

“Male Chauvinism” in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster place*

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Abstract

Gloria Naylor, born on January 25 1950 was a celebrated Afro-American Novelist, who precedes her own identity as well as a black women writer, With extreme state of prominence in Afro-American literature. She has depicted through her set of writings her vision of the world in which human being confronts evil and a life of illusion and despair. She is Recognized for her moving stories of African-American women. Being an African woman by birth and tradition Naylor herself faced a lot many Challenging and perplexing circumstances but she toughly resisted all that came her way.

She grew up in a time and region in which black women used to live. There were no career opportunities for them so they had to live as household women. But Naylor had different outlook and so she rejected to play a traditional Feminine role and also rejected Chauvinism. She depicts the female experience of oppression and exploitation in a male dominated black society. Women are not able to exercise autonomy either over their lives or their bodies Since they are controlled and determined for them by men.

Naylor in her novel *The Women of Brewster Place* published in 1982 portrays the plight of the exceptional aspiring woman of the century, longing to break out her disgusting role in society and complete with her male counterpart on a footing of equality.

The novel deals with the celebration of the riches and diversities of Female experience. It consists of seven interconnected stories. It interconnects Urban black women who live on the imaginary street of Brewster Place. Gloria Naylor undermines the conservative stereotypes of Black poverty , by presenting the living diversity of black female experience , struggling to survive in the ghetto. Naylor’s book The women of Brewster place represent these concerns in the best manner .

The intermingled lives of bright, desperate, determined, black women searching for an authentic self and move across oppressive tracts of experience. Naylor in her novels deals with various women who have been silenced and kept ignorant by the dominant culture. Her contention is that it is the human need to create and maintain a true self in a social context. Black women recreate and maintain their self-identities in the face of a chaotic influx of sensation that has always threatened to sweep them away. They are no more the midnight caged birds, but radiant ebony phoenixes singing joyfully, and triumphantly the song of their true self.

Gloria Naylor presents the confrontation of the female protagonists with the patriarchal oppressive environment . Mattie Michael , The main protagonist hails from a traditional family. Mattie is shaped by the predominance of patriarchy. The strict vigilance and shifting care of her father seeks explanation for her every activity. His domination over her leads her to offer explanation for everything she does. She is deprived of social interaction. “Her father would kill her if he heard she had seen walking with Butch fuller”.

He alienates her from her surroundings. She feels trapped in an oppressive environment. Her ignorance and limiting of consciousness in the form of her father restricts her free thinking.

Consequently she easily falls a prey in the hands of Butch, a notorious womanizer. Naylor depicts the physical abuse that Mattie incurs at the hands of her father. As an aged father he works so hard to fulfil all her wishes. But when she says about her pregnancy and fails to reveal the name of butch he beats her demanding the man who had sneaked into his home and distorted the faith and trust he had on her child. He cannot tolerate his disobedience .

Her pregnancy aggravates her father who cherishes high hopes for her. She is subjected to brutal beatings. She has been tortured so mercilessly that reduced to a “pile of torn clothes and bruised flesh on the floor”. And she braced herself for the impact of the large rough hand that was coming towards her face . He still held her by the hair so she took the force of the blows with her neck muscles, and her eyes went dim as the blood dripped down her chin from her split lip. The grip on her hair tightened, and she was forced even closer to his face as she answered the silent question in the narrowing eyes.

His aggressiveness pushes her to unleash herself from the torturing mental and physical pains. She considers herself as a new woman with a new understanding and consciousness all set to begin. She just wanted to lay head on the cushioned seat and suspend time , pretend that she had been born that very moment on that very bus, and that this was all there was and ever would be. But just then the baby moved, and put her on her stomach and knew that she was nurturing what had gone within her before and would come after.

This child would tie her to that past and future as inextricably as it was now tied to her every heartbeat. With a new born understanding she moves ahead in life. She moves from submission to assertion in order to acquire an identity and to fit into the mainstream of the society. Mattie’s problems encompassing physical

emotional and economic spheres are many and varied. Even in her desperate and forlorn situation she does not lose courage.

She takes up a temporary job to fend for herself and her son.

Her firm and strong willed mind to raise him as a single parent ends in searching a job to fend for herself and her son. Her tenacious and strong willed mind to raise him as a single parent ends in finding a job as a book binder.

She nurtures him with utmost care. Mattie holds herself responsible for her past action. She carries that guilt in her conscience. She tries to screen her guilt in her sacrifice of promising marriage or relationship. Grown up as an egocentric person, Basil fails to introduce himself to the struggles of his mother's life.

He falls into the bad company and is imprisoned on the charge for murder.

Mattie obtain bail after offering up her house, her only property , as collateral. Even though the attorney assures basil that he will be exonerated, he flees at the thought of having to endure a trial. Consequently, Mattie lose her House and is sent to live in Brewster place. A gradual awakening dawns on her that Basil is not her son but a representative of community of men in the Universe. She makes up her mind to lead a life asserting her individuality and not to merely subject to the male dominancy. As an outcome of her clear vision of her stance she moves to Brewster place.

Her sufferings lead her to a new consciousness and still self-confidence into her. A new phase of life begins when she moves to Brewster place. She acts as a supporter, a guide and a source of energy to the other characters, who are often baffled by the problems of life and death.

“The music in his laughter had a way of rounding off the missing notes in her soul”
[Gloria Naylor]

In this novel, the black woman protagonist is not a Negro, instead she is an individual human being who is in search of her identity in spite of the Suppression that she undergoes from the dominant society. They raise their voice to break the chains of societal violence against them. They have the capacity to resist and struggle, to make the noticeable and perceptible thus define their autonomy. The character of Naylor perfectly fit in the image of a struggler and survivor.

Work cited:

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Declaration:

According to my knowledge the above has not been published in any other cites.

