

Call for Papers: Gloria Naylor in the Archives Symposium

The Gloria Naylor Archive invites paper and panel proposals for a symposium on Gloria Naylor's public and private writing and on Black feminist archival methodologies more broadly.

From her award-winning *The Women of Brewster Place* (1982) to her fictionalized memoir *1996* (2005), Gloria Naylor's literary production spanned more than two decades. In her nuanced portrayals of the survival strategies through which Black women build and sustain community and her attentiveness to racism, sexism, homophobia, and capitalism as forms of structural violence, Gloria Naylor has long been recognized as one of the most important U.S. writers of the late 20th century. Naylor's collected papers—donated to Sacred Heart University in 2009 and recently made more accessible through a partnership with Lehigh University—offer a fresh perspective on her published and unpublished work.

The symposium seeks proposals that explore new directions in Naylor scholarship and/or explore how recently accessible archival materials open up new avenues for understanding Naylor's published work and unpublished plays, screenplays, correspondence.

The aim of the symposium is to create a dynamic space for scholars to share work in progress and to learn more about Naylor's collected papers. Potential topics include, but are not limited to:

- **Transnational Activist and Aesthetic Networks.** Naylor's novels represent transnational networks, perhaps most clearly through the customers at *Bailey's Café*, but also in the global ecological vision of *Sapphira Wade*. The archive provides another context for these representations, documenting Naylor's extensive correspondence with writers, activists, and intellectuals including Nikki Giovanni, Lucille Clifton, Julia Alvarez, Pat Barker, June Jordan, Nabaneeta Dev Sen, Gloria I. Joseph, Edwidge Danticat, Pia Tafdrup, and others. We invite papers that address Naylor's transnational influences and interlocutors as well as transnational visions in her published novels.
- **Film, Television, and Theatre.** The mini-series of *Women of Brewster Place* was a landmark representation of Black lesbians in prime-time U.S. television, and Naylor herself was actively involved in the 1994 stage adaptation of *Bailey's Café*. The archive provides new insights into Naylor's career-long ambition to write for film, television, and theatre, with materials about the film production company (One Way Productions) that Naylor founded in 1990, numerous drafts of Naylor's unproduced screenplays—including her film treatment for *Mama Day*, an episode of a children's program, and a television movie set at at Parchman prison. We invite papers that address the mini-series, television program, or produced plays as well as research on archival materials in this area not yet widely discussed in Naylor scholarship.
- **Intellectual Contexts.** Naylor's unpublished and published works engage deeply with intellectual developments in Black studies, Black feminist thought, and queer of color critique. Moreover, the archive includes the extensive research materials collected as she wrote her novels, revealing how her fiction engages 20th-century interdisciplinary intellectual history. For instance, her research bibliography for *Linden Hills* references sociological studies of the Black middle class by W.E.B. DuBois, E. Franklin Frazier, and others. Research materials for *Mama Day* include works by feminist theologians, botanists, and practitioners of folk medicine. Papers may position Naylor's published novels within intellectual history and/or address archival materials that explore her research materials and her correspondence with renowned academics.

- **Archival Methods.** Naylor's collected papers suggest that she envisioned herself as both a writer and archivist. Her archive thus offers an opportunity to reflect on Black women writers' archives more broadly and on the possibilities for archival methodologies rooted in Black feminist praxis. Papers may focus on Naylor herself as archivist and/or archival praxis as it pertains to 20th-century Black women writers more broadly.

The Gloria Naylor in the Archives symposium will be held November 5-6, 2021 at Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania. With conference panels, a multi-media exhibition of materials from the archive, a theatrical performance, and a keynote address by Maxine Lavon Montgomery, the symposium will highlight Naylor's archive and recently developed resources for accessing them. It will also provide opportunities for participants to envision future collaborative projects engaged with the Gloria Naylor Archive and the archives of other 20th-century Black women writers. For that reason, we invite paper and panel proposals both from scholars who have engaged with the archive and from those who are interested in learning more about it.

We anticipate that the symposium will be held in-person, and we will also make recordings of papers and panels available online.

We are committed to holding a low-cost, accessible event. Conference registration fees, which include breakfast, lunch, and an evening reception, will be \$25 for university faculty and staff and \$10 for students and community members. Please contact innaylor@lehigh.edu with any questions.

Submit your panel and/or paper proposals by July 1st, 2021 at https://lehigh.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3qlmqXua7V6Uu5o