

## CHAPTER FOUR

## AN ANALYSIS OF THE IMAGES OF BLACK WOMEN

Women in a fictional world are literally portrayed different from one another according to the way they live. Toni Morrison's female characters are notable for their world view, attitude and behaviors. These women, like those in the real world, are inspired, motivated, persuaded, and forced to see the world through their own naked eyes, so their behaviors vary from one another, and these points of view, of course, led them to both failure and success in life.

Women in Toni Morrison's three novels: The Bluest Eye, Sula and Beloved, can be classified into three groups: submissive, assertive and aggressive categories.

## Submissive Women

Submissive women are those who live their own lives in accordance with social expectations. Their behaviors are determined and shaped by social norms and folkways. They will not cross traditional lines into the outer world. Submissive women do not learn how to claim their own rights or sometimes they do not even know about their existence. These women believe they belong to a group of weak and inferior people. Women, in their opinion, cannot achieve and undergo their own lives without the help or the support of those they think superior and stronger than they are. So they allow other people to manipulate them, and they

accept all faults and mistakes imposed upon them.

And because of a lack of self-confidence, they degrade their own self and deny their own competence. If they are creative women, they soon will lose that creativity. Their creativeness can be suppressed by those superior people in their lives. They are not women who can live against the disapproval of the community in which they live. They try to avoid conflicts whenever conflicts arise. Submissive women learn to be daughters under their parents' protection and then wives under their husband's rule. Most of their concerns are about people, things and events around their houses. So they become obedient daughters, passive wives and non-assertive mothers. They feel warm and stable in their homes. They dare not do what other people around them consider inappropriate or improper. They learn to keep to themselves their own personal wishes. They do not think their own feelings can be shared and understood by men or superior people. They often need some help and do not try to show their abilities to manage things outside their limited world.

They are women who seem unable to live by themselves, feel uneasy and uncomfortable to live by themselves. They feel living alone becomes something unmanageable. So their lives do not belong to themselves but to others. They feel safe and happy under the direction, or protection of men or those who, they believe, are stronger and more powerful

than they are. So in their submissiveness, some women may suffer a limited life, or fail to have a better life.

There were three submissive female characters in Toni Morrison's three novels: The Bluest Eye, Sula, and Beloved. They are Pecola Breedlove, Nel Wright and Baby Suggs. And each woman's submissiveness was caused differently by various factors in their lives.

#### Pecola Breedlove

Pecola Breedlove was an ugly black girl who lived in the most oppressive condition because of her ugliness, poverty, and inferiority. She was surrounded by aggressive people: fighting parents, spiteful whores who lived upstairs of her storefront, and the MacTeer sisters who hated privileges and inequality. These people might not intend to suppress Pecola but their nature did.

She was a completely submissive girl. Though the environment disappointed her and destroyed her positive feeling for herself, Pecola never fought back and never rejected the social criticism about herself. She acquiesced.

Though Pecola was born into a family where her parents lived together, her parents never nurtured her as parents should have done: her father never learned how to look after a family; her mother paid more attention to her work than to her family. Further, the parents Cholly and Pauline were an aggressive couple and they usually fought

each other in front of their own children. Social, financial and mental factors shook their security of mind and irritated their love for each other and their children.

Pecola's fate repeatedly pushed her into mental illness--an escape which freed her from the depressive world. And it was the only exit she could find. Her parents' aggressiveness was a daily frightening setting in Pecola's life. Because the storefront had one bedroom, everything Mr. and Mrs. Breedlove did was witnessed by both Sammy and Pecola. The painful lovemaking in the dark confused them (48) and the violent fighting in the morning frightened them (35-8). To escape from this awful and dreadful condition, Sammy, her older brother, chose to run away. But Pecola could not choose the same path as her brother did because of her age and sex. Younger and female, Pecola found the only way to escape was through her wish for a magic thing to take her away from the grim reality into a world of oblivion:

Letting herself breathe easy now, Pecola covered her head with the quilt. The sick feeling, which she had tried to prevent by holding in her stomach, came quickly in spite of her precaution. They surged in her the desire to heave, but as always, she knew she would not.

"Please, God," whispered into the palm of her hand. "Please make me disappear." She squeezed her eyes shut. Little parts of her body faded away. Now slowly, now with a rush. Slowly again. Her fingers went, one by

one; then her arms disappeared all the way to the elbow. Her feet now. Yes, that was good. The legs all at once. It was hardest above the thighs. She had to be real still and pull. Her stomach would not go. But finally it, too, went away. Then her chest, her neck. The face was hard too. Almost done, almost. Only her tight, tight eyes were left. They were always left (39).

Aside from her parents' ignorance, other factors also acted to complicate her life even more. These factors included social rejections, lonely school life and the deviant standard of living of the three whores who were the nearest neighbors that led Pecola to the tragedy of life. In the community, Pecola found she was rejected in different ways. The shopkeeper tried not to touch her palm while he was picking up Pecola's money (43). The way the shopkeeper behaved was the same as what she usually found in daily life. There was no obvious response. Pecola just literally transferred her shame and anger into the dandelions:

... Pecola feels the inexplicable shame ebb. Dandelions. A dart of affection leaps out from her to them. But they do not look at her and do not send love back. She thinks, "They are ugly. They are weeds." Preoccupied with that revelation, she trips on the sidewalk crack. Anger stirs and wakes in her; it opens its mouth, and like a hot-mouthed puppy, laps up the dredges of her shame.

Anger is better. There is a sense

of being in anger. A reality and presence. An awareness of worth. It is a lovely surging. Her thoughts fall back to Mr. Yacobowski's eyes, his phlegmy voice. The anger will not hold; the puppy is too easily surfeited. Its thirst too quickly quenched, it sleeps. The shame wells up again, its muddy rivulets seeping into her eyes. What to do before the tears come (43).

The transfer was unknown and quick. It ended in shame and tears. The situation was worse at school because both her peers and teachers ignored her. Pecola sat alone at a double desk. Classmates did not play with her; if they wanted to, it was just to make fun of her. Even her teachers avoided calling her name and tried not to ask her to join the lesson activities. A colored mother of a naughty boy evicted her from her beautiful house because the girl was ragged, dirty, and ugly (75). What this woman saw in Pecola's appearance was what she had been running away from all her life. So, to Pecola, it was because of her unchangeable and frightful blackness (40-2).

There were very few people that did not despise and fully reject Pecola. They are the three whores and the MacTeer family. In their poverty, the MacTeers took in Pecola when her father set fire to the storefront and Mrs. Breedlove could not look after her daughter. The MacTeer sisters were told to be good to her. And it was because of Pecola's submissiveness that the sisters became friendly

wiht her. She did not refuse what they offerred to her (19, 25). However, Pecola's drinking three quarts of milk disturbed Mrs. MacTeer's economic plan (22-4). An important event took place during her moral accommodation with the MacTeer family: Pecola was menstruating. The two important questions that crossed her mind were: How could she have a baby? And if there had to be somebody to love her, how could it happen to her? But the girl could not find the answers (29).

\* Unfortunately, no one loved Pecola, not even her parents. It was because of her ugliness and the unusual relationship of her parents, Pecola was rejected and ignored by her own parents. However, Pecola still survived in spite of her physical needy condition. But she was suffering a chronic sickness that no one was not able to notice. What she badly needed was mental not physical treatment. Love--the feeling of worthiness--was all she wanted and yearned for. And she failed to obtain this feeling even from her own parents.

It was living this lonely life that inspired Pecola's wish for a change. However, the girl never aggressively reacted back to anybody even though they mistreated or harassed and rejected her. Pecola believed blue eyes were the source of love and worthiness and having them she could change the bad things around her to better conditions. Pecola prayed nightly for blue eyes (40). Pecola lived too

long with the feeling of being unwanted. Her mother, Pauline, left Pecola and her brother for work. Her father, Cholly, a man who did not have any lessons in fatherhood, did not have anything to do with his daughter. But when he did, he chose what the people called the "forbidden thing," rape and it affected everyone concerned. Cholly left home and died after that, Pauline moved away and lived outside of social contacts. Further, it potently changed Pecola's life.

When Pecola was pregnant with her father's baby, she became the town pariah (147-9). People talked sympathically about her (146-8). The MacTeer sisters tried in their way to help Pecola. But their attempt did not work. They did not know that what Pecola wanted was the miracle of having blue eyes. To Pecola's belief, blue eyes would help her get out of the state of loneliness and rejection. While her natural appearance failed to change things around her, she believed the blue eyes would. The girl tried many ways to have blue eyes: praying nightly for blue eyes (40), eating candies wrapped in a picture of a white girl (43), drinking three quarts of milk a day from a cup with a picture of Shirley Temple (22).

Before the rape, the people who influenced Pecola's worldview were the three whores who lived upstairs of her storefront. They were born-to-be whores who never learned how to be ordinary women who lived a normal life. Because



they did not have the same moral standards as the townspeople did, they welcomed Pecola and accepted her into their society. They talked with Pecola while others avoided doing so. Further, they welcomed her to see their immoral ways of living. They let Pecola love them and wonder about their presence (49). Pecola wondered why these women who were so kind to her were despised and avoided by the people in the community. Further, these women had many "lovers" while Pecola herself had none. Pecola misunderstood the love affairs of these three women; some men liked to come to them while others--both women and men despised and avoided them.

Exposing herself to people with immoral lifestyles as her parents and the three prostitutes, Pecola had no better way to escape from the pressure of life than praying for blue eyes.

Even if Pecola could somehow receive love from her parents, it was not like the love other children received from their parents. Her mother's love was not warm and nurturing. Pauline Breedlove thought her daughter was ugly (100). She was disappointed by many things including the people in her own family. By devoting herself wholeheartedly to her work, Pauline could console herself from her disappointment in life. When her daughter, Pecola, entered the private world of work, the girl was a stranger--an invader. Between the frightened white girl--

her master's daughter and her injured daughter Pauline chose to comfort that white girl and abuse her own injured child as a punishment for dirtying her clean and orderly kitchen. The event then reinforced Pecola's belief that her mother deserted her because she was not beautiful and worth-loving but the white girl was.

The most notable and influential male in the novel was Cholly, Pecola's father. Raised without parents, Cholly never knew how a father loved and took care of his own children. Since he did not have a paternal model for him to follow, he did not know how to show his love to Pecola when he felt sorry for her. The only thing he knew was that he loved her enough to touch her--to love her was to "fuck her tenderly." In spite of his intention, his action was fatal (128). So Cholly's paternal love was formless, unusual and dreadful. His love ruined his daughter's.

The most important factor that pushed Pecola into madness was the success of her wish for blue eyes. However, though Pecola went mad and lost contact with the world of reality, she found a better state of mind to live her life happily (150-8). Through this madness, she did not have to invade her mother's private world. She created one for herself to live in and enjoy--a world with her imaginary friend whom she thought understood her. She did not have to go upstairs to talk with the three whores because she talked to her friend in the mirror (150-8).

And in her social isolation, Pecola was safe from the mental and physical distress and coercion. Further, she had lived too long with loneliness and rejection. With her submissiveness she could not find any exit except madness.

#### Nel Wright

Nel was the only submissive female character in Sula. Nel's life was greatly influenced by three persons: Helene Wright--her own mother, Sula Mae Peace--her only close friend, and Jude Greene--her husband who eventually left her. Nel's world was dominated by Helene and Sula. But the most outstanding person in Nel's life was Helene Wright. Because Nel had lived her life long under her mother's control and suppression, she lost all her self confidence and became a submissive woman.

This wet sandpaper-skinned woman was born and raised in a better-living black family. Helene and Wiley Wright, her graceful Creole mother and usually-absent-for-work father, provided good life conditions for their only child. Wiley was a cook working on a ship so his daughter lived solely under the strict control of her mother. Nel had lived most of her life with an assertive woman, so she was strictly controlled and led to live her life by the approval of her mother. She was a living doll for everything was promptly set and prepared, again by her mother. There were no question, no dispute, no resistance. And this was influenced to Nel's life because Nel became

passive and submissive:

Under Helene's hand the girl became obedient and polite. Any enthusiasms that little Nel shewd were calmed by the mother until she drove her daughter's imagination underground (18).

Though Helene could control her daughter's behavior and suppressed her creativity, there was one thing she could not succeed in spite of her attempt. Helene's graceful beauty did not biologically dominate her daughter's physical appearance so the girl did not possess great beauty. Furthermore, Nel biologically inherited the generous lips and broad flat nose from her father so that her mother had to pull it nightly.

It was all right for Nel to live like that until she had the first and only trip to see her great grandmother who was sick and died before the visitor arrived. The "fearful" but "exhilarating" trip by train was a valuable experience for Nel. Her closed eyes were opened wide by many events. It was clear that people were classified by the color of their skin. And she herself belonged to the inferior group. If her mother's assertiveness ever shone somewhere in the world, it was veiled or blocked on their trip to New Orleans. And it was the only time she saw her mother's assertiveness softened and dulled (20-22). And so it enlightened Nel to find her

selfhood:

But she had gone the real trip, and now she was different. She got out of bed and lit the lamp to look in the mirror. There was her face, plain brown eyes, three braids and the nose her mother hated. She looked for a long time and suddenly a shiver ran through her.

"I'm me," she whispered. "Me."

Nel didn't know quite what she meant, but on the other hand she knew exactly what she meant.

"I'm me. I'm not their daughter. I'm not Nel. I'm me. Me."

Each time she said the word me there was a gathering in her like power, like joy, like fear. Back in bed with her discovery, she stared out the window at the window at the dark leaves of the horse chestnut.

"Me," she murmured. And then, sinking deeper into the quilts, "I want ... I want to be ... wonderful. Oh, Jesus, make me wonderful" (28-9).

However, Nel's awareness of selfhood did not matter to her world view. It just drove her to decide to make friends with Sula whom she had seen for five years without talking to her. Aside from the only trip to New Orleans with her mother, Nel's perception of life developed through the close and intimate relationship with another woman-- Sula.

It was the most important part of Nel's life because she could be and do what she could be and do. And it made her strong and shining. With Sula, she found a new look of things. She freed herself from the neat and orderly house to Sula's crowded house but it was full of life (29).

Nel and Sula became the most intimate friends along the years of their girlhood. In the company of Sula Nel widened her territory of life. Though the way her mother raised her framed her world view, it was with Sula that Nel's imagination which her mother had suppressed could float up into action. They shared the same interests and the same ideas. They did not have any quarrels like other girls did. Along the years they were growing up together, Nel's awareness of a limited life under her mother's eyes was shaken. She secretly gave up pulling her nose as her mother had commanded (55).

Nel's thinking was mixed with Sula's so the two girls were recognized as the same person. The two girls were each other's complementary. Nel alone might have been capable of having her own thought in some level. Yet it was polished and encouraged by the company of Sula. Sula, who neither suppressed nor was suppressed by anybody, made Nel shine:

... Except for an occasional leadership role with Sula, she had no aggression. Her parents had succeeded in rubbing down to a dull glow any sparkle or splutter she had. Only with Sula did that quality have free reign, but their friendship was so close, they themselves had difficulty distinguishing one's own thoughts from the other's. During all of her girlhood the only respite Nel had had from her stern and undemonstrative parents was Sula (83).

The two shared talk and interest with each other. Until they came into their teens and their focus turned to men, Sula never tried to compete with Nel. It might be Nel's more shining personality of a good housewife that interested men. Nel was pleased and proud to be recognized singly. The person who did not mix Nel's selfhood with Sula's was Jude Greene. Since he needed psychological stabilities which he could have from his mother as a son, he chose to marry Nel--a woman who could be in his mother's place. Jude worked in a hotel as a waiter and was a popular man in the community. But he hoped to work in the construction of the bridge connecting Medallion to Porter's Landing, both for better money and for more male-looking work. Jude suffered his disappointment at working in this programme, but with Nel "Jude could see himself taking shape in her eyes" (80-3).

Consequently, Sula left the Bottom for the outside world (85). Ten years after that, she came back with a portentous event, a plaque of robins (94). But Sula's return shook Nel's life, because she "bedded down" with Jude and it was beyond Nel's competence to handle the situation. The event caused the three friends--Sula, Nel, and Jude to scatter from one another; Jude left his wife and she herself broke with Sula because of this. After that Nel had to run the household and learned to be alone and lonely (104-8).

Nel was not a woman who could live by herself: as a child she lived under her mother's protection and later Sula's company could help her be calm. Nel's submissiveness was not innate. It was shaped and framed by suppressive living conditions; that is, the assertiveness and aggressiveness of other people.

#### Baby Suggs

In Beloved, Baby Suggs was the only submissive character. Her submissiveness was sensible for she lived most of her life under the suppressiveness of slavery. Though this character had long been dead from the first page of the novel, her influence was felt throughout the story. Her loving heart and considerate mind was memorized and recalled by other living characters.

Baby was a mournful protagonist because she spent her whole life thinking of the past and the people concerned, especially her eight children who were long lost and dead. Her submissiveness was rather sad because Baby did not fight or claim anything. She surrendered her fate and suffered a painful memory.

Baby Suggs was first in the big slavehouse. Like most slave women, she was mated and had eight children from six husbands. She believed she was looked down on by both white and colored (257). But the one Baby loved was called Suggs--a mournful slave who taught her about fixing shoe. He told her to take a chance to run away either by herself



or with him. Finally, he ran away, alone (175). Baby fixed her name on his. However, during her slave life, Baby was named Jenny Whitlow in the sale bill. She did not claim to her master that her name was Baby Suggs (171). Later, when she was freed by her son's part time labor, she told her master that her name was Baby Suggs. With this name she secretly hoped to meet her husband who was long lost by running away. "Baby" was what she was called by him, "Suggs" was his name. It could mean Suggs' Baby so when he heard it he would know her:

Baby Suggs thought it was a good time to ask him something she had long wanted to know.

"Mr. Garner," she said, "why you call me Jenny?"

"'cause that what's on your sales ticket, gal. Ain't that your name? What you call yourself?"

"Nothing," she said. "I don't call myself nothing."

Mr. Garner went red with laughter.

"When I took you out of Carolina, Whitlow called you Jenny and Jenny Whitlow is what his bill said. Didn't he call Jenny?"

"No, sir. If he did I didn't hear it."

"What did you answer to?"

"Anything, but Suggs is what my husband name."

"You got married, Jenny? I didn't know it."

"Manner of speaking."

"You know where her is, this husband?"

"No, sir."

"Is that Halle's daddy?"

"No, sir."

"Why you call him Suggs, then? His

bill of sale says Whitlow too, just like yours."

"Suggs is my name, sir. From my husband. He didn't call me Jenny."

"What he call you?"

"Baby."

"Well," said Mr. Garner, going pink again, "if I was you I'd stick to Jenny Whitlow. Mrs. Baby Suggs ain't no name for a freed Negro."

Maybe not, she thought, but Baby Suggs was all she had left of the "husband" she claimed (175).

Aside from her husband, Baby spent most of the time thinking of her children. Seven of them were either dead or sold, except for the eighth child--Halle. Baby saw them as children but she missed their adulthood: eventually they were sold away. So Baby gave up watching her last child, Halle, thinking she would lose him some day soon. However, Halle was the only children who stayed with Baby (171). This son was Baby's "sweet boy" who devoted himself to Baby. And in turn, she tried to make him happy.

After Baby was injured and crippled by work, she became "a real bargain." Mr. Garner was her last owner. He bought her and Halle and took them to a small farm--Sweet Home in Kentucky. Baby would have been abused in Carolina, but she never was in Sweet Home. Baby tried to do the right thing because she did not want to be abused down before her son's eyes--it might make him go crazy (257). And since the Garners had a special way of treating their slaves: they listened to what their slaves said,

they did not mate their slaves or made use of their productivity, they taught their slaves how to read and write, they allowed slavemen to carry guns. So slaves in Sweet Home were treated like paid labor (173). The condition in Sweet Home was better but Baby's mind was still bitter. Baby did not have to work too hard. Her work place was in the big house while male slaves worked outdoors. Despite the kindness of the Garners, Baby was a silent assistant in the kitchen. Her painful body was observed closely by her son. He tried to relieve this. He made a string so that Baby could pull herself from the floor and a step to soothe her hip (256).

And finally he asked the Garners to sell his labor for Baby's freedom. At sixty, Baby was freed and driven on a wagon by Mr. Garner who helped her settled down in Cincinnati. Baby was not pleased to be free because it meant she had to leave her son like the other children left her. However, it was important for her only living son:

When Mr. Garner agreed to the arrangements with Halle, and when Halle looked like it meant more to him that she go free than anything in the world, she let herself be taken 'cross the river. Of the two things--standing on her feet till she dropped or leaving her last and probably only living child--she chose the hard thing that made him happy, and never put to him the question she put to herself: What for? What does a sixty-odd-year-old slavewoman who walks like a three-

legged-dog need freedom for? (173-4).

Baby did not talk about her own feeling to anybody. She did not complain about her hip that made her jerk like "a three-legged dog" (172). She ignored her own sorrow leaving her only son to please him and spent the rest of her life thinking of him. Like her mournful past, she never shared it, even with Sethe--Halle's wife whom he sent with three children. To Baby Suggs, the past was painful and, so, unspeakable (72).

Throughout her sixty years of living under slavery, Baby Suggs had never been aware of her selfhood. "She knew more about (her children) than she knew about herself, having never had the map to discover what she was like" (172). When she crossed the Ohio River and grounded, Baby was surprised by the feeling of her own self. And she wondered how her son who was never freed knew about freedom. Then she discovered and realized that every part of her body belonged to herself (174).

As a free woman, Baby Suggs' image looked somehow assertive: especially in her assertion for the calling of her name and her attempt to gather her children. From the moment she knew she was free--no master and no slavewoman, she talked to Mr. Garner about her name. She told Mr. Garner that her name was Baby Suggs. He tried to convince that "Jenny Whitlow" seemed more a name for a freed Negro

than "Baby Suggs." It was Baby's first claim and it was just a silent one (174-5), and it took Baby two years to find that her attempt to regain those long gone children was in vain. The only good news she received was from Sweet Home--Halle's marriage and his children (177-81).

Though he was finally lost like her other children, Halle sent his wife and four children to her. Baby did not know that Halle's wife and children's arrival would destroy her temporary assertiveness: one of these people's arrival caused the collapse of Baby's loving heart.

With the help of the Bodwins--white brother and sister who hated slavery than Negroes, Baby Suggs got a big two-storey, house on Bluestone Road. It was a way station house where people gathered round for both physical and mental needs. She became the community's center and leader (167). Baby was in her glory. Halle's three's children arrived in a wagon--two boys and one crawling girl. A few months later Sethe and the newly-born child arrived and no Halle. Twenty eight days later, the worst event happened; it threw Baby back to the mournful past and pondering of colors she had missed all her life. A slavecatcher and some men from Sweet Home, the place from which Sethe had escaped, arrived. Sethe cut her crawling baby girl's throat and tried to kill all her children. Believing she was denominational preacher, Baby kept on apologizing to god for the sin (187-8) and also did it for Sethe who

refused to do so (250).

Baby Suggs' submissiveness was defined by the way she lived her life with the help of men all her life. When she was a young woman she pleaded with her husband called Suggs. In Sweet Home, Halle looked after her and sold his labor to buy her from slavery. And even on her way to the free life, Mr. Garner drove her in a wagon to Ohio. In her freedom at 124 on Bluestone Road, there was a man called Stamp Paid who attended to her and helped her. So she was the most well-treated of all submissive women in Morrison's three novels: The Bluest Eye, Sula, and Beloved.

#### Assertive Women

Assertive women do not reject their old sphere but they claim to be accepted by the community they live. They are women who learn about their own wishes. However, they do not want to break the social norms. They show their own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs directly and appropriately.

These women know about where they should be and they accept that, but they feel their own wishes and claim them to be known. They can make requests and refusals without hurting men or other people. So an assertive woman can attain her wish by her appropriate and polite assertion.

They accept differences of living, but they refuse all the privileges. They cannot be defeated nor do they submit to other's superiority of age, power, experience, knowledge, sex, or race. Assertive women protect their own

rights, as well as the rights of others. They are more creative than submissive women. But their creative thinking was harmless. It does not threaten their relationship with men and does not harm the community they live in. These women can live their own lives by themselves but they do not refuse men's company and sometimes need it.

There are five female characters in Morrison's three novels: The Bluest Eye, Sula, and Beloved. They are Mrs. MacTeer, Geraldine, Helene Wright, Hannah, and Denver Suggs who are assertive.

Mrs. MacTeer

Mrs. MacTeer is the first assertive woman to be discussed. In The Bluest Eye, she was the only woman who embodied the meaning of a devoted and loving housewife. And she succeeded in life as a good wife and a caring mother. Mrs. MacTeer had two daughters, Frieda and Claudia. Mr. MacTeer worked outside in the mine factory and she was a full time housewife devoting herself to her family.

Through Claudia's eyes, we learned much about how Mrs. MacTeer ran her family affairs. She became a loving and nurturing mother to her children and a good wife to her husband. She did her non-stop housework in order to give the best things to the members of her family. When her younger daughter Claudia was sick, she was worried about

her and so she did everything to make the girl recover.

And this impressive event lasted long in the girl's memory:

... And in the night, when my coughing was dry and tough, feet padded into the room hands repinned the flannel, readjusted the quilt, and rested a moment on my forehead. So when I think of autumn, I think of somebody with hands who does not want me to die (14).

Her love for the members of her family was nurturing and protective. In general, she had nothing to do with other people outside her house. But if they were in trouble and she could help without harming the members of her family, she would not ignore to help them.

She might sometimes act aggressively but she actually did not intend to harm anybody. It was just a protective assertiveness. She took Henry Washington in as a roomer, but he later tried to sexually harass Frieda. So she hit him with a broom. She also screamed when Mr. Dunion said Frieda might be ruined (79-81).

Mrs. MacTeer tried her best to protect her family from illness and poverty. The kindness she had for her own family was also for the other people who came into her family. When the Breedlove family were in trouble, the MacTeers were chosen to take care of Pecola Breedlove. The whole family willingly and wholeheartedly took care of the girl. The two girls were told to be good to her. And Mrs. MacTeer herself had to take care of the girl since she was



the only female adult in the family.

Everything seemed all right except for the three quarts of milk she drank in a day. So Pecola's consumption of milk was beyond Mrs. MacTeer's economic ability.

However, she did not mistreat or condemn the girl directly. She just complained to herself to relieve her worries about her family welfare:

... I don't know what I'm suppose to be running here, a charity ward, I guess. Time for me to get out of the giving line and get in the getting line. I guess I ain't supposed to have nothing. I'm supposed to end up in the poorhouse. Look like nothing I do is going to keep me out of there. Folks just spend all their time trying to figure out ways to send me to the poorhouse. I got about as much business with another mouth to feed as a cat has with side pockets. As if I don't have trouble enough trying to feed my own and keep out the poorhouse, now I got something else in here that's just going to drink me on in there. Well, naw, she ain't. Not long as I got strength in my body and tongue in my head. There's a limit to everything. I ain't got nothing to just throw away. Don't nobody need three quarts of milk. Henry Ford don't need three quarts of milk. That's just downright sinful. I'm willing to do what I can for folks. Can't nobody say I ain't. But this has got to stop, and I'm just the one to stop it (23).

When the complaint finished, everything was all right. And she taught Pecola a valuable lesson of femininity at her house. And after the misunderstanding about Pecola's

bleeding, Mrs. MacTeer felt sorry for her and so she became warm and kind. She began to wash the girl and sang with laughter. Pauline Breedlove should have done this work for Pecola because she was the girl's mother, she should have taught her own child about the lesson of femininity. Mrs. Breedlove missed the chance to do this without even knowing it. Maybe, she did not care because she devoted herself completely to her work.

Mrs. MacTeer's assertiveness was positively portrayed. It did not limit her sphere of living. It interfered neither with her family nor her relationship to the other people: both men and women. And she was happy because her assertiveness was derived from love--caring, protective and harmless.

#### Geraldine

She was a black woman who lived her life differently from the two characters discussed previously. While Pauline and Pecola Breedlove suffered poverty and the hardships of living, Geraldine enjoyed living in comfort. While Pauline and Pecola lacked all the comforts in life, Geraldine was in excess of them. However, she was not happy with her lifestyle.

Geraldine was assertive but this assertiveness seemed merely ambiguous. She might look submissive by her lifestyle, but she was actually assertive by her inner motivation which can be observed by the way she treated

people around her. She was an educated woman who tried to get rid of every sign of blackness. She drew a line between the Negro's personality: uneducated and dirty were black and high morals, educated and neat were colored (68).

Geraldine finished her education from a good college and then married a good man--Louis. She bore him a healthy child--Junior. Though Geraldine did not suffer from poverty, she suffered from another source of difficulty: she could not release herself from the internal suffering of a married life. She did not have an intimate relationship with her husband. Louis, her husband was not a man worth devoting her love to. In reality, he was merely a stranger who invaded her private sphere both mentally and physically (70).

Geraldine loved what she could rule--like the quietness and order of her house. She did not seem to love anyone except herself. If love means sharing and caring, the love she felt for her husband and son was not a complete one. Geraldine could do everything for them if it was their physical need. She could surrender her body for her husband as a sex object and a homemaker, but she did not share the feeling of unity with him. Even while they were having sex, Geraldine did not enjoy it because it consumed and messed up her beauty (68-70).

Even to her son, Geraldine could give him anything he physically needed but the boy could never feel the kind of

love a mother should feel for her son. Besides herself, the only other living creature she loved was a black cat. It was quiet and clean like her house. The cat became the only one in her house that could feel that he was dear to her. As her son was growing up he gradually learned this. So the boy tried to get rid of the cat his mother preferred more than any person in the family:

Geraldine did not allow her baby, Junior, to cry. As long as his needs were physical, she could meet them-- comfort and satiety. He was always brushed, bathed, oiled, and shod. Geraldine did not talk to him, coo to him, or indulge him in kissing bouts, but she saw that every other desire was fulfilled. It was not long before the child discovered the difference in his mother's behavior for himself and the cat. As he grew older, he learned how to direct his hatred of his mother to the cat, and spent happy moments watching it suffer. The cat survived, because Geraldine was seldom away from home, and could effectively soothe the animal when Junior abused him (71).

Since Geraldine's assertiveness was veiled by the submissive lifestyle, it could only be found when there were invasions in her private world. Children were not allow to come into her yard to retrieve a ball (69). Her husband and her son had to obey her while they were at home. Since she preferred an orderly and quiet house, her son was supposed to act properly both inside and outside the house. Junior was told be a colored boy and he was not

allowed to play with black boys (71).

Her husband learned that she would "give him her body sparingly and partially." He would walk outside to smoke when she threw a "sidelong look" at him. And when they made love, he had to avoid touching her body "too much" (69).

And Geraldine once turned aggressive when she found a ragged black girl in her beautiful house. It was because Geraldine hated what she saw in the girl's very appearance from which she had been escaping all her lifetime:

... Up over the hump of the cat's back she looked at her. She had seen this little girl all of her life. Hanging out of the windows over saloons in Mobile, crawling over the porches of shotgun houses on the edge of town, sitting in bus stations holding paper bags and crying to mothers who kept saying "Shet up!" Hair uncombed, dresses falling apart, shoes untied and caked with dirt. They had stared at her with great uncomprehending eyes. Eyes that questioned nothing and asked everything. Unblinking and unabashed, they stared up at her. The end of the world lay in their eyes, and the beginning, and all the waste in between.

... Up over the hump of the cat's back she looked.

"Get out," she said, her voice quiet. "You nasty little black bitch. Get out of my house" (75).

Geraldine was lucky in her financial and moral security, thus she freed herself from physical difficulties. Avoiding human passion, Geraldine was the

only ruler of her quiet and orderly world and she let no one else invade it. The only intruders were her own husband and son; she had own ways to manage things in her world and it was still hers (69).

Her assertiveness was formed and supported by external factors. Geraldine was long under the beliefs about a perfect life and this affected her world view. She did not seem to be happy with it because her assertive mind was disturbed by a submissive body. She might be assertive to people in the community but she was submissive to its convention and norms.

#### Helene Wright

Helene Wright was an assertive woman who was the happiest and the most successful character of all the female protagonists being discussed in this study. She was a woman who loved and then chose to live a better life. Everything in her life was planned and controlled. Born of a Creole whore, she was taken by her grandmother to escape from her mother's immorality.

All her young days were full of love and a good life. Her life was planned by her grandmother--Cecile Sabat. Taken away from every scent and sign of the whorehouse, she was never a daughter to her mother, Rochelle, but a niece to Cecile. Helene's life was set and prepared for good things. She grew up to be a good woman. And she was pleased with it (18). As a result, she was the character

who suffered least in her life.

As inherited from Cecile Sabat--her grandmother, Helene had planned her daughter's life. Her good life led her to marry Wiley Wright, a ship's cook. Because of his sixteen-day-absences, it took Helene nine years to have a daughter--Nel. Helene devoted all her time looking after her only daughter. Her attempt to draw Nel's line of life came out well. She could frame the girl's thought and performance. Even the girl's appearance, Helene had Nel pull her flat nose (18, 28). She did not speak Creole to her daughter nor did allow her to speak or understand it (26-7). Nel became what she intended her to be:

Under Helene's hand the girl became obedient and polite. Any enthusiasms that little Nel showed were calmed by the mother until she drove her daughter's imagination underground (18).

Her assertiveness not only decorated her house but also the community she lived in. She suggested some good and formal practice to a small community such as the Bottom and most of her suggestions were accepted:

Helene Wright was an impressive woman, at least in Medallion she was. Heavy hair in a bun, dark eyes arched in a perpetual query about other people's manners. A woman who won all social battles with presence and a conviction of a the legitimacy of her authority. Since there was no Catholic church in

Medallion then, she joined the most conservative black church. And held sway. It was Helene who never turned her head in church when latecomers arrived; Helene who established the practice of seasonal altar flowers; Helene who introduced the giving of banquets of welcome to returning Negro veterans (18).

However, she did not know that her assertiveness was limited within her household and the community in which she lived--the Bottom, until she left its sphere. Her assertiveness was rejected by the invincible social rule: discrimination (20-2). When she left New Orleans, her confidence for life returned and she became the same graceful Helene.

Apart from her success in advising people around her, the most successful case was about Nel's way of living with which she was very pleased. When Nel married Jude there was a full formal wedding ceremony and it was a good match (79-80). It can be said that Helene Wright was the most successful assertive woman since her assertiveness was handled with good intentions.

Hannah Peace

This first born child of Eva and BoyBoy was another assertive female character in Sula. This assertiveness was influenced by her relationship with her parents, and it resulted in Hannah's negative image in the community. Hannah might have been a simple submissive woman if she



lived in a warm and loving family. But the family in which she lived was broken and lacked intimacy. Eva, her mother, failed to communicate the love she felt for her children. She did not touch them in a loving way such as playing with them. This was effective, especially for Hannah because others died at an early age, but Hannah lived longer. Her assertive behavior which that reflected her loneliness could be observed more longer.

The twisted concept of parental love was so powerful that it embodied Hannah's way of life which was somehow irritating. To Hannah, parental love should be in the form of touching and playing with children. So she yearned for the touch of warm love from her mother. She wondered about the way her mother felt for her children so she asked her mother but Eva failed to explain this. Furthermost, she intentionally killed her own son (67-72). As a result of Eva's failure to reveal her devoted way of childbearing, Hannah's relationship to her mother was distant, and Hannah had not learned how to love other people in the world. Loving Sula was her only love, and it was delicate and indifferent. Consequently, there was a distance between Hannah and her daughter. However, she never mistreated Sula.

Hannah was mentally and physically lonely. She could not share this loneliness with her arrogant mother who had her own way to feed her children. So she spent her whole

life collecting love as much as she could by sensual touching. What Hannah wanted from the people around her was love. Her mother's love was veiled by her arrogance. Her father could not show his love for her because of his long absence. Since love, to Hannah, was touch, the act of lovemaking counted. Her husband could help relieve her loneliness by his sensual touch. Unfortunately, he died soon after their marriage. Hannah refused to live her whole life after his death in solitude. And she made this intention known. She began to have immoral affairs with any men available. So Hannah's assertiveness was a special and specific case, for it was immoral and improper. It was the only fault in Hannah's life:

Hannah simply refused to live without the attentions of a man, and after Rekus's death had a steady sequence of lovers, mostly the husbands of her friends and neighbors. Her flirting was sweet, low and guileless. Without ever a pat of the hair, a rush to change clothes or a quick application of paint, with no gesture whatsoever, she rippled with sex. In her same old print wraparound, barefoot in the summer, in the winter her feet in a man's leather slippers with the backs flattened under her heels, she made men aware of her behind, her slim ankles, the dew-smooth skin and the incredible length of neck (42).

Hannah became a promiscuous woman. But she did not share and feel the warm intimacy she yearned for all her life with these lovers. She did not love any man she made

love to; what she wanted was the daily touching. So loneliness still existed. Her inner world was never shared by anyone: either people in her family or those daylight lovers. Though she loved Sula, as she told her friends, she did not like her (57). The word was effective for Sula who overheard this; later the girl let Hannah die before her own eyes (78). The portent of Hannah's death appeared in the form of a red wedding dress (73) that became her own fortune to be burnt to death.

Though Hannah lived and died early in the story, her assertiveness was effectively inherited by Sula. Because Hannah had a special kind of assertiveness, she irritated the community in which she lived as did her descendant, Sula. Because it powerfully inspired her to have a different world view; she lived her life outside social standards. As a result, Sula's aggressive lifestyle was more destructive and dangerous than Hannah's had ever been. So Hannah's assertiveness could just annoy the Bottom but it did not harm or cause any change in the community like her daughter's aggressiveness did.

Denver Suggs

This was the only assertive female character in Beloved. However, her assertiveness was somehow mixed with submission. Denver belonged to a later generation so she suffered less oppression from the community because, though born into it, she lived outside it. So her assertiveness

was born of her solitude in a limited sphere of living. Denver lived in a big house with a nonsocial mother. In her nineteen years of solitude, there was another thing--her dead sister's spirit.

Denver was the youngest daughter of all four children, and the only girl who was still alive and remained with Sethe. Born and raised in a big lonely house with no peers, she learned to live and be with herself and the inhuman thing--the spiteful spirit of her long dead sister. Since her two brothers ran away from home when she was young, she believed her only really friend was the invisible company in the house. Solitude both brightened and dulled Denver. She was reticent and shy but self-manipulated, hard-headed and irritable (78, 121).

It seemed her assertiveness was driven by her hunger for attention, sometimes made her become self-centered. There were three people in Denver's life: Sethe--her own mother, Baby Suggs--her grandmother and Beloved--her true-to-life sister and each helped construct Denver's personality. Sethe's loving way was frightening because she killed her own child out of love. Denver kept on thinking that she would behave herself so Sethe would not kill her (252). Baby Suggs was warm but she spent most of her time alone yearning for what she had missed in the past.

Of all three women in Denver's sphere, Baby Suggs was

the only normal person in her life (209). But Beloved was the most notable person in her life. Beloved's company made her shine. The assertiveness can be clearly observed. Further, Denver's personality developed and her limited world was widened. Beloved was influenced to Denver especially when she was resurrected into life (91).

Since Denver was the only child who remained with her mother, she was the center of all Sethe's love and attention (121). But when Paul D Garner--the last Sweet Home man who used to live in the same place as her parents came, Sethe's attention was divided. So it annoyed Denver (14-7). And he exorcized the spirit (22-3) that Denver claimed to be her secret company (252). Because of her resentment, Denver's disapproval of Paul D was soon known (51-2). On the third day of the accommodation, Denver asked him how long he was going to "hang around" (54).

Denver's assertiveness was clear. When Beloved in a disguise of a new, lineless, and smoothe-skinned woman (63) came, she knew that was her true-to-life sister. But Beloved was hungry for love and the love she wanted was only from Sethe. She did not pay much attention to anybody because all was for Sethe. In her attempt to call Denver's attention, Denver became protective, patient, relieved and easeful (66-8). To protect Beloved whom she preferred she refused to believe Paul D's assertion that Beloved could pick up the rocker with one hand (69-70). No matter how

much Denver devoted to Beloved, the resurrected spirit never lost its attention from Sethe (92-3). To know that she was not the main reason for Beloved's return was bearable. Denver was afraid that Beloved would leave her and she made Beloved know it (93).

There were no domination and competition in the relationship between the two girls (122). Beloved's self-indulgence made Denver a pleasing girl and at the same time it was Denver who led the activities each day (147-9). But everything she did focused on the same purpose: to keep Beloved's presence and attention. And this attempt made Denver a "strategist": she used to be indolent and resentful for work but she became energetic, creative and executive (148). Since Beloved loved storytelling, Denver told her many stories with explanations and more details (147-8). Of all the things she told Beloved, either told or retold, Denver loved the story about her own birth the most:

... Amy didn't need money more than anything, especially since all she talked about was getting hold of some velvet."

"What's velvet?"

"It's a cloth, kind of deep and soft."

"Go ahead."

"Anyway, she rubbed Ma'am's feet back to life, and she cried, she said, from how it hurt. But it made her think she could make it on over to where Grandma Baby Suggs was and ..."

"Who is that?"

"I just said it. My grandmother."

"Is that Sethe's mother?"

"No. My father's mother."

"Go ahead."

"That's where the others was. My brothers and ... the baby girl. She sent them on before to wait for her at Grandma Baby's. So she had to put up with everything to get there. And this here girl Amy helped."

Denver stopped and sighed. This was the part of the story she loved. She was coming to it now, and she loved it because it was all about herself...  
(94-5).

It was her self-centered nature that she walked out when Sethe and Beloved were occupied by each other's interests (295, 309). When Sethe was eaten up by Beloved's vengeance, she transferred all responsibilities in the house to Denver. When they ran out of food and savings, Denver went out of 124 to ask for help. But soon Denver gave up relying on the neighbors' kindness and decided to work (309).

However, Denver's assertiveness was quite weak. Because it required external motivation. If she was still at 124, and no one, neither Beloved nor Paul D came, her assertion would have been hidden and veiled. So of all the female characters being discussed in this study, Denver was the most developed character: from submissive to assertive image.

#### Aggressive Women

Aggressive women want more than social acceptance;

some of their behaviors may threaten traditional images of women and somehow irritated their male counterparts. They fight to get what they want. So some of their thoughts and behaviors might threaten the people in the community they live in. These women have creative thinking and reveal this through their outstanding behaviors. They can look after themselves both with or without men's helping hands. These women learn and know about their own wishes and then openly and sometimes aggressively claim to make their wishes come true. They feel the power inside themselves and they learn to express it. These women are proud and so they often threaten the men's world of superiority. Aggressive women may live with men but they require less help from them. They feel stronger when their men are absent or helpless or powerless. Without men, they try to succeed in leading their own lives. It is not new to the world to see women trying to live by themselves. However, some women are not innately aggressive, but their aggressiveness and creativeness is gradually shaped and formed throughout their lives.

Family and social background can be the most significant factor. Another motivating factor is the present situation. Some women become aggressive because the condition requires their immediate decision. These women may either succeed or fail in this aggressive way of living.



The present study found that there are nine women in Morrison's three novels: The Bluest Eye, Sula, and Beloved, who were aggressive.

#### Pauline Breedlove

Pauline was aggressive because of her limited and suppressive situation. Like her daughter Pecola, Pauline wished to have a better life, but her wishes were obstructed by the people both in the community and in her own family. However, with more experience and aggressiveness, her image was stronger than that of her daughter.

Pauline's aggressiveness was developed and shaped by the life she had lived in the past. Her image was submissive in her big family in Alabama and then in Kentucky. When she moved up to the North with Cholly, her husband it changed into assertiveness. And then the poverty-stricken life in a city compelled her to become an aggressive woman.

When she was young Pauline was born and raised in a rural part of Alabama in a big family of eleven children. When her family moved to Kentucky, Pauline left school to do housework for the whole family. Her deformed leg, caused by an accident, deprived her of many things.

Pauline kept wondering:

Slight as it was, this deformity

explained for her many things that would have been otherwise incomprehensible: why she alone of all the children had no nickname; why there were no funny jokes and anecdotes about funny things she had done; why no one ever remarked on her food preferences--no saving of the wing and neck for her--no cooking of the peas in a separate pot without rice because she did not like rice; why nobody teased her; why she never felt at home anywhere, or that she belonged anyplace (88).

Because of her submissiveness, she did not make her wishes known. But when Cholly came into her dreamy days and they moved away northward (92), Pauline became assertive.

Pauline's new place was not a promising one. It was not a countryside town like her own home in Alabama. And the people were not friendly. Her relationship with the people in the community was not what she expected to find; it did not go well. It was difficult for a country woman to learn new lessons of married life in a city setting. Pauline had to learn about her new roles: a wife and a city woman. Since her two roles needed encouragement, financial security and moral support, Pauline failed both. First Pauline tried to adjust herself to her new community. Unfortunately, what she tried to do did not bring her close to the people in the community. For example, the black women in Ohio straightened their hair but Pauline did not. When she wore make up, like other women, "it came off

rather badly (94)." Wearing high-heeled shoes could not disguise her crippled leg. Despite her attempts to raise her standard of beauty to that of other women, her deep wish was to be accepted as she used to be by these women (94).

Further, when Pauline accidentally lost her front tooth, she gave up caring about her physical appearance and turned to her pride for her work. She threw away the standard of beauty and declared her own assertive self (98). When Cholly frightened her mistress, she asked Pauline to leave him. Pauline refused and quit the job because it was not reasonable for a black woman to leave a black man to please a white woman (95).

Her stronger assertiveness was clearly observed when she went to the hospital for her second delivery. The doctors in the hospital did not treat her equally as they treated white patients. Pauline tried in her way to get equal attention from the doctors:

I seed them talking to them white women: 'How you feel? Gonna have twins?' Just shucking them, of course, but nice talk. Nice friendly talk. I got edgy, and when them pains got harder, I was glad. Glad to have something else to think about. I moaned something awful. The pains wasn't as bad as I let on, but I had to let them people know having a baby was more than a bowel movement. I hurt just like them white women. Just 'cause I wasn't hooping and hollering

before didn't mean I wasn't feeling pain. What'd they think? That just 'cause I knowed how to have a baby with no fuss that my behind wasn't pulling and aching like theirs? Besides, that doctors don't know what he talking about. He must never seed no more foal. Who say they don't have no pain? Just 'cause they don't cry? 'Cause she can't say it, they think it ain't there? If they looked in her eyes and see them eyeballs lolling back, see the sorrowful look, they would know (98-9).

Pauline's assertiveness became stronger and clearer when she went out to work again after her second child was born, and when Cholly did not pay any attention to his family. The responsibility and recognition of breadwinner made Pauline think she was above Cholly. Besides, her return to church strengthened her belief that Cholly was a sinner (100). And her pride and morality was harmful and aggressive to her family:

All the meaningfulness of her life was in her work. For her virtues were intact. She was an active church woman, did not drink, smoke, or carouse, defended herself mightily against Cholly, rose above him in every way, and felt she was fulfilling a mother's role conscientiously when she pointed out their father's faults to keep them from having them, or punished them when they showed any slovenliness, no matter how slight, when she worked twelve to sixteen hours a day to support them. And the world agreed with her (102).

Pauline only found pleasure in her sexual role.

However, when Cholly came home drunken more and more, the mutual desire faded away and the love of God relieved her (102-4). As Cholly reduced his role in the family, Pauline cultivated her self-admiration. Comparing her high responsibility and morality with Cholly's, Pauline was superior to him in every way. This was the reason she did not leave him. Cholly's weakness confirmed Pauline's belief about her own superior image. And Cholly was the only person in the world she could mistreat without shame; he was male and physically stronger than she but he could not do the duty expect of from his gender.

She worked for a white family named the Fishers. This was the best part of her life that she devoted herself to keeping it. And Pauline gave up caring for her own family. As a good servant, she was worth wanting. Her assertiveness in the Fishers' house went on along with her aggressiveness in the storefront and the people concerned.

But Pauline's aggressiveness to people in her family was violent. She and Cholly usually fought with each other (37), and the fights were always witnessed by her children. Beside Cholly, her two children were also mistreated by the same violence:

But it weren't like I thought it was gone be. I loved them and all, I guess, but maybe it was having no money, or maybe it was Cholly, but they sure worried the life out of me.

Sometimes I'd catch myself hollering at them and beating them, and I'd feel sorry for them, but I couldn't seem to stop (98).

It seemed Pauline's behavior which people was not stable. She could be very aggressive to the person to whom she thought she was superior. Her aggressiveness was limited in a certain boundary--her own family, and those who suffered from her aggressiveness the most were the members of her own family. But to the people who were superior to her, she simply turned her aggressiveness to merely assertiveness. Despite her familial and social disappointments, Pauline succeeded in work as an ideal servant. Playing the role of a perfect housemaid, Pauline forgot, or if she didn't, ignored every role she had ever played, even as a mother. Once Pecola was beaten by her mother in the Fishers' house because of a trivial accident. The event revealed her priorities between her work and her family:

... In one gallop she was on Pecola, and with the back of her hand knocked her to the floor. Pecola slid in the pie juice, one leg folding under her. Mrs. Breedlove yanked her up by the arm, slapped her again, and in a voice thin with anger, abused Pecola directly and Frieda and me [Claudia] by implication.

"Crazy fool ... my floor, mess ... look what you ... work ... get on out ... now that ... crazy ... my floor, my floor ... my floor." Her words were

hotter and darker than the smoking berries, and we backed away in dread.

The little girl in pink started to cry. Mrs. Breedlove turned to her. "Hush, baby, hush. Come here. Oh, Lord, look at your dress. Don't cry no more. Polly will change it." She went to the sink and turned tap water on a fresh towel. Over her shoulder she spit out words to us like rotten pieces of apple. (86-7).

As the Fisher's servant, Pauline found her right place. She could be more than a black woman who was ugly and poor and lacking front teeth. Pauline never felt herself a superior person in the name of Pauline Breedlove but as the Fisher's servant, she did. She could be a superior customer when she bought things for the Fishers; she could make her own decisions to choose the best things she wanted. She had her own name for this job "Polly." This nickname was given by the Fishers. To Pauline, this nickname meant more than a name because it was her honorable label of worthiness. And this was what Pauline loved and cared for the most. As "Polly," she was a skillfully devoted and proud servant to the Fishers, while "Pauline" was an uncaring and aggressive housewife to her family. "Power, praise, and luxury were hers in this household" (100). Her devotion to the Fishers fulfilled her wish for power, praise and luxury (101). Her hunger for a feeling of worthiness was fulfilled in this place.

The perfect world she found in the Fishers' household

gave her more than a better status. In this sphere, she regained what she had missed all her life: the beauty of a young white girl and a clean and orderly kitchen. Working in the Fishers' house, she could touch, love, and nourish the invincible beauty of her master's daughter to compensate for her forever-missing beauty. In the Fishers' kitchen, Pauline could be an authorized manager who could administrate everything. Consequently, she took better care of the Fishers's household than her own family. So she was assertive Polly in her work place and aggressive Pauline to her own family.

The MacTeer Sisters: Frieda and Claudia

They were aggressive or, at least, assertive black girls. They refused to see the same worldview as their schoolmate Pecola Breedlove. While Pecola was fond of blue eyes in a white girl's face printed on the wrapper of candies and on the milk cup, Claudia wondered how this face called more attention to people than hers. Pecola prayed for blue eyes nightly but Claudia tore a pink-and-yellow baby doll to examine the source of beauty that made people love it (20-1).

Claudia and her sister Frieda lived in a poor family. Despite their poverty, their loving and caring parents tried their best to raise and nurture their children. And their parents' attempt was successful. Unlike Pecola, parents' love and care prevented Claudia and her sister



from the feeling of loneliness and unworthiness. Their young days of life were full of loving and caring. Claudia had a wonderful memory of an autumn when her mother took good care of her while she was sick (14).

However, the warm and loving world Claudia and her sister lived in was limited by poverty. When they came to the outside world, they learned that their poverty and blackness somehow prevented them from reaching the fulfillment of life. Though they did not yearn for perfection like Pauline, the two girls wanted to possess the feeling of worthiness with human rights and other equalities. They knew and accepted the differences of people in society but they protested against the lack of privileges and superiority they never had. Their aggressiveness showed whenever white people gained more attention: Rosemary Villanucci and Maureen Peal were those whites.

And Maureen Peal was the "disrupter of seasons." Claudia and her sister hated her and wanted to hurt her because she was rich and beautiful. She wore fine clothing and had enough money to buy ice cream. Further, her beauty and wealth made her the center of admiration and attention at school:

Frieda and I were bemused, irritated, and fascinated by her. We looked hard for flaws to restore our equilibrium,

but had to be content at first with uglying up her name, changing Maureen Peal to Meringue Pie. Later a minor epiphany was ours when we discovered that she had a dog tooth--a charming one to be sure--but a dog tooth nonetheless. And when we found out that she had been born with six fingers on each hand and that there was a little bump where each extra one had been removed, we smiled. They were small triumphs, but we took what we could get--snickering behind her back and calling her Six-finger-dog-tooth-meringue-pie. But we had to do it alone, for none of the other girls would cooperate with our hostility. They adored her.

When she was assigned a locker next to mine, I could indulge my jealousy four times a day. My sister and I both suspected that we were secretly prepared to be her friend, if she would let us, but I knew it would be a dangerous friendship, for when my eye traced the white border patterns of those Kelly-green knee socks, and felt the pull and slack of my brown stockings, I wanted to kick her. And when I thought of the unearned haughtiness in her eyes, I plotted accidental slammings of locker doors on her hand (53-4).

And Rosemary Villanucci was another white girl whom the MacTeer sisters wanted to hurt. When the girl offered something so she could please them, they felt wounded in their own pride and refused. Both Maureen and Rosemary possessed the pride of ownership and an arrogance that made Claudia want to smash them:

She rolls down the window to tell my sister Frieda and me that we can't come in. We stare at her, wanting her

bread, but more than that wanting to poke the arrogance out of her eyes and smash the pride of ownership that curls her chewing mouth. When she comes out of the car we will beat her up, make red marks on her white skin, and she will cry and ask us do we want her to pull her pants down. We will say no. We don't know what we should feel or do if she does, but whenever she asks us, we know she is offering us something precious and that our pride must be asserted by refusing to accept (12).

The sense of violence could be aroused also when they caught sight of privilege and inequality. Because of this they felt obliged to protect Pecola, a poor black girl who was the center of bad fate. At home, they took care of her as an "outdoor" person (17-28). On their way home, they protected Pecola from being harassed by a group of school boys. They were pleased to see rich Maureen make friends with Pecola (52-6). And when the friendliness turned to insults, their aggressiveness was invoked (59-61). Even when Mrs. Breedlove badly treated Pecola, her own child, but tried to please her master's daughter, "the familiar violence" was also aroused (86-7).

When Pecola was pregnant with her father's baby, they prayed for her baby to live. They tried secretly to help her by burying their own money and, with magic words, planting seeds. Pecola's tragedy might be the real example of life to Claudia and Frieda. Though Frieda and Claudia MacTeer were too young to judge things in their

lives, they had some ways to protect themselves from the distressing world. They were safe from the feeling of loneliness and unworthiness. They learned about pride and dignity from people who lived in better conditions. And so they knew how to protect themselves from people who lived in limited and restricted situations. They were progressive characters who developed their world view, and succeeded to live their lives with that maturity.

#### The Three Whores

They were Marie, China, and Poland. These women, who lived upstairs over the Breedlove's storefront were aggressive, especially when they were annoyed. They were not forced by fate to be whores; they were not sloppy but adequate. Prostitution was the lifestyle they chose for themselves, so it was not a self-destructive way of living. They could make a living from it alone.

They were shunned by all people of both sexes in the community and, so in turn, they shunned all human beings in the world. The only group of women they did not despise were those who were entitled as "good Christian colored women." The money from the husbands of these women was taken with a vengeance by the three whores because they were dishonest to their wives (48). The way they revealed their hatred to men was aggressively dangerous:

Except for Marie's fabled love for

Dewey Prince, these women hated men, all men, without shame, apology, or discrimination. They abused their visitors with a scorn grown mechanical from use. Black men, white men, Puerto Ricans, Mexicans, Jews, Poles, whatever--all were inadequate and weak, all came under their jaundiced eyes and were the recipients of their disinterested wrath. They took delight in cheating them. On one occasion the town well knew, they lured a Jew up the stairs, pounced on him, all three, held him up by the heels, shook everything out of his pants pockets, and threw him out of the window (47-8).

#### Miss Marie--The Maginot Line

Of these three whores, Marie was the most aggressive woman of her gang and she was both assertive and aggressive. Though she was rejected by the community, and especially its women, she learned how to live her own life and did not care much about other people's opinions. She did what she wanted to do, and it frightened people of the community. Further, she said what she was thinking and most of the things she usually had in mind were about food and numbers (46). Because of this, she was called "The Maginot Line." People in the community mutually judged her as a dangerous and ruined woman; Mrs. MacTeer, for example, told her daughters that she would never let her eat from her plates:

China was not too terrible, at least not in our imaginations. She was thin, aging, absentminded, and unaggressive.

But the Maginot Line. That was the one my mother said she "wouldn't let eat out of one of her plates." That was the one church women never allowed their eyes to rest on. That was the one who killed people, set them on fire, poisoned them, cooked them in lye. Although I thought the Maginot Line's face, hidden under all that fat, was really sweet, I had heard too many mouths go triangle at the mention of her name, to dwell on any redeeming features she might have (64).

Like her friends, she hated men of every kind. The only man she loved was Dewey Prince. She met him when she was fourteen and was very happy with him, like a married couple, for three years. However, it was just a sweet memory she could keep and talk about. Marie seemed dangerous to everyone except Pecola was very friendly to her. And since Marie did not expect this kind of good feeling from any woman, Pecola gave her the feeling of worthiness: the girl asked her about her lover named Dewey Prince, and showed a curiosity about the money she spent (45-8). She did not hate Pecola and so never abused the girl.

However, Marie's kindness to Pecola could not protect the girl from the unyielding world because she did not guide the girl to find a suitable way of living, because Marie and her friends did not live their lives morally as other women did. Marie loved herself and she did not care for anything in the world but food. Everything that

impressed her was usually related to food. Though she was rejected by the community, she did not regret it. Marie became dangerous when she felt she was degraded and rejected. When the MacTeer sisters were in search of Pecola, she seemed to be friendly but when the girls were shown some signs of rejection and degradation, she became dangerously violent and furious. She threw the bottle of rootbeer at the girls:

"Why don't you wait for her? You can come up here. Want some pop?" Those rain-soaked eyes lit up, and her smile was full, not like the pinched and holding-back smile of other grown-ups.

I moved to go up the stairs, but Frieda said, "No, ma'am, we ain't allowed."

I was amazed at her courage, and frightened of her sassiness. The smile of the Maginot Line slipped. "Ain't allowed?"

"No'm."

"Ain't allowed to what?"

"Go in your house."

"Is that right?" The waterfalls were still. "How come?"

"My mama said so. My mama said you ruined."

The waterfalls began to run again. She put the root-beer bottle to her lips and drank it empty. With a graceful movement of the wrist, a gesture so quick an small we were never really saw it, only remembered it afterwards, she tossed the bottle over the rail at us. It split at our feet, and shards of brown glass dappled our legs before we could jump back. The Maginot Line put a fat hand on one of the folds of her stomach and laughed. At first just a deep humming with her mouth closed, then a larger, warmer

sound. Laughter at once beautiful and frightening, She let her head tilt sideways, closed her eyes, and shook her massive trunk, letting the laughter fall like a wash of red leaves all around us (82-3).

Marie and her friends might live their lives outside social norms and were rejected by members of the society; but they could both survive those rejection and hatred because they were strong enough to live such a life. If Pecola had learned what these women learnt about life, she would never had gone mad. And this shows that only the strongest could successfully survive.

Eva Peace

This woman in Sul is very notably in her aggressiveness. Eva had her own style of showing passion: love and hatred. She had a strong and tough love that feeble persons whom she loved could suffer and die from. And when Eva's love turned into hatred, it became very dangerous. However, Eva failed in every case to nurture her loved ones.

Eva's love was thick and tense so it was dangerous and devastating. And this weird love could destroy both herself and the people she loved. So her life was directed by two forms of passion: love and hatred. The love she felt for her own children was balanced with her hatred for their father, BoyBoy. However, her love for both her husband and children did not make these people safe and



happy with her. Further, it drove them away forever: some died and some went away.

After the collapse of her married life, BoyBoy--the father of Eva's three children walked out. Eva had nothing to think about but how to survive this physical need of her children and her own. She did not know how and what to feel about this crisis caused by BoyBoy. A few days later she went away leaving her children with a neighbour. Eighteen months later, she came back with one leg and lots of money. No one knew exactly what she had done to her leg. However, it was cut for a certain purpose--money. She did not know that she should hate BoyBoy until he came back for a visit with a new woman:

Knowing that she would hate him long and well filled her with pleasant anticipation, like when you know you are going to fall in love with someone and you wait for the happy signs. Hating BoyBoy, she could get on with it, and have the safety, the thrill, the consistency of that hatred as long as she wanted or needed it to define and strengthen her or protect her from routine vulnerabilities (Once when Hannah accused her of hating colored people, Eva said she only hated one, Hannah's father BoyBoy, and it was hating him that kept her alive and happy) (36-7).

And her love for her children was more notable because it was frightening and really dangerous. When Plum, her youngest child, was very young, he suffered the great pain

at his bowel. Eva tried many possible ways to help him (33). But when he grew up, she killed him for his wayward behaviors. To rescue Hannah, she threw herself from the windowpane. She could have died if no one saw the event and helped her. However, it was the way she loved her children.

It was love that drove her to burn Plum to death when she found out that he was an wayward son. After a long absence for military service, he came home late, a year after the war, in a shabby appearance. He had become addicted to a kind of drug. Plum's life was not what Eva hoped to see and it was unbearable to see him alive in such way. With her love for the boy, she burnt him to death but not before holding him close:

Eva swung over to the bed and propped her crutches at its foot. She sat down and gather Plum into her arms. He woke, but only slightly.

"Hey, man. Hey. You holdin' me, Mamma?" His voice was drowsy and amused. He chuckled as though he had heard some private joke. Eva held him closer and began to rock. Back and forth she rocked him, ... Rocking, rocking, listening to Plum's occasional chuckles, Eva let her memory spin, loop and fall ...

Eva lifted her tongue to the edge of her lip to stop the tears from running into her mouth. Rocking, rocking. Later she laid him down and looked at him a long time ...

Eva stepped back from the bed and let the crutches rest under her arms. She rolled a bit of newspaper into a

tight stick about six inches long, lit it and threw it onto the bed where the kerosene-soaked Plum lay in snug delight. Quickly, as the whoosh of flames engulfed him, she shut the door and made her slow and painful journey back to the top of the house (46-8).

Eva's murder of Plum was not witnessed by anybody, but Hannah knew this the moment she told her mother about it. However, Eva felt she received the wrath of god by having Hannah burnt to death. When Hannah was burnt in the back yard where Eva could see her from upstairs. In her attempt to save Hannah, whom she never had any idea to kill, she threw herself from the windowpane. Eva's attempt failed to save Hannah from burning. Her one-legged condition limited and obstructed her movement. Hannah died on the way to hospital and Eva herself was badly injured. In her sorrow, she cursed the man who saved her (75-7).

Long before Plum's and Hannah's death, Eva sacrificed her body to buy a better life for her children by having the train sere her leg. It took her eighteen months to regain her health and then back to the Bottom. However, her beloved children died before her very eyes in torturous situations. It was a punishment from God. Furthermore, Sula--her granddaughter was another hand of god that shook Eva. People who talked to her felt they "were looking up at her" (31). Living upstairs and directing things from above, it was overlapping with God's kingdom. Unlike God,

people under her had abnormal personalities: Hannah loved a daily touch, Sula was reckless for life. And when she adopted three boys from their needy circumstances, she called them all "Dewey." The Deweys lived their lives with one soul, as Eva's one name for them. They three had the same mixed personality:

Slowly each boy mixed came out of whatever cocoon he was in at the time his mother or somebody gave him away, and accepted Eva's view, becoming in fact as well as in name a dewey-- joining with the other two to become a trinity with a plural name ... inseparable, loving nothing and no one but themselves. ... they spoke with one voice, thought with one mind, and maintained an annoying privacy (38-9).

The adoption of the Deweys might have been inspired by Eva's sense of either sympathy or divinity or even love of maleness. It was well known that Eva loved men. The only person she had cultivated a never-ended hatred in mind for was BoyBoy--her long gone husband. Every woman who had inherited Eva's blood was also bequeathed this nature. Since Eva herself was pleased to be surrounded by men, her daily life consisted of the presence of men: talking, teasing, discussing about news they read for her, and playing checkers and seeing her well-dressed and only calf. Even men in other women's affairs were positively prejudiced (41-2). The inheritors of this nature were both

Hannah--her daughter and Sula--her granddaughter. Hannah's easy way became the topic of people's gossip (42-4). And after Hannah, it was Sula who revealed the mixture of Hannah's sexual generosity and Eva's weird arrogance. And it was Sula whose arrogance interfered and defeated Eva's state of divinity in the big house. She put Eva out to the Sunnydale's homecare. And furthermore, Sula's presence was more influential than any women in Eva's big house and even in the Bottom. Though Eva's aggressive nature was harmful for people in her own family, it was caused by her unlimited love. Eva, too, herself suffered the results of her dangerous love. Her suffering lasted longer than anyone else's because she lived longer.

#### Sula

Sula, the title character, was not a woman for the nineteen twenties. She was not a typical black woman. Further, Sula was a notably creative but aggressive woman who was free from every limitation of living. The way she lived her life was thrilling. Hannah's sexual generosity and Eva's self-affirmity were mixed in Sula's reckless self-indulgence. Sula's life started in a big and crowded house where people were not individually close to each other. It was a rooming house where her mother had two things to do daily: housework and lovemaking. Similarly, her grandmother, Eva enjoying the male company, spent her time with her male callers. It was Sula's lonely

but safe time: from hurting somebody and being hurt by somebody. Ignored and abandoned by a one-legged grandmother and an un-nourishing mother, Sula learned to be alone and to love nobody in the world but herself. Loneliness was what Sula had been living with without knowing of its existence.

Born of a mother who rejected moral standards--Hannah, Sula's immorally sexual behaviors harmed her relationship to the community. This was a woman who possessed a wildly devastating nature that nothing could change or even relieve: her free soul was bound with nothing in the world. However, this nature was constructed in loneliness and solitude. There was no one for Sula to count on and, in turn, nobody could count on her. So Sula was another self-affirmative and self-indulgent woman whose behaviors were more harmful and disastrous than any other female character in this study. Notably, most of the damages she caused did not happen by intention. However, Sula participated in and caused many frightening events.

When her close friend Nel was harassed by four Irish immigrant boys, Sula and Nel were twelve then, to protect herself and Nel, Sula cut her finger to frighten away the Irish boys:

Sula squatted down in the dirt road  
and put everything down on the ground:  
her lunch pail, her reader, her

mittens, her slate. Holding the knife in her right hand, she pulled the slate toward her and pressed her left finger down hard on its edge. Her aim was determined but in accurate. She slashed off only the tip of her finger. The four boys stared opened-mouthed at the wound and the scrap of flesh, like a button mushroom, curling in the cherry blood that ran into the corners of the slate.

Sula raised her eyes to them. Her voice was quiet. "If I can do that to myself, what you suppose I'll do to you?" (54-5).

This bloody sacrifice drove away those boys. Later, overhearing of Hannah's words that she did not like Sula (57) might have inspired or somehow motivated her to take part in two sorrowful events: Hannah's burning and Chicken Little's drowning.

On a sunny day, Sula accidentally threw Chicken Little into the river. In a panic, Sula ran to Shadrack's shack, to ask him if he saw the murder of Chicken Little, but she did not utter any sound but questioning eyes. Shadrack was very pleased to have somebody visit him and Sula became his first and only guest. So he decided to protect her from legal actions. He said nothing and promised to keep the secret except the word "always":

At the edge of the porch, gathering the wisps of courage that were fast leaving her, she turned once more to look at him, to ask him ... had he ...?

He was smiling, a great smile, heavy with lust and time to come. He nodded

his head as though answering a question, and said, in a pleasant conversational tone, a tone of cooled butter, "Always" (62).

At Chicken Little's funeral, Sula cried, soundlessly (66). It was the first and the only time that she felt sorry for hurting someone perhaps, because she did not intend to kill the boy who never hurt her. But Hannah hurt her, without knowing that she did. And so her death was partly caused by Sula whose interests was in looking at people's passion on their faces (119).

Hannah's death was more frightening and torturous than Chicken Little. Sula was thirteen then and her birthmark over her eyes "was getting darker and looked more and more like stem and rose" (74). The day Hannah died was the day Sula became troublesome. She messed the house and bothered the roomers. Even Eva who could read dreams for people, did not understand the meaning of Hannah's dream about a red wedding gown (74). Though Sula did not cause the fire but she saw the event. The girl did not try to do anything to rescue her mother.

Nel's marriage was first time Sula and Nel were were physically and socially separated, and Nel's marriage meant more than a physical separateness for Sula, it was Nel who shared and filled Sula's hollow center along the lonely years in Medallion. Without "Nel", Sula suffered both the loss of self and the only other person she had. She went



away from Medallion travelling around the country, and tried to find another friend like "Nel."

However, when she returned to Medallion, Nel was no longer her "Nel" since Nel belonged to others--the society she lived in, her husband and children. And Nel was actually not the self and other she had been in search of for years. So Sula could never share everything with Nel. There were many events that happened and shook and then changed the community. On the day Sula returned, there was a portent of Sula's dangerous nature. Many robins crowded the sky and fell down dead messing up the Bottom. Sula's return called more attention to the community. But, she received an unimpressive welcome from her grandmother Eva. They had a spiteful quarrel about Sula's way of life. The matter of this quarrel frightened Eva who, after that, locked her door for fear that Sula would burn her:

"Hellfire don't need lighting and it's already burning in you...?"

"Whatever's burning in me is mine!"

"Amen!"

"And I'll split this town in two and everything in it before I'll let you put it out!"

"Pride goeth before a fall."

"What the hell do I care about falling?"

"Amazing Grace."

"You sold your life for twenty-three dollars a month."

"You throw yours away."

"It's mine to throw."

"One day you gone need it."

"But not you. I ain't never going to need you. And know what?" Maybe one night when you dozing in that wagon flicking flies and swallowing spit, maybe I'll just tip on up here with some kerosene and--who knows--you may make the brightest flame of them all."

So Eva locked her door from then on (93-4).

After that, she deprived Eva of the roomy house and sent her to a home for the aged (94), and fired the woman who cooked for her house (99). This decision formed negative images of Sula, and deviant behaviors affected not only her relationship to the whole community of the Bottom but also her good and long friendship with her close friend--Nel.

First, her magic return moved Nel's love for Jude to become "a bright and easy affection, a playfulness that reflected in their lovemaking" (95). But Sula's magic of stirring men's mind provoked Jude's. Since married life was what all the women in her house had missed, Sula did not take it seriously. And in her belief of sharing everything with Nel, she bedded down with Jude. Then Jude left his wife and children and never news to them. This caused a real separation between Sula and Nel (104-13):

As a result, the event caused two serious breakups: Nel and her husband and Nel and Sula. And these breakups shook Nel's calmness (108-9). To Sula, friendship and sensual affairs were not related to each other. Sharing

everything with Nel was what she had done for a long time. In bedding down with Jude, Sula did not mean to hurt Nel. The relationship between men and women in her did not guide her about possession. She did not know that she became "an other" or even "an invader" in Nel and Jude's relationship. She had never learned about the holy condition of marriage. To Sula, men were all available (119).

The affair with Jude was not Sula's only case. She slept with any men she wanted to either single or married, black or white. Sensual love helped her to get through her loneliness. To fill "the space" in herself, she could find and feel the loneliness and the state of being alone after intercourse (123).

When she wanted Jude to fill her "space," he was anything but a worth loving man. Like other men in the Bottom, Jude was just one of those men who came to Sula's loneliness and helped her, without knowing that he did, touch her own hollow world of sorrowful solitaire:

... And there was utmost irony and outrage in lying under someone, in a position of surrender, feeling her own abiding strength and limitless power. But the cluster did break, fall apart, and in her panic to hold it together she leaped from the edge into soundlessness and went down howling in a stinging awareness of the endings of things: an eye of sorrow in the midst of all that hurricane rage of joy. There, in the center of that silence was not eternity but the death of time

and a loneliness so profound the word itself had no meaning. For loneliness assumed the absence of other people, and the solitude she found in that desperate terrain had never admitted the possibility of other people (123).

Hannah's easy way was uplaced by her daughter's ways, and both frightened the whole community. Sula disparaged masculinity: once she took a man to her bed, she would never turn back to him again. To Bottom people, she was a bitch who did not believe in the same God as they did:

She came to their church suppers without underwear, bought their steaming platters of food and merely picked at it--relishing nothing, exclaiming over no one's rib or cobbler. They believed she was laughing at their God (115).

Sula's evil harmed and moved the Bottom, and the people there believed one could be in danger by any contact with Sula. For example, Young Teapot fell down in front of her house because he talked to her, or old Finley who loved sucking chicken bones all his life accidentally killed himself by looking at Sula (114).

Bottom people began to observe Sula's unusual nature. They believed she slept with white men. They remembered a plague of robins the day she came back and thought back to "the tale about her watching Hannah burn" (112-3). They also drew a flashback to the time when Sula was young: gnats and mosquitoes never bothered her. She did not look

old like other women of her age. She had lost no teeth and was still in good shape. There were no signs of childhood diseases on her skin. She did not belch when drinking beer. Further, insane Shadrack, who was never civil to anybody, tipped a (supposed) hat to her (115-7). So the frightened people of the Bottom tried to protect themselves from Sula's evil:

... they laid broomsticks across their doors at night and sprinkled salt on porch steps. But aside from one or two successful efforts to collect the dust from her footsteps, they did nothing to harm her. As always the black people looked at evil stoney-eyed and let it run.

Sula acknowledge none of their attempts at counter-conjure or their gossip and seemed to need the services of nobody. So they watched her far more closely than any other roach or bitch in the town, and their alertness was gratified (113).

However, people of the Bottom could survive Sula's dangerous nature (118). And it also re-constructed and strengthened the community. She inspired and sparked the loving and caring relationship of the people of the Bottom. Teapot's mother who accused Sula of pushing her child, turned to be a most devoted mother. Women who used to pay less attention to their family turned to be caring housewives. Ignoring mothers spent much more attention and took care of their own children better than they used to do. Wives nurtured and cared for their husbands (114-5).

Sula's loneliness was too deep and chronic to be recovered. It seemed Sula could not get real love from anyone in the world: Eva hated her freedom, Hannah did not "like" her and the Bottom people despised her evil presence. In turn, Sula loved no one and counted on no one. The only love and intimacy she could find in her relationship to Nel was veiled by her affair with Jude.

The breaking up with Nel somehow clinched Sula's loneliness. She might not realize that it was loneliness that she had suffered because she lived with it all her life. So what she had missed, without knowing that she did, was the feeling of possession: both being possessed and possessing something. Jude and those men whom she used to pick did not mean anything to her, and her self-indulgence was destructive to men and their masculinity:

... But my lonely is mine. Now your lonely is somebody's else's. Made by somebody else and handed to you. Ain't that something? A secondhand lonely."

Nel sat back on the little wooden chair. Anger skipped but she realized that Sula was probably just showing off. No telling what shape she was really in, but there was no point in saying anything other than what was the truth. "I always understood how you could take a man. Now I understand why you can't keep none."

"Is that what I'm supposed to do? Spend my life keeping a man?"

"They worth keeping, Sula."

"they ain't worth more than me. And besides, I never loved no man because he was worth it. Worth didn't have

nothing to do with it" (144-5).

Since Sula confirmed that no man was worth loving and keeping, Jude was no exception. Everything she did was to please herself. The only man who could shake Sula from first till last meeting was Ajax. He was the only man who truly pleased Sula.

Since he threw a word "pig meat" to her, he had haunted Sula's mind and every lovemaking was Ajax to her (136). When the rumour about Sula aroused his curiosity he came to her big lonely house. With pretty presents, Jude incited Sula's interests. Sula began to feel a strange feeling she had never felt before--the feeling of possessiveness. It motivated her to pay more attention to her own appearance, the next visit of Jude, and housework (131-2). Ajax soon learned of this change and he knew its meaning. After a farewell lovemaking, he left her without any signs of his presence except his driving license. Sula for the first time had the feeling of loss of something she wanted to possess. After this disappointment Sula fell sick. Nel decided to pay her a visit out of social obligation. It was the last meeting of these two women. In her serious illness, Sula was still arrogant wanting no one's help (141-5).

Sula died that day in the manner of forever yawning. People were pleased to hear about Sula's death. No blacks

came to see and manage her dead body. Only Nel and some who came to make sure that it was a real death. So most of the attendants at Sula's funeral were whites. Even Eva-- her own grandmother refused to come (171-3).

Sula's death called back people's old luck and nature. It was announced by the dawning of a brighter day. The Bottom was disturbed by iced-cold. People suffered many troubles by this phenomenon. Besides the difficulties of living, their love and care for one another turned sour: mother paid less care to their children, daughters complained about their responsibility for old people. Wives gave up coddling their husbands. Immigrant Negroes reclaimed their superiority. The Bottom was going on its path to collapse.

There was a big downward migration of young people. Shadrack decided to celebrate his suicide day for the last time, because Sula, his visitor, was dead. It was because of Sula's death that Shadrack's Suicide Day had completed its name and purpose. Many people in the parade were killed by the collapse of the tunnel excavation (151-62).

Sula's aggressive presence could be weird and destructive in the surface but inspiring, creative and magnificent in the sequences. In spite of many disastrous events, Sula did not directly and physically intend to cause them. However, they were related to Sula's presence. So she was not a physically aggressive character but her



self-indulgence was aggressively influential.

### Sethe Suggs

Sethe Suggs was physically harmful and extremely aggressive. Like Eva, her aggressiveness was motivated and initiated by love--a tough love: she wanted to put her loved ones in a safe place. But Sethe's safe place from death was in the hand of death itself. So Sethe was a notable living character in Beloved who was outstanding for her ventures and her world view. However, her aggressiveness was protective. Sethe was frightening for her motivation of making the most dreadful decisions. It was not a common case for a mother to commit infanticide. But this ex-slave woman accepted it and chose it. And it was not generally common for a slave woman to succeed in running away without a man's helping hand. Sethe was a self-reliant person who learned to live by herself suffering the loneliness and the memory of love and care from absent persons: both those who had long gone and those who were dead by the consequences of her infanticide.

Sethe's aggressiveness was inherited from her mother who threw away all her children that were born of the white crew who raped her. This aggressive personality was gradually developed from her assertiveness. In her early years, Sethe was nursed in a big house where her mother worked in the field and was too tired to sleep with her baby girl. Once she told Sethe the way to recognize her by

the stamp on her skin. In her wish to be recognized by her own mother, Sethe asked her for that kind of stamp:

... she opened up her dress front and lifted her breast and pointed under it. Right on her rib was a circle and a cross burnt right in the skin. She said, 'This is your ma'am. This,' and she pointed. 'I am the only one got this mark now. The rest dead. If something happens to me and you can't tell me by my face, you can know me by this mark.' Scared me so. All I could think of was how important this was and how I needed to have something important to say back, but I couldn't think of anything so I just said what I thought. 'Yes, Ma'am,' I said. 'But how will you know me? How will you know me? Mark me, too,' I said. Mark the mark on me too,' Sethe chuckles (76).

However, her assertive request was refused. When she grew up and was sold to Mr. and Mrs. Garner's Sweet Home, since the Garner did not mate their slaves, Sethe could choose her own husband. Of the five slavemen, she chose Halle. She told her decision to Mrs. Garner thinking of and hoping for a joyful wedding party. But there was no such thing for a slave's mating. Despite her disappointment, she secretly made her own wedding dress (12-3, 32-3).

Since Sethe married a man who sold himself out to buy his invalid mother's freedom, she shared a dream of freedom with him. But Mr. Garner's death shook everyone in his house. The schoolteacher who came to Sweet Home changed

things in Sweet Home including the near freedom of Sethe's family. All the slaves shared a plan to escape. However, the plan failed. Slavemen scattered and Halle disappeared. Sethe sent away her three children: two boys and a baby girl, with a wagon and she herself turned back to wait for Halle. She was beaten though pregnant. A few months later, she could run away alone. This successful one-woman escape annoyed Paul D (10). Further, with the help of a white woman, she bore her youngest child at the riverbank. She named her daughter after that white woman--Denver (43, 96-104).

With more experience and stronger motives she became more and more aggressive, and this aggressiveness was deadly severe and so it drove the persons she loved away from her: both living and dead. After she had arrived at 124 on Bluestone for twenty eight days, the schoolteacher and some men came to 124 to catch Sethe. With her love for her children and the extreme panic, she tried to kill all her children. She succeeded to slit her baby girl's throat with a handsaw:

I didn't have time to explain before because it had to be done quick. Quick. She had to be safe and I put her where she would be. But my love was tough ... How if I hadn't killed her she would have died and that is something I could not bear to happen to her (246).

Holding her dead daughter, she refused Baby Suggs' request to clean herself and fought her mother-in-law before nursing Denver (187). People gathered round to see Sethe go to jail. Her profile was shocking with her "too high head" and "too straight back" (187-8).

After Sethe's discharge people was scared to visit 124. Sethe's two sons were scared of their mother (225) and finally ran away from home (3). Baby Suggs's big heart collapsed and she died soon after the two boys' departure. Her funeral clarified Sethe's rejection in the community:

The setting-up was held in the yard because nobody besides himself would enter 124--and injury Sethe answered with another by refusing to attend the service Reverend Pike presided over. She went instead to the gravesite, whose silence she competed with as she stood there not joining in the hymns the others sang with all their hearts. That insult spawned another by the mourners: back in the yard of 124, they ate food they brought and did not touch Sethe's, who did not touch theirs and forbade Denver to. So Baby Suggs, holy, having devoted her freed life to harmony, was buried amid a regular dance of pride, fear, condemnation and spite. Just about everybody in town was longing for Sethe to come on difficult times. Her outrageous claims, her self-sufficiency seemed to demand it (210).

Then Sethe began her anti-social living with her youngest child, and ever since had long lived in solitude. On her first social outing, she was "badly dressed for the

heat" (58). Her routine work at a restaurant could provide her a good life with Denver. She avoided having any contact with other blacks and so she pilfered things she could well afford to buy from her work place instead of standing in a row with other people (234).

When Beloved--her true-to-life daughter came into 124, in her ecstasy of regaining her daughter from the timeless place, Sethe deserted everything including a promising life with Paul D--the Sweet Home man who had travelled for years to find her. She talked back to her boss (232) and then gradually went to work later and later so she was fired (294). Further, she ran to kill Mr. Bodwin who came to pick up Denver for work thinking he had come to take her child away. It was Sethe's last harmful aggressiveness (322). However, all Sethe's aggressive behaviors were motivated by the same basic drives; that is protective love.

Beloved

This title character in Beloved was very special for many reasons. She had no past and no future. And her contemporary presence was intentional: love was all she wanted. Beloved's resurrection was to regain the love of her mother she had missed for eighteen years. Further, the claim for love was followed by spiteful vengeance. And she was aggressive by her unnatural existence. Beloved's aggressiveness could be observed both during its existence

with and without flesh.

With a vague memory about her own babyhood, she could remember only Sethe's: face, earrings, and self-made songs (92-3).

After the murder, the spirit haunted 124 and obstructed people in the house from social contacts. It scared the people who came to the house. It injured a dog named Here Boy severely and so the dog never came into the house despite the bad weather (14-5).

Added by Sethe's dangerous love, the spirit also frightened the two boys from the house (3). So it became a part of the house until Paul D's arrived. The man from Sethe's past exorcised the spirit and took its place (22, 127). However, Paul D's exorcism came undone because it returned with blood and flesh in the disguise of a beautiful nineteen-year-old woman. Then began the claim for love and vengeance of the spirit that called itself "Beloved."

Beloved hated Paul D and did not fail to make it known to him. The two tried many ways to drive each other out of the house. Paul D was annoyed by her overstay at 124. And Beloved herself was irritated by Paul D's consuming Sethe's day time because he could have her time all night. She gradually moved him from Sethe's bedroom down to the rocker and downstairs. Finally, he went out to the cold house (140-4). She went to him at the cold house and told him

that she wanted him to touch her "on the inside part" and Paul D could not refuse it (143-4). With his guilty heart, Paul D decided to go away.

Aside from the cold house affair, Beloved got more and more fond of Sethe. Sethe was Beloved's attention. She went outside farther each day waiting for Sethe. She woke up early to watch Sethe prepare breakfast before she went to work in town (71). She loved to look at Sethe's face and liked to listen to what Sethe said.

And it was Denver who loved and paid much attention to Beloved both before and after the resurrection. But Beloved had come for Sethe only. When Denver asked her not to go away, Beloved became rude to her:

Denver swallowed. "Don't," she said.  
"Don't. You won't leave us, will you?"

"No. Never. This is the place  
where I am."

Suddenly Denver, who was sitting  
cross-legged, lurched forward and  
grabbed Beloved's wrist. "Don't tell  
her. Don't let Ma'am know who you are.  
Please, you hear?"

"Don't tell me what to do. Don't  
you never never tell me what to do."

"But I am on your side, Beloved."

"She is the one. She is the one I  
need. You can go but she is the one I  
have to have." Her eyes stretched to  
the limit, black as the all-night sky  
(93).

No matter how much she loved Sethe, Beloved's spite for Sethe still remained. It choked Sethe's neck in the Clearing, the place where Baby Suggs used to be among her

people but Denver timely rushed to save her:

The fingers touching the back of her neck were stronger now--the strokes bolder as though Baby Suggs were gathering strength. Putting the thumbs at the nape, while the fingers pressed the sides. Harder, harder, the fingers moved slowly around toward her windpipe, making little circles on the way. Sethe was more surprised than frightened to find that she was being strangled (117).

When Sethe found out that Beloved was her long dead daughter, Beloved changed her role from the pleasing to being pleased. Under Denver's observation, the source of danger shifted from Sethe to Beloved. Beloved played games with Sethe and consumed her work time. Sethe gradually lost her mind. She was fired by Mr. Sawyer for getting to work later and later. And when Sethe found the scar at Beloved neck, she became Beloved's attendant. Sethe tried to please and Beloved wanted much more and more (294-6). Beloved became bigger and bigger while Sethe was thinner and thinner. Beloved's game was wild and harmful for Sethe. What could harm Sethe she demanded her to do:

A complaint from Beloved, and apology from Sethe. A reduction to pleasure at some special effort the woman made. Wasn't it too cold to stay outside? Beloved gave a look that said, So what? Was it past bedtime, the light no good for sewing? Beloved didn't move; said, "Do it," and Sethe complied. She took the best of everything--first. The



best chair, the biggest piece, the prettiest plate, the brightest ribbon for her hair, and the moreshe took, the more Sethe began to talk, explain, describe how much she had suffered, been through, for her children, waving away flies in grape arbors, crawling on her knees to a lean-to. None of which made the impression it was supposed to (296).

Beloved's plan for the maternal love she had missed in the dark place of death was fulfilled but another failed. Sethe still survived her vengeance, by the help of thirty black women who did not approve of the resurrection of dead things. Beloved's presence with flesh and figure to the world was what those women called the invasion (315). Beloved had gone and left behind the defeated mother who cried for her forever lost daughter. Though her in-flesh presence was short and limited in a certain area, she could influentially dominate and change them both negatively and positively: Denver came out of her solitude and emerald closet in the woods and turned to be a strong and reliant daughter to her mother instead of a shy and secretive girl. Seth became a crying woman instead of a quiet and queenly woman who rejected society. However, Beloved's aggressiveness eventually did not destroy anything at 124. It broke down an antisocial wall invisibly but sensibly constructed between 124 and the outside world. Beloved's aggressiveness was born of a greedy hunger of love. It seemed spiteful and forceful but its consequences were

creatively and positively effective.

The images of these female characters were different from one another because they lived under many different limitations. They were women who had their own way of living; they lived differently in accord with their different background, destination, inspiration and perspectives of the world. The society in which they lived affected their lives and inspired their thoughts, framed their world view and then affected their behaviors. Their images were shaped and developed from their lifestyles which resulted from their motivations and limitations.

