FROM MARGINALIZATION TO AGENCY: BLACK WOMEN'S RESISTANCE IN GLORIA NAYLOR'S WRITING.

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RESUME

Cet article analyse la représentation de l'insurrection des femmes noires dans l'œuvre littéraire de Gloria Naylor, en mettant particulièrement l'accent sur leur résistance face aux oppressions raciale, sociale, économique, sexuelle et patriarcale. S'appuyant sur la critique littéraire féministe noire et l'écoféminisme, l'étude montre comment les personnages féminins de Naylor transforment leurs expériences de marginalisation en formes d'affirmation de soi, de solidarité, d'autonomisation et de résistance communautaire. L'étude examine également la déconstruction des stéréotypes de la Sapphire et de la Matriarche, tout en soulignant l'intersection de la race, du genre, de la classe sociale, de la sexualité et de l'exclusion sociale dans l'expérience des femmes noires. Par ailleurs, Malgré le report ou l'inaccomplissement de leurs rêves, les personnages féminins manifestent persévérance, résilience et solidarité. En définitive, l'article montre que Naylor fait de la littérature un moyen de donner une voix aux femmes noires marginalisées, de remettre en question les représentations dominantes et de promouvoir l'autodéfinition, la justice, l'égalité, l'autonomisation et la libération collective.
Mots-clés : *femmes noires ; insurrection ; résistance ; autonomisation.*

ABSTRACT

This article examines the representation of Black women's insurrection in Gloria Naylor's literary works, with particular attention to their resistance to racial, social, economic, sexual, and patriarchal oppression. Drawing on Black feminist literary criticism and ecofeminism, the study explores how Naylor's female characters transform experiences of marginalization into forms of self-assertion, solidarity, empowerment, and community resistance. The study also examines Naylor's deconstruction of the Sapphire and

Matriarch stereotypes and highlights the intersection of race, gender, class, sexuality, and social exclusion in shaping Black women's experiences. Furthermore, Despite deferred or unfulfilled dreams, her female characters demonstrate remarkable perseverance, resilience, and solidarity. Ultimately, the article argues that Naylor uses literature as a means of giving voice to marginalized Black women and of challenging dominant representations while promoting self-definition, justice, equality, empowerment, and collective liberation.
Keywords: *Black women; insurrection; resistance; empowerment*

INTRODUCTION

The writings of Gloria Naylor hold a significant place in African American literature because of their powerful representation of Black women's experiences in a society shaped by racism, sexism, and social inequality. Through her novels, Naylor gives voice to Black women who struggle against oppression while seeking identity, dignity, and freedom. Her works explore the realities of discrimination, poverty, violence, and marginalization, but they also celebrate resistance, solidarity, and self-affirmation among Black women. The theme of Black women's insurrection therefore emerges as a central aspect of her literary vision.

In Naylor's fiction, insurrection does not always take the form of open rebellion or violence. Instead, it often appears through acts of self-expression, emotional resistance, communal support, and the rejection of oppressive social norms. Her female characters challenge patriarchal domination, racial injustice, and cultural stereotypes that attempt to silence or diminish them. Through their struggles, Naylor reveals the strength, resilience, and humanity of Black women in America.

This research aims to examine the representation of Black women's insurrection in the writings of Gloria Naylor. It seeks to analyze how her female characters resist different forms of oppression and how their resistance contributes to the construction of identity and empowerment. Ultimately, the study intends to demonstrate that Naylor's writings are not only artistic expressions but also social and political commentaries that advocate for justice, equality, and liberation for Black women as discussed by celebrated and

outstanding writers and activist such as Toni Morrison, Alice Walker and Bell Hooks to name but a few.

This contribution is carried out in line with such literary theories as black feminist literary criticism and ecofeminism in order to foreground women's experiences and offer contemporary critical perspectives. It follows a three-part structure. It first examines the struggle of the black woman before social and racist pitfalls. It then investigates their actions against stereotypes and finally considers black women's perseverance before deferral dreams.

DEVELOPMENT

1- THE BLACK WOMAN VOICING AGAINST THEIR SOCIAL, RACIAL AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS.

To get the scope of this analysis it appears of the uppermost importance to state that racism in the US was an institution. the critic Celeste Fraser exposes the racist violation of a governmental work called the Moynihan report in the 1960s. In fact, the Moynihan report asserted clearly that poverty was linked to the black family's structure whereas it said nothing as such concerning white people in the words of Fraser (Fraser,1993:91). Fraser stands against that vision of the black community, which is only rooted in racial repulsion also called racism.

The institutionalization of racism, obviously, kept black Americans far away from taking full advantage of the American society for a very long time. And it is the case of Naylor's female characters. They were really excluded and kept aside. They had to attend separate schools from Whites, travel with black buses and using only the commodities devoted to their race. Black women were seen as the outcast of the American society. For Gloria Gayles, there are many social levels in the American society and the black American women come last. They are the bottom, not only in the American society but also in their own communities. (Gayles 1984:34). Racism devastates Blacks' life to such an extent that, even some black leaders of the 1960s denounced it openly. Malcolm X for instance carried it to the religious field may be because he was exceeded by racist attitudes.

He stated: "They got Jesus white, Mary white, God white, everybody white. That's white nationalism." (Gates &MC Kay: 1997:100.) Malcolm X was surely right saying so because many events were difficult to understand and accept in the American society. In fact the country is inhabited by different racial groups among which Blacks and Whites. How then can white women be openly allowed to procreate whereas the black ones were sterilized some decades ago?

Facing the horrors of racism, Gloria Naylor's characters undertake to protest at it through self-assertion. In *the Women of Brewster Place*, Brewster Place the district the novel is named after, is a dead end street. Therefore, the rulers of the town have confined in there only persons of black skin color and mainly women. The said black women, despite their modest financial means, refuse this status. Although they seem to have been forgotten by the rulers of the town, they manage to unite, to organize in order to compel their white building owner, to fix up their homes. Racism and ostracization are also completely taken down in *Linden Hills* where, after compromising his family, a black man is able to reach the white living standards. Luther Needed becomes thus, a real estate owner, a very rich black American.

Blacks thus faced among others lack of job despite their qualification. The lack of job based on racial discrimination is read in *Bailey's Café*. Stanley is a young black man. Despite his PHD, he collected ninety-nine job rejections. Still he did not give up. To fight racist practices, he becomes a 'woman' and serves right his community.

Black female characters also show as level-headed entities. To put an end to injustice and oppression they go through, black women fight to reach and deserve a better position in their communities as much as in the American society. Therefore, after working for decades as prostitutes, some depressed black women join Bailey's Café in order to be soothed and enjoy a better life. Those women are depressed because of the plethora of sad experiences they have faced. Despite that situation, they make the decision to change their living conditions. In *Mama Day*, Cocoa is another example of black women struggling for a better social position. Born in the rural area of Willow Springs, she travels to New York. She adopts the life of big cities. In the meanwhile, she experiences the precariousness of the life of the

black women. To escape such a fate, she graduates. Thereafter, she endeavors to get a well-paid job in order to earn a living. Her actions, which oppose men's domination, are acts of insurrection against racism mixed together with sexism and class oppression. Black American women, moreover fight to overcome sexual abuse.

An organized insurrection is besides raised against black American women's sexual misuse. Before brutality and sexual assaults such as rape that they undergo, black female characters revolt. An illustration is provided in *the Women of Brewster Place* with the rape of Lorraine. But since rape is most of the time perpetrated in secret, the disgusted women dared not say a word about it publicly until the rape of Lorraine. In fact, on an evening walk, Lorraine comes across a gang of black teens. She is terribly raped. The teens rape her to such an extent that she crumbles. Her body as well as her mind are terribly affected. Satisfied, they abandon her at last. In a sudden burst of energy, she grasps a piece of brick. She defensively throws it against the rapists. Unfortunately, they had already disappeared and the brick kills Ben the janitor who was precisely rushing to help. A man is killed anyway. The death of Ben appears unfair. It is still significant in the frame of this work. The murder of the janitor by Lorraine, who was raped, is in keeping with black women's insurrection against the unfair American society and mainly against sexism. The protest at rape is discussed by Danielle MC Guire, who clearly enough explains that for decades black women have faced sexual misuse and suffered the horrors of rape in the US. Therefore, through different ways they protest at it. She writes:

> Throughout the ninetieth century… black women regularly denounced their sexual misuse-by deploying their voices as weapon in the war against the white supremacy whether in the church, the courtroom, or in congressional hearings, African-American women loudly resisted what Martin Luther King Jr., called the "thingification" of their humanity. Decades before radical feminists in the women's movement urged rape survivors to " speak out", African-American women's public protest galvanized local, national, and even international outrage and sparked larger campaigns for racial justice and human dignity.(MC Guire:2010:XIX-XX.)

So for the dignity of the black women and for the dignity of humanity at large such behavior as rape must cease since women who denounce it have been undergoing it for centuries. Rape is truly speaking among the most current and dehumanizing plights. Black women are constantly raped but dare not say a word about it. But with the raising feminist movements which support and fight for oppressed women, a forum is opened to share experiences about it and try to define the scope of the flow. In such opportunities, each woman listens to the other ones who are strong enough to explore their traumatizing experience before an assistance composed of women. Such experience provides a strong support to women who have been suffering alone if they have already undergone rape or anxiety for those living with the fear to undergo it.

In the same context, the sexuality of the women and mainly black ones is questioned. Some people who are essentially men deny them the right to choose their sexual orientation, the one that could help them fell deeply sexual relations. Sexual orientations are numerous and various. The most commonplace is heterosexual relation that unites a man and a woman. However, there is also homosexuality, which can exist among women. Homosexual inclination is denied to women mainly the black American ones like the women living in Brewster Place. The two lesbians living in Brewster Place were ostracized because of their sexual choice; Still they did not yield.

But the main uprising-based insurrection of black women seems to be the awakening of their consciousness about their conditions and their own bodies. This consciousness awakening led by Kiswana helps the whole female communities stand up for their rights in the process of opposing patriarchal oppression. It is also read through the itinerary of Mattie. She first was a sexual object for men. She then moved to Brewster Place because of family troubles. Her movement shows the strength of her personality, her ability to define herself. This movement transforms her from the former lover into a communal authority. Her new personality leads her to fight men's authority through this provocative discourse "all good men are either dead or waiting to be born" in order to operate the subversion of men's image.

Black American's insurrection is furthermore felt through the dynamic actions they have with their companions, their husbands. In fact, they adapt their behaviors and actions to the evolution of their social and marital situation. Because of the injustice and domination, they undergo in the hands of their husbands, there is a constant conflict in couples. This conflict is generated by the will of power of oppressed women who want in turn to take over as discussed by Zannou Adiele. In "the African American Woman Struggle in Alice Walker's *the Color Purple*", she writes: "The conflict between men and women is not static. As women become stronger than men that were dominating them and the men that were dominating then become even weaker than them." (Zannou,2015:255.)

As it sounds, the white dominating system created any artfulness to prevent blacks from thriving and making money. Black American women in reaction take any action to get freed from the vicious circle of deep poverty. Naylor's novels reprove the bad implications of racism upon the lives of the black people by describing through details how Blacks generally refuse to epitomize the bad picture they had been stuck on. They avoid for instance the bad image of the matriarch, poverty stricken, who strives to eat. They rather show black women fighting to overcome gratuitous violence. Naylor in fact praises black women's maturity before oppression and violence. All their actions aim at constructing their decaying environment and reinforce harmony within their societies. It is an insurrection before the negation of their rights as depicted in Naylor's fiction (Frazer,1993:100). Moreover, the narrator tries in *Linden Hills* to build a new image of the black race that valorizes it before Whites. Black women thus "reverse the poles of the black/ white binary by valorizing 'black' instead of 'white' in the words of Luke Bouvier. (Bouvier,1993:142). There is moreover Naylor's insurrection against the negatives stereotypes drawn against black women.

2- THE FIGHT AGAINST MALE STEREOTYPES

Gloria Naylor's fiction offers a powerful critique of the stereotypical representations of Black women that have historically shaped American culture and literature. Among the most persistent

stereotypes are the Sapphire and the Matriarch figures, intersectionality and female subjectivity and the illusion of American dream. Through her complex female characters, Naylor challenges and deconstructs these reductive images, revealing the diverse realities, struggles, and strengths of Black women.

The Sapphire stereotype portrays Black women as loud, aggressive, domineering, angry, and emasculating. Emerging from racist cultural narratives, this image reduces Black women to hostile and irrational figures whose emotions are viewed as threatening rather than justified. As to The Matriarch stereotype, it depicts Black women as overly strong, controlling mothers who dominate their families and are blamed for social problems within Black communities. While seemingly positive because it acknowledges strength, the stereotype denies Black women vulnerability, emotional complexity, and individual desires. In novels such as *The Women of Brewster Place*, *Mama Day*, and *Bailey's Cafe*, Naylor refuses to present Black women as one-dimensional figures. Consequently, she constructs characters whose identities are shaped by history, race, gender, class, and personal experience. Her women express anger, resilience, tenderness, fear, and hope. By presenting a range of emotional experiences, Naylor dismantles the notion that Black women fit neatly into stereotypical categories. Several of Naylor's female characters display anger and assertiveness, traits often associated with the Sapphire image. However, Naylor contextualizes these emotions within systems of oppression, discrimination, poverty, and gender inequality. For example, in *The Women of Brewster Place*, characters confront domestic violence, economic hardship, and social marginalization. Their expressions of anger are not signs of irrational hostility but understandable responses to injustice. Naylor transforms anger into a form of resistance and survival. Rather than portraying outspoken women as inherently aggressive, she demonstrates that their voices emerge from lived experiences of struggle. In doing so, she reclaims Black female anger as a legitimate political and emotional response.

Naylor also interrogates the Matriarch stereotype through mother figures who bear immense responsibilities yet remain deeply human. Characters such as Mattie Michael embody strength and leadership within their communities, but Naylor avoids portraying them as invulnerable superwomen. Mattie experiences loneliness, disappointment, and emotional pain. Her maternal role is not presented as evidence of domination but as a response to social circumstances that often require Black women to assume multiple responsibilities. By exposing the emotional costs of caregiving and resilience, Naylor reveals the limitations of the Matriarch stereotype. Her characters are neither all-powerful nor responsible for the structural inequalities affecting their communities. The novels also insist upon intersectionality and female subjectivity.

A significant aspect of Naylor's deconstruction lies in her emphasis on intersectionality. Black women's experiences cannot be understood solely through race or gender. Economic conditions, family histories, sexuality, and community relationships all influence their identities. Naylor grants her characters subjectivity by allowing them to narrate their own experiences. This narrative strategy resists stereotypical representations imposed from outside the Black female experience. Her women become agents of their own stories rather than objects of cultural myths.

The female community also presents as a space of resistance. Naylor frequently portrays female communities as spaces where stereotypes are challenged and redefined. Through friendship, solidarity, and collective memory, women support one another against social forces that seek to limit their identities. In Brewster Place, for instance, communal bonds help women transcend the labels imposed upon them. Their relationships reveal emotional depth, vulnerability, and mutual care: qualities often absent from stereotypical depictions. This section also analyses The Illusion of the American Dream.

The American Dream is traditionally understood as the belief that hard work, determination, and perseverance can lead to success, prosperity, and social mobility regardless of one's background.

However, Gloria Naylor critically examines this ideal in her fiction, revealing the structural inequalities that often prevent marginalized groups, particularly African Americans and Black women, from achieving the promises associated with the dream. Through novels such as *The Women of Brewster Place*, *Linden Hills*, *Bailey's Cafe*, and *Mama Day*, Naylor exposes the illusionary nature of the American Dream by highlighting the persistent realities of racism, class inequality, gender discrimination, and social exclusion. The American Dream furthermore shows as an Unfulfilled Promise. Naylor presents the American Dream as a promise that remains inaccessible to many African Americans. While society promotes the idea that success is available to everyone, her characters repeatedly encounter barriers that limit their opportunities. In *The Women of Brewster Place*, the residents strive for better lives through hard work and sacrifice. Yet their efforts are often frustrated by poverty, discrimination, and institutional neglect. The physical isolation of Brewster Place, symbolized by the wall surrounding the community, reflects the social and economic barriers that prevent upward mobility. The dream of prosperity remains distant despite the determination of the characters. One of Naylor's major critiques of the American Dream is that it ignores the impact of systemic racism. The ideology suggests that individual effort alone determines success, but Naylor demonstrates that racial discrimination continues to shape social and economic outcomes. Her characters frequently encounter limited educational opportunities, employment discrimination, and residential segregation. These obstacles reveal that success is not solely a matter of personal merit. Instead, structural inequalities create unequal starting points and unequal chances of advancement.

Through this critique, Naylor challenges the myth that America functions as a true meritocracy through Class Mobility and the Illusion of Success. Perhaps Naylor's strongest examination of the American Dream appears in *Linden Hills*. The novel portrays a prosperous Black suburban community whose residents seem to embody the ideals of success and upward mobility. However, beneath the appearance of wealth lies emotional emptiness, alienation, and moral compromise. Many residents have sacrificed their cultural

identity, family relationships, and personal authenticity in pursuit of material success. The community itself functions as a metaphor for the American Dream's deceptive nature. As residents move closer to economic privilege, they often become further removed from their humanity and sense of self. Naylor suggests that material achievement alone cannot guarantee fulfillment. It also concerns gender and the limits of opportunity.

Naylor also explores how gender shapes access to the American Dream. Black women face a double burden of racism and sexism, making the path to success even more difficult. Characters such as Mattie Michael in *The Women of Brewster Place* work tirelessly to improve their lives and support their families. Yet they continue to encounter social constraints that limit their opportunities. Their experiences demonstrate that the American Dream often overlooks the specific challenges faced by women, particularly women of color. By foregrounding Black female experiences, Naylor reveals how the dream is structured around assumptions that fail to account for intersecting forms of oppression. It also highlights marginalized voices and social exclusion.

In *Bailey's Cafe*, Naylor focuses on individuals who exist at the margins of society. Many characters have been excluded from mainstream definitions of success because of poverty, trauma, race, gender, or sexuality. These characters challenge conventional measures of achievement. Rather than seeking wealth or social status, they struggle for dignity, healing, and self-acceptance. Through their stories, Naylor questions whether the American Dream's emphasis on economic success truly reflects human fulfillment. The novel suggests that society often devalues individuals who cannot or do not conform to dominant standards of achievement. All this results in alternative definitions of Success.

Although Naylor critiques the American Dream, she does not portray her characters as entirely hopeless. Instead, she proposes alternative forms of success based on community, resilience, cultural identity, and personal growth. In *Mama Day*, fulfillment comes not through wealth or social advancement but through connections to

family, heritage, spirituality, and community. Naylor presents these values as more meaningful and sustainable than material success alone. This alternative vision challenges capitalist notions of achievement and emphasizes collective well-being over individual accumulation. Moreover, stands Symbolism and Social Critique.

Naylor frequently employs symbolic settings to illustrate the failures of the American Dream. Brewster Place symbolizes confinement, exclusion, and blocked opportunities. *Linden Hills* symbolizes the seductive yet destructive pursuit of material success. *Bailey's Cafe* symbolizes refuge for those rejected by mainstream society. Willow Springs in *Mama Day* symbolizes cultural continuity, communal strength, and alternative ways of defining success. These spaces allow Naylor to explore the gap between America's promises and the realities experienced by marginalized communities. It leads to the resilience of these marginalized and oppressed segment of society.

3 -PERSEVERANCE OR RENEWAL OF DEFERRAL DREAMS

Before the numerous pitfalls that compromise their lives, Naylor's black female characters never give up. Despite the difficulties they face with the male-controlled system, they keep on fighting, hoping better days. People in their lives are aspiring leaders, professionals and even moneybags. Those expectations care so deeply about them that they long to grant the wishes. They constitute dreams that dreamers endeavor to fulfill. In the black American societies depicted in Gloria Naylor's works, the dreams remain unfortunately unfulfilled in most cases despite women's determination in their activities. Black women do not yield still. They rather show persistence.

Persistence in the present context refers to the fact of continuing to try to do something despite difficulties, especially when other people are against you and think that you are being annoying or unreasonable. (Wehmeier, 2006:1083). This perseverance, which characterizes Naylor's voice, is marked in her works. For example, *The Women of Brewster Place* describes the myriad of problems for Afros,

particularly women, who refuse to abandon unachieved dreams. Naylor's depiction of the Black women contrasts with the former ones, mainly those realized by men who show black women as stupid persons who cannot do anything right for themselves.

Although perseverance is widely observed in most of Naylor's books *The Women of Brewster Place* reads as the one that best depicts that mindset. It is the novel, which carries to the highest point black women's perseverance before unfulfilled dreams and even the renewal of those dreams. It is a story about the unfulfilled dreams of black women of the sixties in the United States of America. Despite the fact that the female characters are interrelated and share more than the same living place, the narrator presents them individually living in harmony the ones with the others. Their differences appear with the community rejecting severely, "the two" for their lesbian practices. However, after the violent rape of Lorraine who is a lesbian black woman, the whole feminine community gathers around her. The other women forget thus about her 'forbidden' sexual practices and turn to a single aim: justice for black women. The critic Jill L. Matus thinks that the black women's actions in *the Women of Brewster Place* are nothing but the celebration of their persistence before deferral dreams. This is an excerpt of his essay "Dream Deferral, and Closure in *the Women of Brewster Place*": "*The Women of Brewster Place* turns from the grand and explosive ending to affirm endurance and persistence in the face of unfulfilled dreams". He adds: "Naylor's novel is not exhortatory or rousing in the same way; her response to fracture of the collective dream is an affirmation of persistence rather than a song of culmination and apocalypse" (Matus,1993:135).

In other respects, *The Women of Brewster Place* is a several-part novel, which relates the stories of many black American women living there in Brewster place, the cul-de-sac where nobody of white race is to be found. With the exception of Kiswana who joined them to feel close to her people, the black female characters in the novel are there because of hard economic and social conditions due to their race. These African-American women are confined in that dilapidated place they cannot leave, unfortunately. It appears obvious in the following lines from "Naylor's Geography: Community, Class and Patriarchy in *The Women of Brewster Place* and *Linden Hills*": "They were

here yesterday and unless there is some catastrophic change in society, they will be here tomorrow.(Christian, 1993:119). This citation from the critic Barbara Christian summarizes very well the precariousness of black women's position. If she refers to cataclysm to see them moving away from Brewster Place, it is simply because of their deplorable living and financial means that prevent them from moving. Nevertheless, despite the fact that most these black women are not graduated, they do not surrender to beggary. They try to get jobs, whatever the kind, in order to earn their living. It is the case of Kiswana in *the Women of Brewster Place.* After leaving her wealthy family, she takes part in several theatric representations to earn her living. Her efforts to live independently show her opposition to her social conditions, which are also the ones of all the women sharing her living environment. In the same context, stands Miss Maple, another character of Naylor's fiction in *Bailey's Café*. After applying countless of times for a job without success, he joined Bailey's place and works to deserve money, not only to provide his needs but also to improve his community. Cocoa in *Mama Day* does not adapt to poverty either. Though a black woman, she wanders all around the city of New York in order to get a job which will permit her to live free. She behaves so because the black communities are deeply corrupted by material poverty.

Gloria Naylor's fiction is also characterized by black women's refusal to accept the deferral of dreams they have so long cherished. Therefore, they manage to resist, expecting the realization of the said dreams; unveiling thus, an insurrection against the man-dominated system. Black women as characterized in Naylor's works are resilient and active despite the oppression they face in the hands of the patriarchal system. They keep on working, doing thus their share in the reconstruction of their community. The ability of black women to turn the void into living place, to transform a shabby place such as Brewster place into a home in which people can live is described as follow by Olga Kenyon who praises their success in facing hardships:

> Female characters overcome almost insurmountable odds. They paint black women's resilience through images of their individual and common achievements-the turning of flowers,

> of children, of female friendship, the transforming of shacks into homes. (Kenyon,19991:80).

The fact of using the adjective insurmountable raises black women's determination to achieve their dreams even if those dreams seem unreachable. Black women with courage and faith face any hurdle that one way or another hinders them. Their determination leads them to overcome any difficulty that they come across. Their lives are indeed constantly upset by problems linked to their sex, social position and also their race. The fact of believing in an ideal keeps them strong and revivified before failure. Their activity results in fact in the renewal of their deferral dream they endeavor to fulfill. It is the case in most of Naylor's novels and very well elaborated in *Mama Day* with the character of Cocoa. Her will is to get a decent job, since she has graduated, in order to provide her needs and also live a decent life. Unfortunately, she is unable to find the job she runs after. She is not desperate still. She rather hopes to get it in the coming months.

Even *Bailey's Café* is a narrative about dream deferral as Donna Rifkind writes it in the Washington post, October11, 1992 (Rifking 1992:28). "For the most part, Naylor steps aside and lets her characters tell their own tales of hopes abandoned and dreams deferred." Still, those female desperate characters do not surrender to indefinite hopelessness. That is why they gather at Bailey's, sharing experiences and sadness but above all acting and hoping a very quick relief. In a sense, they renew their deferral dreams and keep on expecting for their realization.

Persistence appears thus as a characteristic feature of black women in their fight for better days. They strongly believe in the fulfillment of their dreams which are about their welfare. They show such a determination in persisting in their dreams that their courage before social hardships is testified. The depiction made by Naylor of their social realities is perceived as a celebration of their courage and persistence before hardships.

Persistence in believing and fighting for the improvement of the living conditions of humanity by black women is mainly perceived through the "block party". The wall in this novel is a symbol of isolation. In fact, the destruction of the wall that symbolizes Brewster Place's confinement as a cul-de-sac is seen as the retrieval of societal

harmony they had for long failed. It creates in fact a sense of harmony: harmony between nature and women, between outside and inside; the self and the other. The symbolism of the falling rain is essential since in the process of persisting, rain symbolizes rebirth, the foreshadowing of the New Jerusalem not only for Americans but for the whole world.
It finally appears that the analysis of Naylor's fiction mostly shows female characters as strong persons that do not abandon an aim because of a given hardship they may come across on their way.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the writings of Gloria Naylor provide a profound exploration of Black women's insurrection against racial, social, sexual and patriarchal oppression. Through her novels, Naylor portrays Black women as strong, resilient, and determined individuals who challenge the systems that seek to marginalize and silence them. Her female characters resist oppression in various ways, including self-assertion, solidarity, spiritual endurance, and the rejection of imposed stereotypes. These acts of resistance demonstrate that insurrection is not limited to physical rebellion but can also be expressed through the struggle for identity, dignity, and freedom.

This study has shown that Naylor uses literature as a powerful tool to expose the realities of Black women's lives in America while emphasizing their courage and humanity. Her works reveal the intersection of race, gender, and class oppression, and at the same time celebrate the collective strength of Black women within their communities. By giving voice to marginalized experiences, Naylor contributes significantly to African American feminist literature and to the broader discourse on social justice and equality.

Ultimately, the theme of Black women's insurrection in Naylor's writings reflects a continuous quest for liberation and self-definition. Her novels encourage readers to recognize the importance of resistance against injustice and the necessity of empowering oppressed voices. Therefore, Gloria Naylor's literary legacy remains

an important contribution to the understanding of Black women's struggles, resilience, and empowerment in contemporary literature and society.

Furthermore, the significance of Naylor's representation of Black women's insurrection extends beyond the historical and social contexts in which her novels are situated. Her literary vision invites readers to reconsider dominant narratives that have traditionally portrayed Black women as passive victims, voiceless subjects, or figures confined to restrictive social roles. Instead, Naylor presents them as agents of change who actively participate in the reconstruction of their identities and the transformation of their communities. Their resistance challenges not only patriarchal authority and racial discrimination but also the cultural assumptions that perpetuate their invisibility and devaluation.

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