CHAPTER II

“DOUBLE STITCH”: PORTRAITS OF MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS

Motherhood is a major theme in contemporary women’s literature. In all societies, whatever their differences, the role of the mother is given importance. The role of the mother is imposed on woman as her sole identity in almost all societies. The black women writers chosen for this study have much to say about this great institution of motherhood. They analyse this singular experience of women from different angles. They look carefully at those aspects of motherhood that had been ignored. The portraits of mothers in the works of African and African-American women writers, Buchi Emecheta, Paule Marshall, Toni Morrison and Alice Walker project no single view of motherhood. Their mother-portraits reveal what it is to be a mother in their respective societies. Various types of mothers are presented and the writers question through their portraits the entrenched notions of motherhood.

Mothers are featured prominently in complex and multiple ways in the writings of these black women writers taken up for study. We see a slave mother, a mother who becomes a slave to her children, a meek but loving mother, powerful and domineering mothers, killer mothers, indifferent mothers
and "other mothers". There is an astonishing variety as the portraits reveal. What Marianne Hirsch says of maternal narrative is true:

In as much as the mother is simultaneously a daughter and a mother, a woman and a mother, in the house and in the world, powerful and powerless, nurturing and nurtured, dependent and independent upon, maternal discourse is necessarily plural and divided. Maternal discourse is tied to and tied up in social and political reality as well as psychological structures. (270)

A study of the portraits of mothers involves a study of their influence on their daughters and their bonding with them. In the same way, a study of the portraits of daughters automatically brings in their mothers, but the mother portraits get predominance by their very nature of being mothers. Therefore, like the "double-stitch," a strengthening and decorative technique, this chapter stitches together the portraits of mothers and daughters.

An analysis of the portraits of mothers and their daughters must be preceded by an understanding of the ideology of motherhood in African and African-American societies.
In African societies, the mother figure is greatly respected. In many African societies motherhood defines womanhood. Motherhood is crucial to a woman's status in society. To marry and mother a child, preferably a male child, entitles a woman to more respect from her husband's kinsmen. John Mbiti, the African anthropologist stresses that "Without descendants, an African's spiritual existence is nullified, since, for him the dead of this earthly plane continue to exist in another dimension—as long as they are remembered and called upon" (qtd. in Christian, BFC 214). Thus women as mothers are greatly valued in traditional African societies. Filomena Chioma Steady says:

The importance of motherhood and the valuation of the child-bearing capacity by African women is probably the most fundamental difference between the African woman and her western counterpart in their common struggle to end discrimination against women. (BWCC 29)

As the role of the mother is often central and has intrinsic value, we find Buchi Emecheta, an established writer from Nigeria, analysing African motherhood in most of her novels. A woman's struggle to conceive, her fear of being replaced by another, the happiness at conception and delivery or agony at the denial of motherhood, various attempts to appease the Gods and hasten pregnancy, followed by the joys and pains of motherhood – all these are
graphically described in most of Emecheta’s novels. Her portraits of Nnu Ego in *The Joys of Motherhood* and Ma Blackie in *The Bride price* are good examples. Motherhood is often romanticized and there is often an idealization of motherhood and of suffering women who live solely for their children. It is further glorified by equating the mother with earth and Africa. Such a glorification masks the reality of motherhood and the practical reality of mothering in Africa is shown to us by Emecheta through her mother-portraits.

Motherhood is an important and a cherished function in African-American society too. But the African view of woman as mother was affected by the institution of slavery, as slave women did not have a right to their children. Therefore, women were not valued for themselves but for the capacity to breed, that is, to produce more and more slave workers. The mother who was denied access to her children and who had to mother white children was glorified as “mammy.” Though many were unhappy at the prospect of their children turning to slaves, they did not have effective or fool proof means to prevent conception. Sometimes slave mothers terminate the lives of their children in order to save them from the horrors of slavery. Toni Morrison, through the portrait of Sethe in *Beloved*, reveals the extremes to which slave mothers are driven in order to protect their children.
While the stay-at-home mother is held up to all women as the ideal by whites, black women can never subscribe to this standard ideal as they are compelled to work as plantation slaves or domestic servants. As a result, they can never aspire to the white ideal of motherhood and get labelled as "mammies" or "matriarchs" by the dominant White society. In spite of all the odds against them, black mothers played a vital role in ensuring the survival of their children through sacrifice, will and wisdom. The centrality of African-American motherhood is strengthened and complicated by the precarious position of African-Americans in the racist Anglo-American community.

In the writings of African and African-American women writers, different portraits of mothers are presented. The universally imposed role on women, motherhood, is explored in most of the novels taken up for study and the novels present finely drawn portraits of daughters too. Maternal and daughterly voices vie with each other to be heard. It is a new and exhilarating experience to hear them speak. As Barbara Christian rightly says, "Since a woman, never a man can be a mother, that experience should be hers to tell." [emphasis mine] (BFC 212)

"God, when will you create a woman who will be fulfilled in herself, a full human being, not anybody's appendage?" ... "After all, I was born alone, and I shall die alone. What have I gained from
all this? Yes, I have many children, but what do I have to feed them on? On my life, I have to work myself to the bone to look after them, I have to give them my all ... When will I be free?" (JM 186-187)

This is the desperate cry of Nnu Ego, the mother, in Emecheta's ironically entitled *The Joys of Motherhood*. An analysis of the portrait of Nnu Ego reveals the reason for her despair. Nnu Ego is imbued with traditional notions of motherhood. Tradition decrees that motherhood is a necessary state for women by enforcing it through sayings like “What greater honour is there for a woman than to be a mother...” (JM, 119) When Nnu Ego fails to conceive after her marriage she is sent back to her father's house and her husband consoles himself with the words: “Let her go... she is as barren as a desert” (JM 39).

In a society in which women are allowed to find their identity only as mothers, Nnu Ego’s grief about being barren is understandable. When she marries again and gives birth to a son, Nnu Ego vows to love her pot-bellied husband, Naife: “He has made me into a real woman—all I want to be, a woman and a mother. So why should I hate him now?” (JM 53). But, when the child dies, so great is Nnu Ego’s shock that she tries to commit suicide as “she is a failed woman”, a woman without a child for her husband. After a while, Nnu
Ego's luck turns. She gives birth to a number of children. The backbreaking grind of childbearing and child-rearing saps her energy. Added to it, the uphill task of educating her sons bleeds her dry. Nnu Ego's "love and duty for her children were like her chain of slavery" (JM 186). Yet, Nnu Ego's sense of responsibility as a mother never allows her to leave the children. Even when her children, especially, her boys turn out to be selfish and callous, she defends them as a truly enslaved mother.

Some fathers, especially those with many children from different wives, can reject a bad son, a master can reject his evil servant, a wife can even leave a bad husband, but a mother can never, never reject her son. (JM 214)

Nnu Ego's children deny her the most basic of African children's responsibilities, the care of their parents in old age. Nnu Ego dies one night alone in the roadside with no child to hold her hand and no friend to talk to her. Emecheta points out that "she had never really made many friends, so busy had she been building up her joys as a mother" (JM 224).

Nnu Ego gives her all to her children subscribing to the saying, "The joy of being a mother was the joy of giving your all to your children" (JM 224). Her reward for living the life of an enslaved mother? "Did she not have the greatest
funeral Ibuza had ever seen?" (JM 224) and a shrine built in her honour. No wonder, Nnu Ego did not answer prayers for children.

In contrast to Nnu Ego who internalizes the values of her society and suffers, Emecheta shows us her spirited co-wife, Adaku, who defies tradition. As Ibo society values male children, Adaku is rebuked constantly for not giving birth to sons. A kinsman who comes to settle a quarrel between her and Nnu Ego humiliates her for lack of male issues. He tells her:

If Naife had been married only to you, you would have ended his life on this round of his visiting earth. I know you have children, but they are girls, who in a few years' time will go and help build another man's immortality... If I were in your shoes, I should go home and consult my chi to find out why male offspring have been denied me. (JM 166)

Adaku's response to this humiliating advice is to 'damn' her chi. She refuses to worship her Chi for sons. She defiantly says: "I am not prepared to stay here and be turned into a mad woman, just because I have no sons" (JM 169). She speaks about her resolve to Nnu Ego: "I want to be a dignified single woman. I shall work to educate my daughters though I shall not do so without male companionship"(JM 170-171). Adaku refuses to submit to
tradition in her refusal to worship her Chi for sons. She refuses to submit herself to humiliation. Her anger takes a positive course when she decides to educate her daughters. She is shrewd enough to guess that education will help her daughters have a better future. Emecheta contrasts well the meek Nnu Ego, who submits to tradition and dies a lonely death, and the spirited Adaku, who defies tradition that humiliates her.

Other than the portrait of Adaku, Emecheta introduces the story of Nnu Ego’s Chi to emphasize Nnu Ego’s life of slavery. Nnu Ego’s Chi was the slave girl who was forcefully buried along with Nnu Ego’s father’s senior wife. The beautiful slave girl did not wish to die when she was called upon to die with her dead mistress and tried to climb out of the shallow grave. She was brutally beaten by the sons of the dead woman. When Agbadi, Nnu Ego’s father, intervened, the dying slave called out to him. “Thank you for this kindness... I shall come back to your household, but as a legitimate daughter...” (JM 23). The slave girl does come back, born as Nnu Ego with a lump on her head and she becomes Nnu Ego’s Chi. The life of Nnu Ego enslaved by tradition and her love for her children is similar to that of the slave girl who is forced to jump into the shallow grave with her dead mistress. By making the slave girl, Nnu Ego’s Chi, Emecheta skillfully draws a parallel between their lives and shows that Nnu Ego, as a mother, lives the life of a slave.
The portrait of Nnu Ego seems to question the joys of motherhood. In a society that makes motherhood a condition of womanhood, Nnu Ego's life is a lesson to mothers who give their all to children. Emecheta daringly presents an embittered mother in the portrait of Nnu Ego.

If Emecheta shows us a mother who is enslaved by her love and duty for her children, Morrison in her *Beloved* portrays a slave mother terrible in her abundant love for her children. The terrifying power of mother love is brought with full force through the portrait of Sethe. Of mother love, Morrison says:

"One of the nicest things that women do... is nurture and love something other than themselves—they do that rather nicely. Instinctively perhaps, but they are certainly taught to do it... whatever it is, it's something that I think the majority of women feel strongly about. But mother love is also a killer." [emphasis mine] (Rothstein, 195)

Sethe, the slave mother, illustrates through her act of killing that mother love is a killer. After an extremely difficult escape from a plantation in Kentucky, Sethe attempts to kill her four children rather than allow them to be taken back
into slavery. When the ex-slavers track her down she succeeds in killing one of her children, a baby daughter, before she is stopped. Through the use of flashbacks and fragmented narration, Morrison acquaints us with bits and pieces of the horrible life Sethe led in Sweet Home with the coming of the new master, “Schoolteacher,” and his nephews. We learn about the “School Teacher’s” pseudo scholarly list of the slaves’ human and animal characteristics, Sethe’s milk taken forcibly from her by his nephews, Sethe’s back opened up with a cowhide and innumerable other atrocities committed against slaves. As Ann Snitow says, “Morrison doesn’t really tell these incidents... She twists and tortures and fractures events until they are little slivers that cut” (Snitow, 196).

Sethe’s terrible act of infanticide can only be understood in the historical context of slavery. The many voices and stories other than Sethe’s tell us what it is to be a slave, a slave mother. Though the dominant maternal voice is Sethe’s, we hear other maternal voices too. For example, Baby Suggs, Sethe’s mother-in-law, talks about the pain of mothering children who are sold away in slavery:

I had eight. Every one of them gone away from me. Four taken, four chased... “My first-born. All I can remember of her is how
she loved the burned bottom of bread. Can you beat that? Eight children and that's all I remember." (B 5)

Baby Suggs feels bitter that she cannot remember their features, her own children whom she will not be able to recognize if she sees them.

As a child Sethe herself had never experienced bonding with her mother as her mother had to be away all the time because of the demands of her work. She was cared for by another woman who had to feed white children first and most often she did not have enough milk for Sethe. Sethe says, "There was no nursing milk to call my own. I know what it is to be without the milk that belongs to you; to have to fight and holler for it, and to have so little left" (B 200). As slave mothers have no right over their children, they cannot claim them as theirs and the children born to slave mothers cannot claim the milk of their mothers. In such a society where the rights of slave mothers are non-existent, Sethe's desire is to bring her milk to her children. Beaten brutally by the "schoolteacher" and his nephews, her back ripped open with cowhide, the pregnant Sethe escapes from Sweet Home full of thoughts about her baby daughter waiting to be nursed by her. Recalling the painful scene she says, "All I knew was I had to get my milk to my baby girl. Nobody was going to nurse her like me. Nobody was going to get it to her fast enough..." (B 16) Sethe is able
to get her milk to her child as she successfully escapes from Sweet Home and reaches her mother-in-law's home. She enjoys twenty-eight days of free life when she learns to love her children proper as "they wasn't mine to love" in Kentucky (B 162). But when the "Schoolteacher" comes to catch her and her children, she tries to kill her children as she feels she has to "put my babies where they'd be safe" (B 164).

Pondering over Sethe's love for her children Paul D, another Sweet Home slave, says: "...to love anything that much was dangerous, especially if it was her children she had settled on to love. The best thing, he knew, was to love just a little bit" (B 45). To Sethe, loving a little bit will not do. Hers is exclusive mother love. Her agonizing remembrances of the past never give her any respite. She is haunted by the memory of her baby daughter whom she had killed and feels a compelling urge to explain her actions to her dead child. As soon as she gets the gravestone of her daughter in place with the name Beloved, Beloved makes her presence felt in Sethe's house. She shakes the furniture, puts tiny handprints on the cakes, shatters mirrors, while Sethe and her daughter Denver live stolidly in the chaos, emotionally frozen. Only when Paul D comes to Sethe's porch, the ghost is driven out by his warm presence. But the ghost returns as a grown woman calling herself 'Beloved', the one word she found on her tombstone. Sethe is happy to have her dead daughter back.
Beloved, she my daughter. She mine. See. She come back to me of her own free will and I don’t have to explain a thing. 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.... I won’t never let her go. I’ll explain to her, even though I don’t have to. Why I did it. How if I hadn’t killed her she would have died and that is something I could not bear to happen to her. (B 200)

Sethe’s tough love brings back her dead daughter from the grave but Beloved is not interested in Sethe’s explanations.

Morrison not only portrays the terrible mother love of Sethe but also the possessive love of her daughters. She portrays the daughter figures, one flesh and blood and one ghost, in their relationship to their mother. The daughter from the grave craves for the attention of her mother all the time. She spends her time looking at her mother and being near her. She “licks, tastes and eats Sethe” with her eyes. She wants to completely possess her mother. Denver’s love for her mother is possessive too. She loves her “quiet, queenly mother,” ostracized by the black community. Strongly enmeshed in mother love Denver does not know the outside world. So when she watches the growing affection
between Paul D and her mother she feels jealous and angry. The arrival of Beloved makes her happy. But when Beloved's demands on her mother seem to be endless, Denver tries to protect her mother. She steps out of her mother's yard to seek help from her neighbours, tries to work and earn money to take care of her mother. Denver grows in strength as she comes out of the stranglehold of mother love. There is a significant role reversal here. She becomes the mother to Sethe. This even helps her to think of "a self to look out for and preserve" (B 252). Sethe's neighbours who ostracized her for eighteen years assemble in her yard to exorcise Beloved's ghost. Sethe undergoes the trial of Beloved's return and vengeance, suffers the torment involved in confronting and overcoming the past before she finds peace and feels free to live.

In her analysis of Beloved Carole Boyce Davies says:

Beloved speaks multiply, answering the meaning and practices of mothering, voicing the positions of daughters, grand mothers, fathers, male friends, neighbours, community and of course the mother herself. (BWWI 137)

What she says is true. We are shown how Sethe's neighbours, daughters, sons and community react to her mother love. Paul D is horrified when he learns about her 'crime' and tells her she has two legs and not four. Ella, a
member of the black community, asserts: "what's fair ain't necessarily right" (B 256). The vibrant Baby Suggs dies unable to digest the sorrow. The black community ostracizes her. Sethe's boys run away from the house frightened of her stifling mother love. Denver is puzzled by "the thing that makes her mother kill her daughter" and she grows up lonely and self-centred. The dead Beloved herself comes from the tomb to torment her mother. But Sethe defends her action when Paul D comments on her love for her children as "too thick". To Sethe, "Love is or it ain't. Thin love ain't love at all" (B 164). When Paul D tries to show her that her thick love has only succeeded in driving out her boys, she replies that they are not owned by the "Schoolteacher". Paul D suggests, "May be there's worse". Sethe makes her point clear in her reply. "It ain't my job to know what's worse. It's my job to know what is and to keep them away from what I know is terrible. I did that" (B 165).

There are varying critical responses to Sethe's act of mother love. "In Sethe, Barbara Rigney says, "we can see the terrifying power of mothering – the African Great Mother Goddess and Kali, the destroyer (qtd. in Payant, 196). To Carole Boyce Davies, "An unquestioning endorsement of Sethe's action cannot reveal the text's complexity" (137). For the Creator of Sethe, Toni Morrison, "It was absolutely the right thing to do... but she had no right to do it" (Rothstein, CLC Vol.55,195). Sethe tries to keep her children anyway
she can, even to the point of destroying them. We sympathise with Sethe but at the same time we feel that she has no right to do it. Sethe's portrait makes us agree with her comment that "unless carefree, mother love is a killer."

Mother love is a killer is exemplified again through the powerful mother figure, Eva Peace, in Morrison's Sula. The portrait of Eva starts like that of any other abandoned wife but she evolves into a strong and terrible mother. Abandoned by her husband with very little left to feed her children, Eva's life is a struggle for survival. The striking thing about Eva is her ability to survive the ordeal in a novel manner. After an absence of eighteen months she comes back with two crutches, a new black pocket book and one leg. The missing leg and the untold story about it make one thing clear — Eva's powerful love for her children and her ability to protect them by any means.

If Eva shows herself to be strong and protective when she sacrifices her leg for her children, she shows herself to be terrible when she burns her drug addict son, Plum, to death. There is a significant conversation two years after Plum's death between Eva and her daughter Hannah. Hannah has two questions to ask her mother: "Mamma, did you ever love us?" (S 67) and "what'd you kill Plum for mamma?" (S 70). To the first Eva answers:
With you all coughin' and me watchin' so TB would n't take you off and if you was sleepin' quiet I thought, O Lord, they dead and put my hand over your mouth to feel if the breath was comin' what you talkin’ ‘bout did I love you girl I stayed alive for you can’t get through your thick head... (§ 69)

Eva may not be physically endearing to her children but loves them enough to keep them alive after the desertion of her husband. To Hannah’s second question, Eva unburdens her heart:

After all that carryin’ on, just gettin’ him out and keepin’ him alive, he wanted to crawl back in my womb and well... I ain’t got the room no more even if he could do it. There wasn’t space for him in my womb. And he was crawlin’ back... I had room enough in my heart, but not in my womb, not no more. (§ 71)

Eva’s reasons for killing Plum reveal not her cruelty but her mother love which cannot bear to see Plum, the way he is. She feels she has done the best thing for him, helped him die like a man. Eva’s response to her daughter’s questions show the two dimensions to her character as mother. Eva’s concern for her children and the fact that she will not allow any of her children, especially, her son, to grow up as an effeminate person. Eva’s
terrible act of killing has provoked many critics into interpreting her action in
different ways. To Hortense J. Spillers, Eva is "Like an avenging deity who
must sacrifice its creation in order to purify it" (227). Marianne Hirsch believes
that Eva's burning of Plum can illustrate the powerlessness of mothers (266).
Barbara Christian interprets the killing of Plum as "ritual killing inspired by love
- a ritual of sacrifice by fire" (BWN 159). The creator of Eva, Toni Morrison,
says in her conversation with Robert B. Stepto:

She's god-like, she manipulates - all in the best interest. And she
is very, very possessive about other people, that is, as a king is.
She decided that her son was living a life that was not worth his
time. She meant it was too painful for her; you know, the way
you kill a dog when he breaks his leg because he can't stand the
pain. He may very well be able to stand it, but you can't, so
that's why you get rid of him. (Stepto, 383)

Though Eva's killing of Plum is terrible, it is to be remembered that the
killing is born out of love which cannot see her son suffer. The many possible
interpretations of Eva's action reveals Eva as a complex woman, a far cry from
the stereotypical image of the mammy and the matriarch. Eva is both powerful
and powerless. She is powerful enough to take decision over her son's life.
But her decision to kill him is born out of her powerlessness to help her son to
be a man. Therefore she is forced to kill him, the only way possible to help him out of his dope-ridden misery. As Sethe's mother love drives her to kill her child, to help the child escape the horrible system of slavery, Eva kills her 'grown up' son who is unable to come out of drug-addiction. Mother love is terrible and frightening as the mothers assume control over the lives of their children. They are creators of life and destroyers too.

Eva's protective love for her children is proved again in a positive manner when she hurts herself from the third floor window to save her daughter Hannah who catches fire while canning in the yard. "Eva knew there was no time for nothing in this world other than the time it took to get there and cover her daughter's body with her own"(S 75). Hannah's question to her mother whether Eva loved her children is answered by this act of Eva when Hannah is in the throes of death. When Eva recovers from the severe bleeding injury, she muses over "the perfection of the judgement against her"(S 78). Having killed her son by deliberately setting fire to him to save him from his dope-ridden misery, Eva is to watch the death by fire of her beautiful daughter Hannah and her grand-daughter's 'interested gaze', who does not make any attempt to help her mother Hannah. Eva's killing of Plum provokes not only human repercussions but Nature's wrath as well. Eva's destruction of

The self-indulgent, easy-going Hannah, the daughter of the powerful Eva Peace, is also the mother of the rebellious Sula. Hannah who doubts the love of her own mother Eva succeeds in making her daughter Sula feel insecure when she overhears her mother's declaration: "I love Sula, I just don't like her" (S 57). Sula takes this to be her mother's rejection of her. Later, she watches her mother burn to death without moving to help her while Eva risks her life to save her daughter Hannah. Eva recollects having seen Sula in the back porch watching her mother burn "not because she was paralyzed, but because she was interested" (S 78).

In Sula's character and behaviour we see traces of Eva and Hannah. Eva, Hannah and Sula love maleness for its own sake. Eva has truly bequeathed to her daughter and grand daughter "man love." Sula's unconventional ways, her fearlessness, independence and arrogance have come to her from her grand mother. If her grandmother sacrifices her leg for the survival of her children, Sula snips off her finger tip to frighten away bullying white boys. From her mother, Sula has learnt that "sex was something pleasant and frequent, but otherwise unremarkable" (S 44). Sula is as
promiscuous as her mother Hannah. So when she takes Nel’s husband, Jude, she does not understand the possessiveness of Nel, her close friend. Sula never feels close to her mother Hannah or her grand mother Eva. But she is a true inheritor of Eva’s arrogance and Hannah’s self-indulgence.

There is yet another mother figure in Sula, Helene Wright. She is Nel’s mother and vastly different from the easy going Hannah. The daughter of a creole whore, raised by her grand mother, Helene Wright is constantly on guard for any sign of her mother’s wild blood. With her daughter’s birth Helene “rose grandly to the occasion of motherhood – grateful …that the child had not inherited the great beauty that was hers …”(S,18). She severs her connection with her mother and fails to learn her mother tongue. She manipulates the lives of her husband and daughter. Under Helene’s hand, Nel grows obedient and polite with her imagination driven underground. So when Nel sees the completely different Sula and her house swarming with people, she feels happy to be with her. But after a while, when she marries Jude, she falls into the trap of middle class values her mother cherished so much.

Of the three mother portraits, the portrait of Eva Peace has provoked widely different responses because of her unspeakable act of killing her son. Hannah’s ambivalent feelings towards her daughter Sula makes her lose the
capacity to feel. Helene Wright succeeds in rubbing away the spontaneity of Nel. The influence of these mothers over their daughters is obvious. However much Sula asserts her independence, she bears the influence of her mother and grand mother. Nel finds her identity for a short while after her trip to her grand mother's place when she says "I'm me. I'm not their daughter. I'm not Nel. I'm me. Me" (S 28). But her mother's influence remains with her. While Hannah manages to kill the capacity to feel in her daughter Sula, while Helene kills the budding quest for individuality in her daughter Nel, Eva literally kills her son to save him from a hopeless life. Like Sethe in Beloved who kills her baby daughter to save her from being killed by the dehumanizing system of slavery, Eva kills her son by setting fire to him to save him from the devastating effects of heroin. Whatever be the reason for the killing, these two mothers, Sethe and Eva, are prompted by mother love to do the terrible act.

Mireille in Mariama Bâ's Scarlet Song is also a mother who kills her child. This mother is white. She marries Ousmane, a Senegalese Muslim and leaves her country, parents and religion to be his wife. When she learns to her horror that her husband has betrayed her for the sake of another woman she goes mad and kills her half-caste son. Even on the throes of insanity she is able to guess that her son will be rejected in both the places, France as well as
Senegal. Whatever be the colouring of the skin, mothers everywhere are fiercely protective and terrible in their love for their children.

The portrait of Silla Boyce in Marshall’s Brown Girl, Brownstones is the portrait of a powerful and domineering mother who is as fiercely protective in her love for her children as the other mothers discussed above. Silla Boyce is an awe-inspiring mother figure like Morrison’s Eva Peace. Awed by her power and strength, her daughter, Selina, thinks of her as “the mother” not “my mother”. In fact, the very first appearance of Silla impresses on us a sense of her power and dominance.

Silla Boyce brought the theme of winter into the park with her dark dress amid the summer green and the bright-figured housedresses of the women lounging on the benches there. Not only that, every line of her strong – made body seemed to reprimand the women for their idleness and the park for its senseless summer display. Her lips, set in a permanent protest against life, implied that there was no time for gaiety. And the park, the women, the sun even gave way to her dark force; the flushed summer colors ran together and faded as she passed. (BGB, 16)
Silla's power and dominance, are born out of her urge to seek material stability for her children in New York, "The city of the Almighty Dollar". Having experienced poverty as a small child in Barbados, Silla wants financial security and education for her daughters. In her struggle for stability Silla is alone, as her husband Deighton, a dreamer, refuses to co-operate with her. Silla is a bitter, enraged mother, who with her mouth fixed and back rigid, has to scrub floors for a few "raw-mout" pennies, has to pit her strength against the machines because "you got to learn to run these machines to live". When she scrubs "the Jew floor", Silla cries, " 'Lord; lemme do better than this. Lemme rise!' ". Her idea is to imitate other Barbadian immigrants who work day and night to buy a house and fill it with roomers and see that the children enter high-paying professions.

In her obsessive pursuit of getting a brownstone house, a mark of material stability, Silla is prepared to destroy anyone who crosses her path. She constantly battles with her husband to save money for the down payment of a brownstone. As Deighton dismisses and belittles her attempts to get a brownstone, Silla has to strive alone. When he inherits a piece of land in Barbados, Silla decides to forge her husband's signature and sell the land to pay the down payment for the brownstone. Through this decision Silla reaps the scorn of her daughter Selina who loves her dreamy, carefree father.
The portrait of Silla as a powerful mother emerges through the young eyes of Selina who both loves and hates her mother. As Selina watches her mother voicing her opinion on people and politics while making Barbadian delicacies to fetch in more money, she is amazed by her mother's power with words. She is awed by her powerful voice and passionate anger. When Silla bullies and threatens Selina that she will kill her if she spoils her plans of selling the land she strikes dread in the heart of her daughter. The dread that Selina feels is for her dreamy father. This emboldens her to confront her mother in her workspot. There, inspite of herself, Selina feels the surge of "familiar grudging affection" for her mother when she sees her preparing shells for war: "Only the mother's own formidable force could match that of the machines; only the mother could remain indifferent to the brutal noise" (BGB 100). Though Selina loves her carefree, indolent father, she has admiration for her mother's "dark strength." She feels that "the mother" is the "only prop" and without her the world will fall apart. Through Selina's eyes we see the strength, power and dominance of Silla, the mother. Silla's readiness to work, her assessment of people and the situation around her are shown to us through the watchful eyes of her daughter, Selina.
Marshall probes the passionate relationship between mother and daughter and the complex responses of Selina to her mother's actions. Selina's ambivalent attitudes to her mother whom she both loves and hates, are shown to us. We share Selina's feeling of awe and respect for her mother's grit and determination. Though Selina is drawn towards her father's carefree attitude and imagination, there is a part of her that loves and respects her mother. This is shown repeatedly by Marshall. A telling example of Selina's ambivalent attitude towards her mother is revealed in the scene in which her father comes home triumphant after frittering away all the nine-hundred dollars gained through the sale of the land. Though Selina sympathizes with her father, hating her mother for selling the land fraudulently, she cannot feel triumphant over her mother's defeat when her father spends the money on frivolous things. She stays with her mother in her hour of defeat and agony. She pities her mother's stunned disappointment and remains by her side: "For there was a part of her that always wanted the mother to win, that loved her dark strength and the tenacious lift of her body" (BGB 133). She hates her mother for her ruthlessness and at the same time loves her for her strength.

Marshall shows that it is not only the daughter who admires her mother for her spirit but also the mother who loves her daughter for her spunk. Silla's
love for her daughter, Selina, peeks out whenever she sees strength of mind and spirit in her. A good example is the scene in which Selina takes a trolley at night to confront her mother in the war plant and bully her into abandoning her plans about the plot of land. It there is stunned rage in Silla at her daughter's boldness, there is also "the softness," in her angry words: "But look at my crosses! Curls and all now. And taking trolley this time of night by herself. Oh God, a force-ripe woman!" (BGB 102). Another example of Silla's admiration for her daughter's spirit is when Selina calls her "Hitler" and strikes her, accusing her of causing the death of her father. After striking her mother, Selina falls asleep clinging to her mother.

Slowly Silla lowered her face and gingerly touched the sore places on her shoulders and arms. She stared down, with a strange awe and respect, at the limp figure huddled against her and the thin arms wound loosely around her neck. (BGB 185)

When Silla touches her daughter, it is with tenderness, wonder and admiration. Silla's touch also declares her possessive love. "Each caress declared that she was touching something which was finally hers alone" (BGB 185).

Though Selina constantly vacillates between a loving awe and a violent angry distrust for Silla, Silla remains steadfast in her purposeful moves towards
securing a bright future for her daughter. Once she senses that Selina deserves collegiate education, she starts making plans to save money. She literally orders her white tenant Miss Mary to die, evicts the sensual suggy skeete for being an "undesirable" tenant and fills her house with roomers. All these determined moves are for her daughter to succeed at any cost.

A domineering mother, she terrifies one daughter, the lovely Ina, into meek submission, and she tries to force Selina into medical school. She even betrays her husband to the immigration authorities for abandoning the family and has him deported. Yet, this strong-minded woman reveals a guarded respect for her daughter Selina inspite of Selina's open display of contempt for her actions. Under Silla's "covert gaze," Selina experiences a tangle of emotions:

... bewilderment as to its real meaning; disconcerion at the love and admiration it masked; a dark satisfaction at its mute plea for forgiveness when she knew she would never forgive; and fear at the possessiveness lurking behind its softness. (BGB 201)

Selina comes to terms with her mother only after understanding her reasons for her behaviour. Understanding comes to her with her exposure to racism, her doomed love affair and her own ruthless attempts to win a
scholarship from the Barbadian association. Selina realizes finally that she is her mother’s daughter and admits it to her. Though her sister Ina is perceptive enough to see that Silla and Selina are the same in their temperaments, Selina takes a long time over recognizing it. She tells her mother:

"Everybody used to call me Deighton’s Selina but they were wrong. Because you see, I’m truly your child". (BGB 307)

Selina’s admission that she is her mother’s daughter frees her from oppressive mother love. Her mother respects her enough to allow her to go her own way. The Selina who ventures into the world on her own is truly Silla’s daughter. As Mary Helen Washington says, “Literature has rarely revealed so passionate a relationship between mother and daughter as we see in Brown Girl.” (Afterword, BGB, 321)

Like the strong and powerful Silla who fights with her husband and works hard to possess a brownstone house, the emaciated Mem in Alice Walker’s Third Life of Grange Copeland fights with her vicious husband who destroys her plans for “a decent house” for the children.

Victims of the cruel share cropping system of the South, Mem and her husband Brownfield along with their children are forced to move from one Sharecropping cabin to another. While Brownfield becomes brutal and cynical
under the onslaught of the system, Mem tries to make the unspeakably dirty cabins habitable for her children by planting flowers. But when without any reason, warning or explanation the arrogant white men frequently put them out, Mem becomes furious with Brownfield for agreeing with whatever they say: "you ain't dragging me and these children through no more pig pens. We have put up with mud long enough" (TLG 118).

Having suffered much, Mem wants for her children good things and a decent life. She tells Brownfield

I want Daphne to be a young lady where there is other decent folks around, not out here in the sticks on some whiteman's property like slavery times. I want Omette to have a chance at a decent school, "And little baby Ruth," she said wistfully, "I don't even want her to know there's such a thing as outdoor toilets." (TLG 118)

Mem has the constructive will to help her children lead a decent life beyond the reach of the sharecropping system. By renting out a house for twenty dollars after backbreaking work she proves to her husband that she and her children "got a right to live in a house where it don't rain and there's no holes in the floor" (TLG 119). For a while her children enjoy living in a house with sinks, toilet and electric lights. The jealous and malicious Brownfield
plans for her ‘come down’ and brings her and the children back to a musty smelling cabin. Brownfield’s triumph is shortlived as Mem gathers up her strength again to work hard and go ahead with her plan for a “decent house.” The Scene in which she confronts and tells Brownfield that she will work hard for her children reveals her undaunted spirit and her powerful, protective love for her children.

“I have worked hard all my life... If you think I won’t work harder than ever before to support these children you ain’t only mean and evil and lazy as the devil, but you’re a fool!”(TLG 124)

Mem’s defiance provokes Brownfield to shoot her dead. Till her death Mem struggles hard with her brutal husband to give her children a decent place to live in.

What is striking about this mother is her undaunted spirit in the face of difficulties. She is a brave mother who is defeated by her husband’s brutality. Deprived of mother care Daphne, the eldest daughter, is admitted in an asylum, Omette becomes “a lady of pleasure” and Ruth barely escapes the fate of a miserable life with the help of her grand father Grange Copeland.

Adah, the heroine of Emecheta’s Second – class Citizen, is a protective mother like Mem. She too has to fight her husband and racism but
in an alien land, Britain, to which they have migrated from Nigeria. Being an employed woman she has to leave her children under the care of foster-mothers as other Nigerians in England do. Of this habit, Emecheta says:

As soon as a Nigerian house wife in England realised that she was expecting a child... she would advertise for a foster-mother. No one cared whether a woman was suitable or not: no one wanted to know whether the house was clean or not, all they wanted to be sure of was that the foster-mother was white. (SCC 44)

Adah soon explodes the myth about white foster-mothers' ability to take care of children when she exposes Trudy, the 'foster-mother' for her children. By doing so, she is able to get her children admitted in the nursery much to the envy of her Nigerian neighbours. The Nigerians in London have learnt to live with the idea that "Only first class citizens lived with their children not the blacks" (SCC 46). But Adah proves them wrong when she lives with her children. As a mother she tries to get the best for her children.

Adah is successful in her fight with the foster mother but she finds it to be extremely difficult to free herself of her lazy husband, Francis. He is so used to Adah feeding the whole family that he is full of resentment for Adah's
bid to freedom. As a young mother, she struggles hard to bring up her small children in an alien land. She has to constantly battle with her selfish husband who never contributes to the family. When her husband disowns their children in the court, the physically ailing Adah affirms her love for her children. She declares to the judge loud and clear: "Don't worry, sir. The children are mine, and that is enough. I shall never let them down as long as I am alive" (SCC 185). She has been providing for her children from the beginning but now she formally accepts responsibility for her children in the court.

What is remarkable about Adah is her fierce loyalty towards her young children in the face of difficulties like a brutal husband, an alien land and racism. Once again, through this portrait, the protective and nurturing nature of mother love has been proved.

All the mother figures we have seen so far are caring mothers, though their mother care drives them sometimes to kill their children or get killed. Morrison's Pauline and Walker's Meridian are mothers who do not give mother care, who are not the nurturing types. One mother drives her daughter insane, the other gives up her child to pursue higher studies. Both make interesting studies.
Morrison reveals the dangerous side of mothering through the portrait of Pauline in *The Bluest Eye*. Pauline is portrayed as an uncaring mother, not the usual nurturing type. As Katherine B. Payant says:

Morrison successfully deconstructs the myth of the Afro-American matriarch.... This image of the strong, nurturing, self-effacing, wise mother who supports her children, often with her man gone or broken by white oppression... (169)

The portrait of Pauline presents a horrifying picture of motherhood.

A study of Pauline's portrait reveals her lack of self-esteem. Morrison explains how Pauline develops a sense of unworthiness. As a young woman, Pauline has always felt that her limp made her "separate and unworthy." She finds solace and pleasure in keeping house, especially in establishing order, mending fences etc. Later, when she falls in love with Cholly Breedlove she moves to Ohio, where the constrained space of her house and Cholly's absences make her feel irritable and lonely. She diverts her attention to movies from which she learns and accepts the idea of physical beauty of the white culture. When she finds her two front teeth gone, right in the middle of a picture show she feels depressed. The images of actresses she sees on the screen erode her sense of self worth. She decides she is very ugly and passes on her feeling of self-hatred to her children. Life in the Breedlove
family degenerates but for Pauline life as a maid in the house of the Fishers is fulfilling. She neglects her storefront house and takes pride in the order and beauty she creates in the Fisher's kitchen. The omniscient narrator's voice tells us:

Pauline kept this order, this beauty, for herself, a private world and never introduced it into her storefront, or to her children. Them she bent toward respectability and in so doing taught them fear: fear of being clumsy, fear of being like their father, fear of not being loved by God, fear of madness like Cholly's mother's. In to her son she beat a loud desire to run away, and into her daughter she beat a fear of growing up, fear of other people, fear of life. (TBE 128)

Pauline as an uncaring mother damages her children's sense of self-worth. Her uncaring attitude towards her daughter is captured well in the scene in which Pecola drops the hot berry cobbler and gets slapped by her mother. She soothes her employer's little daughter who calls her "polly," with honeyed words. She shouts at her own daughter without attending to her legs burnt by the hot cobbler. In a voice laced with anger she shouts at her daughter which reveals her concern for "the floor" and not for her daughter: "crazy fool... my floor, mess... look what you... work... get on out... now that...
crazy... my floor, my floor... my floor (TBE 109). No wonder Pecola addresses her as Mrs. Breedlove and never as mother when even a small white girl calls her mother "polly." Pecola never feels close to her mother. Lack of affection from her mother destroys her sense of self-worth. In a culture where blue eyes and blond hair are the symbols of beauty, Pecola comes to believe in her ugliness and throws it "as a mantle over her." With an indifferent woman for a mother, and a "dangerously free man" for a father, Pecola sinks into madness wasting her "tendril, sap green days." Her father is the only one who loves her enough to touch her, "give something of himself to her" but his touch turns out to be fatal. Pecola represents the psychic trauma experienced by black girls who are assaulted by the value system of another culture and who are not protected from it by their mothers.

Morrison portrays a caring mother in the same novel, Mrs Mac Teer, whose mothering is presented as a contrast to Pauline’s horrible mothering. Her confident daughters Freida and Claudia stand in contrast to the diffident Pecola. They escape the fate of Pecola as they are enveloped in mother love. Mrs MacTeer is a protective mother who has taught her daughters belief in themselves. So her daughters are able to face racial prejudice and lead normal lives. The mature Claudia describes the love of her mother to be “thick
and dark as Alaga Syrup". She remembers the time when she was sick with cold and describes her mother's concern and love for her.

It coated my chest, along with the salve, and when the flannel came undone in my sleep, the clear, sharp curves of air outlined its presence on my throat. 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. (TBE 12)

Poor Pecola had never experienced "the sweet and musty" mother love with "an edge of wintergreen everywhere in the house" like Claudia and Freida. The result of mother care is obvious in the case of Claudia and Freida who have built up self-esteem. Claudia, in fact, hates the white ideal of physical beauty and likes to dismember the white baby dolls presented to her, whereas Pecola loves to drink milk from the Shirley Temple Cup. She yeams for Shirley's blue eyes which she wrongly thinks will enable her to win the affection of all. Claudia in contrast to her resists the society's definition of female beauty. The blue-eyed, blond-haired look so much loved by all is disgusting to her. But in the case of Pecola she yeams for the unattainable, the impossible – the white standard of physical beauty as a cure for all her sufferings. In her
quest for this elusive ideal she goes mad. Though her mother is alive, Pecola suffers mother loss as her mother is not nurturing. Unlike Claudia and Freida who are cocooned in mother love and grow up into normal human beings, Pecola's lack of mother love shatters her sense of self-worth forever and drives her mad.

If Morrison's Pauline does not give mother love to her children, Walker's Meridian in the novel named after her gives away her child when she gets a chance to do higher studies. As a teen-age mother, Meridian feels strongly the constraints of motherhood. Motherhood, for her, is fraught with contradictory impulses. Even while caressing her little son's body, she imagines that her fingers have scratched his flesh to the bone. She considers ways of murdering him. Shocked by her thoughts, she dreams of suicide. She thinks of him as a "ball and chain". The conflicts that rage in her heart are not known to others and they praise her as "an exemplary young mother, so mature, so calm" (M 70).

At seventeen Meridian is a high school dropout, a deserted wife, a mother, a daughter-in-law. So when she wins a scholarship to study in Saxon college, she wants to make use of the opportunity. But it means she has to give away the child. Meridian's mother, Mrs Hill, tells Meridian that only a
monster will do that and adds: “If the good Lord gives you a child he means for
you to take care of it” (M 87). Meridian feels her mother-in-law will be able to
take care of the baby better than her but to Mrs Hill it is an appalling idea.
She says self-righteously: “I have six children... though I never wanted to
have any, and I have raised everyone myself” (M 90). Though Mrs Hill knows
her daughter has a chance to open up her life she is adamant.

Interestingly, the portrait of Meridian’s mother reveals her resentment
towards motherhood, a feeling of a loss of freedom and personal identity.
Before her marriage, she has tasted independence as a schoolteacher. Only
when she gets curious about “the secret, mysterious life” of married women
she falls into the “trap” of marriage and motherhood. She could never forgive
her community, her family, the whole world, for not warning her against
children “and for not at least allowing her” to be resentful that she was caught.
For her motherhood meant, “being buried alive, walled away from her own life,
brick by brick” (M 51). As a result she keeps herself aloof from her children,
withholding love and understanding from them:

In the ironing of her children’s clothes she expended all the
energy she might have put into openly loving them. Her children
were spotless wherever they went. In their stiff, almost inflexible
garments, they were enclosed in the starch of her anger. (M 79)
No wonder she passes onto her daughter, Meridian, a sense of guilt for having “shattered her emerging self.” Though there is anger and bitterness in Meridian’s mother, she is aware of the glory of motherhood, the sacrifice of her maternal ancestors - mothers who were slaves and who did anything and everything to keep their children. That is why Meridian’s mother disapproves of her daughter giving up the child for adoption.

Meridian too is aware of her maternal history and feels guilty. Though she feels she has done the right thing, on some deeper level she feels “condemned, consigned to penitence for life”. She frequently gets nightmares that trouble her sleep. The thought that her mother alone is worthy of the maternal history “as she raised her children” torments her.

Meridian knew that enslaved women... had thought that their greatest blessing from ‘Freedom’ was that it meant they could keep their own children. And what had Meridian Hill done with her precious child? She had given him away. (M 91)

Meridian is constantly tormented by a voice that cursed her existence, “... an existence that could not live up to the standard of motherhood that had gone before” (M 91). She is obsessed by her guilt and thinks constantly of her
mother as "Black motherhood personified, and of that great institution she was in terrible awe, comprehending as she did the horror, the narrowing of perspective, for mother and child, it had invariably meant" (M 96-97).

Meridian is able to give up her child physically but not psychologically. So she loses her hair, has severe headaches, loses her eyesight temporarily and becomes paralyzed. She does not recover from her illness until Miss Winter, a symbol of her mother, whispers "I forgive you" and absolves her of her guilt. This absolution, as Barbara Christian says, helps Meridian to go on a quest,

...that will take her beyond the society's narrow meaning of the word mother as a physical state and expand its meaning to those who create, nurture, and save life in social and psychological as well as physical terms. (BFC 242)

Walker juxtaposes through the portraits of Meridian and her mother, their awareness of their maternal history and their response to it. Meridian's mother, though she believes in "the glory of black motherhood" does her mothering with resentment, whereas Meridian boldly gives up her child to educate herself and becomes a better person but is plagued by a sense of guilt. But Meridian gradually assumes a maternal role towards all black children. She rehabilitates the wild child at Saxon College. She relinquishes
physical motherhood but only to assume universal motherhood. There is a distinct growth in Meridian's stature.

Other than the biological mothers analysed in detail, there are "other mothers", grandmothers, sisters, aunts and neighbours who act as "other mothers." In Walker's *Color Purple*, the teenage mother Celie's children born of rape are given away and she pines for them. Corrine who adopts the children and Nettie, Celie's sister who comes to live with them, bring up the children. In the same novel Sofia's children are taken care of by her sister and her husband's girl friend when she is imprisoned for slapping the Mayor. Later, Sofia is ordered to serve the Mayor's wife as maid. There she becomes the other mother to the white child who loves her. Celie forcefully married to Mr. ___ takes care of his children well, though she hates her husband. In Marshall's *Brown Girl, Brownstones*, Suggy Skeete and Miss Thompson serve as 'other mothers' to Selina. She seeks the friendship and advice of these women whenever she feels frightened of her domineering mother. Suggy Skeets initiates Selina into a knowledge of sex and pleasure. Miss Thompson takes good care of Selina and helps her into adulthood. To Pecola in Morrison's *The Bluest Eye*, the prostitutes who live near her house serve as "other mothers." In their company the poor Pecola finds some happiness.
The novels explored for this inquiry present a spectrum of mother portraits and mother-daughter relationships. It is an enriching experience to analyse the mother portraits as there is so much of psychological exploration by the authors. The study proves that women are as good as men in presenting complex characters. Morrison's Sethe and Eva are powerful, awe-inspiring mother figures who kill their children in order to protect them. The authors probe their psyche to reveal to us their hidden guilt and terrors. Paule Marshall's Silla is an equally powerful portrayal of a strong mother. Silla's ruthless killing of her 'shy self' and her merciless lashing of her husband with her powerful tongue reveal to us a complex mother figure who would resort to any means to achieve material stability. We may feel horrified by Pauline who is not the usual nurturing type but we are told the reason for her indifference—lack of self-esteem which erodes her sense of self. Mem's "Come-down" from a plump school teacher to a haggard, ugly-looking woman is shown to us by Walker who captures well the misery of a black sharecropper's wife and her astonishing determination in the face of difficulties to give her children a decent house live in. Walker's Meridian is a penetrating portrayal of a high school dropout who gives up her bond with her baby son but evolves into a mother to all and there is a significant evolution in her character. Emecheta's Nnu Ego conforms to the prescriptions of society as to the role of women but dies an embittered mother. Emecheta seems to ridicule the saying "The joy of being a
mother is the joy of giving your all to your children" (JM 224). The complexity of the mother portraits presents different angles of viewing motherhood.

The portraits of daughters that emerge out of the study of the mother portraits show us how the daughters react to their mothers' love. Selina finds her mother Silla's love to be oppressive and feels the dominance and power of her mother. She both loves and hates her for her strength and ruthlessness. Sethe's children are terrified of their mother for she has tried to kill them in order to protect them from slavery. Beloved, the child who had been killed by Sethe, comes from the grave to torment her and wants to possess her completely. Denver who is cocooned in mother love is afraid to face the outside world. Hannah is awed by her powerful mother but feels Eva is not loving enough. Sula is hurt by what she takes to be the rejection by her mother, Hannah, in her declaration: "I love Sula, I just don't like her" (S 57) and loses the capacity to feel. Nel, for a short while finds her identity but is soon enveloped in the stifling love of her mother who has embraced middle class values. Mem's eldest daughter Daphne loves her mother and tries to protect her from her father's malevolence. When she sees her mother killed brutally by her father she goes insane. The portraits of daughters also reveal the effect of the lack of mother love in their lives. Walker's Meridian does not experience any bonding with her mother as her mother has done her
mothering with resentment. Yet, she is in awe of her mother’s sacrifice and considers her to be the personification of Black Motherhood. Morrison’s Pecola has never experienced mother love. She is driven insane by her lack of self-esteem. Her mother has never taught her self-esteem and so Pecola is destroyed in the racist U.S. Unlike Pecola, Freida and Claudia enveloped in mother love are well equipped to face the racist society.

We get glimpses of mother figures as daughters too. Some have been deprived of mother love and bonding with the mother due to various reasons. Nnu Ego as a daughter has never felt the influence her unconventional mother Ona because of her mother’s death. Sethe as daughter has not been allowed to go near her mother and receive love as they are trapped in the life of slavery. Hannah as daughter has doubts about her mother’s love as Eva is not demonstrative enough in her affection for her children. Silla as daughter convinces her mother of chances of a better life in New York and gives her mother no peace till she pays for her passage to New York.

Aggressive mothers sometimes find their match in their daughters. The forceful Silla realizes her daughter’s fire and passion and respects her. The strong and powerful Eva is challenged by an equally powerful and aggressive Sula, her grand daughter.
All these portraits strike an unforgettable deathblow at the stereotypes. They pulsate with life, with fierce energy, power, determination and complex reasonings and prove that they are a far cry from stereotypes. We are able to see their inner selves and we are amazed by the complexity in their psychological make up.