

## **Jouissance in Association or Dissociation? Psycho-linguistic Signals of Kristeva's Psychoanalytic Concept of "Abjection" in Morrison's *Beloved***

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**ABSTRACT:** *Kristeva's description of motherhood as a "demented jouissance," the pleasure of the pain, reveals the ambivalence of love and hate relationship as the child attempts for individuality by detaching from her mother and a woman within herself. It is an excruciating experience for both mother and daughter since the female identity is not delimited, autonomous, separated, or individuated. Morrison's Beloved is saturated with conversations that signal actual utterances in the real world, manifesting Kristeva's concept of abjection through mother-daughter conversational analysis. This study is concerned with how conversational language in terms of syntax, semantics, pragmatics, and lexico-syntactic choices can be a psycho-linguistic indicator of psychological functioning. Specific linguistic style, lexical choices, or syntactic variations used by characters implicate psychological tendencies and inclinations since the mental function is a constituent of the textual structure. This article intends to broaden the insights regarding Kristeva's notion of "abjection" in mother-daughter relationship.*

**KEY WORDS:** Kristeva, abjection, mother-daughter relation, Morrison, *Beloved*, psycho-linguistic signals, lexico-syntactic analysis

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### **INTRODUCTION**

*"Our words are never neutral!" (Fiske, 1994)*

This study is concerned with how conversational language in terms of syntax, semantics, and pragmatics and the lexical choices amidst sociocultural discourses can be a semiotic indicator of psychological functioning. Many studies have focused on how mindset, mental

structure, and cognition influence language. However, instances of its revelation in different types of texts and genres require more inquiry. Literature, narratives, and novels are primarily saturated with the conversations of various characters reflecting the actual language used in reality. As a researcher from both psychology and English literature interested in applying psychological theories in the analysis of literary narratives, I employed Kristeva's theory of Abjection in Morrison's *Beloved* as a part of my PhD dissertation conducted at Universiti Malaya in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Literature has historically proved to be a site where thoughts, feelings, and relations are manifested as the writers mirror reality and liberate characters in the plot to express their psychological experiences freely. It acts as a haven to show the true nature of humans, as the writers have experienced, and they intend to enlighten people by challenging or improving human lives. Literature as a psychosocial discourse is open to analysis and exploration as a response to many mentioned assumptions and hypotheses (Bowles, 2007, 2010, 1977; Halliday, 1971; Simpson, 2012; Toolan, 2011). Fowler (1981) advocates the ideological analysis of literary texts where values and beliefs underlying the texts are discovered and interpreted. However, the task is complicated as the text or discourse resonates with many divergent and convergent voices and theories. Ideologies. Literature cannot be defined in isolation from psychological discourses that lurk beyond the conversations.

The literary researcher finds herself amid communicative tools, psycho-linguistic structures and meanings which can be interpreted from different angles related to psychological manifestations where interactional styles and mental functions are negotiated in the contexts of communications. Literature with certain lexico-syntactic choices becomes a platform of revelation. Traditionally literary texts were regarded as aesthetic artifacts with metaphoric, elevated, figurative, and symbolic language. It embodies greater reflexivity and self-consciousness, different from the ordinary language of everyday life. With greater reflexivity and self-consciousness concerning the forms of the language it uses. The literary analysis consists of two steps, descriptive and interpretative, where the psychological voices are interpreted.

### **Morrison's *Beloved***

African American women's literature, especially the works of Nobel laureate Toni Morrison were principally probed in terms of slavery and historical perspectives. psycho-linguistically, they are yet open to deeper analyses. Particular psycho-linguistic style, lexical choices, or syntactic variations used by characters implicate psychological tendencies and inclinations since the mental function is a constituent of the textual structure. Fowler and Kress (1979) advocate the use of psycho-linguistic techniques and

insights to the full within a critical, cultural, and social context of literary discourse. It signals a commitment to widening the notion of literature by incorporating various fields of knowledge (Kress & Trew, 2011; Halliday, 1970,1971; Fowler, 1977, 1981, 1982; Fowler, et al., 1979; Kress, 1996; Kress & Hodge, 1979; Simpson, 2012; Lakeoff & Tannen, 2011; Tannen, 1989, 2009, 2012; Toolan, 2011, 1995; Widdowson, 2004, 1995). There are "strong and pervasive connections between psycho-linguistic structure and social structure" (Fowler & Kress, 1979: 185), as psycho-linguistic meaning is attached to ideology, belief, thinking style, and psychological proclivity. Dissecting characters and analyzing their language can help understand the psychological processes involved in various actions and reactions occurring in real life. It can consequently sharpen, broaden, and deepen our insights toward self-knowledge and the nature of relationships.

Morrison concentrates on the relationship between mother and daughter in her masterpiece *Beloved*. She depicts maternal preservative love as the highest form of maternal child protection among Black mothering and its detrimental consequences. Morrison's *Beloved* starts with a mother trying to justify her acts of agency and subjectivity. She wants the world to hear the voice of a woman who performs the role of a mother and a subject. It is a mother-centered narrative mirroring the challenging story of shattered mother-daughter love/hate and trauma in the intimate details of a slave narrative.

Considering the context of the profound agonizing, and excruciating story of the physical, emotional, and spiritual devastation wrought by slavery, a devastation that continues to haunt those characters who are former slaves even in freedom, this paper aims to investigate its psycho-linguistic impacts. The powerful seditious context of slavery cannot be denied as the whole novel obtains its profound meaning and affect from it. O'Reilly (2019) in "Maternal Theory: Patriarchal motherhood and empowered mothering," Budds (2021) in "Validating social support and prioritizing maternal wellbeing: beyond intensive mothering and maternal responsibility," Friedman et al.(2020)in "The realities of pregnancy and mothering while incarcerated," Turner(2019)in her doctoral dissertation "*The Significance of Motherhood and Mothering for Low-Income Black Single Mothers* and in the paper(2020) "Black mothering in action: The racial-class socialization practices of low-income Black single mothers," Coleman-King et al.(2022 )in "Reclaiming our time: Black mothers cultivating the home place during times of crisis," Banks, (2022) in her article "Redefining Motherhood: How Formerly Incarcerated Black Mothers Frame Mothering Choices," Mitchell and Davis(2019)in "Formerly incarcerated black mothers matter too: Resisting social constructions of motherhood," Meadows-Fernandez(2022)in *Mothering in Their Own Words: Uplifting the Voices of Black Mothers in Wyoming and Surrounding Areas*, Dow(2019) in *Mothering while black: Boundaries and burdens of middle-class parenthood*, Lorenz (2021) in "Slavery, Motherhood, and Recurring Trauma

in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*,"Bhatt (2022)in "Mother-love in Morrison's *Beloved* and *A Mercy*: A Comparative Analysis," Sengupta (2021)"Deconstructing Motherhood: Reading the Black Mother, *Sethe* in *Beloved*," Zhang (2021) in "An Analysis of Motherhood Based on Toni Morrison's *Beloved*,"and Winters (2020) in the doctoral dissertation *Morrison's archaeological dig: Beloved and the toxic stereotypes surrounding black motherhood*, explain how mothering is formulated and the effects it has on mother-daughter relationship that Morrison has depicted in her novel *Beloved*.

## METHOD

This paper adopts content analysis. It is a qualitative research method to determine how specific lexico-syntactic structures drawn from qualitative data, like a text, are used to reveal certain concepts. Through analysis and evaluation of the specific structures, meanings, and themes, the researcher identifies the relationships and makes inferences about the texts' hidden ideologies and content. Here, the psycho-linguistic signals in the conversations between mother and daughter are explored to discover the psychoanalytic concept of Abjection. Data sources could be from conversations and communicative language in narratives, essays, and discussions.

Content analysis is a systematic and objective narrative inquiry of messages in an interpretive and naturalistic approach with less reliance on quantitative or experimental constituents. It investigates individuals' intentions, communication inclinations, attitudes, behavioral responses, psychological or emotional states, conflicts, and relational patterns. It can be conducted as a conceptual or relational analysis to determine the configuration of the concepts in the text, which leads to particular interpretations and inferences. Samples or extracts from texts are selected for analysis on different psycho-linguistic and conversational levels or categories, and then the relationships between concepts are explored. Content analysis provides valuable historical and cultural insights, allows a meticulous focus on the text and data, focuses on the contexts, and offers perceptions of human cognition and language use. However, it is highly time-consuming and requires a high interpretation based on inferences from the relationships and impacts.

## Kristeva's Psychoanalytic Concept of "Abjection"

The concept of the abject emerged within theoretical writing in the 1980s. Kristeva's *Powers of Horror* is a challenging theoretical book that elaborates her theory of abjection, matricide, and the notion that maternal functions are the primary abject. It is concerned with how a person sees himself/herself as a separate being with his/her clear borders between subject and object. Kristeva asserts "the way that a psychic sense of self is maintained through creating a boundary between the self and the other, the self and those

forces, that would pollute it" (Osborne, 2019 :16). Through abjection, Kristeva tries to say that humans' first experience of the world is through the semiotic chora as she feels in unity and oneness with the whole environment without any borders. McAfee argues that misery or Kristeva's wretchedness emerges when the child considers himself apart from his mother's body, sees his picture in the mirror, speaks the language, and recognizes subjectivity.

Oliver characterizes Kristeva's wretchedness as "an approach to denying the basic egotistical distinguishing proof with the mother" (1993, 61). Kristeva sees this "miserable" feeling of separation from the mother as necessary if the child wants to turn into an independent subject (ibid, 135). The child should abandon the mother to become a different being. Jean Radford also underlines the subject's requirement for partition from the mother: "For the subject to appear and enter the representative includes the renouncement of the mother, of the not-me" (1986: 210). Oliver clarifies that "the youngster should view its mom as something unwanted to isolate from her" (ibid, 135).

The mother is the main thing the youngster objects because the child sees the mother unclean because of, as Oliver said, her role in the child's period of toilet training (1993: 289) as the first one who teaches the child about the clean and unclean parts of the body as within the semiotic chora, the child inhabits the realm of "maternal authority characterized by a guilt-free attitude to the body and its wastes" (ibid, 93). Thus, the realm of maternal authority should be removed for subjectivity attainment. Abjection involves a fundamental rejection of the improper and unclean maternal body that has menstrual blood as polluting bodily fluids. According to Kristeva, the abject mother looks both attractive and repulsive to the child. On the one hand, it is attracted to the mother and longs for union with her mainly because her body has met all its needs. On the other hand, the child must reject this union to become a subject (2004: 48). A separation that is never complete, the maternal dependency remains forever, but its repression is necessary for developing subjectivity.

Abjection refers to all that threaten the fundamental borders between subject and object, "disturbs identity", and "does not respect borders"(kristeva, 1980: 4). Abjection is double-sided. It acts as a safeguard protecting the subject's identity, and it allows an ego to emerge through a process that establishes the necessary borders between mother and child" (ibid, 14). However, the rejection of the repulsive object can never be complete. It is not a temporary phase in a person's development but permanent and covers the whole life. The child's relation to its mother is an abject one. Term "subject" is an alternative to the term "self," meaning a being who is fully aware of his/her motives, able to use language as a tool to convey ideas, and able to act autonomously subjected to the authority of no one but

his own repository of repressed desires, tensions, and fears in the unconsciousness. Lacan's concept of the unconscious is expressed as the site of repressed desires, obsessions, anxieties, and dreams. It is the driving force behind language formation and desire, where female subjectivity, resistance, and conflicts paint the female self in patriarchy. However, George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831) and Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche (1844-1900) argued that there is no autonomous, self-conscious individual with self-determinacy. Kristeva is interested in the manner the characters show their mentality and feelings through words. She believes that semiotics is the site of all physical drives. The characters' drives and impulses can be contradictory since they are both "oriented constructively" and "destructive by themselves" (Kristeva, *Revolution* 27). Abjection refers to the end of semiotics and the child's ideal relationship with her mother. Since the subject's identity has to be shaped by the breaking and splitting of others, what entity does not belong to the body must be first disgusted and then removed. When the subject enters the symbolic order, she has to forget her maternal body and everything within her own body to realize the borders; so that "abjection is a sickness at one's own body, at the body beyond that 'clean and proper thing, the body of the subject. Abjection is the result of recognizing that the body is more than, above, the 'clean and proper" (Grosz 78).

The Semiotic refers to the imaginary order that Lacan defined where there is no meaning, sign, or signification process, just "an evocation of feeling or, more pointedly, a discharge of the subject's energy and drives" (McAfee 14). Kristeva herself describes semiotics as "non-expressive totality formed by the drives and their states in a motility that is as full of movement as it is regulated" (Kristeva, *Revolution* 25).

Abjection starts with pregnancy when another "inhabits within the body, takes over the whole physical body as a woman's body is no longer hers. It brings nothing, but extreme fatigue, backache, headache, early lactation, bleeding gums, and disturbing thoughts. These negative symptoms of pregnancy bring a woman down psychologically, physically, and psychologically. Kristeva proposes that the infant develops a bond with her mother in the Symbolic" (1986: 180-81) and "semiotic which is underwater, trans-verbal communication between bodies" (1986: 182). Therefore, the deconstruction of the larger symbolic order depends on the reunification of the mother and daughter.

Kristeva's Stabat Mater contends that "The body of [the] mother is always the same Master-Mother of instinctual drive, a ruler over psychosis, a subject of biology, but also, one toward which women aspire all the more passionately simply because it lacks a penis ... By giving birth, the woman enters into contact with her own mother; she becomes, she is her own mother. She, thus, actualizes the homosexual facet of motherhood, through which a woman is simultaneously closer to her own instinctual memory, more open to her own



psychosis, and consequently, more negatory of the social, symbolic bond (Kristeva, 1982: 239). Kristeva views the pregnant maternal body as a meeting place between the symbolic and the semiotic. They both are able to move beyond the fierce possessive love. They ruin the detrimental unification, fusion, and identification bind between themselves under the castrating father of symbolic law through language and speech.

The symbolic phase occurs with the emergence of language and order when the subject gets involved in the process of signification and associating meaning to the signs. However, in this movement from semiotic to symbolic, the subject should separate the two entities as her subjectivity faces boundaries and limitations with others. According to Kristeva, "thetic phase marks a threshold between two realms; the semiotic and the symbolic, the second includes part of the first and the scission is marked by the break between signifier and signified" (Kristeva, 1987: 48). Imaginary father, an entity or an object which helps the child to pass from semiotic to symbolic is sought and found during a thetic break to make defend and empower "the child against emptiness that results from abjection" (Kristeva, 1987: 46).

Kristeva's theory of abjection is the representations of women which keep them in subservience to the unjust exercise of patriarchal authority. She claims that all women, particularly mothers, are exemplary abject in most societies. Kristeva discusses the importance of pre-oedipal, primordial, and preverbal phases dominated by union with the mother. This symbiosis is destroyed in the oedipal phase by the abrupt entrance of the father representing formal culture. One can be freed from the patriarchal symbolic order through the use of the poetic language associated with the unconscious of challenging male-identified symbolic.

## ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Here, some extracts from Morrison's novel *Beloved* including conversations between mother and daughter are selected, analyzed psycho-linguistically, and interpreted according to Kristeva's notion of abjection.

### Extract One

"you **could smell** the heat in her dress, her eyes did **not** pick up **a flicker of light**. **They** were like two **wells into which he had trouble gazing**. Even punched out they needed to be covered, lidded, marked with some sign to warn folks of **what that emptiness held**." (9)

The choice of "you" indicates anyone and indirectly involves the readers in the feelings

described. The use of simile acts to resemble *the eyes of endless wells* where no one could stand gazing. Poetically, it manifests the trauma the mother is suffering from where there is no hope, no change, no improvement, and no flicker of light but emptiness. Psychologically, the description above belongs to a clinically depressed person in need of urgent help.

### Extract Two

“Who then?”

“**My daughter.** The one I sent head with the boys.” “She didn't live?”

“No. The one I was **carrying** when I run away is **all I got left.**

Boys **gone** too. **Both of them walked off** just before Baby Suggs died.”

“**Probably best,** he thought. If a Negro got legs he ought to **use** them. Sit down too long, **somebody** will **figure out** a way to **tie** them up. Still ... if her boys were gone...”(10)

The use of the possessive pronoun *my* before daughter shows her sense of attachment to her daughters as her belongings. “All I got left” also shows how important they are to her as she uses the absolute quantifier *all* to describe that everything she has, is summed up in her daughters. Her boys left her easily as the use of *gone, both of them, walked off* indicates. As a man he admitted their action of running off as he uses the modal auxiliary of probability *probably best*.

### Extract Three

“No man? You here by yourself?” “Me and Denver,” she said. “That all right by you?”

“That's all right by me.” (10)

The elliptical interrogative non-finite clause of “no man?” with the interrogative mark shows his state of surprise at the absence of a man, and the loneliness, and isolation of two women. Worried, he asks to see whether she is fine with the lack of men in the family and is later responded that it is all fine with her. The fronting of *me* in “me and Denver” shows how she sees herself as the matriarch of the family and also as the supporter of the daughter. In the last line, she uses *me* rather than *us* as the object of proposition. She thinks herself as the sole person in charge of the family and the only one who can decide. It gives a solid authoritarian sense of matriarch to her.

### Extract Four

“Here she is **my** Denver. This is Paul D, **honey**, from Sweet Home.”

“Glad to get a look at you. Last time I saw your mama, you were **pushing out the front of her dress.**”

“**Still is,**” Sethe **smiled**, “provided she **can** get in **it.**” (11)



The mother introduces the daughter to the old male friend. *Here* as the adjunct of location is thematized to bring the focus in the new information about to occur *She is my Denver* by putting Denver in the possessive form after *my*; the mother is creating a solid attachment with her daughter, and the endearing vocative *honey* while addressing her adds to this intimacy. The mother preserves her daughter's positive politeness. Paul D's response, "*Glad to get a look at you,*" is a continuation of positive politeness. He adds sincerity by bringing a joking and funny memory of "*pushing out the front of her dress,*" which might, in reverse, attack her cheerful face.

Seth's confirmation *still* purports the recognition of her daughter's strong dependence and attachment to her as she craves to join her mother. The thematized adjunct of *Still* with elliptical *she* implicates the ever existence of this very attachment from birth to this very adolescence. Kristeva's interpretation discourse can be applied to Black mother-daughter relations where the absence of a father in Black families hinders the daughter's entrance into the symbolic stage or the realm of social communication. The distortion of this crucially introductory phase of identity formation has detrimental effects on her mental and emotional growth. It destroyed the healthy mother-daughter relationship as the majority of Black families were suffering from the absence of a father who, according to phallogocentric psychoanalytic ideologies, brought law and order to the families.

#### Extract Five

"**Hot, shy, now Denver was** lonely. **All** that leaving: **first** her brothers, **then** her grandmother--serious losses since there were **no children willing** to circle her in a game or hang by their knees from her porch railing. **None** of that had **mattered** as long as her **mother** did not **look away** as she was **doing** now, making Denver **long**, downright **long**, for a sign of **spite** from the baby ghost."

"Did he, **Ma'am**? Denver **fought** an **urge** to **realign** her **affection**." (12)

The modifiers to describe how Denver was feeling ending with the attribute *Lonely* manifest how she is upset, disturbed, and disappointed by her mother's engagement in talking with someone else, not her. In a monologue, she thinks that none of those bitter memories of being isolated by other people around her *matters as hard* as how her mother ignores her. Thematized absolute negative quantifier *None* and the use of the process *mattered* with the subordinating conjunction of *as long as* intensifying the detrimental impact of her mother's act, the behavioral process of *looking away as she was doing now*. When the daughter is in the slightest fury or disappointment from the mother, she determines to take revenge and destroys the mother's happiness, peace, and subjectivity. Kristeva's theory of abjection and detachment is obvious here as the daughter, filled with disgust, tries to suffocate the mother because she feels displeased and dissatisfied with her

behavior. The power of the daughter to ruin her mother's life and vice versa is not only perceptible in White families but also traceable here in Black families. The daughter is desperately seeking to regain her mother's attention and affection. The use of the solid wishing word *urge* also highlights how incredible this feeling of relation to the mother is for the daughter. The use of the vocative Ma'am in an interrogative mood accentuates the necessity of her mother's attention. She tries to disturb their intimacy, their twosome, as she finds no space for herself. The daughter's selfishness to have all her mother's attention does not allow the mother to enjoy moments of subjectivity.

#### Extract Six

"**They** were a **twosome**, saying "Your daddy" and "Sweet Home" in a way that made it clear both **belonged** to them and **not** to her. That her own father's absence was not hers."

"We have a ghost in here, she said, and it worked. They were not a twosome **anymore**. Her mother left off **swinging** her feet and being **girlish**."

"No sir, said Denver, not evil. But not sad either." "Rebuked. Lonely and rebuked."

"I don't know about **lonely**, said Denver's mother." "Mad, maybe, but I don't see how it could be lonely spending every minute with us like it does."

"**Must** be **something** you **got** it **wants**."

"Sethe **shrugged**. It's **just** a **baby**." (13)

The negative polarity of they were *not* a twosome, and the adverbial adjunct of *anymore* indicates how successfully she ruined her mother's (the carrier) moments of happiness as the material positive process and attribute of *girlish* attempted to portray. The mother describes the daughter by negating the cognition process of knowing and *see* and attributes of *mad* not *lonely*. She wrongly believes that the daughter is no lonelier for she is present. She has ignored the fact that daughter is after the abject mother now. Meanwhile by replacing the epithets "*rebuked and lonely*" with *mad*, she is trying to evade the burden of her guilt by using the undertone, tentative, deduced modality of possibility in interpersonal metafunction. The overtone, assertive modulation *must* show how certain he is in his comment about the way baby ghost willingly seeks to earn what they have. Mother's behavioral process of *Shrug* and the use of adjunct and *baby* indicates that currently, to the mother, the sense of relation with the mother is not that much important as she is after her own desires and pleasures of having a man. For a moment, she felt herself apart from all those burdens of motherhood and was seeking subjectivity.

#### Extract Seven

"**How** **come** everybody run off from Sweet Home **can't** stop talking about it? Look like if it was so **sweet** you **would** have **stayed**. (13)

**Girl, who you talking to?"**

“But it's where **we** were, said Sethe. **All together**. Comes back whether **we** want it to or not. She shivered a little. A light ripple of skin on her arm, which she caressed back into sleep. **Denver**, she said, **start up that stove**. Can't have a **friend** stop by and don't **feed** him.”

"At it **again**, thought Denver. **Her back to them**, she jostled the kindlin and almost lost the fire. “Why don't **you** spend the night, Mr. **Garner**? You **and** Ma'am can talk about Sweet Home **all night long**.” (14)

In this extract, the daughter is taking power to interrupt and intervene to castigate her mother and ruin her slight moment of happiness. She is, in fact, taking revenge on her mother, for she feels disgusted towards the abject. Denver's choice of lexicon and structure is deliberately interrupting and castigating and causes her mother to react harshly by addressing her as *a girl*. *Sethe* ordered her to get involved in a house chore through the use of the imperative sentence "*start up*" *that stove*. The interrogative mood as the suggestion "*why don't you spend the night?*" functions as FTA to the mother's negative face. The daughter is not allowed to ask questions as she is at the bottom of the power hierarchy according to her age and status. She is scolding and ridiculing the intimacy between her mother and the stranger. The use of adverbial adjunct of *all long* emphasizing the length of the night clearly shows her ill intention of humor to attack her mother's negative face again.

#### Extract Eight

“Sethe took two swift steps to the stove, but before she could yank Denver's collar, the girl leaned forward and began to cry.”

“**What** is the matter with you? I **never** knew you to **behave** this way.” “**Leave** her be, said Paul D. I'm a **stranger** to her.”

“That's **just** it. She got no **cause** to **act up** with a stranger. Oh **baby**, what is it? Did something happen? But Denver was **shaking** now and sobbing so she could not **speak**.”

“I **can't** no more. I **can't** no more.”

“I **can't** live here. I don't **know** where to go or what to do, but I **can't** live here. Nobody **speaks** to us. **Nobody** comes by. Boys don't **like** me. Girls don't either.” (14)

In wh question, an interrogative tone attacking her daughter's negative face, committing FTA, and warning the daughter for her misbehavior of questioning her as "taking two swift steps" indicates she takes her power and authority to scold her. The mother is reproaching the daughter for misbehavior through FTA by using the verb *act up*. The mother has the power to decide how the daughter should behave “*she got no cause*.” However, she does not want to see her daughter sad, so she uses the emotionally invested interjection and vocative *oh baby* to express that she cares for her daughter

The interrogatives afterward highlight her care and attention while forming an intimate and close bond. The mother cannot be indifferent to her daughter's suffering. The progressive predicative *shaking* and *sobbing* of a negative behavioral process result from the psychological moment of depression, shock, and inability to catch up with the situation. She is silenced and voiceless as she finds herself unable to handle the dependence and independence from her mother.

Repetition for emphasis on the extent and weight of the burden of grief and hardship multiply the effect of struggling for Kristeva's love and hate between mother and daughter. The use of negated modality of ability *Cannot* as repeated, shows the intensity of her weakness and fragility. She is looking for a change, a transformation, separation, and independence from her mother. The subjectivity and identity development of the daughter is distorted as she cannot enjoy the outside world and does not have the opportunity to communicate and socialize with people. She has yet to enter the symbolic stage, as Kristeva claimed is vital for the average personality growth. She needs clarification about *where to go* and *what to do* as the negated mental and behavioral processes of *know and live* propose. This extract also pinpoints the importance of a sense of belonging to a community, especially in Black communities, as Black people were long denied any sense of relationality. The whole community tries to earn this relationality within the network of their community. Selfhood can be recognized only in relation to others. If there exists no other, no self-identification is established. Considering the gender of the characters involved here, as Gilligan and Chodorow purported, women need to establish a stronger sense of relationality to grow healthy. In her essay, "Reconstructing Kin: Family, History, and Narrative in Tom Morrison's *Beloved*," Dana Heller states that Denver is on the track to move from the imaginary mother-daughter fusions to the symbolic order of language and society without renouncing maternal intimacy. She challenges the psychoanalytic split between the maternal intimate unity and the patriarchal system of symbolic language.

### Extract Nine

**"Honey, honey."**

"What's she talking 'bout nobody speaks to you? asked Paul D."

"It's the house. People don't--"

"It's not! It's not the house. It's **us**! And it's **you**!" **"Denver!"** (14)

Vocative and addressing word of affection, *Honey* which connotes sweetness and love, is repeated for emphasis here to manifest that the mother cares a lot for the daughter. Disagreeing, objecting, and gaining the power to commit FTA on the daughter's part embarrasses the mother when she points the finger of guilt at the mother's public image

and faces in front of others. First, it comes with our unity of *us*. Then, it moves to separation and independence of *you*. The daughter separates herself from her mother. She is threatening her mother's self-worth by pointing the finger of guilt at her. Addressing the name alone with an exclamation mark suggests the word "shut up" to counteract what the daughter says. Mother is the authority here and can put the girl in her place. It sounds like it is used with a higher pitch, louder, and stronger intonation.

### Extract Ten

"No moving. No leaving. It's all right the way it is."

"**You** going to **tell** me it's **all right** with this child **half out of her mind**?" (15)

Mother wants the same condition as the complement *after* the copular verb suggests. She thinks she is the only one to decide for the family. She is an absolute matriarch. She has her daughter next to her and that's all that matters. Although she scolded her daughter for her impolite interruption, comment, and misbehavior, she does not allow anyone else to do so. She is the only person who can do so and no other person is allowed to treat her daughter harshly. Years of independence have taught her that she is the only person to decide. Shortened sentences and negated progressive predicative suffice to reject the suggestion. She only sees herself as a mother in love with her daughters and ignores many other issues about her daughter's necessary entrance into the symbolic stage of social relationships. As Kristeva mentioned, the absence of a father figure affects mother-daughter relations and distorts identity formation.

### DISCUSSION

The daughter loves her mother who (over) nourishes her, but, at the same time, she is angry at her control, which impedes the development of her own identity. The nourishment her mother provides her does not empower her; instead, it paralyzes her. The daughter eloquently accuses her mother of quenching her thirst with paralysis and nourishing her with lifelessness. According to Kristeva, symbolic order imprisons and manipulates the subject with its own paradigms and sociocultural codes. Throughout symbolic order, the subject is deprived of his desires and impulses and struggles to free herself from these strict chains and follow her desires. Kristeva mentions that the subject should rebel to feel the same state of semiotic by the imaginary loving third who accepts the individual into social life with love and forgiveness, which consequently leads to happiness.

Daughters often resist mother-daughter closeness as they seek independence. By identifying with her father, she can be better socialized to accept and fulfill an autonomous societal role. The mother's overprotection and control of the daughter suffocate the

daughter, and she is looking for a way to eliminate the mother's intense interference with her freedom. However, she is caught in the same tragic dilemma. Mothers feel that the new lack of mother-daughter closeness is a threat to face and their identities as mothers. There is a discord between mothers and daughters in the course of autonomy, separation, and individuation. They identify with each other through their connection and preamble ego boundaries.

Kristeva believes that the daughter wishes to separate, individuate, and abject herself from her mother for a healthy identity formation and an actual creation of an individual. The mother also abjects her daughter to prioritize her own identity formation. Kristevan's theory, while allocating a safe space to explore subjectivity, and autonomy for the mothers as individuals, reminds distress, pain, and fluctuating emotions because of the emotional abjection of the daughter. The physical and emotional rejection and distance from an unwanted entity are called abjection which is radically excluded.

Selected conversations extracted from Morrison's *Beloved* went through a lexico-syntactic analysis to reveal discourse signals of Kristeva's notion of abjection. Both mother and the daughter here determine to enjoy their subjectivity and are frustrated with the ongoing dependence and attachment. The love/hate relationship keeps going and does not stop. Maternal thinking asserts that Sethe should be in charge of fulfilling her daughter's security and safety demands by ignoring her social acceptability. The mother's earlier actions, decisions, and her face and reputation in the community have consequences for the mental and emotional health of the daughter.

Kristeva's abjection concept manifests here as the daughter Denver tries to achieve independence from her mother. The community's refusal of Sethe, her lack of proper mothering in childhood, and her disastrous loss of her daughter led her to an intense intimacy with Denver, who is desperately looking for a way out of this mother-daughter entrapment and transition to the symbolic stage to develop a successful self-identity. Kristeva's discourse of "demented Jouissance" is realized here as Sethe's mothering experience brings both joy and pain. Kristeva believes in the constant love-hate relations between mother and daughter and emphasizes the father's role in the daughter's independence and individuation. However, the bitter history of slavery and raced and gendered discourses disturb daughters' psychoanalytic growth and development.

This micro psycho-linguistic analysis proves the existence of subtle sociocultural mechanisms that affect Black mothering and daughtering. Morrison draws the public's attention to the minute details of the mother-daughter relationship, where the mother is seen as abject, wretched, unclean, and should be separated. However, the impact of



dominant discourses and the context of slavery should be taken into account when degrees of fury and disgust are evaluated. Denver needs to adopt autonomy and separation from her mother for identity construction and growth. Morrison is putting the White patriarchal discourses under the spotlight by showing how the mother-daughter bond affects the daughter's abjection and hugely influences the mother's self-evaluation. The prevalent absence of men in a Black family structure made Black mothers the solely responsible resource for children financially, mentally, and emotionally that's why their mothering differs from that of the White.

## CONCLUSION

The detailed lexico-syntactic analysis of the selected mother-daughter conversation manifests how mother-daughter abjection is interpreted amidst various mechanisms at work. Mothering does not take place in isolation. Sociocultural variables like race and gender vastly affect Black women's mothering and daughtering processes and relationships. Dominant discourses place overwhelming importance on the daughter's abjection in a social context. The individuation of daughters is agonizing for the mother as she is an essential source of emotional security for the mother. They both remain in an ambivalence of attachment and detachment, association and dissociation that never ends. Kristeva's notion of abjection was traceable in the selected conversations as the daughter desires to detach herself from her mother to gain subjectivity and autonomy to progress healthily toward a stable identity formation. Persuaded to follow her mother's mothering and her codes, values, and traditions, she wishes to disengage herself from her mother as she criticizes her mother's failure to shape her individuality and abjection under harsh standards. Kristeva's discourse of demented Joissance is addressed here. Morrison's novel enlightens women about the sources of their misery and offers awareness about the way women can regain their lost individuality. She dissolves the boundaries of discourses and invents a broader and deeper interpretation and understanding of the concept of Kristeva's abjection in the Black mother-daughter relationship.

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