

## CHAPTER FIVE

## CONCLUSION

The conclusion of the images of women in Toni Morrison's  
novels

In Toni Morrison's three novels: The Bluest Eye, Sula, and Beloved, her female characters's images were found to be submissive, assertive, and aggressive.

The Bluest Eye

In the The Bluest Eye, nine female characters were discussed. Pecola Breedlove was extremely submissive while Mrs. MacTeer, Geraldine and Helene Wright were assertive. And the aggressive women were Pauline Breedlove, Frieda and Claudia MacTeer, and the three whores.

Since Morrison focused on the portrayal of black female characters with a variety of limitations and backgrounds, the black women in The Bluest Eye had different personalities and lifestyles as follows:

Pecola Breedlove was an extremely submissive girl. The main factors that forced and limited her competence to handle problems were social standards of human appearance and poverty. These two things negatively affected her failure to live in the world of reality.

Social standards of beauty and poverty caused many harassments in her life. Most people around her, both men and women repeatedly mistreated and drove her to find a safe place she could live in. Pecola's troubles

were never complained about, her feelings were never shared. In her submissiveness, mental isolation helped her escape from frustrating conditions. Pecola's submissiveness was harmful to her own life.

Mrs. MacTeer was one of two assertive female characters in the story. Her assertive image was typically depicted. Her assertiveness was shaped by love and protection. She devoted her love, attention and herself to her family. She felt good when her family was happy and nervous and annoyed when somebody in her family was in trouble. All about her nature could be observed in her daily activities. She sang when she was happy and she complained when things went wrong. She also made her pleasure and worry known. And so her assertiveness was positively portrayed: it was not harmful for anyone in her life, not even for herself.

Geraldine was another assertive woman. She had a good life and did not suffer from a lack of basic needs. Her assertiveness was not harmful to men's world. But it was found to protect her own private sphere. She made her wishes known so nobody would not invade her world.

Frieda and Claudia MacTeer were aggressive. They had strong and secure minds. The love and care they got from their parents could protect them from a tragic fate which befell Pecola. Their aggressiveness could become harmful when it was self-defending and sometimes protective

for helpless persons. They helped protect Pecola from some maltreatment. They despised privileges and refused to live under them. Further, their inexperienced youth drove their aggressiveness to recklessness.

Pauline Breedlove was an aggressive woman. Her aggressiveness was driven from frustration and disappointment in life. But it was limited in a certain sphere--her own family and those who were inferior to her. However, it weakened her husband's image in her own family. Despite its limited sphere, Pauline's aggressiveness was harmful and frightening to men's world. So she was the most irritated woman in the story.

#### Sula

There are five female characters being discussed in Sula. Nel Wright was the only submissive woman in the story. Hannah Peace and Helene Wright were assertive. And Sula Peace the title character and her grandmother Eva Peace were aggressive female protagonists.

Nel Wright's submissiveness was not defined by nature because it was gradually shaped by the long living under other's protection. She let other people rule her life and did not learn to live by herself. She did not observe her own feeling and ignored the way how she meant to the people. In her hard time, she avoided facing the trouble. She yearned for men's company and their protection.

Helene Wright was assertive, and her assertiveness was

positively told though it was self-affirmative and protective. In her attempt to leave her disgusting past, she protected her daughter from every sign of it. Because of her husband's absence added by her attempt to frame her own daughter's life, she became notably assertive.

Further, her assertiveness came out of her house to her community: it was known and shown in the community she lived in. However, it did not impinge on men's traditional sphere.

Hannah Peace was negatively portrayed as a self-indulgent woman. Her negative image can be neither submissive nor aggressive. Because she did not harm anybody. What she had done did not irritate men but rather their wives. However, she did not break down their marriage. She can be considered sexually self-indulgent. So Hannah's assertiveness was irritating in a limited sphere.

Eva Peace was drastically aggressive. But her aggressiveness was only for a certain kind of people. She was notably harmful to the persons she loved because her aggressiveness was shaped by the excessive love. So it was both protective and destructive love. Eva's image was clarified by her reckless love for her children. Her assertiveness was frightening and dangerous for both other people and herself.

Sula was another aggressive character. Though she was

not aggressive by nature, her self-indulgence was physically devastating and morally dangerous. It harmed the whole community. Loneliness and parental ignorance let loose her uncontrolled behavior. Sula depreciated men by rejecting their masculinity. Her reckless aggressiveness irritated not only men, but all women.

### Beloved

In Beloved, four women were discussed and all were Suggs. Baby Suggs was the only submissive protagonist in the story while Denver was assertive. Two, mother and daughter, were found to be aggressive: Sethe and Beloved.

Baby Suggs' submissiveness was the result of her living too long under men's rule and protection. Both slave masters' rule and protection and her own son's devotion shaped her image as a submissive woman. Baby Suggs had devoted her own life to fulfilling other people's wishes and ignored her own. She did not complain about her pains and she neither fought nor claimed anything for herself. Her once-holy assertiveness was disheartened by other's bad fate, and her submissive image was positively portrayed.

The only assertive woman in Beloved was Denver. Her assertiveness was shaped and developed through loneliness and love. Her relationship to other people notably affected the development of her image. Her early submissiveness resulted from the living long under her

mother's protection in solitude. But when her loneliness was compensated by the company of her resurrected sister, her creativity and assertiveness were polished and clarified. The development of Denver's image was rapid; her exposure to the outside world was successful because it was contributed and encouraged by the people around her.

Sethe was a physically aggressive woman and outstanding for her threatening ventures. And those ventures were undertaken by herself, without any help of men. Her aggressiveness was driven from protective motivation and frustration. Love alone was enough to make Sethe aggressive because it was a maternal love that became a killer. Sethe's aggressive image interfered with any men in her life. Their maleness was disdained and disparaged by Sethe's self-affirmity.

Beloved was a special character for her contemporary presence in other people's lives. Her aggressiveness was motivated by love and vengeance. Beloved was another woman who both physically and mentally berated masculinity. Despite her short presence, it was effective: it polished her sister's assertiveness and clarified her mother's protective but destructive aggression.

Black women's failures and successes in life, have been observed through Toni Morrison's exacting vision of black women's travail. Some of their venturous performances may need wider and deeper studies since black

women's experience in the U. S. is notably special by its limited setting and its distant roots of culture. Racism and sexism cannot be taken for granted to be the sole reasons for black women's difficulties. Through careful studies, we may find some other sources of obstacles they have suffered and struggled against. In Morrison's presentation, it is interesting to find that social conventions and beliefs in their own black community could be harmful and destructive to its members especially to the female members.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

The study of images of black women in Toni Morrison's novels have been examined in this study in the framework of submissive, aggressive, and assertive nature. However, women in Toni Morrison's fictional world can be observed through some other frames of research.

Some areas of research study that can be extended from the present study are as follows:

1. Black women's images can be extended into a wider sphere covering Morrison's other novels or other black women writers.
2. A study of black women's images in black male writers's novels can be conducted through the same framework or another.
3. Women's images as portrayed in the works of either black or white writers should be observed in other racial

groups in the U. S.

4. Images of black men can also be examined in black women writers' works.

5. Comparative studies of black women's images can be observed in two different settings: inside and outside their families, or under slavery and freed condition.

6. Comparative studies of internal and external motivations can be studied to see how they influenced black women's images.

