GLORIA NAYLOR
A Selected Bibliography

by Tracy Butts

Primary Works (A Chronological Listing)

Novels


1989.


Articles, Essays, & Notes


79-85.


71.


*Interviews & Conversations*

*An Evening with Gloria Naylor.* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Public Library and Information Center, 1991).


Carabis, Angel. [Interview with Gloria Naylor]. *Belles Lettres* 7 (Spring 1992): 36-42.


**Secondary Sources**

Analysis of Naylor's progression toward a “more complex vision of sisterhood” from her first novel to her third.

Reads *The Women of Brewster Place* as a revision of Jean Toomer’s *Cane* and Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*.

Reads the “extreme violence” in the two texts as black women’s reactions to society’s failure to recognize them as human beings.

Analysis of David’s recitation of Whitman’s poem “Whoever You are Holding Me Now in Hand” at his male lover’s wedding in *Linden Hills*. Argues that Naylor’s incorporation of Whitman’s poetry “reveals . . . a connection between writers of different races and a continuum of American literature as a whole . . . .”

Discussion of the reception of the television adaptation of *The Women of Brewster Place* by African-American feminist critics.
Analysis of the relationship between language, race, gender, and geographical space in *Linden Hills*.

Analysis of Naylor’s use of propriety in her first two novels.

Examines how Naylor’s use of screams and laughter in her first four novels creates stories of human grace and salvation. The screams result in “the creation of the narrative, of a story to be shared,” whereas laughter “opens a place to begin the healing, and the healing leads to salvation.”

Analysis of Naylor’s use of biblical allusion in the novel. Asserts that the Bible serves as a “mythical home” which defines and builds women’s sexuality and identity.

Uses Ellison’s definition of the blues “as an autobiographical chronicle of personal catastrophe expressed lyrically” to argue that *Bailey’s Café* is a blues text.

Exploration of the way in which setting affects gender and class in Naylor’s first two novels.

Argues that the treatment of lesbianism in the texts of African-American women writers shows a growing respectability.

Explores the themes of topography, genealogy, and narrative voices in Mama Day and Linden Hills and shows how they “allow Naylor to reconstruct a parallel black history.”


Compares Willie’s (odyssey through hell) and Willa’s (entrapment in the basement) parallel journeys.


Uses Adrienne Rich’s concept of “compulsory heterosexuality” to suggest that Naylor’s characters “fall in the liminal spaces between the two extremes of gay and straight.”


Asserts that Naylor’s texts, when studied together, bring forth a “radically feminist revision of traditional patriarchal narrative.” By employing a circular framework, Naylor suggests that “in our end . . . is our beginning.”


Analysis of the treatment of community and ethnic identity in The Women of Brewster Place.


Asserts that Naylor’s organization of narratives in the novel, which move from Bailey’s tale of the catastrophe of the atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki to Gabe’s and Mariam’s tales of the aftermath of the Jewish Holocaust and Diaspora, eradicate the “delusional desire” to view these historical events as being more horrific or significant than racism in 20th-century America.

Connects *Mama Day* to Lee Smith’s *Oral History*. Asserts that reading the two stories together eradicates the belief that white is universal and black different.


Discussion of white Appalachian culture versus rural black island culture and the importance of the past in shaping family, community, and cultural history in both cultures.


Analysis of the “new breed of female protagonists” who eradicate negative images of black womanhood by (re)creating nurturing images. Looks at Ato Aidoo’s *Anowa*, Naylor’s *The Women of Brewster Place*, Bessie Head’s *Maru*, and Paule Marshall’s *Brown girl, Brown stones*.


Asserts that Naylor’s incorporation of both positive and critical attitudes toward Shakespeare enables her work to fully dramatize “the conflict between established and emergent traditions.”


Analysis of Naylor’s “assimilation” of Shakespeare in her first three novels which argues that Naylor’s texts suggest that Shakespeare’s place in the canon as the “all defining center of things” should be reinvestigated.


Comparative study of the rhetorical technique used in Naylor’s *Linden Hills* and Whitman’s *Calamus* poems.


Collection of fourteen previously published critical essays, six original essays, excerpts from Naylor’s first four novels, and an interview.


Comparative study of the treatment of ginger in these two works.


Lectures delivered at Mercer University. Asserts that Naylor is following in the literary footsteps of her “folkloristic foremother,” Zora Neale Hurston.

Hayes, Elizabeth T. “Gloria Naylor’s Mama Day as Magic Realism.” Felton and Loris, Critical Response to Gloria Naylor, 177-86.

Asserts that Mama Day privileges Miranda’s nonrationalist ideology (“magic realism”) over George’s rationalist ideology (realism).


Analysis of Naylor’s use of an ancestral figure to link gender, culture, and language in her first three novels.


Reads Linden Hills in conjunction with Luce Irigaray’s Speculum of the Other Woman in order to show how Naylor and Irigiray both tell “the story of the woman in the cave.”


Excerpt from PhD dissertation focuses on how Mattie Michael’s failure/inability to use language within its proper social contexts results in her becoming ostracized from her family.


Asserts that Alcott and Naylor reverse the traditional narrative focus by making the mother (Mama Day), not the daughter (Cocoa), the subject of the novel.


Analysis of Naylor’s use of African American quilters’ improvisational qualities in Mama Day.

“Framing the Possibilities: Collective Agency and the Novels of Gloria Naylor.” _Gloria Naylor’s Early Novels_, 133-54.

Examines how Naylor’s first four novels are connected by intertextual links, such as space, time, African American musical legacies, Western literary traditions, gender issues, birth, and death, which “form a place’ where she has been able to define an aesthetic and cultural terrain that works both with and against the prevailing one(s).”


Analysis of the dream sequence as the characters’ expression of frustration with their disappointing relationships with men and their “subconscious desire for rebellion and revenge.”


Examines the celebration of matrilineal heritage in Naylor’s “Kiswana Browne,” Alice Walker’s “Everday Use,” and Toni Cade Bambara’s “My Man Bovanne” and connects this celebration to the writers’ reservations about black nationalism.


Brief discussion of the cast of _The Women of Brewster Place_ and the making of the television adaptation.


Connects Naylor’s focus in _Linden Hills_ on the black middle class to black women writers of the Harlem Renaissance. Sees the residents of Linden Hills as culturally and emotionally starved because their community failed them.


Discussion of how reviewers of _Mama Day_ have “mistaken its genre and defined its origins too narrowly.” Also asserts that the novel belongs to the romantic tradition.


Asserts that Naylor’s “unusual narrative conceit” in _Mama Day_ is actually a sophisticated narrative strategy.

Levin, Amy K. “Metaphor and Maternity in _Mama Day_.” _Kelley, Gloria Naylor’s Early Novels_, 70-88.
Asserts that Miranda Day, the title character, follows a model of motherhood influenced by a West African model of mothering and female leadership.


Analysis of the disruption of the black community by outside forces (i.e., racism, sexism, homophobia, and colorism) in Naylor's first three novels.


Brief biography and analysis of Naylor's first four novels. Aligns Naylor with Toni Morrison, Paule Marshall, Alice Walker, and Zora Neale Hurston.


Views the city in Naylor’s novels not as a promised land, but as a trap for African Americans. Although characters achieve a better standard of living, materialism entraps them and results in their loss of identity.


Argues that the absence of closure in the novel reflects Naylor's reinterpretation of Hughes's “dream deferred.”


Analysis of Naylor's “blueprint for the process for change” in *Linden Hills* and *Mama Day.* Identifies three requirements for change: education of both sexes, redefinition of religion, and equalization of the power structure.

Meisendhelder, Susan. “‘Eating Cane’ in Gloria Naylor’s *The Women of Brewster Place* and Zora Neale Hurston’s *Sweat.*” *Notes on Contemporary Literature* 23.2 (March 1993): 5-7.

Brief discussion of how “eating cane” acts as a “disguised metaphor” for enslaving women.


Analyzes the competing narratives and values of George (influenced by “white” upbringing) and Cocoa (influenced by “black” upbringing).

Argues that Naylor, Toni Morrison, and Paule Marshall reclaim and revitalize the idea of flight.


Applies Northrop Frye's theory of the romantic mode to the novel's female characters.


Reads the novel as a “haunting lyrical text steeped in biblical allusion.”

Asserts that the collective female voices symbolize an end to the male dialectic.


Sees the women's dismantling of the brick wall, the apocalypse in The Women in Brewster Place, as their reaction to restrictions placed upon them by the white male power structure.


Suggests that Naylor's female characters often find themselves mired in domesticity. Looks at how Naylor's texts mirror the unique realities of black women's lives.


Asserts that the characters in the novel reject the dominant/mainstream definition of the American dream, favoring instead a version of reality that "blackens" white dreams.


Comparative study of women novelists' engagement of Shakespeare in their texts, including a brief discussion of Mama Day.


Comparative study of the relationship of African American women’s language to subjectivity. Looks at Naylor’s The Women of Brewster Place, Ntozake Shange’s For Colored Girls Who Have Considered Suicide When the Rainbow is Enuf, and Alice Walker’s The Color Purple.


Analysis of Naylor’s treatment of the African American experience in her first three novels.


Uses Derrida’s concept of the “unnamable bottomless well” as the “abyss” to draw parallels between Derrida, Morrison’s Jazz, and Naylor’s first four novels.


Analysis of Naylor’s use of wells and well-like symbolism. Argues that characters live at the edge of wells/the abyss (the différance) which neither destroys nor benefits them.


Brief analysis of female defined imagery in the novel.


Exploration of Naylor’s use of proverbs in Mama Day to signal conflict between male-female relationships and to mediate between polarities of gender and corresponding dimensions of society associated with gender (i.e., science/ mysticism, rational/intuitive, and self/community).


Analysis of the recurring healer figure in Naylor’s novels.

Asserts that Naylor’s novel forces readers to take a cosmic leap from the world in which they live, one of science and reason, to a border world where religion and faith reign.


Uses Foucault’s concept of the pre-panopticon dungeon to answer why battered women remain in abusive relationships. Focuses on Willa Nedeed in *Linden Hills*.


Uses Marjorie Garber’s concept of transvestitism to analyze Naylor’s treatment of manhood.


Comparative study of the texts of Naylor, Paule Marshall, June Jordan, and Audre Lorde, all of which engage in an effort to eradicate stereotypical images of black women.


Uses Mikhail Bakhtin’s concept of the polyphonic novel to analyze the various textual voices. Also reads the novel as gothic fiction.


Reads *The Women of Brewster Place, Linden Hills*, and *Mama Day* as revisions of Ann Petry’s *The Street*, Dante’s *Inferno*, and Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, respectively.


Asserts that *Bailey’s Café* demonstrates Naylor’s success at appropriating stories from Western culture due to her avoidance of “discursive indenture.”

Looks at Naylor’s and other American women writers’ rewriting of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*.


Asserts that Naylor follows in the tradition of Jesse Fauset and Nella Larsen with *Linden Hills*, which is to be viewed as a novel of manners.


Asserts that Naylor’s portrayal of “the two” in *The Women of Brewster Place* “counters” what Barbara Christian says to be the growing respectability of the treatment of lesbianism in African American women’s texts.


Comparative study of the connection between disease and sociocultural conditions. Focuses on Lucielia Louise Turner and Mattie Michael in *The Women of Brewster Place*.


Argues that Naylor’s use of metaphor to describe violent acts in her texts in a manner that enables readers who might otherwise resist reading such graphic portrayals to read on is “inherited from her literary ancestor Charles Chesnutt.”


Reads *Mama Day* as a “speakerly text.” Asserts that the “necessity of establishing a narrative authority” is the novel’s central theme.

Juxtaposes the rape scenes in these two texts to show how Naylor subverts Laura Mulvey's "model of patriarchal viewing."


Argues that Naylor's texts are influenced by "African womanism" because her characters "are distinctly African in origin" and, thus, they transcend the boundaries of the text and ascend to higher levels of liberation.


Analysis of the food consumed by and eating habits of the characters in the novel. Views characters' rejection of "down home food" as personal and cultural starvation.


Naylor's use of King Lear, Hamlet, and The Tempest suggests her "complex, ambivalent relationship to Shakespeare."


Analysis of Naylor's use of the conjure woman testifies to the staying power of the oral tradition.


Brief analysis asserts that the quilting scene in Mama Day shows the "interrelation of women's lives and friendships."


Reads novel as a commentary on the price the black middle class has to pay for its upward mobility.

Comparative analysis of *The Women of Brewster Place* and Jean Toomer’s *Cane* which “seeks to intertextually read these works of fiction as composite novels.”


Asserts that the “sharp contradiction” of love (which denotes feeling) and dialectic (which denotes logic) forms the basis of *Mama Day*.


Analysis of Naylor’s and Marshall’s use of the mentoring, nurturing figure in the two novels.


Book-length study of major themes, symbolism, and development of characters in and the influence of the Bible, Dante, Shakespeare, African American folklore, and mythology on Naylor’s five novels.


Analysis of how the novel “focuses on a struggle between two worlds and the beliefs that sustain the inhabitants of these worlds.”