

# A Postcolonial Utopia: Analysis of Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day*

Yuan Tian

*School of English Language and Culture, Xiamen University Tan Kah Kee College  
274572005@qq.com*

**ABSTRACT.** *This paper analyzes African American writer Gloria Naylor's work *Mama Day* from a postcolonial perspective. Scholars Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha's concepts of the "subaltern voice", "the other" and "hegemonic power" are adopted to interpret the protagonists' complex journey of self-discovery in the novel. Through her philosophical language, Naylor proposes her idea of a state of harmony and equilibrium which can be reached to settle the issues of the paradoxes and conflicts existing in one's interior world, of the confrontation between white and black world, and of the contradiction between modernity and nature.*

**KEYWORDS:** *postcolonial perspective, *Mama Day*, hegemonic power*

## 1. Introduction

I wrote because I had no choice, but that was a long road from gathering the authority within myself to believe that I could actually be a writer. The writers I had been taught to love were either male or white. And who was I to argue that Ellison, Austen, Dickens, the Brontes, Baldwin and Faulkner weren't masters? They were and are. But inside there was still the faintest whisper: Was there no one telling my story? And since it appeared there was not, how could I presume to? Those were frustrating years. (574)

The passage above is taken from Gloria Naylor's famous conversation with Toni Morrison, in which Naylor expresses her gendered and raced concern as a black female intellectual under the Western influence, as well as her persistent motive through her writing career---to tell her own story. Naylor is actually disclosing a common issue faced by writers of minority background in Western world: how to construct one's own subjectivity and establish one's own voice under the powerful imperialism culture, especially the Anglo-Saxon literary tradition? The fact that her social status as "other", a black and female, to Naylor, brings a paradox: on one hand, it bestows her unique insights and experience out of the mainstream and majority; on the other, she has to write beyond the traditions. How to reconcile this privilege and disadvantage and to bring a public awareness of the suppressed voice,

remains the biggest concern in all her works. This essay will analyze Naylor's practice to narrate her own story in her work *Mama Day* (1988), through a postcolonial approach.

## **2. Construction of one's own Voice**

*Mama Day* begins with the legend of Willow Springs, obviously an imaginary territory Naylor set for the stage of her drama, her own story. It is a mysterious sea island off the southeast coast of United States and the whites have no control of it. As independent and primitive as Willow Springs is, the only connection between it and America is a human-made wooden bridge. Despite the harsh racial reality beyond the island, and the increasingly developing human civilization in the mainland of America, Willow Springs remains as a utopia, an ideal island which rarely maintains black living traditions and cultural heritage. Most importantly, the residents here are spiritually independent and live on generation by generation as a closely related black community. Naylor does not deny the fact that such a utopia can not escape the imperialism culture's curiosity, interpretation and desire, as many Sea Islands or African tribes do in twentieth century. Ironically, she does not send a white man to do the exploitation; instead, she sends Reema's boy, a descendant of residents on Willow Springs, someone walks out here and gets educated in America. He takes everything with him as a professional researcher of anthropological studies: the stereotyped knowledge about black image and their culture which he has got from some "fancy [college], notebooks and tape recorder as the approach by which he has been taught by the whites to do "extensive field work" and a whole system of transferring the research result to a published book, to attract white readership and to earn profit....However, he has lost the key to collect the meaningful answers for his research: a heart to listen to. To the frustrated residents on Willow Springs, he behaves just like a funny clown who has been brainwashed by the imperialism and took everything for granted. The narrator in the text finally comments on him:

....someone who didn't know how to ask wouldn't know how to listen. And he coulda listened to them the way you been listening to us right now. Think about it: ain't nobody really talking to you. We're sitting here in Willow Springs, and you're God-knows-where. It's August 1999---ain't but a slim chance it's the same reason where you are. Uh, huh, listen. Really listen to this time: the only voice is your own. (Naylor 10)

"The only voice is your own". By the character of Reema's boy, Naylor foregrounds the central theme in the text: the significance to establish the subaltern's voice in a postcolonial age. Thus, she begins to tell her own story of love, selfhood and harmony in *Mama Day*.

Naylor's pursuit of her own "voice" is, of course, a common concern for most American writers of minority background. Toni Morrison and Alice Walker persistently adopt trauma fiction to present the memory of "the denied, the repressed and forgotten" (Whitehead 82); Ishmael Reed continuously challenges the Anglo-Saxon literary tradition and generic genres by his act of deconstruction and rewriting

in his works; the Chinese American writers like Amy Tan and Maxine Hong Kingston always try to explore a third space between the dominant American culture and the ancestral Chinese culture by their characters....All these writers' works can be categorized into the group of postcolonial fiction, which, as Anne Whitehead proposes, "has often sought to replace the public and collective narrative history with an interior and private act of memory" (82). Further more, since these writers all have moved from their ancestral homelands which conceived the old cultural heritages, they face with a tension "between the oral and the written modes of narration that is represented as finding a voice in writing", as Henry Gates claims (21).

The central concern of narrative authority in Naylor's text actually echoes the postcolonial issues such as the subaltern's right to speak for themselves. The word 'subaltern' is a post-colonial term, which now commonly refers to "the perspective of persons from regions and groups outside of the hegemonic power structure" ("Subaltern"). Therefore, it sometimes is replaced by the 'other', the 'marginalized' group---"people rendered without agency by their social status". As a term used in reference to colonized people in the South Asian subcontinent in 1970s and 1980s, subaltern provides a different view on the history of colonization from the perspective of the colonized rather than from the perspective of hegemonic power. Many major postcolonial theorists have proposed a definition and interpretation of the term 'subaltern' in their works. Being against a loose use of the term, Gayatri Spivak suggests defining it in a stricter sense according to the mechanics of the discrimination. She notes that in postcolonial terms, "everything that has limited or no access to the cultural imperialism is 'subaltern'---a space of difference" ("Subaltern"). Homi Bhabha, instead, emphasizes the significance of social power in his definition of 'subaltern' group: "oppressed, minority groups whose presence was crucial to the self-definition of the majority group: subaltern social groups were also in a position to subvert the authority of those who had hegemonic power" ("Subaltern"). In Naylor's text, Willow Springs is described as an obviously feminized and raced territory, which is homed by the descendents of African slaves and presided over by the power of a little old lady. Thus, it is a utopia of the 'other', out of control of the imperialism. In other words, Willow Springs symbolizes the subaltern's subjectivity of fully independence and autonomy despite its status of minority and social inferiority.

In her famous essay on 'the subaltern', "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (1989), Spivak challenges the authority of white elites to speak for the oppressed, and the efforts of the subaltern studies group, a project led by Ranajit Guha and some Indian intellectuals then. Instead of weakening the imperialism by defining and constructing the subaltern group, postcolonial studies complicit in the task of cultural imperialism by silencing the voice of the subaltern in a large sense. In the context of African American history, a number of cultural historians advance the powerful idea that "the recorded history of blacks in America has been largely a history of 'the black image in the white mind'" (Sundquist 3). As long as blacks are silenced or stereotyped, a cultural imperialism is not ended. Gina Wisker argues that "anyone who has achieved the literacy and sophistication to produce writing which

is defined widely by others is almost certainly actually not themselves as subordinated or subaltern in position and so disqualified from speaking for the people they are supposed to represent" (206). Gina's words obviously target on those scholars, who, though are of minority background, have assimilated dominant culture and value system: since their identity and works are both identified by imperialism culture, they are also disqualified to speak for subaltern group.

In *Mama Day*, Naylor avoids any specific white characters in the text but she do face the fact that out of Willow Springs, it is a white man's world, which is so powerful that it can turn Willow Springs' children into "raving lunatics" like Reema's boy (Naylor 8). The dominant white culture also turns the orphaned black child, George, into a stereotypical male chauvinist who is unaware of his potential to appreciate the emotional and spiritual dimensions of life and who naturally claims New York as "my city" (61). To Naylor, as willing to be defined by the imperialism culture as they are, black people like Reema's boy and George are unable to construct a complete selfhood and thus are unable to truly understand their black identity and cultural heritage. They are disqualified to tell their own stories until they experience a process of self-discovery and self-reevaluation.

### **3. An Adventure of Self-discovery**

In *Mama Day*, the most important thread of the plot is the evolution of Cocoa and George's relationship. Through these two characters, who hold contradictory understandings towards life and the world they live, who come from totally different backgrounds and who share few interests in common, Naylor seems to construct a series of binary opponents. Cocoa is born and brought up by her grandma and grandaunt in Willow Springs until 18 years old when she goes to university in Atlanta. The memories in her childhood and youth go with her whenever she goes and provides her the fundamental knowledge of the world. The spiritual connection between her and the two "Days", her grandaunt and grandmother, is of significance to her even though she leaves there and only comes back once a year. The communication between them through the letters they send to each other once a month always bridges her present life with her memory in Willow Springs. She says to George, "Regardless of how well you thought you knew me, it was only one part of me. The rest of me---the whole of me---was [in Willow Springs]" (Naylor 176). Before she meets George, she has already lived in New York for seven years; however, she does not really know this city until she encounters George. She expresses her contempt and hatred towards this sexist and racist city of modernity and civilization repeatedly in the text: She sarcastically comments on New York subway, the symbolism of New York's efficiency and advancement, "There's something hypocritical about a city that keeps half of its population underground half of the time..." (Naylor 18); she argues after being regarded as a "bigot" by George because of her attitude on New York's political system and race relations, "...I was scared when I came to this city. Really scared. There were more people living on my one block than on the whole island where I grew up. And instead of getting better in seven years, it's gotten worse (63); she disappointedly concludes

after one of her quarrels with George, “It’s easier to get run over by a flying saucer than to find a decent man in New York” (121)....

Different from Cocoa’s strong awareness of a black selfhood, George’s African America identity is nearly invisible in the text, which is only exposed through some clues between the lines. Orphaned as a prostitute’s son, who has never got an impression of his mother, and has no way to find who his father is, George grows up at the Wallace P. Andrew Boys Shelter in New York, until he is 18 years old and goes to the university. The Boys Shelter is a place of cruelty and strict rules. Most importantly, it is a place that deprives a sense of hope, expectation and artistic imagination of the boys. George expresses his realistic self molded by experience in the boys’ shelter, “To believe in fate and predestination means you have to believe there’s a future, and I grew up without one....Our guardians...were adamant about the fact that we learned to invest in ourselves alone” (22). “Keep it in the now, fellas” and “Only the present has potential” are the sentences repeatedly sounded in his life. It is further understood by George that the “present” means oneself. As someone who has “a more than forgettable past and no future that was guaranteed”, he learns very early that the only and possible salvation for him is the self-reliance (26). He also admits life in Wallace P. Andrews gets any illusions about oneself or the world from the boys (26). Thus, he speaks the truth in an ironic way, “it wasn’t the kind of place that turned out many poets or artists---those who could draw became draftsmen, and the musicians were taught to tune pianos” (26-27). All these experience and lessons he has got in boys’ shelter, produces an adult George of sense, diligence and self-reliance. Moreover, all these features produce miracles on him: he goes to a famous university in the country and becomes a successful businessman owning his own firm, in a white dominant society.

Therefore, Cocoa and the island Willow Springs she comes from represent black subjectivity, cultural heritage and a unique historical space, where primitiveness, sensitivity and imagination are conceived. New York, a metropolis of modernity, civilization, reason and technology, produces black city boys like George, who are of sense, self-discipline and self-reliance, but represses their spiritual and emotional needs as a habit. Moreover, the orphaned experience of George, obviously symbolizes a sense of rootlessness created by history for African Americans, or in other words, the ‘othered’ identity of black Americans, despite the fact that George repeatedly claims New York as “my city” and that he climbs from the bottom to the top of the white dominant society as a colored man. In a raced society, no matter how well George adapts to the society, he is one of those Mama Day sarcastically called “honorary white folks” in the text (38). W. E. B. DuBois’s idea on the term “double consciousness” can explain George’s sense of loss and incomplete selfhood in New York,

The Negro is .... born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world---a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world. It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. (“On Double consciousness”)

George is not only an American, but also an African-American. The later is more to the point to him in a raced society dominated by the white imperialism culture. No matter how well he does to deny the African part and establish the “white” American self by assimilating the white value system, George carries an incomplete or broken selfhood as long as he lives under the white spell and is unaware of his ancestral culture’s impact on him. Naylor’s effort, however, does not stop at revealing these binary oppositions to establish the confrontation of primitive Willow Springs and civilized New York, or the confrontation between Cocoa and George. Instead, in the text, Cocoa has to walk out of Willow Springs to see New York and expand her mind for more possibilities in the world; while George has to visit Willow Springs to explore the potential dimensions of him and finish the trail of recovering his selfhood. And most importantly, they have to fall in love with each other and nurture the love through repeated frictions and negotiations, since the evolution of their relationship develops parallel with their adventures of self-rediscovery and self-reevaluation. In this way, their love completes each other. Moreover, as Storhoff proposes, for Naylor, a New York City inhabitant herself, “Manhattan is not the antithesis of Willow Springs but its complement” (39). Different from most other contemporary African American writers, who seem to keep a concern with the threatening impact of imperialism culture and modernity on the primitive black culture, and on the selfhood of African Americans as a marginalized group in a raced society, Naylor obviously proposes a promising possibility in *Mama Day*: a kind of coexistence of different cultures and systems of ideology with human beings’ effort of tolerance, appreciation between each other and spontaneous inheritance of their own cultures.

Thus, a central theme of *Mama Day* is revealed: the realization of harmony and equilibrium in human relationship, in one’s interior world and in the multicultural society of postcolonial America. Cocoa and George have respectively discovered the narrowness of their minds and gained fresh insights of life through each other during their daily contact. Moreover, they have also expanded their knowledge of New York and Willow Springs, as well as the different cultures they represent.

The novel begins in a Manhattan coffee shop, where Cocoa and George first meet. Cocoa’s monologue about the coffee shop constructs a miniature of New York in her mind, a place of artificial, anonymous and inhuman elements and full of desperate people. She further reveals the painful experience to be other, black and female, in a city categorizing people solely in terms of race and ethnicity. A typical example she sets is about the phenomenon of ‘glass ceiling’ in employment. She sharply points out that the racial segregation is replaced by something she considers worse in this country, an unspoken discrimination and restriction underground.

Mama Day and Grandma had told me that there was a time when the want ads and housing listings in newspapers---even up north---were clearly marked color or white...And how I longed for those times, when I was busting my butt up and down the streets....I just wanted to bring the clarity about it back....What I was left to deal with were ads labeled *Equal Opportunity Employer* or *Take your chances*. ...That’s where the headwork came in. (Naylor 19)

First used to describe the invisible barriers that hinder women in American from the career advancement, the term “glass ceiling” is now commonly quoted to refer to the situations where the opportunity and the advancement of a qualified person within the hierarchy of an organization or of a society is deprived or stopped at a lower level because some forms of discrimination, mostly commonly sexism and racism. As a permanent resident of New York city, Naylor speaks the painful truth through Cocoa, that the colored people still live under the shadow of racism in contemporary America. But is Naylor a “bigot” like Cocoa, who is critical about this harsh reality all the time and even negates charm of the city as a whole? To seek the answer, it is necessary to look at how George walks into Cocoa’s life and brings mind reform to her gradually.

Different from Cocoa, George loves New York and enjoys life here, despite that he is also an African American. This is the city that fulfills his American dream: with his diligence and perseverance and most importantly, the ideologies he has been taught in the Boys Shelter, he becomes a successful entrepreneur, member of the elites of the country. ““Only the present has potential”, the repeated teaching he has got from the guardian of the Boys Shelter echoes the ideology of young America, a nation which is concurred to be one without past but only a future to look forward to. Coincidentally, George is also an orphaned child who has “a more than forgettable past” in the text. Moreover, adult George sees a different New York with humanity, through the bustles and hustles on the surface. In order to verify Cocoa’s lack of recognition of the city’s charm and beauty, he says, “My city was a network of small towns, some even smaller than here in Willow Springs. It would be one apartment building, a handful of blocks, a single square mile hidden off with its own language, newspapers, and magazines....its own laws and codes of behavior, and some times even its own judges and juries. You’d never realize that because you went there and lived on our fringes” (Naylor 61). To add this point of individuality and diversity in New York, George sets more examples to illustrate this city’s tenderness, purity and sweetness that can be discovered everywhere.

Out of surprise, Cocoa agrees to George about his request “I’d like you to see New York”. From the late summer to the end of October that year, Cocoa goes to “see New York” with George; meanwhile, she borrows George’s perspective to observe this city of diversity and vitality. Finally, she stops calling people “food” any more; she learns to distinguish Chinese, Korea and Vietnamese; she gets rid of the prejudice to certain minority groups in the city....Most importantly, Cocoa has discovered that Manhattan is indeed an island, as wondrous as her Willow Springs. “Standing [on George Washington Bridge] under and all over all that incredible space, I saw how small and cramped my life had been....And I had told Mama Day I knew New York---God, what a fool I had been” (Naylor 98). At first, the growth experience on a small island of primitive natural beauty and of close connection among people, deprives Cocoa of a sense of belonging in such a modern metropolis like New York. Moreover, the hardship she faces to survive in a white dominant society intensifies her disappointment with and prejudice towards New York. Thus, the stereotyped definition and impression she holds toward the city hinders her from knowing it better and seeing its beauty. George’s appeal to her finally brings her a

willingness which she has not established for seven years in the past, to see, to feel, and to discover the details of this city. What she discovers is not only the vitality and magic of New York City, but also the narrowness of her mind previously, as well as the potentiality and possibility to expend it.

George is alert to the love and humanity illustrated by the episodes and details of earthly life under its surface; he, however, has long been unaware of the spiritual and emotional facets of his own character, or, in other words, he long has repressed a self of sensibility but only acknowledged the self of sense. As an abandoned black child who is deprived of everything, George has learnt to construct a selfhood of masculinity and pursued the route of self-salvation since childhood. On the surface, he is quite successful in the society of New York, with the help of his masculine will and sensible mind. Thus, the masculine self becomes the only one he unconsciously admits and continues to construct through his life. He loves football and can not miss every Super Bowl; he sees everything on the earth as a system of organism, including women, who can be analyzed and conquered; and he tries to define and interpret Willow Springs with knowledge of science and approaches he has got in the white world he has grown up....

Cocoa's arrival in his life and especially his visit to Willow Springs later, however, exposes a repressed selfhood of sensibility of George and the risks he runs by ignoring it. As Storhoff analyzes, George actually "possesses a deeply literary imagination, a potentiality of responding to the spiritual and emotional dimensions of life" (5). Though after his first dating with Cocoa, George sarcastically concludes that "being human beings [is] about the only thing we [have] in common" as he speaks the truth of his ignorance in literature compared with Cocoa, he indeed lists Earnest Hemingway, Ralph Ellison and surprisingly, Shakespeare's *King Lear* (Naylor 62); During his phone conversation with Cocoa's grandma, George makes the seemingly plain but profound promise, "She has all I have" (136). The point of sharing he emphasizes here even impressed Mama Day; when he is finally convinced to go to Willow Springs with Cocoa, a place that can not be found on the map and where his scientific analysis can not work, he is astounded by its primitive beauty and quietness in saying "where even the word paradise [fails]" (175). Thus, despite that he repeated declares "I [have] a very rational mind" and is proud of it, the real George is not the one that he claims to be, or at least, is more than that.

The ruthlessness and intensive concentration the New York City, a "clearly and highly competitive, egocentric, racist" and white-dominated world requires, for an African American man with a bruised past to succeed, surely has had a big impact on George and hindered him from constructing a self of wholeness, despite the potentiality on him (Storhoff 7). The way of self-salvation George chooses previously, though has guaranteed his wealth and status in New York, surely has risked his soul. He has lost the flexibility before the occasions beyond his control and become helpless out of the familiar environment. In the text, he finally has not conquered the crisis he faces in Willow Springs and failed to pass the test Mama Day set for him to help Cocoa and to save himself.



The test is a mysterious scene Naylor arranges in the text. Because Cocoa has been hexed with an herbal poison by Ruby out of jealousy over her husband, George is asked by Mama Day to take the mission of saving her. To George, Mama Day and other residents' explanation of Cocoa's illness is readily ridiculous enough. However, he gets more frustrated by Mama Day's bizarre and unclear instructions to finish the mission, "You gotta take this book and cane in [the chicken coop] with you, search good in the dark of [the red chicken's] nest, and come straight back here with whatever you find" (295). Out of outrage, he shouts at Mama Day, "It's cruel of you to play these games, when it's your own niece that's sick" (Naylor 296). George's "very sensible Mind" and the natural contempt he holds towards a "backward" culture, as a pious believer of western science and culture, deprives George's ability to cope with Mama Day's way to save Cocoa.

Because of a hurricane, George has no access to western medicine and approaches beyond the bridge to save his wife; out of disappointment, he chooses to follow Mama Day's instruction. During the mission, he has not conquered the strong antipathy towards Mama Day, willow springs and the shadow they have brought to him then. He goes to the coop, destroyed the chicken nest, fights with the terrifying chicken in an almost insane way, and makes a futile effort in finding anything Mama Day may ask for. Finally, the test ends with George's tragic death caused by a heart stroke.

Storhoff proposes that it is inappropriate to read the section of George's experience in the chicken coop literally; instead, she suggests taking this part as the description of "magic realism", a term used by contemporary criticism. Naylor's shift of writing style surely is an intentional act: As many other contemporary African adopt unrealistic style to describe witchcraft, Hoodoo or traditional medicine of old Africa, to illustrate the complexity and mystery of black culture, Naylor uses mythic or parabolic mode here to imply that Mama Day's test is actually a potential journey towards an "authentic selfhood" for George. Only by successfully finishing the journey, can George recognize his African root, recover his bruised and disconnected memory and discover the lost self of sensitivity (Storhoff 7). It is only in this context that Naylor's unrealistic language and the seemingly irrational episode here can be fully understood.

Thus, in the context of recognizing African culture and discovering an authentic selfhood, the implication of Mama Day's instruction can be derived: when she says "Bring me straight back whatever you find", she means bringing back the eggs, the most important culture symbol in the text. Repeatedly appearing in the text as a significant tool for Mama Day to realize her power as a skillful midwife, eggs is embedded with many African values and beliefs, such as commitment to the community, love of nature and respect to life, which are all presented by the black cultural monument in the text---the character of Mama Day, an respectable old African lady.

#### 4. Conclusion

Mama Day ends with the sentence "...there are just too many sides to the whole story". The story Naylor tells in the text is exactly a narration with dimensional facets. The text can be a poem of love, a picture of the black living reality, a choral of primitive African culture or a fable of human progress, but is more than any of them. The complexities, multi-dimensions and tensions Naylor embodies through Mama Day, a work by which she expects to tell her own story, a story of others, actually echoes the features of African American history, cultural heritage and living reality according to Naylor's understanding.

Moreover, Naylor emphasizes the oral tradition of African culture through the text while she shows her doubt towards the modern approaches to explore history, such as anthropological books and pictures. Reema's boy publishes his book based on "extensive field book", in the name of "cultural preservation", which actually represents no truth and thus has no value to bring public awareness of African American cultural heritage (Naylor 7); after George's death, Cocoa cries before Mama Day, for a picture of George, in order to preserve history and pass it on to the next generation; however, Mama Days tells her that "Cocoa, if the child wants to know what George looked like, the easiest thing to do it to tell him. And remember, children need the simple truth" (310). At the end of the text, Cocoa finally learns to tell, learns to inherit the African tradition to explore history. She learns to tell her own story.

Anne Whitehead speaks postcolonialism and postcolonial novelists' contribution to history and memory:

[Postcolonialism] recognizes that history represents an investment by groups or ideologies in specific power formations. Postcolonial fiction has often sought to replace the public and collective narrative of history with an interior and private act of memory. Postcolonial novelists seek to rescue previously overlooked histories and to bring hitherto marginalized or silenced stories to public consciousness. (10)

As a postcolonial novelist, who is observant of and sensitive to being an American, an African and most importantly, the hyphen between them, which is often neglected and unacknowledged, Naylor constructs her own voice in the text, full of her unique understanding and experience of the othered subjectivity, which is both black and female. Through her philosophical language, Naylor also proposes her idea of a state of harmony and equilibrium which can be reached to settle the issues of the paradoxes and conflicts existing in one's interior world, of the confrontation between white and black world, and of the contradiction between modernity and nature. Thus, the text implies that if people, either black or white, can expand their mind for more spaces, we can possibly establish a more complete selfhood personally, and create a more harmonious racial relationship in a postcolonial society.

## References

- [1] DuBois, W. E. B. "On Double Consciousness". May 21, 2008. <http://www.duboislc.org/html/DoubleConsciousness.html>.
- [2] Gates, Henry Louis Jr. *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African-American Criticism*. New York: Oxford UP, 1988.
- [3] Morison, Toni and Gloria Naylor. "A Conversation." *Southern Review* 21.3 (1985): 567-93
- [4] Naylor, Gloria. *Mama Day*. Ticknor & Fields: New York, 1988.
- [5] Storhoff, Gary. "The Only Voice is your own". *African American Review*. Terre Haute: Spring 1995. Vol. 29.
- [6] Whitehead, Anne. *Trauma Fiction*. Edinburgh University Press: U K, 2004.