Their emerging relationship-confusing, mysterious, erratic, yet enduring and magnetic defines the paradoxical nature of life that Naylor is highlighting. That we accept the mysterious nature of relationships (no two people who are radically different can explain why each is drawn to the other) but perhaps cannot accept the validity of other mysteries is, to be sure, contradictory and confusing. (Charles E. Wilson 98, 99)

Abigail's granddaughter is Cocoa Day. Nevertheless during connecting the George / Cocoa nuptial knot in front of diverse resistant residents of Willow Springs who were against their matrimony, Naylor strengthens the novel structure while she scrutinizes the divergence of plot construction for story lovers. Such indication becomes crystal clear whilst Mama Day, during her endeavour headed for induct George so as to they have to imply into the supernatural practice to facilitate keep Cocoa alive. This reminiscent George to facilitate himself in addition to Cocoa, therefore they both are in relationship together within an ethereal one, up till now combining manners. As a consequence of this mutual attachment, furthermore Cocoa is solitary with the purpose of glorifying straightforward judgment of Mama Day; therefore George is not aware of the outcome of these rituals which at last results into his death.

George tries his level best to save his wife, in her native town, when she faces danger: "You see, she done bound more than her flesh up with you. And since she's suffering from something more than the flesh, I can't do a thing without you" (*M D* 294). "In addition to highlighting the mystical bond between George and Cocoa, Mama Day also highlights the link between the mysticism of that bond and the mysticism (inexplicable circumstances) of Cocoa's illness, which entails the mysticism of the Willow Springs world." (*Gloria Naylor A Critical Companion* 99) The mystical element in the novel is their inseparable which exists even after the death of George; they both are soul mates to each other. Whereas spotlighting on the liaison of George with Cocoa it becomes too essential to notify the storyline composition of the tale along with its influence on the linking theme:

As noted earlier, both George and Cocoa, with little interruption, share narrative duties, as they speak intermittently to each other about their life together, George is, of course, narrating from the grave, and as such, he links death with life. Just as Mama Day bridges the gap between life and death when she visits the other place to commune with the spirit of her ancestors, George's narrative sections make a similar bridge. (*G N A C C* 99)

Whilst George concurs on the way to trip Willow Springs in company of her, Cocoa becomes nervous just before she explain him off to the urban persons, who constantly examines Cocoa similar to typical of freak on account of her brighter membrane. (Her relatives has pet

named her Cocoa to "put some color on her.") Except George does not realize her timidity, in addition to they got caught in a clash so as to warns to slash them away from each other. George is not able to understand Cocoa's trouble. Cocoa is tied emotionally with George so she tries to improve their relationship. She becomes a victim to Ruby. She is not aware of Ruby's intentions. Mama Day has no guessing about the envious emotions of Ruby, she has towards Cocoa. Incidentally Cocoa allows Ruby to braid her hair. However this happens, the rite which has assisted bond Cocoa to their social norms since her childhood, Ruby terrorizes to annihilate her. Finally, Ruby poisons Cocoa.

Throughout her subsequent sickness Cocoa has dreadful delusions and thrusts George further than her. She start on towards supposition that worms have occupied her physique plus they are ingesting her alive since within to outward. Simply the comforting pats of her grandmother's hands can remain the vermin off from consuming her. Following George saves her by surrendering his existence, plus Mama Day fosters her support to Cocoa for proper fitness. She departs her living away from New York and inhabits in Charleston, a Southern city that stays her close to her dwelling excluding Willow Springs not completely a fraction of it. After the death of George, Cocoa marries other man; she has two sons from him. She names one of her son George, after the name of her first husband. Whenever, she visits Willow Springs, people usually discuss, what has gone wrong with her first husband therefore he died. As Miranda Day further praises Cocoa, she is the only female as she has been finally been given the meaning of peace.

Cocoa's mother is Grace Day, "Ophelia's loss is linked not only to Bernice, but also to Cocoa. Though Abigail regrets the day her own daughter Grace named her baby Ophelia (Cocoa) and, in so doing, visits upon Cocoa the horrors of Ophelia's tortured life, somehow Mama Day and Abigail are comforted that Cocoa, by being the child of Grace (allegorically, grace), will survive whatever ills befall her". (*G N A C C*) Grace is the mother of Cocoa; she worried too much because her husband was disloyal to her. Grace worries resulted to her death. Thereafter Cocoa felt motherless.

In the second half of the novel, Mama Day must help her save her grandniece Cocoa. While she attempts to safeguard Cocoa from exterminating envy, she is capable of merely to ratify vengeance on Ruby as she toxins Cocoa. Mama Day by spraying a metallic powder in the region of Ruby's house, she grounds lightning to hit two times and exterminate her. She moves away towards another location, that she trips usually, to be trained from her Day ancestors how she can prevent Cocoa's illness. Utmost of the residents of Willow Springs' revere Mama Day's expertises, either in curing the patients or in warding off what they believe possibly curses on them will be corrected by an ominous practitioner. "Even Dr. Smithfield, the mainland physician who visits the needs no such validation, because she believes in the primacy of, and has witnessed the success of, natural cures," (Wilson 94. 95) Mama Day gains obligation after providing her services people appeal her whenever they want her herbal medication. As a dedicated herbal professional she almost refuses to be judged by the people as Dr. Buzzard:

Dr. Buzzard, the island's resident bootlegger, conjurer man, con artist, and gambling cheat almost everyone. Soon after George arrives with Cocoa in Willow Springs, he meets up with Buzzard, who proudly informs him that Mama Day is a bit jealous of the competition he offers to her practice, that they have a little professional rivalry afoot. When Mama Day hears of this insult she is incensed that the "shiftless, no-good, slew-footed, twisted-mouthed, slimy-backed" (191) Buzzard would even speak her name. (Wilson 94. 95)

Noticeably, Mama Day senses the aim of Buzzard in some way he reduces her attempts here to do lawful job. "Any practice that smacks of voodoo Mama Day disdains, and she would never identify herself as such" (*G N A C C* 95). At a standstill, while Cocoa undergoes her unbearable sickness at the hands of Ruby, the exceptionally envious professional of the occult and sufferer of low self-esteem is Ruby, Mama Day understands that she ought to combat this type of misfortune. Winning upon all the resilience since she can arrive from the different place:

Mama Day connects the rational world with the mystical world when she asks George to honor the promises he made to Cocoa in the rational world, but to do so by obeying the rules of Willow Springs. In a phone

conversation with Mama Day soon after he and Cocoa Marry, George assures her, “She [Cocoa] has all I have’ (136). Later challenging him, Mama Day wants George to open up his life just enough to accept an important part of Cocoa’s Willow Spring’s world. (Wilson 95)

Obviously, in return to do so, he necessitates postponing his logical belief as of the outside world. However the sacrament that Mama Day perseveres he achieves may appear ridiculous and ill-fated, he ought to perform the duty. “As the voice of reason and promise (which entails hope and having faith in the unknown), Mama Day, in fact, must bridge these two worlds”. (G N A C C 95) Like the main character of the novel, she stays on reliable all the way through novel; considering the potential of an enhanced day still while conditions appear to specify or else. The other character Ruby is vamp of the novel:

Ruby possesses great powers, but she uses them to hurt other women, in particular those to whom Junior Lee is attracted. She first puts a hex on his long-time girlfriend, who goes mad. Ruby makes Junior Lee marry her. She keeps a watchful eye over him. When Ruby catches Junior Lee making advances towards Cocoa, she lures Cocoa to her house and braids her hair, as she has done since Cocoa was a girl, combing poison into her hair and scalp. Mama Day uses her superior powers to kill Ruby with lightning as a result. (Bookrags.com 30)

The legend of Sapphira Wade belongs to her in Island of Willow Springs; she has migrated from Africa as a slave. She has murdered her white master and acquired the land with legal rights to her sons. In the fiction of Mama Day, Naylor writes the land rights of the island have belonged to Day family. Similarly, during Harlem renaissance, a large number of slaves have migrated from Africa to America. Zora Neale Hurston gives an account of this migration in her writings.

In *Black Feminist Criticism, Perspectives on Black Women Writers*, Barbara Christian remarks about Zora Neale Hurston, “There is no single face in nature because every eye that looks upon it, see’s it from its own angle. So everyman’s spice – box seasons his own food.”



– Zora Neale Hurston, *Dust Tracks on the Road*

“Zora Neale Hurston arrived in New York City with her own unique spice box at a time, when the Harlem Renaissance was just beginning to swing” (Hurston, Zora Neale; 1942) (*Dust Tracks on the Road* 61). In the decade heralding the way in Zora Neale Hurston, a large number of blacks had migrated from rural south to cities like New York. In the same manner, in fiction *Mama Day* (1988), Cocoa has migrated from Willow Springs to New York for job and further education. “Out of this great migration emerged Harlem, the mecca of the black world in the twenties” (*B F C* 7). A new pride for their race emerged between black people. The wealth of black literature has bloomed. Black women have migrated to city for new life but they found their substantial importance remained the same. They appeared in the new apparels. In olden times, they were housekeepers, cooks and cotton pickers. In new era, they emerged as domestic, garment factory workers and sweepers – “they became the hard bottom of the labor market” (*B F C* 8). The blacks emerged in America with blue collared jobs. Black people have developed their culture and tradition.

Naylor’s Willow Springs is criticized based on Hazel V. Carby’s analysis of black rituals and black tradition. According to Carby the contemporary political situation is focused on urban areas. The current literary criticism has limited the black tradition to bona fide urban areas. Carby persuades us that evasions to black inter – generational tradition is levelled in the 1990’s in black society. *Mama Day* does not evade the black tradition. *Mama Day* sensationalizes the political struggle with cultural beliefs. In this novel, George leaves New York without regret. *Mama Day*’s scepticism is revealed through magical witch craft, cultural belief and faith. *Mama Day*’s exploration of White society in relation to Shakespeare is subject to criticism under black cultural heritage.

Gloria Naylor’s novel is admirable. The feminist pace is indicated within many women characters in the novel. *Mama Day* is a “spirit in the woods” (*M D* 79) whose walking stick is a magic wand. “A wave over a patch of zinnias and the scarlet petals take flight... Winged marigolds follow them into the air ... A thump of the stick: morning glories start to sing” (*M D* 152). *Mama Day* has her attunement to natural resources. She is the healing magician matriarch in island. The other magician vamp is Ruby. “That the roots she’s working may have got Junior Lee to the altar for her, but Ruby being so much older than him, she’ll be dead before he finds

his way into all of that. Or him having the reputation of being far less than ambitious; he'll tire out on the wedding night just trying to roll up her gown" (*M D* 134). One of the island inhabitants Ruby is a superficial friend of Days family. Ruby is suspicious about Cocoa on top of she is jealous of Cocoa's happy marriage. Ruby emerges as a vamp. Her marriage with young Hazel Junior Lee is unsuccessful. Ruby experiences her as insecure from Cocoa, so she decides to poison Cocoa's hair. Ruby calls Cocoa at her home to braid Cocoa's hair. "Yeah, Junior Lee was a trial to her – and it's time she was judge and the jury. A soft hypnotic voice with firm fingers massaging that warm solution into my scalp" (*M D* 246). Cocoa has been poisoned by Ruby. Ruby almost kills Cocoa by her "hoodoo" practices. George views the worsening condition of Cocoa. George is not able to realize her sickness. George has the practical mind of the engineer. Though, Mama Day with gifted hands is more efficient than the "hoodoo" practitioner Ruby. Ophelia has emerged a victim to Ruby. Mama Day as a women healer is to save Cocoa from the hoodoo practices on Ophelia (Cocoa) by Ruby. She has in her disposal magical powers from nature and natural herbs. The greatest "Miranda is staring past her dried herbs, past the birth of Hope and Grace, past the mother who ended her life in The Sound, on to the Mother who began the Days" (*M D* 262). "She smells the bloods from the broken hearts of men who they cursed for not letting them go" (*M D* 263). Cocoa's physical and mental worsening takes place, she begins to hallucinate "The heavy trembling of Abigail's hands as she brings the cup to her lips is enough alone to make Miranda kill Ruby. She ain't had to go in that bedroom and see them red splotches around Cocoa's temples. To bend down and sniff the scalp between the parts of her hair" (*M D* 264). Miranda cuts of Cocoa's braid until "the plaits woven next to the scalp" (*M D* 264). At first, Miranda applies Charcoal paste in her head. Then Miranda massages greyish paste into her scalp. Then Miranda rinses the paste from Cocoa's head. "It's like feeding her when she was a baby, propping up her chin, prying open her lips with the tip of the spoon" (*M D* 265). Finally the solution of Cocoa's recovery reflected in the eyes of Mama Day. Mama Day informed Abigail that she would entail the facilitation of George to heal Cocoa. George accepted the scepticism in his belief to save Cocoa. Mama Day expects George to make "bridge for Baby girl". George is unable to join hands with Mama Day. George faith wavers on the attunement of Mama Day as a natural healer. George has to learn the practices of other World to make Cocoa fit; Abigail and Mama Day were reluctant to tell him the truth.

George is linked to Cocoa with love and emotional attachment. George agreed to perform a ritual. George has learnt to perform the task solicited by Mama Day to save Cocoa from death. George has to pursue Mama Day's directions. Mama Day has instructed George to retrieve the contents of the selected hen from her chicken coop. After bringing the contents George must move to other place to heal Cocoa. He arrived at Mama Day's chicken coop. "*There was row after row of yellow eyes, glinting at me from all sides. The northwest corner of the coop*" (M D 300). George has a weak heart. After retrieving the contents from chicken coop. George is attacked by chickens that causes him heart – ache. "Bring me straight back whatever you find. But there was nothing to bring her. *Bring me straight back whatever you find*. Could it be that she wanted nothing but my hands"? (M D 300) As a result, Mama Day puts into sacrifice George's life. The remedies and healing could work only after the death of George, as he had been an important character in Cocoa's life. Finally George dies; he sacrifices his life so Cocoa could recover from illness and to live a long life. Mama Day proves herself victorious by saving her grand – niece, Ophelia (Cocoa) from Ruby's hatred and jealousy. Cocoa and George could be compared with Jack and Rose of the movie Titanic (1997). George sacrifices his life, so Cocoa could live her life. In the same manner, Jack has sacrificed his life so that Rose could have her future life. After the sacrificial death of George, Cocoa remarries someone else. She gives birth to her two sons. Cocoa names her second son 'George' in remembrance of her first husband George. In this way, she pays homage for her undying love towards George, her former husband.

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## Chapter 5

### ***BAILEY'S CAFE AND THE MEN OF BREWSTER PLACE***

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Bailey's Café is the fourth novel of Gloria Naylor. Its first Edition is in the year 1993, since then this publication is under Vintage Contemporaries. Gloria Naylor has written her first novel *The Women of Brewster Place* in (1982), which has set up her as a gifted novelist; her subsequent fictions are *Linden Hills* (1985) and *Mama Day* (1988). Her second novel *Linden Hills* (1985) is famous for original rationalization of black middle class. Critics have erroneous her novel in meticulous observance to Dante's *Inferno* (1320). Her third novel *Mama Day* (1988) is fusion of social satires and verbal folklore. Reviewers retrograde Naylor's *Mama Day* (1988) for surplus symbolism. These novels have enhanced her reputation. She seeks recognition after the publication of *Bailey's Café* (1993) among her audience. Eventually with the addition of *Bailey's Café*, Naylor persists to explore and assimilate Western culture. She explicates the appropriation of black familiar stories with western culture. By the modification of contents, she recasts them in a different way. In her novel *Bailey's Café*, Naylor de - establishes the ontological boundaries. She de - centre the boundaries of gender, genre, class, culture, political history. Her every text binds reciprocal relationship with the text already fore grounded. Her every version connects the reciprocal text with implicate inter -textuality. She makes the increasing use of inter - textuality in her novels. With the addition of, *Bailey's Café* (1992) in her quartets of novels, the text reflects self response towards the regeneration of inter - woven text.

When inter - woven texts are borrowed from other novels displays inter - textuality. Inter - textuality structured in her novel is reflected from, *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), her crucial attempt has been to create a genre of her own. Rebecca Carroll in her book, *I know What the Red Clay Looks Like* (1994)', mentioned Gloria Naylor, "The quartet of novels" have been assumed, "would be a foundation of [her] career (Carroll 160)". Their interconnections have been formed from her first novel. Inter - textuality has been formed in the linked pattern in this manner. Kiswana Browne runs her Movement in the Brewster Place, but she belongs to Linden Hills. George has been dislocated from *Bailey's Café* to New York. At the end, George's life



ends in Willow Springs, while saving life of her wife Cocoa as advised by Mama Day. Willa Prescott Nedeed of Linden Hills and Ophelia Day nicknamed Cocoa of Willow Springs are cousins; they both belong to ancestral lineage of Mama Day whose true matriarch is Sapphira Wade. Similarly Naylor weaves and inter weaves the strands of distinct stories with the related characters in similar novels. Thus, she creates interests in her upcoming novels.

With the last novel, *Bailey's Café*, I have done the quartet of novel that I had dreamed about I look back, I finished the quartet. This was to lay the basis or foundation – I saw it like this little square foundation – for a career I was going to build. So I now believe that I will have the kind of career I want – Gloria Naylor.

[A] Remarkable novel ....Naylor has transcended the realism of her [previous] three novels to find means a new to give voice to the suffering of black women. In *Bailey's café* that voice is poetic and profound". – New York Daily News

Fowler gets influenced from Naylor's views, as Virginia Fowler comments on Naylor, in *Gloria Naylor: In Search of a Sanctuary (1996)*, she, "dares to engage important issues affecting women of colour world – wide and thus rescues the stories of women from silence to oblivion. At a time, when women across the globe are experiencing unprecedented oppression, Naylor's voice is a clarion that demands to be heard" (Fowler 193).

"Bailey's Café is a half way house – half way between the finite and the infinite, half way between the belief that the universe cares for us as individuals and the evidence that it does not" (Fowler 26). These lines are depicted by Karen Joy Fowler for *Bailey's Café (1992)* in "The Chicago Tribune (1992)" published by *Gloria Naylor: Critical Perspectives Past and Present (1993)*. These two arrangements appear reciprocally excluded. It's delightful to observe that Naylor does argue matters on both sides. In spite of disagreement *Bailey's Café* is a real restaurant. *Bailey's Café* opens from the edge of front door and annulled (illegal relationship) takes place at the back. Angela diPace States in "Gloria Naylor's *Bailey's Café*: A Panic Reading of *Bailey's Narrative*" published by *The Critical Response to Gloria Naylor (1997)*, "Whereas for others, it may be the place of infinite possibility" (76), -- "The back door [that] opens out to a void" (BC 76), ("Gloria Naylor's *Bailey's Café*" 195). People do arrive at *Bailey's Café (1992)*,

when they derive are completely dejected. Bailey's Café proffers customers a fixed menu for each day except weekends. Almost all food is available on weekends. There is no time consumption in a definite period of time during weekends, their customers has to wait for entry in Eve's boarding house. This has been validated by owner of Bailey's Café. Eve's boarding house is a way station. She runs a brothel down in street. Eve does not guarantee any one assuage of dejection. The current chapter is an attempt to intricate and elaborate the conditions of women in Eve's boarding house.

African – American writer Gloria Naylor portrays Oppression of Gender through impoverished and deprived black female characters in her fourth novel *Bailey's Café* (1992). These women battle against society to find out their importance in society, their right to thrive out in social survival. These black women face defied resistance in the potential arena of race, class and gender. Bailey's café women sexuality is the major constraint that proves hindrance in their acceptance in society. Naylor implicates the entire procedure of women objectification. The central characters in this novel are Sadie, Esther, Peaches, Jesse Bell and Eve. These black women are recognized as prostitutes in African – American society of *Bailey's Cafe*.

Else, they are denied political and economic rights. These whores suffer racism and brutalized sexuality. Naylor has created meticulous, intricate, de – humanizing realistic attitude towards the black women who struggled for black feminism. In appropriation of freedom to whores through “black feminist” lens, the interrogated notion is of “Two fold risk”. The notion of “Two fold risk” envisages a feminist to vision primarily, Black women as whores, suffrage of unpleasant incidents, secondary to apply black women experiences of their life as prostitute in Black women's literature.

One of the examples of these whores is Sadie; she belongs to Bailey's cafe. Sadie could not liberate her from domestic household chores after her marriage with Daniel. She is oppressed by Daniel for performing household chores that intensifies her feeling regarding woman in bondage. “She turned up the unpaved road leading to the settlement of shanties (64)”. Both of them had their shanty room (a crudely built hut) residence. Naylor has focused on the daily house – hold routine tasks. Their house is situated near railway tracks, “The trains thundering by became one train”, (64) where goods train carrying coal and petrol nearby their house emits dust and smoke. Though Daniel does not appreciate her efforts but she keeps continuously involved

in housekeeping. Sadie finds her domestic tasks inexorable, inevitable and oppressive. Even after her fanatical devotion to household tasks, she is not able to transform her shanty living place into her dream house space. Daniel assessments about his home to Sadie as, “woman, this is my damn house” (BC 55). Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar submits Sadie household task as “the architecture of patriarchy and thus to the imprisonment Sadie experiences” (1979, 85). Death of her older husband frees Sadie from oppression and woman bondage enforced by her husband, but she is not liberated from household domestic chores. She attempts to gross a living by becoming a domestic servant. She fall shorts in her endeavours to serve as a household cleaner and domestic servant, so she turns from a widow into prostitute to earn money. She sells herself too many places to earn money. Her move to Bailey’s Café finales her search for a living ‘space’, that is home. Her journey in Eve’s place starts with endurance of pain. She acquires woman shelter but she endures the plight of epoch of time as coloured woman in the city. In case of Sadie her marriage additionally her life as a prostitute has been compared.

As scrutinized by Simone De Beauvoir, marriage could be directly reciprocated with prostitution. Prostitution is practiced from historic times. Whores are imbibed as dark shadow in a family. Family, especially husband anticipates chastity from his wife; he himself inflicts sovereignty as well as control on her. But he does not entail to need moral attitude towards him. In *The Second Sex* (1997) authored by Simone de Beauvoir, she states Montaigne with approval:

The kings of Persia part were wont to invite their wives to join them in their banquets; but when the wine began to excite them in good earnest and they felt impelled to give the reins to sensuality, they sent them away in their private apartments, that they might not make them partake of their immoderate lust, and caused other women to come in their stead, towards whom they did not feel such an obligation of respect (Beauvoir 568).

Fathers of Church have been remarked to thwart one part of female sex, ‘White females’ from exploitation and most terrible nuisances, other females ‘black females’ are sacrificed. Americans support of ‘prostitution as an institution’. Southern Whites mull over prostitutes as “shameless women”. White females are reflected on as docile, meek and polite among them. White female are treated with utmost gallant reverence. While, on the other hand, “the prostitute is a scapegoat: man vents his turpitude upon her, and he rejects her. Whether she is put legally

under police supervision or works illegally in secret, she is in any case treated as a pariah” (Beauvoir 569).

Gloria Naylor has depicted through her literary skills the portrayal of repressed women. Those black women have to do put into effect them sexually either in regard to own choice or in consideration forcibly. Either they have practiced resistance against female domination or they have to somehow overcome stereotypes of gender oppression. Gloria Naylor’s women characters have faced with oppression, repression and exploitation by patriarchal power. All women at Eve’s boarding house are familiar with similarity in experiences of gender subjugation and their exploitation. Gender subjugation by patriarchal society readies them to withstand all sorts of compulsions and disorders in their lives. To overcome patriarchal power, these women form a cohesive bond which brings them together as sisters. Naylor subordinated by Eve, so in *Bailey’s Café* such sisters struggle against patriarchal powers. Eve’s boarding house defies authority and repression.

Eve is the most powerful woman in novel *Bailey’s Café* (1992). Bailey’s wife is the second powerful woman, we are aware of is Nadine. She is Bailey’s wife. Bailey has already denoted his courtship about her. He has seen her at a Baseball game. Even though, he chased her but he is too much afraid of to catch the attention of her towards him. Consequently, when Bailey flings a sherbet cone down to her dress, “Then, she smacked me in the head with her straw purse”, this has been the beginning of courtship of Bailey. He apprehends that Nadine does not take pleasure in dating with him that he points out from Nadine; she does not smile during her dates with him. Then, in their courtship, Bailey commits an error by evaluation of Nadine that he estimates ‘no smile’ as an abnormal behaviour. Nadine answered Bailey’s pointing out with “But what does that (smiling) have to do with being pleased (*B C 17*)?” Bailey gets peeved and upset completely. Bailey does not have a word, in Nadine’s response; again there had been no smile. Smile as an emblem has no guess of her real mood and behaviour reflection. Nadine accepts Bailey’s marriage proposal. His marriage proposal has been conducive as well suitable as to her. Therefore this has been gendered discussion about Bailey and Nadine.

Furthermore an illustration about gender is given. In 1982 Ivan Illich was chosen as lecturer in University of California, Berkeley. His expertise is on the field of gendered studies. Gender studies have been the area of women expertise for Illich. He was honoured for a subject

pioneered by women. Illich draw ends about women's place in society. This paper presentation is written for a symposium on Illich's concept of gender, which has been organized by women studies. Illich has forged idea about the conditions of African women in African society. He argued against women's world wide attempt to achieve equality. Illich's "gendered seythe's" focuses on his inaptness of ideas about gender. The major premise of Ivan Illich's for human beings is that "We are created not of human species but as male and female". One major image of negritude movement is that African women in their role remain silent, untouched by the Western culture. Similarly, Bailey's wife is an epitome of African woman. She is a woman who is faithful to Bailey all through his years of combating war in Hiroshima and Nagasaki. She remains faithful to him, until he arrives back to his own land and they live together again. Bailey loves his wife a lot. It has been a hard time for him, when he confronts to war. Even though paired loved each other, when they were apart from each other more than twenty – five years due to war.

On the one hand, in novel great love between Nadine and Bailey has been discussed, on the other hand Naylor discusses prostitution in Bailey's cafe (1992). Certain outlooks on femininity are opinionated by Simone De Beauvoir in her book '*The Second Sex (1997)*'. In prostitution, contentment of male desire takes place. Desire might be explicit and open no affair about individualized body. Man could never be exploited. Neither wife, nor prostitute and even no chance for whore to oppress man for sex. A male could be exploited if a female accomplishes individual ascendancy over him. The dissimilarity between prostitute and wife exists; legalized wife could be oppressed as married woman. She is esteemed by others as human beings. As long as prostitution exists, the whores do not get rights of humanism. If summed up, prostitute endures all forms of feminine slavery. Eve is a customer of Bailey's Café. As a proprietor of boarding house, she seizes and grabs hold of more power than anyone else in Bailey's Café. She doesn't have any influence of charity being given to her. She admits the man at her boarding house who offers expense to her, owing to wild flowers purchased from her garden. Eve is here in a conversation with a nun.

- Everything in that house is for sale. (Nun)
- When you have a house full of single women there are gonna be gentleman callers. (Eve)
- Gentleman callers? Lord Jesus.(Nun)
- And I was taught a gentleman buys a lady flowers,(Eve)
- Ladies? Lord..... (Nun) (*B C 92*).

Eve “passes no judgment on the behaviour of those women once she lets them live there, and she passes no judgment on their visitors” (92). Eve’s boarding house makes possible these whores to live on their own terms and conditions.

Other than this there is an anecdote about Bailey. During Second World War II, American military informed American army to follow orders to fight war. Bailey contributed in fighting war from land to land. As American army troops get closer to Tokyo, the killing and mass destruction atrocities occurred. This destructive war has been in catalogue of Bailey.

As inch by inch, island by island, we were pushing them back. And they told me I was on the winning side; long before the A- bomb was dropped. But believe me, I understand about the bomb. Because even with every Medal of Honor they gave me, every victory broadcast, every assembly called to hear the latest greetings from my supreme commander, I wasn’t gonna win a war from the sea or in the air, I had to win it on land –

*We weren’t getting into Tokyo*

- The enemy’s land (*BC 23*).

Bailey with his troops at Okinawa has decimated hundreds of Japanese; Bailey further realized in Tokyo, they weren’t getting into war with weak people, that he could not countenance children, physically challenged and the old people. These people were awaiting war to rest in Tokyo. For Bailey war became unbearable. He came out live. Even though he knew if he leaves war, he would be doomed. Bailey survives. In exchange for his life, he has shot the living bodies at Hiroshima, Manila, Nagasaki and Okinawa, Pika – Don. But at Nagasaki, count the dead bodies for – unborn children. Their mothers died pregnant whose children had to be born.

Bailey kismet stays alive while to overcome with the catastrophe that could have been thwarted and stopped. He had been fated to live on his own secret hell. “Take”, “This Cross from me. And yes, I offered any God who would answer the rights to my unborn children. And the only god to answer claimed them (*B C 26*)”. Bailey’s will to survive destroys the lives of others. He gains nothing but loses all in his bargain to live. Bailey thinks, “My seed rained on that city from black clouds, withering the camellias, curling the leaves of oaks, scalding the feathers of songbirds. My seed flowed with the inland tides, sweeping heaps of trout and salmon into piles among the rotting sea turtles”. (26) Bailey contributed in devastation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Therefore his manliness incessancy is wasted by dispersal of his seeds, Thereafter he turns into an old man.

Another black man who is victim of Whites injustice is Stanley, once he has fame. Stanley, his middle name is Backworth Booker Y. Washington Carver is announced as compendium of historically black men of fame. He goes with his Papa to surprise him with high school reward. He is presented with a set of Shakespeare volumes that arises his curiosity. In resent, White Gatlin brothers have ridiculed Stanley and his father, including black men and men of colour. They are assaulted aftermath the presentation of gift of Shakespeare works. Although they damaged their English books, “[t]he silk cover was gouged with holes, the spine busted and bent over double. They’d torn out handfuls of pages, crushed what was left between their fists, and then urinated on the whole thing. The stench of *The Tempest* was quickly filling that close room” (183). Stanley is whipped by White men in a bare position; meanwhile Gatlins’ beaten up and bolted both of them, son and father. White Gatlin brothers were neither contented by striping Stanley and his father naked. Otherwise, White Gatlins were not satisfied with father and son when they left behind them bolted in store room. Stanley tensed: “My father took the dress and forced me to take the corset: Don’t be foolish; things might turn ugly out there, and you can see that they’re the types who go straight for the balls” (*BC 184*). Stanley’s father provided him with the clothing at his undertaking, “a red taffeta dress with spaghetti skirt, puffed out with yards of lace crinoline” (*B C 184*). This dress might help them to vanquish the red neck white boys. However, he procured physical protection by dressing up in woman’s outfit. Finally he was able to protect his waist and its underneath. Harassment that Stanley has suffered by Gatlins is more mental than physical.

Aftermath, both of them go away from room in ladies outfit; Gatlins amaze themselves, “They laughed so hard their knees got weak. But Papa waited until the noise died down...” (184). Stanley and his papa have assumed that as they both were in ladies outfits demarked their surrender to Gatlin brothers, those were Whites. Stanley feels contempt after his father’s surrender to Gatlins. He has doubted manliness of his Papa, who is a peace loving man. His papa ignores racial discrimination and disdains meet head-on. His father confronted violently with brutality in front of Gatlin brothers, “headed straight for the big one and spoke to him first. Grabbing him by the collar, he slammed his face down on the counter and dragged his unconscious body along the whole length of it, the fat Gatlin picking up splinters in his broken nose and leaving behind a trail of blood and clipped teeth” (184). The Gatlin brother injures.

Stanley suffers racial discrimination, even after learning his oppressors’ language, he is yet oppressed. Importantly, the unknown language of his oppressors, Stanley opinions that “language” spoken by the one is one’s representation of symbolism. Stanley picks up the mistake of his father; it has been cause of fight. His papa always prefers him to teach English language than other languages. As English has been the dialect of Whites’, their conscience and ideological structure depends upon English dialect. Stanley’s father directs him to become skilled at English language so that he may understand the perception of whole world. Stanley has earned his PhD degree of Mathematics at Stand-ford. He has toured all along America in summer time of 1948 to look for a job for the designation of statistical analyst in marketing. He applies for 99 jobs; he has been rebuffed in all these jobs because of his race. He apprehends in 1948 that as a Negro, he has no future prospects to acquire a job in America for that he applied. Neither male costumes, nor male macho man gestures prove one of from a particular race. Thus inheritance of manly attitude in terms of peace, compliance, acquisition of language, leads Stanley to arise inner strength. Then, he refused to battle field in World War II. In this way he protested against American racist attitude and racial hypocrisy. Karen Scheindler reviews racial derogation in “Gloria Naylor’s Poetics of Emancipation: [E] merging [I M] possibilities in *Bailey’s Café*” at year (1999), about Stanley’s blues, “Stanley has violated his self – respect, self – assertion, he bears a woman name and adopts a woman outfit aftermath his imprisonment in jailhouse rapes” (Scheindler 8). Stanley transformation takes place from a sweating gray – flannel corporate aspirant to a real housekeeper at Eve’s boarding house. Currently, he puts on



his sweltering gray flannel suit as a comfortable house dress. In Eve's house, he is recognized as Ms. Maple. Thus in this way, Stanley takes up his financial activity.

As we vision from the financial security perspective, the status of prostitute matches up with married woman. Accordingly, La Puberte Marro, he states: "The only difference between women who sell them in prostitution and those who sell them in marriage is the price and the length of the time the contract runs". For prostitute and married woman, sexuality is their service. Wife is secured by one man for life time; the prostitute has several customers who pay prices. Wife is protected by husband from all other men for life time. Prostitute is defended by all males for their tyranny exclusive by each. In prostitution the benefits received in return for giving their bodies are limited by existing competition among the whores. Husband could secure different wives, so the performance of 'conjugal duties' is not a personal attachment, it could change, wife is just in use as for the execution of contract. Both prostitutes and wives are considered inferior than males therefore such women suffer gender oppression by males.

The novel delineates painstaking condition of women because of gender oppression by men and males are considered supreme than females, so patriarchy prevails. Esther is compelled into prostitution at age of twelve. Esther has been concupiscence for next twelve years. Her elder brother has instigated her into prostitution. Esther has served as hetaerae's for her brother's employer. His employer is a wealthy farmer, he provided Esther with a comfortable apartment and food in profusion. Her brother said, "This is your husband..... Do whatever he tells you, and you won't be sent like the others..... I believe in my older brother. He is kind to me and calls me only little sister. And there is much more food here than at home" (B C 95). She is subdued; because Esther cogitated she is betrothed to farmer in lieu of her brother, sister – in – law and their eight children supplied with ample grocery provisions. Esther stayed with that wealthy farmer for twelve years to reimburse her brother's debt year after year. Her brother heeds to his wife and children. Economically weak families are not able to overcome male superiority ideologies. In a deprived stage such families acquire economic gains from power structure. Esther in a state of deprivation has to submit in front of socio – economic powers. In context to Esther this wealthy farmer is in governing position with powers. Therefore Esther is subdued.

She has to accept her forged husband without speaking a word. "And each time I am called into the cellar to kneel among the sacks of potatoes and flour, I count the days to repay my

debt. I count the many ways in which you can hate a man. My brother knew. My brother knew” (B C 98, 99). Maxine Lavon Montgomery depicts Esther’s hatred as “the commoditization of Black women within the context of a rural economic system” (“Authority, Multivocality and the New World Order” 191). Affluent farmer has encouraged her to amuse herself with sexual toys, he purchased for her. He soon involves Esther in sexual act. Esther validates at age of twenty four, she has never been married to that man. As forever, she has been swindled in the name of marriage, so she departs for Eve’s boarding house. She comes in the queue of racially, sexually and socially exploited women. Eve understands her past and present. Eve provides her with a compartment in basement. She could conceal in darken room. Esther appeals, “I like the white roses because they show up in the dark” (95). She is obstinate that her customers would fetch white roses to her, which stipulate bright in darkness. Esther’s customer could not watch her in dim light. She functions only in darkness.

The radical transformation of home construction upon Bailey’s café as in case of George and Mariam displays zenith of Naylor’s ideas. Seven women characters reside in Bailey’s Café. The tasks performed by them, either relate to home or somewhere else. The household tasks are performed by black women, essentially those in the cities, most of the times; do not result them to profitable incomes. As far as, these household tasks are involved they liberate black women from bonds of patriarchy. Sadie supposes she must turn out to be prostitute. Her toil as a home maid has been unsuccessful to afford with economic security. Sadie as a woman is typically countenanced with circumstances as faced by other woman in quandary. Sadie has been socialized to the responsibility of home – maker. She grasps her worth as a home – maker is not sufficed, her mother and her elder husband Daniel persists her, in job of home – maker. After the demise of her mother and husband, Sadie earns an opportunity to work as maid in the house of prostitution, Bailey’s Café. Her every day schedule comprises of cooking food, washing and ironing clothes. These were the economic perspectives for black woman.

Shahiza Ismail, Hamdan, Hashim and Ruzy Suliza in their study of Malaysian Women and the female discourse, “Roshnah Bahuruddin’s.... reveals a similar patter- Women who fulfil the traditional roles are privileged over those who deviate from them”. “Good women are equated with Mother Nature; bad women are associated with all things synthetic.” (Hamdan 78) Naylor has described about the prostitutes earnings. Naylor has highlighted Eve’s Socio –

cultural stance towards her class of women. She facilitates those women who have attributes of African American women. These women must be from African origin, historian Cheikh Anto Diop's have classified these women with world view of two cradles, theory of European and African cultural differences. Sociologist Kobi Kambon in *The African Personality in America: an African - Centred Framework* (1992) compares African women in America within world view. Accordingly Eve's works in harmony with nature, she believes in idea of communalism, instead of individualism. She believes in idea of matrilineal community over patriarchal community. Eve as owner of brown - stone, exercises power over these women. Eve does not represent any system wherein these women may be in possession as chattel or whore house. These women have been allowed as to make their own decisions, about how they would instigate in spares means extra time, created by Eve for them. Though Naylor have portrayed Eve as a matriarch, Eve does not symbolize reproduction of males who owns women as patriarchy. Moreover, as a common mother for all prostitutes, Eve personalizes motherhood.

Eve is authority over all these women to form community bonding. She heals and takes care of these women. She is a friend, guide and matriarch of all puzzled women. In Eve's house, they are free from patriarchy. In relation to sex desires they control it with autonomy and independence. They have no more pain afflicted upon them by patriarchy. Virginia Fowler, "In Search of a Sanctuary", remarks that Patriarchs are "defined by the world exclusively in terms of their bodies is the bond shared by all the women in novel" (Fowler 132). Their consciousness reveals their sexuality. Thus their sex - desires emphasis them against patriarchy and female dominated world practices. They are maker of their own fate in regard to love making and life sharing.

Love making and life sharing is a part of 'housewifery'. Naylor's adaptation of 'housewifery' is because of American dreams consequences in the consciousness of a black female to own a home through her vocation. Sadie seeks to attain salvation thoroughly, by becoming house hold maid. Unwillingly, she has been induced, as a prostitute by her mother. Her psychosomatic state is perturbed after demise of her mother. All in vain, Sadie seizes to excessive alcoholism. Sadie's intoxication does not end; Naylor's configuration of her is of a prostitute wino. When Ice man, a deprived man anticipates a life for her, she cannot adopt that life. She is still drunk. The place Sadie trips, he didn't like that place for her as a prostitute wino.

“She’d laid away a piece at a time over the years: the juice glasses, the water glasses, the wine goblets, worrying that Waterford would change the pattern before, she’d gotten them all”(B C 74). Sadie is gorged over drinks. Her day dreams are of being a nice lady but her actual existence is of a wino; so her abode is in Eve’s brothel. Sister of her community, who belongs to same profession, advances the same rituals; follows tenets and tradition. They have Eve as their cultural mother, who prop ups necromancy.

Gender oppressed, racially discriminated and mentally harassed women arrive at Eve’s place. At this juncture they gain comfort and support from women residing in this place. They co – operate with one another to form woman bonding. These women perpetuate unity in diversity “among the widely disparate voices of women” (Authority, Multivocality and the New World Order 188). Objectification of these women increases inter- related woman union. The power structure in a social context applies norms and restrictions upon females because the society is authorized by males. They probably think females must progress and behave in accordance with males suggestions; she must follow his instructions in patriarchal world. Male supremacy ideologies could not assume women empowerment.

It is not possible to be distant emotionally from Mother Eve of Brownstone. A little Jew girl has moved into Eve’s garden. This story has been narrated by Nadine, who doesn’t like to verbalize much, because there is no such man to notify this story. The girl cannot notify story herself. She has a story that reasons (causes) perturbation in mind. Mariam means ‘young Mary’, mother of Christ. Mariam’s story has Christian history as root for conception and birth, from Virgin mother is hypothesis for Christ’s efficacy. Naylor insists reader to revise the conceptual knowledge of biblical text. In Bailey’s Café, a young pregnant woman emerges; she urges that “*No man has ever touched me (B C 143)*”. Subsequently then, author touches to consecrated biblical religious Christian transcript. This biblical textual, cultural history has been permitted by author in Bailey’s Café, as young woman, ‘virgin’ gets expectant with child. Her mutilation is in relation to ‘clitoris dictum’ rites. Her disfigurement by ‘clitoris dictum’ rites is an answer to social question; which proves she has never been touched, “*No man has ever touched me*” (B C 143). Even though, she is pregnant. Her mutilation (injury) is in assurance to Mariam’s dignity, that she has been a virgin.

In *Bailey's Café* (1992), Gloria Naylor puts - forth the image of a plum to illustrate the physical violence committed to Mariam. The genital mutilation of female re - production organs have been committed in case of Mariam, "Eve walked in with plum and placed in the middle of the counter. I have a new boarder, she said. The fruit looked tender and soft. The reddish black skin was so thin you could already smell that the flesh would be sweet. Nadine, please, brings me a knife" (BC 145). Nadine affirms that this is a woman's business. Nadine, requests for a sharp knife. Knife has been used before child - birth, so it has not been the case of child delivery but a case of precision in which child is taken out from womb by operation. Mariam uttered "*No man has ever touched me*" (B C 146). Eve retorted "She wasn't the first pregnant girl to show up at my door steps. But she was the first to make such claims" (B C 146). This girl had not been lying is confirmed by the whole village, they have taken notice of her squeals (screams) in the Hills of Ethiopia.

Gloria Naylor locates Mariam geographically. She is an outcaste from Beta Israel of Ethiopia. She belongs to Jewish tribe; those adhere to strict rules and regulations on child birth regarding female pioussness. "Elell, Elell Jews.... Nine shouts of joy from the hut kept far away from the settlement. A female child is born... Twelve shout for a male child" (B C 146). These outcastes are allocated as tenants (renter) on the land of Beta Israel in Ethiopia. Their pleas turn toward Jerusalem. This Beta Israelis spin linen, shape iron and bake pottery outside their damaged huts. To be marshalled as poor men faith of being Beta Israel is to attain prayers with their children in church. A priest is assigned for them in their prayers to Abraham, in consistent with Law of Moses. The tribal populace supposes that they are the last Jews in the world. They are undeniably last to build sanctuaries and choose a high priest. "*And these words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, when thou liest down and when thou risest up*" (B C 146, 147).

They welcome their each child for survival. They believe girl child have special honor of home keeping and bearing sons. "Elell, Elle . . . nine shouts of Joy from the hut of blood" (B C 147). Birth rites and rituals delegate an inferior status to women as states Wolf Leslau in '*Falasha Anthology: The Black Jews of Ethiopia (1951)*', in (1969) edition. Wolf Leslau explains for a Falasha woman who gives birth to a male child must release woman from

“*yamargam gogo*”, that is hut of blood, after the thirty two day. However, in case of girl child birth, mother is detained to the hut of blood for two weeks or more, but she is incarcerated (confined) to child bed more than sixty – six days. “The birthing process and the mother herself are considered so unclean and the hut is burned and the mother is allowed to return under the cover of darkness and only after she shave her head and goes through thorough washing” (Leslau 1969, xiv, xv). Naylor strategizes Mariam to speak words of Holy Virgin that is Mother Mary. In an Eastern “Book of James”, such stories explicitly (openly) influence the cult of Virgin of West. In “*Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary (1985)*”, Marina Warner has shielded Virgin Mary, herewith *Mother Mary* has reportedly answered that “I am pure before him [God] and know not a man” (Warner 26, 27). When Eve bathes Mariam, she concludes, “No man has even tried” (B C 152).

The characters in the novel *Bailey’s Cafe* are:

In a novel that identifies several characters as significant, no one character tends to dominate the narrative. Since the reader is given mainly a sketch of each characters life, as in *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills*. It is challenging to chart the comprehensive development of any one of them. Each character in an individual way, represents a work –in progress, for each is attempting to transform some important aspect of his or her life in order to gain, at the very least, a modicum of power and control. This tentative development is best described as a process whereby characters strive initially to please others (society, authority figures, etc.); then, finding such an attempt unsatisfying or unrewarding, they opt to please only themselves. Ultimately, however, with rare exception, they try to strike a balance between these two alternatives. (JR. Wilson, Charles E. 121, 122).

The key to understanding and appreciating the plight of these characters is Bailey who, along with his wife Nadine, recounts the stories of these transients with a matter-of-fact directness that both invites and commands respect for each of Eve's residents/Bailey's customers. Even the most bizarre tales are presented in such a way that the dignity of the "protagonist" is retained. (JR. Wilson, Charles E. 121, 122).

Bailey quickly prepares the reader about the atmosphere of his cafe; it is extraordinary in addition to facilitate the consumers therefore they are provided with the similar level of honour like individual would offer to every person. Individual is required to plainly understand them, very soon as it is like they are, while individual is ought to believe in the cafe, by means of its employee tenets. At the same time as Bailey would not fuss over the customers, in a minute as he will not pamper the reader, he will permit them adequate freedom to get rid of whatsoever devils are preoccupying them. At the same time by seeing that Bailey, in the company of Nadine, conveniently there is no deceit or double standards.

“This direct approach to life and to people, with little regard for foolhardiness, is best examined in Bailey's response to new customers who, unaware of the ordering policy, venture into the cafe”. (*G N A C C* 122) In Bailey's cafe there are no party choices at hand for the period of the week, only the criterion for price that exacting day. Nonetheless, clients might order whatever they would be fond of scheduled weekends. Since several beginners are puzzled with such options, “they will challenge the rule and place a far-fetched order. If the customer eats the strange food combination, it is free; however, if he refuses, Bailey makes sure the smart aleck pays for the trouble”. (*G N A C C* 122)

This uncertain advancement is well expressed like a procedure in which characters make every effort in the beginning to satisfy formers (the public, power structure, and so forth.); afterwards, discovering such an effort unproductive otherwise unfruitful, they choose to delight merely themselves. Eventually, nevertheless, through unusual exemption, they endeavour to strike a balance amid these two alternatives. Similar to Bailey, Nadine is a no-gibberish individual, she might or might not serve a few specified client, depending on her nature on a particular day. And Nadine rejects to examine benchmark canons of anticipated societal manners. Before marriage Bailey and Nadine used to date each other. “Nadine rarely exudes any excitement or pleasure about the courtship, if in fact it could be defined as such. On one occasion Bailey questions her about not having smiled all day, fearing that she might not be pleased with the date, and in response Nadine offers a question of her own” (*G N A C C* 122) : "But what does that [smiling] have to do with being pleased?" (*B C* 17)

Nadine rejects any prescribed notions of how she should behave or how she should respond to circumstances. Instead she charts her own course. A woman of few words, she chooses them carefully and utters them forcefully, fully expecting the listener to understand not only the words themselves but also the implied context. Bailey and Nadine are the narrative voices through whom the reader is introduced to the other characters. With their somewhat implacable demeanour, they serve as protectors of these castaways whose vulnerabilities are heightened in their efforts to regain sanity and/or equilibrium in their lives as they undergo the developmental process noted above. (*G N A C C 123*)

Other tale does not represent the same crystal clear reality as Sadie's. Nadine always provides drinks and food to Sadie two times which definitely makes this consumer exceptional. Sadie is a prostitute and wine addict. She is also a woman which could be easily remarked. She could not be straightforwardly classified. One would have to accept her completely.

Sadie's life has been fraught with pain. For most of her years, she has attempted to please all others, first her mother (who never wanted to have children and who constantly referred to Sadie as The One The Coat Hanger Missed), then her husband (a taciturn man old enough to be her father who relished nothing but peace and quiet). In order to please both of them, Sadie elevates silence to a fine art; with her mother she softens a cracker in her mouth rather than chew it, lest she crunch too loudly and disturb her mother's drunken slumber. And with her husband Daniel, she sews peacefully while even timing herself to bite the thread at the same instant when Daniel clinks the ice in his whiskey-filled glass. Even when Sadie works as a maid in a brothel after the death of her mother and before her marriage, her job is to honor the requests of the residents and customers. (*G N A C C 123*)

After the death of her husband she gets a thrust from her home. For mental and spiritual peace Sadie all alone consumes tea in the coffee shop. This is enjoyment which one can attain alone. Otherwise she has a forlorn life. After being thrust from her home after the death of



Daniel, Sadie seeks personal peace by periodically sipping tea alone in the cafe, the only apparent joy left in an otherwise forlorn life. “However, during a brief phase, Sadie seeks a shred of joy for herself when she accepts the attentions of Iceman Jones, who tries so desperately to bring happiness to Sadie. For the first time in her life, Sadie seeks pleasure just for herself, and she seems to gain a measure of self-esteem”. (*G N A C C 123*) Sometimes, she also fascinates about embarking a new beginning with Iceman. Regrettably, her fascination is short – term. While Sadie finally, refuse Iceman's proposal with difficulty she continues her existence on the boulevard. Minimally, though, Sadie gets pleasure from, the company of a man momentarily, who admits her presently as she is. If the developments have to be traced, Sadie in this process, she comes back to her previous life. Sadie never – ever enjoyed her previous life because there is lack of unconditional love of Ice – man.

Gloria Naylor has already stated about Stanley that he would definitely work in different companies or he will run his own business, as he has his PhD, Degree. Furthermore he will use his intellect and become an established business man:

Significant minor characters include Sugar man, Sister Carrie, Mr. and Mrs. Van Morrison, Uncle Eli, Miss Maple's father, Gabriel, and Daniel. Sugar Man is the area pimp and hustler whose main task is to entice wayward young women to work for him as prostitutes before they find their way to Eve's brothel. He is presented as the ultimate human parasite that not only feeds off of the misery and misfortune of others but also denigrates others in a futile effort to define him. This attempt is made clear in Sugar Man's treatment of Miss Maple. (*G N A C C 126*)

Although Bailey always affirms Sugar man that Miss Maple is not homosexual.

Even then Sugar man considers Miss Maple Gay to opinionated himself correct in the views of world. He must place or fix others as the world views them so he might be comfortable with all the common folk.

Another character Sister Carrie emerges here:

Ostensibly presented as his opposite is Sister Carrie, resident Bible-thumper and

self-righteous voice of morality, she is, however, just as despicable as Sugar Man. Sister Carrie patronizes the cafe only to secure an audience for her endless harangues on the mortal and venial sins of everyone but herself. She is especially insulted that Bailey would serve anyone who lives in, or is in any way connected with, Eve's house. Sister Carrie cannot see herself and the patrons as human; she can be human only if she re-creates them as subhuman. But because Bailey's, the world that Naylor has created, welcomes difference, Sister Carrie is presented only as a carping and shrewish woman. Even though she vies so desperately to be the authority on righteousness and normalcy, Sister Carrie emerges, ironically, as marginal to the marginalized, and as a consequence, ultimately she has no authoritative voice in the novel. Mr. and Mrs. Van Morrison are the couple for whom Bailey's parents worked when he was a young boy. Affluent blacks, they made Bailey's family feel inferior and beholden. Striving too desperately to be accepted into white society, they fail to acknowledge their own oppressive behaviors in their interaction with less affluent blacks. (Wilson 126)

Similar to the Van Morrisons is Uncle Eli, in-law to Jesse Bell and catalyst for her downfall. Because he, too, is obsessed with elitist values, he demeans those blacks who, he believes, are inferior to him. Still another minor character who has achieved economic success yet has not allowed it to consume him (at least not in regard to other blacks) is Stanley's father. As a wealthy landowner and businessman, he has tried to install in Stanley (a.k.a. Miss Maple) a sense of pride in the family accomplishments, particularly in the face of white bigotry. Gabriel, Russian Jew and pawnshop owner, provides the means of challenging arbitrary social and religious boundaries. Though Gabe and Bailey are often at odds in any political or religious discussion, they ultimately find common ground, even if they merely agree to disagree. Gabe's presence, and his interaction with Bailey, reminds the reader that "differences" must somehow coexist. Daniel, Sadie's husband, is important because he prods the reader to assess even the most minor characters as comprehensively as possible. On the surface a bitter and distant man who offers Sadie no emotional support, Daniel is, in fact, a man with feeling. The

reader glimpses this depth only when Daniel, drunk and despondent, mutters about lifelong frustrations and offenses he has suffered. With each utterance the reader discovers that Daniel's manhood and humanity have been systematically eroded over time. (Jr. Wilson, Charles E. 126)

Besides characters the details of the story are stated, Bailey's Café has been set up in 1948. This period has been concerned with post World War II. Warriors were not only Americans, but also African – Americans. This period has immanence in global history. Racial segregation even then existed in America regarding land ownership Rights. The year 1948 ushered an era of change, that revolutionizes into Civil Rights Movement of 1950's and 1960's. How so far ever a likely activism has emerged after a long epoch of time. Never ever before, Naylor has appropriated both the themes of war and prostitution in her work. This has been a new theme impulsive with wonders. Bailey's mania with baseball discloses the history of baseball as sports. Naylor reveals African – Americans sporting baseball in integration with whites. Bailey opinions that only integration of Jackie Robinson, a black male in American Major League Baseball team is not satisfactory for African - Americans. In these circumstances black endures racial discrimination and pressure performance from superior white athletes' as Gibson, Smokey Joe Williams and others. Racial segregation has been the major grounds further than grievances and lack of vistas means less future prospects for blacks. Bailey demands from Whites that Blacks must own manage and coach teams. That is true integration of Blacks in team. He anticipates from America, its Black citizens must have equal rights of land ownership, property and prosperity. This would be an end of racism. Novel realizes blacks, until and unless, national character likewise Bailey does exist in reality. No true progress in reality will emerge.

The poststructuralist notions were regarding the dogmatic constraints about language of black women and minority groups. These humans slot (fit) in their conversation struggle for adding meaning to their lives by authority of discursive indenture. To evade self – effacement, otherwise to elude different symbolic order at one side in dispute, that what was an efficacious kind of struggle for African – Americans? The widespread poststructuralist notions of black community, linguistic influence and women empowerment have evolved the theory of black cultural tradition. Consequently that resulted to propagation of African – American English.

Wole Soyinka as in his Noble Laureate in (1986) has proposed the paradoxical variation on “renunciation” about Western ideology, tradition, language and literature. The question lies in the problem of usage of Western language. African’s oppressed by West without surrendering to its structural and tropic coercion of western language, has opted for American English. That is their adoption of Western language; American English resulted in new form of structural and equatorial African – American English. Such opted adaptations have to be avoided. This has been called “discursive indenture” by Henry Louis Gates. The ideology of “discursive indenture” has been defined in *Afro – American Literary Study* (1989) – entails a persistent appropriation (Gates 25). Soyinka hypothesizes that “what we borrow an alien language to sculpt or paint in; we must begin by co – opt in the entire properties of that language as correspondences to properties in our matrix of thought and expression” (Gates 24). In context of African – American English, African – American writers transformation of their ideas into western language what constitutes of “successful appropriation and transformation of that “language” is hard to come by” (Gates 24). Karen Schneider expresses her view, about the post structuralism successful appropriation and adaptation of a “Martian language”. Many African – Americans are under fire for absolute adaption or inadequate adaption of western plots, caucus and literary tradition, for example – Shakespeare in Gloria Naylor’s poetics of emancipation.

Gloria Naylor’s novels are in criticism for misappropriation of black character and eulogizes for Western characters. Peter Erickson discussed about Naylor’s projection of “The role of Shakespeare in Naylor’s novel (1991)” in book *Gloria Naylor: Critical Perspectives Past and Present* (1993). Peter Erickson in his response criticized “Effects of *Mama Day*’s exploration of Shakespearean heritage is critically to revise and de – center it” (Erickson 247). Miss Dehn Kubitschek has demonstrated Naylor’s criticism, “Toward a New World Order: Shakespeare, Morrison and Gloria Naylor’s *Mama Day* (1988)” in *M E L U S* (1994), she declared that a number of black writers “Overemphasize the Euro – American sources (Kubitschek 75, 77)”. From both the novels *Mama Day* (1988) and *Bailey’s Café* (1992) are textured on the basis of Western and African – American literary tradition to forgo novellas liberating society and sexuality. Although both novellas appropriates, connotes earlier texts. While Gary Storhoff, in his review, “‘The Only Voice Is Your Own’: Gloria Naylor’s Revision of *The Tempest*” in *African American Review* (1995) within optimism identifies Naylor as

“rescue[d] the Shakespearean text for a gender – conscious, multicultural, multiracial audience (Storhoff 37)”.

Nevertheless, one could not sum up Naylor’s qualities without final judgment of her project unless taking into account *Bailey’s Café* (1992). ‘Naylor has met this challenge by avoiding “discursive indenture”’ (Schniedler 2). Naylor has appropriated familiar stories from western culture, after certain modification of content and structure. She recasts stories in a formulation that de – establishes ontological boundaries unconditionally, classified by genre, gender, socio – politics, race, and class, black folk cultural and literary tradition. At end, she intentionally forefronts a reciprocal relation that dynamically gains inter – textuality among all her texts. Ultimately, by the integration of *Bailey’s Café* (1992) among her foursome of novels generate self – reflection and re – generation. These novels are related to one another in meanings. These interconnections regulate inter – textuality in the preceding and subsequent novels of an author. All these novels in parts configure the whole. As these novels in group are created as inter – textual in context. Such inter – textuality does not create critics voices’ against Naylor for pointing out ‘others’ by her in Western literary tradition.

Rather in Western tradition raw material for novels reconstructs the configuration of novel itself. In his Nobel Laureate address (1986), Soyinka’s advises Naylor “co – opt[s]” the entire properties in [her] matrix of thought and expression” as an African – American writer. So far as, Naylor’s ideas clearly, conceives from her, properties of language not only the sentences formation and words adopted from Western cultural literary tradition. Simultaneously in larger dimension, her singular and all dissertations form a vital part of Western literary tradition.

In *Bailey’s café* (1992), Naylor persists to adjust and develop her strategized interferences. Naylor impulsive from “Great tradition” of Bible that continues to Hollywood films and Western cultural literary tradition as merges and modifies the discourse. She compels in her consideration efforts self – consciously of the Henry Louis Gates, Jr. in his study of “*Significant Others* (1988)” regarding “provisional nature fixity” (Gates 622) that has been demonstrated that nothing has been written from stone.

Naylor has appropriated the fantasy of Shakespeare in *The Woman of Brewster Place* (1982) and *Mama Day* (1988). Cora Lee fantasies her son to be a great writer as Shakespeare in

'*The Woman of Brewster Place (1982)*'. Cocoa compares George with Shakespeare's white standards of living in the novel *Mama Day (1988)*. Naylor appropriates Dante's Inferno (1320) in *Linden Hills (1985)* compared the cultural materialism of black gentry with the hell of Dante's Inferno. 'In Bailey's Café, with its variety of weary pilgrims, calls to mind The Canterbury Tales and "its innkeeper (Harry) Bailey, who, like Naylor's narrator – mistakenly called Bailey – initiates the storytelling (Schneider 1-20)''.

This chapter attempts to explicit (open) women sexuality in feminist lens. Stereotypes of gender, gender oppression, femininity and masculinity have been described earlier in this chapter. In this novel, women objectification has been depicted by Gloria Naylor. Deep women bonding have been portrayed by her, as these women are excluded from their society. They have objected their objectification. In this regard they are against patriarchy and dominant ideologies, their (patriarchy and dominant ideologies) control on women sexuality results into women suppressed (keep inside) sex desires. In this regard, novel *Bailey's Café* discusses those women who have escaped from patriarchal authority and dominant ideologies to exercise sexual practices without restraint. Motherhood and spirituality are strengthening points of this chapter. *The Men of Brewster Place (1998)* their lives have effects of *The Women of Brewster Place (1982)*

Why should it be my loneliness? Why should it be my song?

Why should it be my dream deferred overlong?

- "Tell Me"

Langston Hughes.

*The Men of Brewster Place (1998)* begins with the poem "Dream deferred" by Langston Hughes. *The Women of Brewster Place (1982)* also starts from the poem "Dream deferred" by Langston Hughes. Again "Dream Deferred" has been denoted by Gloria Naylor in the beginning of *The Men of Brewster Place* to further carry on with story. In the last line of poem poet confers about manly attitude of *The Men of Brewster Place (1998)* by asking them "Tell me" to tell each men's story. Novel begins with the description of *The Women of Brewster Place* Author has acknowledged Ben's death in *The Women of Brewster Place*, but Gloria Naylor takes poetic

device to assuage resurrection of Ben's spirit. Naylor has taken voice of Ben to narrate the story in major portions of novel that is *The Men of Brewster Place*. "As is true of the Woman of Brewster Place (1982), *The Men of Brewster Place* is composed of short stories, each of which details the life of a particular character. The first story presents Ben, the maintenance man for Brewster Place, who not only narrates his own tale but also introduces the remaining chapters..... It is his voice, then, that unifies the novel". (Charles E. Wilson, JR. 137, 138)

Ben is a drunk, he narrates the whole story, "I do n't know a man who would be anywhere without a woman. And don't know a woman who would be anywhere without a man. It's how God did it; and we sure can't undo it" (*M B P* 7). Ben claims he knows man, - "there was always a her in his story" (*M B P* 8).

Novel *The Men of Brewster Place* (1998) depicts other side of the coin that is gender oppression faced by women of Brewster's men. Gloria Naylor puts emphasis on Brewster men as they are either in love relationship or in hatred with these coloured women. In the story Ben narrates that that black women have faced gender oppression implied on them either by black males or whites. The power structure and dominant ideologies have shut blacks' mouth that result their voices into silence.

In the "Ben" chapter the reader charts Ben's journey from childhood to his present sixty-eight-year-old life, while Ben himself fleshes out key events from his past so as to present himself as a whole being and not merely a one-dimensional stereotype. Throughout his adult life, Ben has been dismissed as a useless alcoholic; however, this condition did not emerge out of nothing. Like Ben himself, his current situation has a history; one directly connected to the most troublesome, out of many, disappointments that plague his life. (Charles E. Wilson, JR. 138)

Naylor characterizes her novel with oppressive gendered past of her characters in the novel *The Women of Brewster Place*. Fiction *The Men of Brewster Place* denotes demasculinized men helpless to support their Brewster women.

The chapter following returns to a character from *The Women of Brewster Place*, in the

first novel Basil Michael abandons his mother Mattie after she uses her house as security for his bail, resulting in Mattie's losing the house and removing to Brewster Place. The chapter opens with a remorseful thirty-five-year-old Basil, three years after his sudden flight, standing at Mattie's grave site and wishing he could undo the emotional damage inflicted on his mother and apologize to her. The reader soon discovers a man quite clearly more mature than he was just a few years prior. Basil reveals that he has spent the last three years working two full-time jobs and one part-time job in an attempt to earn enough money to restore his mother to her own home. But just as he prepares to surprise her with his news and her good fortune, Basil discovers that Mattie is dead. (Wilson 140)

In an attempt to redeem himself, Basil decides that he will find some woman, make her his wife, and ultimately become the kind of loving and supportive father he never had. Quite determined in his agenda, Basil begins to date the boss's secretary, Helen, a respectable person who is pursuing her own dream of earning a graduate degree. However, soon after they begin seeing each other, Basil meets Helen's cousin Keisha, a twenty-year-old unmarried welfare recipient with two young boys. Fearful that he might not be able to father his own children, Basil decides that he should become a father figure to Jason and Eddie, quite to Helen's consternation. Ultimately, he and Helen dissolve their relationship, and Basil assumes a fatherly role in the life of the boys, deciding finally that he must marry Keisha, though he really does not love her, so that he can adopt the boys and give them a normal home life. (Wilson 140)

Two years into the marriage Basil discovers that Keisha has been unfaithful to him with her drug-addicted ex-boyfriend. Confronting her on what he considers the emotional abuse of his sons (subjecting them to criminal), Basil soon finds himself engrossed in a bitter argument with Keisha, one that ends with his slapping her, an act that he immediately regrets. Finding that he cannot reason with Keisha, Basil, in what is merely a scare tactic, threatens to take the boys and leave. A few days later Basil finds himself confronting a bench warrant for his



arrest. Keisha has reported to the police that Basil is a five-year fugitive, a circumstance about which she cared nothing when Basil admitted it to her prior to their marriage (then, of course, he was her new cash cow). Now Basil must explain to young Eddie and Jason, both of whom adore their stepfather but both of whom are still sensitive to abandonment, why he must leave them. By the time Basil returns a few years later, the boys have become hardened and distant. Yet Basil is determined to win their respect and trust once again. (Wilson 140, 141)

Other character Ben, the lesson that his grandfather learns and the one that Ben, and other black men like him, will learn is that to be a man is to be strong and silent, to suppress weakness, a lesson consistent with a traditional definition of manhood in general. But in the case of these black men who witness various atrocities in a lifetime, such an admonition of silence seems particularly perverse. While his grandfather retreats from society and turns his anger inward (he keeps waiting for a vengeful God to strike down all things evil), Ben also develops into a kind of hermit, but he adds alcohol to the isolation. (Wilson 138)

Blacks have travelled northern of white man's land. Males as well as females notice their White masters were cruel to them. Whites show apathetic attitude to their slaves. Ben's family has been victimized by racism. *"Sister comes out of the woods, stumbling toward the fields, calling for her mother. When the child gets close enough they see the blood running down her legs. Blood soaking the back of her dress, Blood running from the corner of her mouth, on the side of her face where she'd been beaten so bad her eye had swollen. This girl is ten years old"*. (M B P14) Everyone passes her through in silence; no one has a voice to utter. Ben's grandpa's, sister has been raped and beaten unto dead. Incidentally very sad demise of his grandpa's sister took place in silence. *"Sister's funeral in silence"* (M B P 15) the minister of church has uttered, *"The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away"* (15). His grandpa cried loudly, *"No. No, he don't. All eyes turned to him before his mother slapped him. Boy, shut your mouth, you hear? Shut your mouth. Be a man"* (15)

Ben's life of frustration is presented not as an isolated circumstance; rather, his is a story that has shaped the lives of other black men much like him. This argument is supported when Ben details his family history, especially that of his grandfather. Raised by his Grandma and Grandpa Jones, Ben grew up hearing much about their young lives during slavery, and he watched as his grandfather developed into more of a silent and bitter man. It is much later in life before Ben discovers the cause of his grandfather's anger. When the old man was a twelve-year-old slave, he witnessed one of the most horrific tragedies that could be visited upon a child. After his ten-year-old sister is raped by the plantation overseer, the boy is sent on horseback by his mistress to enlist the aid of the doctor, once it is discovered that the young girl is in dire need of medical attention. Frantic and scared, upon arriving at the doctor's, the child rushes to the front door, only to be intercepted by a black house slave, who directs him to the back and forces him to wait incessantly in punishment for his error. By the time he and the doctor return to the plantation, his sister is dead. Now completely devastated, the future Grandpa Jones waits in vain for some acknowledgment of wrong, for some kind of accountability. When the bewildered boy cries out "No, No" at his sister's funeral, his own mother slaps him and admonishes him to be quiet and act like a man. (Wilson 138)

Again Ben begins his note on Brewster Place with ghettoisation of Brewster area. These black Brewster men were in love with their black women. These black old women lived in Brewster basement apartment that has been next to ghettoised wall. These old women move around their Brewster building then to boulevard. The young ones and men lean against Brewster wall. Old men of Brewster Street does not accompany Ben, he describes himself as coloured man and drunkard so nobody would care about him. Ben again refers to dream deferred of *The Women of Brewster Place* he states that: who could sleep through Brewster Place's long dark nights without hanging on to some kind of dream? (6) Residents of Brewster ghetto live inside the ghettoized wall.

Time left these buildings a little shabbier, the sidewalks from alley a bit more racked and tar stained. The only thing that didn't change was me and that brick wall. I was still drinking. It was still there. And this place was still a dead end street. (6) .....a street is a street. Give me a nickel for each time. ....I've swept down these steps or raked garbage from the sewer and I'll give you every pay check I made in return. A better bargain for me, believe it. A street is a street is a street. Its cement sand and water mixed up to dry. It wears with time, get dirt and tar ground into it's surface; it cracks and finally needs to be patched. A street is a street is a street. (7)

Blacks lived in Richland Plantation, a mythical land because there was no such land in the map. This hypothetical name existed only in their brains. When the Great Depression come these blacks were so poor they had no effect. They did extreme hard work, "back breaking work – nine months a year – from the planting, weeding and picking of cotton. So much cotton it touched the horizon each way you looked". (*M B P* 11) In the novel *The Men of Brewster Place*, character Elvira worked as sweeper. "She worked in the ladies' bathroom, hanging out towels and keeping the sinks and floors clean". (*M B P* 20) In ladies room, she used to read magazines or books. Ben appreciated her because she could read and write both. Ben thought her a good woman because of her reading skills and writing ability. "I imagined her standing up there at City Hall and writing her name with a large flourish at the end. Perfect penmanship", (*M B P* 20) His overemphasis in this imagination results him to want to be with Elvira. Both of them decided after marriage to settle in country. So both of them have been grown up in farms therefore they were able to cope up in country air. Ben has compromised of his city job of "riding the railroads as a redcap" (*M B P* 20). He has convinced himself to work as a sharecropper. They shared the farm as their workplace. "The man who owns the place gives you loans of your seed and equipment; and then you're in business" (21). These farmers worked on the farm "for the sake of a place to eat and sleep" (21).

Much of Ben's present pain stems not only from the fact that the majority society ignores, or represses, his manhood, but also from the troublesome realization that not much has changed for black manhood since the days of slavery. After leaving home at seventeen in the early 1940s upon the death of his grandmother (his

grandfather having died ten years earlier), Ben works for a while cleaning spittoons in a Memphis hotel, only to be spat on daily; then, he shines shoes in a railroad depot, that is, until he meets his future wife, Elvira. Convincing Ben that her health requires fresh country air, Ben reluctantly returns to an agricultural life. (*Gloria Naylor A Critical Companion* 138,139)

Finding themselves sharecropping on a farm owned by Mr. Clyde Haggard, Ben and Elvira attempt to eke out a living. Even years after the birth of their slightly crippled daughter (and only child), they are merely scraping by. An increasingly belligerent Elvira accuses Ben of being less than a man because he cannot spirit them away to better economic circumstances. As a result Ben becomes even more frustrated with feelings of inadequacy. And then when his now teenage daughter, who cleans house for Mr. Clyde, reports to him and Elvira that the old man has molested her, Ben feels all the more emasculated, especially when Elvira, in denial, refuses to acknowledge the validity of their daughter's accusation. Elvira even threatens to strike Ben if, either by commission (questioning Mr. Clyde directly) or omission (refusing to grin and smile when Mr. Clyde approaches), Ben challenges Mr. Clyde in any way. Ben realizes that his only alternative is to "be quiet and act like a man," instead of defending his daughter's honor and redefining manhood for himself. (Wilson 139)

After his daughter finally flees from home, stating in a note that if she has to prostitute herself to Mr. Clyde, she might as well go to Memphis where she can really make some money, Ben tries to assuage his guilt by drinking heavily. He wakes up one day to find that, even after all of his emotional and physical sacrifices, Elvira has abandoned him. Though he describes her action as being an actual favor, he is still burdened with the belief that much of his life has been a nightmare because he has been left with so few choices, and the ones offered him are ultimately self-defeating. (*Gloria Naylor A Critical Companion* 139)

Suddenly one day an unmarried and pregnant young woman, Sister Louise, visits Woods in his office to seek solace about her condition, revealing as well that she is unsure about the paternity of her child, though one possibility is, in fact, one of the deacons. Woods realizes that at the very least, his prayers have been answered. On an appointed Sunday, the Reverend preaches an impassioned sermon about sin and redemption, after which he asks that the anonymous deacon reveal himself and bravely shoulder a portion of Sister Louise's shame. Knowing that no one will emerge and knowing that as a result of such refusal the membership will begin to scorn the entire officers board, Woods, now in full dramatic form, intensifies his plea to the errant father who, of course, never surfaces. Now completely miffed with the unknown villain, the congregation decides to support the Reverend's efforts in erecting a new building. (*G N A C C* 143)

In novel *M B P*, blacks had a juke point as church. Grandfather of Ben, “he only went to church on Resurrection Sunday when the sinners were called to come down front and sit on mourner’s bench..... He was a bitter man.” (*M B P* 12) “I am opening the Bible when someone shows me the Place that says white people is going to hell”. (12) Ben understood spirituality but he did not define this to his grand pa Jones, Bible is written and it preaches redemption of man. Bible has nothing to do with either blacks or whites. It is preached for all humans. Some people have black hearts as doer of bad deeds. Others have pure hearts, irrespective of the colour of skin. Bible preaches the purity of hearts, neither skin colour, nor financial status. Accordingly bible, impure hearts are sending to hell for damnation, while people with pure hearts are redeemed. Bible justifies purity of hearts.

Most of the times, black women suffer racism by white women. These Afro – American women undergo racism and sexism both by ‘Whites’. Black men’s coloured women suffer gendered oppression. White capitalism represses black man. Black characters have identified amongst themselves that they altogether have been sufferers of gendered oppression. They suffer

the same experience but are unable to retaliate against their oppression as have been perpetuated by dominant ideologies. In the other way, it has been approved that they share men bonds as in the novel *The Women of Brewster Place*. The gender oppression of their women results in binding these men of Brewster Street together. The story of men bonds is depicted through several male characters, one of them is Ben. He has been an impoverished character in this novel. *The Men of Brewster Place* is a saga of gender stereotypes such men confront hatred, anger, dominance and impoverishment.

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## Chapter 6

### CONCLUSION

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The thesis proposes to investigate the structures of oppression of women within their family and work roles as illustrated in the novels of Gloria Naylor. Based on the preceding analysis of various critics and theorists several points emerge. Feminist and gender critics suggest that women were judged on their family and work roles. Gender and social conditioning has raised several feminist issues. Coupled with racist exploitation and biases, these issues become more intense in – oppression of women, cultural conditioning, construction of femininity and masculinity, social stereotypes of gender, racism, sexism, ghettoization, economic aspects of gender related to work, motherhood, women bonding, spirituality and religion.

Feminist criticism initially focussed on how, white women were exploited within patriarchy. White women focused on the distinction between the white male and the white female. Patriarchy as the authority for all men used to control women irrespective of class and race. The white male patriarch regarded as an enemy of white and black women. White American men promoted separation between white and black women. White men ordered both of them. Women face oppression, “Even if they raise their voice collectively. In African – American society men consider themselves superior than females”. (*Ain’ I A Woman* – 86, 87)

Women face suppression and sexual exploitation because of social factors. Gender is a product of social conditioning. They are in consideration as weaker and second sex. In the social-cultural structure girls face gender discrimination since childhood. The gender constitutes of masculine and feminine traits. Patience, forbearance and endurance are the qualities those are in expectations from females. These feminine traits are in inculcation since childhood within girls. Masculinity is in construction within culture and society. Masculinity is of men, exclusively.

The study explores social stereotypes of gender, which includes femininity and masculinity. Simone de Beauvoir states that gender is “constructed”. Gender is a product of social – cultural construction. In her discussions, she reveals gender construction based on social

and cultural factors. Simon de Beauvoir treats 'body as a situation' (*G T* 12, 13). Cultural communities have always interpreted body. Simone De Beauvoir, Greer too wrote about construction of gender. Judith Butler deconstructed gender based on discussions it could be identified that gendered construction is the effect of social and cultural influences. Arguments based on oppressions of gender consider man as masculine gender oppresses woman that is feminine gender. It discerns from the arguments' social stereotypes of gender have been the aspect that could be imbibed (take) in the thesis.

Patriarchy considers females inferior than males because of sexual role of women and their body seen as inferior and second sex. The man, "projects himself towards the other without losing his independence the feminine flesh is for him a prey" (Beauvoir 393). Women in their marriage remain chaste and pure. Women lose their chastity, purity and virginity in sexual relations outside marriage. They suffered and despised of in the society for making sexual relations with many men, whereas men are under no criticism for making sexual relations with many women. Society not only prohibits women and restricts their "attempt to explore their own pleasure" with men (Irigaray 17). Women submit themselves to men and suffer sexual exploitation by men. Men oppress women naturally. Men allow themselves to display their superiority, sexually and misogynist mentality something that comprises of their masculine behaviour. Similarly, unmarried females noticed having sex and babies in the many characters of *The Women of Brewster Place*. These are Mattie Michael oppressed by Butch; Etta Mae Johnson sexually exploited by Woods Moreland, Ciel's maternal feelings are hurt from her boyfriend Eugene. Later on, Ciel has to go on for abortion for her unwanted pregnancy because of economic limitations, which has been a blow to her motherhood.

The Second parameter of the woman's abuse and suppression is the institution of marriage. Women are raped and sexually harassed not outside marriage only but within marriage also. Marriage not only restricts the female's freedom but also controls her sexual reproduction and child bearing. In novel *Linden Hills* Luwana, Evelyn, Priscilla and Willa, all Nedeeds' wives suffer oppression and sexual repression and reproduction within marriage. These all Nedeed wives brought to Linden Hills to reproduce a male offspring to be an heir in for Linden Hills. In this novel gender oppression exhibit, "a graphic description of the difficulties" as remarked by S.D. Sharma in, "Concept of Marriage in Nayatra Sahgal's Storm in Chandigarh" in Recent

Indian English Literature which crop up after marriage is seen no better than , “a cage by the modern woman with independent ideas and views.” (Sharma 349), Naylor is against the “Social and moral norms of the traditional society in which women are caught up in paroxysm of neglect and humiliation.” (Sharma 350)

Simone De Beauvoir rightfully states, “Marriage is the destiny traditionally offered to women by society most women are married, or have been or plan to be, or suffer from not being”. (446) Marriage is compulsory for all girls until they reach maturity. Marriage is only aim and destiny of women in society. If not married women pitied and looked down in society. Men taught to prefer their career and ambition to marriage. Unmarried maternity is not acceptable in society. It proves destructive for their unborn foetus. Pregnancy forced on the women within marriage. Many communities forced women to abort foetus outside marriage.

The third factor of women oppression is her maternity. Males control the reproductive capacity of women not only within marriage but also through rape. The patriarchal structure of society confines women destiny through marriage and childbirth. The reproductive potential of a woman utilized for the birth of a male child. Husband compromises with the health of wife for the birth of a male child leading to their ultimate death. The fourth parameter analysis sexual exploitation of women takes place in rape. In the novel *The Women of Brewster Place*, female character Lorraine has been gang raped by C.C. Baker and his boys which results in her ultimate death.

The fifth parameter analyses insufficient education of women takes place in patriarchal society. In marriage women, face exploitation in the field of education. Patriarchal society does not allow women to receive equal education in comparison to men. If girls look mature, they do not get a suitable match or they remain unmarried for a lifetime, so it becomes necessary for girls to marry after a certain age before signs of aging. Those girls who compete in their career until aging, they do not get married and pursue their career for a lifetime. In patriarchal society, men could pursue their career irrespective of aging; they could get married even at a mature age. Educational subjects also gendered as masculine gender and feminine gender. Hence, “the kind and quality of education is not same for all sex” (Millet 42). Whereas, “humanities and certain social sciences”, considered assign to women. “Science and technology, the professions, business and engineering” are coded masculine (Millet 42). Therefore, education also supports

patriarchy. The expectations of society create gender differences result in feminine domination those arised feminists to raise voice against gendered discrimination.

Racism and sexism are the phenomenon constructed by Americans to suppress black women. Blacks struggle against white practices of racism and sexism. They were all alone to suffer emotionally and psychologically. Their economic perspectives were limited. Gloria Naylor not only explores the concept of black feminism but also focuses on racism. She also writes about black economic activities. African – American women have come out of their family roles. They are working outside domesticity. They earn and matriarchs support their families independently. Critics and writers have not previously discussed the aspect of economic activity in Gloria Naylor’s novels. Detailed accounts of economic condition in Naylor’s novel have described in this thesis. Thus, pointing out multi-dimensional aspects in all her novels. In Naylor’s novels, the construction of racism suggests white supremacy and de masculinity of black men. Thus, therefore to protect privileges of whites.

White society not only maintains the system of white superiority, intact, but also to maintain the domination of blacks. In Gloria Naylor’s novels, the criterion of white racist practices: Whites are white complexioned with sharp features. Blacks are members of non – white groups. Their ancestors are slaves. The criterion for blacks groups are black complexion and black ancestors and black social circle. In black appearance, African – American features are less desirable, because of their looks blacks have been in consideration inferior to Whites.

The study also shows dominant norms the racist and sexiast practices against black women set forth by those dominant white groups. Naylor’s study also depict that African people have been brain washed by Europeans. The black consider them inferior to whites. In white society, white people have adopted racist attitude so blacks feel de – masculinised and dehumanized. African – Americans believe themselves inferior, they could up grade themselves through education and spirituality. In this manner, they would add to their well-being.

In economics, women earnings assigned secondary and inferior to men. Women also prohibited prospering ahead from the head of the family that is male. Women considered them unfit for many jobs because of their physical status. Women despite of their same, economic, social and behavioural status do not gain the same respect as men in designations. The men and

women of their family and society consider females work as granted. Even working women outside home, her work does not liberate her. They are also restricted within femininity.

Females are sufferers because of social conditioning. Women could fight against patriarchal society by writing and speaking in their own voice. They may form women bonding to overcome oppression and suppression imposed on them by patriarchal ideology. Women could break up the patriarchal language by coming “out of the snare of silence”. (Cixous, Medusa 251) Naylor’s novels put forth that economic and financial independence of women does not liberate them by working out from home. Thus, women confined within patriarchal ideologies and clutches of femininity. Therefore because of her family and work roles, women are restricted in their responsibilities. “The home is regarded as the domain of the ‘private’ and the feminine while sites of paid work have coded the masculine within the public sphere” (quoted in Chris Barker 293).

On being writing the thesis, I endeavour to analyze and explore the novels of Gloria Naylor from the perspectives of feminist voices and social stereotypes of gender. I apply the critical approaches of feminist writers and the research done on gender theory. Gender is an aspect of social – cultural construction. Thus traced in the novel how multiple factors reflect economic aspects of females and males. The novel reveals sexuality, motherhood and matriarchy, women bonding and spirituality.

Five novels of Gloria Naylor have been take for study in chronological order *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), *Linden Hills* (1986), *Mama Day* (1988), *Bailey’s Cafe* (1992) and *The Men of Brewster Place* (1998). The above five novels have been chosen for study to view her approach in rise of feminist voices and explore her observation in social stereotypes of gender. Her work 1996 is a semi fiction that is not included for study because it depicts the real life of Gloria Naylor and the problems she was persisting through while writing her novel. This work contains realism by the names of fictitious characters. She further added on a realistic approach to her work. She mentions in 1996 the mental harassment a writer like her faces on while writing a fiction. The analysis of Gloria Naylor’s novels reveals that she depicts racism and economic aspects in all her novels. The silenced black women claim to represent and speak for their experience. In plus, American society has deprived them of opportunities because of their

historical conditions. The voices of these black women remain unheard. The study also shows how their religion is in control of the white world.

*Linden Hills* (1985) is a community of African – American middle class as a set of location in Linden Hills. Linden Hills is the depiction of African American culture in middle class society. In *Linden Hills*, the home place is an arena under the patriarchal dominion divorced from the political struggle of contemporary black America” (Montgomery 57). *Linden Hills* (1985) illustrates the perils of domesticity varied from empowering the black community. Nedeed wives deemed sentinels of contemporary black America they are dutiful wives. Their ideology perpetuates from bourgeoisie class; results in their unwilling contribution to conspiracies with black male encounters in female subjugation. The replication of Nedeed wives is that they are their husband’s life – long servants, house – hold tasks correlated with that persists in hell like place. The women of Brewster streets face the similar debilitation to Nedeed wives.

In *Linden Hills* (1985), Willa, the wife of Nedeed, finds help from reading the diaries of her mother’s – in – law to overcome the imprisonment of three generations of Nedeed’s wives. The household works’ that Nedeed wives enacted for domesticity led them to manias, desolation and degradation. The ‘women domesticity’ revealed in this novel through manuscripts of their mother – in – laws. Evelyn’s wedlock turned depreciating, cooking turned into duress for her. Evelyn advertences to cooking of comestibles that gave her way to over eating and purging. Her recipes iterated her to cooking manias. The Needed wives were powerless to conduct positive changes. Their life documentary in Nedeeds’ home by the novelist proves home as a location for ‘vassalage’ and ‘serfdom’. In her review Maxine Lavon Montgomery states, ‘a history both by and about women’ in discovering ‘her story’, Willa discovers “herself”. (Montgomery 62) She challenges the situation conditioned by bourgeoisie society to women. After death of the son of Willa, she transpires destructive for others and self – destructive. In Willa’s house – keeping, she avenges, it resulted to the doom of Nedeed family. Willa’s contempt ends the entire Nedeed family and Willa in vain to devastation. In *Linden Hills*, is a patriarchal construction of society, the destruction of Nedeeds that is a victory over Luther Nedeeds’ patriarchal rule?

Furthermore, in, “Authority, Multivocality, and the New World order in Gloria Naylor’s Bailey’s Cafe”, Maxine Lavon Montgomery portrays the authority of patriarchal legitimacy.

Naylor has portrayed all women suppressed under patriarchal authority. Eve, for instance, “is to provide for herself under dire economic circumstances”. She is the matriarch of prostitutes’ boarding house. She encourages male supremacy for the roles defined towards women lives outside marriage. Montgomery concludes in her write up of *Bailey’s Cafe*, “to revise codes of power, domination and assertion in a male text (193)”.

The American society has dehumanized black male. They do not get earnings easily in white society. In *Bailey’s Cafe*, there is an attempt to display power structure omnipresent in the era of knowledge. The main cause behind Miss Maple earlier named, as Stanley’s failure to procure job is the basic philosophy of power structure Naylor’s novel reveals black men in *Bailey’s Café* as Miss Maple did not get a job because of being black. The power structure could not benefit the subaltern because of their resistance against White world. The characters raise their voice against oppression that inculcates a rebellious attitude in them. In American dominant ideology black characters regarded similarly to criminals, critics criticized Naylor for such an example of character Stanley, Schneider added about Stanley as Miss Maple, “disparaging representations of black male representations”. (02) This has harmed the black community largely. The characters of Naylor’s novels demand freedom and changes in their lives and community.

Apart from freedom in blacks’ lives, Naylor centre is on the lives of impoverished women, those who work in private homes, either of their white counterparts or of black bourgeoisie. In *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), Mattie Michael is a solitary mother, her professional hours and drudgery could seek her necessity of economic security and residency. She remained frustrated from her occupation even after alternating countless jobs because of less payments and unhygienic environment. As Basil, Mattie’s son grew up; she worked on two jobs to owe her mortgaged home that she has purchased from Miss Eva, owner of the home. For women, participation in travail force is the fundamental prerequisite to appropriate immutability for proletariat society. The character Kiswana Browne discontinues her college education affiliated along with the Marxist movement. Further, on, she identifies herself with wage earning people. Working class society activist Kiswana Browne is not drudged in domesticity. Naylor created a community where these women of Brewster Street slog outside home for their emancipation. The aspiration for economic security inspires these women to slog outside home.



George is the heroic character of the novel *Mama Day* (1988). His brought up takes place in an orphanage named Wallace P. Andrews. In this boy's orphanage, when boys ever whined to the state inspector about their castigations nothing was ever done in their residence. The boys nurtured in Wallace P. Andrews, they could prepare their meals, paint own dorms, make most of the furniture; sew curtains and bed – sheets. The ones who turned out from the orphanage were not encumber some to the state. George added, "I don't know of anyone who became a drug addict, petty thief, or a derelict" (*MD* 26). No one grew up with the chimeras in their mind about oneself or about the world. Most of the boys as apprentices went from Wallace P. Andrews to either trade or college. Those who could draw became drafters. Those who were interested in music learned to tune pianos. Those left poor kids joined Arts College.

In *The Women of Brewster Place*, Mattie was ashamed of her past life because she has been pregnant outside marriage. She is stunned with sexuality. She denied herself love of a man. Mattie has no hope of successful married life. Likely, Ben is also unable to safe his daughter from sexual harassment, "wallowing in despair and guilt about the wrongs done to his daughter, he allows the past to sap any possibility for future growth and change". (Charles E. Wilson, JR 54) In *Linden Hills*, every male choose light-skinned wives. Contrarily, all Luther Nedeeds want to produce dark skinned sons. These Nedeeds, "want to prove the potency of blackness over any complexion less than black, but at the same time, they are placing the women in a position of blame if potency is not proven. Willa Prescott Nedeed gives birth to a light complexioned son. He accused her of relationship outside marriage. Willa Nedeed is light complexioned so her, "lighter strain is coursing her vein and could easily reveal itself". (Charles E. Wilson, JR 78)

In the novel, *Mama Day* George belongs to New York Cocoa belongs to Willow Springs. Their relationship is uncovering the similarities between the two different people. Their personality, family background, personal expectations and general temperament are different. Their emerging relationship is confusing, mysterious and magnetic inexplicable quality of drawn to each other. Their close tragic mystery is disclosed when George's risks his life to save Cocoa.

In *Bailey's Cafe*, Karen Schneider discusses the sexuality about the women of Bailey's Cafe. Schneider details Esther in sexual exploitation, "Naylor's Esther is a twelve year old girl given by her brother to his boss for the satisfaction of perverse sexual appetites that are fulfilled in the darkness of a cellar" (Schneider – 10). Naylor has discussed the attributes of patriarchy in

all her novels. Naylor's Eve Godfather has brought her up. The evil in Eve is her sexual instinct that is derogatory in the eyes of Godfather. Karen Schneider describes the sexuality of Eve in relation to gender roles. "For this Eve, the wages of "sin" are not death, shame, and strictly prescribed gender roles, but rather their nullification" (Schneider – 12). Patricia Hills Collins in 'Sexual Politics and Black Women's Relationships' believes that African – American women took strength and brought social change with the woman bonding. Eve's boarding house is a place for women bonding. These women bonding share their common experiences and their worldview. Naylor provides a place to her characters to fight against patriarchal powers. Thus limiting and confining themselves within the boundaries of black ghettos.

They loved and were bind together in one community. They loved themselves, which reflected in the spirit of *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982). These African – Americans from Naylor's novels share women bonding from one generation to another generation and even until forthcoming generations. In the novel, *Linden Hills*, all Nedeed wives of different generations formed women bonds through the notes left in diaries or food recipes. These mothers – in – laws and daughter – in – laws display strong women bonds. Her novel *Mama Day* based on women bonds, "Most important is the historical connection that runs from the legendary free spirit who founded the community, Sapphira Wade, through Miranda (Mama Day) to Miranda's great – niece Ophelia (286)". *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) and *Bailey's Café* (1992) consist of the women community who provide help to each other. In *Bailey's Cafe* central character, Eve is the owner of brothel. She allows all the women to exercise their sexuality according to their own wish. These women not forced as professionals. They have relationship with gentle men callers in their own terms. Eve does not treat these women as pariahs or castrated beings. She has women bonding with these women.

In the novel, *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), the main character Mattie finds help from Miss Eva and she also helps Lucielia Eva Turner and others and in return becomes the matriarch figure for her whole community. Mattie helps Ciel to come back to life, as nurturer, caretaker and mother of all Brewster women would lead her to salvation. In *Linden Hills*, all Nedeed wives Luwana, Evelyn, Priscilla and Willa their voices been silenced. The death of Willa's son takes place by the cruelty of her husband Luther Nedeed. After her son's death, her inner self awakens through self – introspection. She revenges Luther Nedeed for her son's death

to end sinful practices of all Luther Nedeed. She destroys the whole family of Nedeed including herself burnt in a fire. Therefore to promote the well being of *Linden Hills* gentry by removing evil doers Nedeed's and their crimes.

In the novel *Mama Day*, the character Mama Day is the community healer of Willow Springs. All Willow Springs inhabitants consider her their matriarch. However, she is never married and she has no children. She has cure for all the inhabitants. When her niece Cocoa Day falls ill, she takes special care of her. When her niece approaches death but comes to life because of Mama Day is healing her through herbal practices. Mama Day's deeds confirm her spirituality above all human beings in Willow Springs.

In *Bailey's Café* (1992), Eve is the central matriarch character. In her brothel, her relationship is amicable with all prostitutes. Her good behaviour with prostitutes is her way towards spirituality. To calm her inner self she considers herself matriarch of all whores. The Black Feminists highlight the 'Black Matriarchy'. The term matriarch applies in which the existence of social order, in which women exercise social and political power, a state which in no way resembles the condition of black women or all women in American society. The term 'black matriarchy' usually describes the status of black women. Black womanhood had overstepped the bounds of femininity because they worked outside home. They also provided economic support for their families by doing menial jobs. In this manner, they had upgraded themselves and considered black men weak and effeminate.

*The Men of Brewster Place* (1998), focuses on the lives of the men of Brewster Place. *The Men of Brewster Place* is a sequel of the novel *The Women of Brewster Place*. The events of the novel are the continuation of the first novel. The lives of these men relate to the lives of the women of Brewster Place. These men suffer racialism. They are unable to form the patriarchal system as white men. *The Men of Brewster Place* similarly resist against the white world like *The Women of Brewster Place*. Bell Hooks describes the males outside the feminist movement. She thinks black men oppression also like black women in many ways. In her essay "We real cool: Black Men and Masculinity 2004" she described black men as marginalized, de – masculinised and dehumanized in the white American society. Men of Brewster Place have failed to portray the positive attitude of black male characters. Black males demasculinity have been described in the novel. Sherley Anne Williams points out, "The novel seems an attempt to

redress the inequalities of black males”. Similarly, eulogizing, “unfulfilled dreams and hopelessness of male characters” (5).

Further, on the criticism for this novel describes that these men lack unity in their community. Most of these men related to Brewster women do not live in the Brewster ghetto. In the end, “*The Men of Brewster Place* – and their book need women to make sense of their lives. (Hoffman 19). In the first novel a strong sense of women bonding depicted where women stood for their own rights. Otherwise, in *The Men of Brewster Place* where Abshu stands alone for their rights of men of Brewster locality. His fight for rights is independently that’s, “One man standing” (*The Men of Brewster Place* 113). Patricia Hills Collins describes, “Only Black women know what it means to be black women (98). Naylor gives a high opinion to the words of Jean Louis Chevaliers that a black female, “speech is no longer a whisper fraught with pain and hope but a thundering clamour” (63). By raising their voice, they are able to fight against their suppression. They are working in work place and fulfilling their responsibility in family roles. They are earning and living independently. Like, previously they are no more slaves to their master; they are no more burdens to their family.

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