



Inseparability of Emotions and Love in Gloria Naylor's *The Women of Brewster Place*

KEYWORDS

Naylor, love, emotion, Brewster Place, Identity

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ABSTRACT *This paper focuses mainly on Gloria Naylor's first novel The Women of BrewsterPlace. She is an African American author has written six novels so far. Her novels are emotionally interwoven with many African American women characters. Their quest for the cultural identity is almost evident in all her novels. She always chooses woman as her protagonist. Women in her novels are resolute and they know what they need. They are able to live with a positive note even after many disappointments had happened in their life. Some characters are too sentimental and they move easily to tears when their loved ones are in trouble. Being too emotional might not be appreciated but unexpressed love and emotions will not be valued. How Naylor diligently portrays the characters with respect to love and emotions is been discussed.*

The most important theme in Naylor' novel is love, emotions and bond exist between women especially African American women. It is much evident in her first novel *The Women of Brewster Place*. It is the story of seven women who faced hardships in life. There exists a mother daughter relationship between women characters. They are concerned about each other and the love and concern derives from the wisdom of seclusion. They stumble upon cruelty and unconcern from their fathers, husbands, lovers and children. Mattie Michael, the protagonist's occurrence is felt throughout the novel. Mattie leaves her parents as she is pregnant by a scandalous man, Butch Fuller. She strives hard to make her life with her new born son, Basil. She finds her dwelling place is unsuitable to live with her son she is in search of shelter. Eva Turner a kind hearted woman gives her place in her home. Eva's care and concern is very obvious that she refuses to charge rent. Eva is like a surrogate mother to Mattie. Mattie's astounding love for her son is apparent. She had to sell the house as Basil grows up to be a problematic man and kills a man in a bar fight.

Etta Mae Johnson is a woman who wants to live with a wealthy man. She always has an unfulfilled desire. She keeps changes the place and man. Etta gives her up when she sees Reverend Woods. Later she realizes it is all fantasy and felt completely broken. She finds restoration in Mattie. Kiswana Browne belongs to an affluent family but she leaves her family and lives in Brewster place. She Fights for cultural and class revolution. She is a woman of hopefulness and morals. Ciel is the granddaughter of Eva, Mattie's surrogate mother. Ceil loses hope as her husband is an irresponsible man and fights with her for insignificant reasons. Naylor skillfully narrates the emotional outburst of Ceil When she sees her daughter is electrocuted and becomes lifeless. Mattie is the one who makes Ceil comfortable by rocking her asleep. Mattie is the only hope Ciel has. According to Annie Gottlieb in *Women Together*, a review of *The Women of Brewster Place*

"... all our lives those relationships had been the backdrop, while the sexy, angry fireworks with men were the show ... the bonds between women are the abiding ones. Most men are incalculable hunters who come and go." [1]

Cora Lee has an obsession for children and she gives birth

one after another with different men. She takes care of her children only when they are infants and they are awfully abandoned when they grow up. Cora Lee and her children are noticed by Kiswana and she invites them to a play. Cora Lee was motivated by the play decides to give a good future to her children. Naylor brings out the sentiments and love that every women possess and their concern for the needy. Lorraine and Theresa are "The Two" in the novel. They love each other very much. They seem to be good friends initially but soon the residents realized they are lesbians. Lorraine is wounded by the indifferent behavior of the residents. Lorraine tries not to be rebellious and she wants to fit herself with residents. Theresa has a different attitude and she never cares about others. Lorraine sees Ben as a father and he who give her confidence to live her life. Ben tells the story of his deceased daughter who was led into prostitution. Lorraine's destiny was pitiable that she was confronted by a group of men and they gang rape her. Lorraine hits Ben's to death out of fear and anxiety. It rains continuously after Ben's death. The residents dreams about each other. Mattie swiftly awakes when she dreams the women tearing down the wall. Later Mattie realizes that wall is still standing and the residents are getting ready to celebrate block party.

The Women in the novel have an overt affection to each other. The characters in situations induce strong feelings, and they come lively with practical emotions, love and sentiments. According to Deirdre Donahue, a reviewer for the *Washington Post*,

"Naylor is not afraid to grapple with life's big subjects: sex, birth, love, death, grief. Her women feel deeply, and she unflinchingly transcribes their emotions ... Naylor's potency wells up from her language. With prose as rich as poetry, a passage will suddenly take off and sing like a spiritual ... Vibrating with undisguised emotion, *The Women of Brewster Place* springs from the same roots that produced the blues. Like them, her books sing of sorrows proudly borne by black women in America." [2]

The Women of Brewster Place is a novel of seven women, explores the experiences in the male dominated society. The story revolves around Mattie as she is the central character. The bond of friendship among the women in the community is energizing and redemptive. The mother

- daughter relationship is also revitalizes. Mattie plays an important role in bringing Ceil back from her agony. Mattie's heed for Ceil is evident when she bathes her carefully and gently. In several aspects the novel exhibits the value of love and concern. Love is expressed emotionally by the characters. Mattie's character is valued independently and she shows a motherly affection to the ones who are oppressed. According to Collins,

"other mothers [are] women who assist bloodmothers by sharing mothering responsibilities....Grandmothers, sisters, aunts or cousins act as othermothers by taking on child care responsibilities for one another's children" [3]

The residents of Brewster Place are persistently in search of a home to live and a peace of mind. The journey from one home to another is repeated with every character and they drops down in Brewster Place. Mattie comes there after selling her house and Etta comes there after many futile affairs. In spite of the frustrations the residents face they are united by having hope about their future. Depiction of characters shows how love and emotions creates bond which sustain and offer hope even in baleful situations.

REFERENCE

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