



Gloria Naylor: A Critical Companion (Critical Companions to Popular Contemporary Writers)

Charles E. Wilson Jr.

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In each of her five novels, Gloria Naylor invites the reader to join her characters in their journeys to move beyond established boundaries and embrace an increasingly diverse society. With lucid analyses of each work, this Critical Companion helps readers comprehend how Naylor successfully links the trials of her African American characters to the struggles of human beings at variance with seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Insights into Naylor's own struggles and successes are provided in a richly drawn biographical chapter, which incorporates fresh materials from a recent interview conducted for this book. Naylor's place within the larger framework of the African American narrative traditions is considered as well.

Beginning with a full chapter on Naylor's debut success *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982), the literary components of each novel are examined: *Linden Hills* (1985) *Mama Day* (1988), *Bailey's Cafe* (1992), and *The Men of Brewster Place* (1998). In addition to a comprehensive plot synopsis, character portraits, and thematic discussions given for each, all works are carefully related to their historical contexts. By understanding the extent to which seminal events, such as the Great Migration and the ushering in of the Civil Rights Movement, serve as the background for Naylor's works, readers can better appreciate them. Throughout the text, particularly in the alternate critical readings provided, all terms and concepts are clearly explained for the student and the general reader. A select bibliography cites biographical sources, interviews, reviews, criticism, and related works of interest.

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