

# Naylor, Gloria (1950-) Encyclopedia Article

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## Naylor, Gloria (1950—)

Gloria Naylor, one of the most influential African American women writers of the late twentieth century, came to prominence in 1982 when she published *The Women of Brewster Place*, a novel that won her the American Book Award and was later adapted to television. Critic Henry Louis Gates has noted that the book boldly returns to and rejuvenates "naturalism as a mode of narration and plot development." A story of seven women, the novel depicts Brewster Place as a dead-end environment where the seven women are forced to come and stay. Yet through bonding, love, and humor the seven women of Brewster Place refuse to end their lives and stay resilient. Gifted with an innovative mind, Gloria Naylor is also known in American literary circles because of her relentless search for her own female voice; she pursues the search by rewriting canonical writers such as Shakespeare, Dante, and Geoffrey Chaucer in novels like *Linden Hills*, *Mama Day*, and *Bailey's Cafe*. *The Men of Brewster Place* (1998), is a response to her first novel from a black male perspective.

### Further Reading:

Gates, Henry Louis, Jr., editor. *Gloria Naylor: Critical Perspectives Past and Present*. New York, Amistad, 1993.

Naylor, Gloria. *Mama Day*. New York, Vintage Books, 1988.

———. *The Men of Brewster Place*. New York, Hyperion, 1998.

———. *The Women of Brewster Place*. New York, Viking Press, 1982.