





University of Tehran press

## Research in Contemporary World Literature

<http://jor.ut.ac.ir>, Email: [pajuhesh@ut.ac.ir](mailto:pajuhesh@ut.ac.ir)

p-ISSN : 2588-4131 e-ISSN: 2588 -7092

### The Lover of Marguerite Duras: Dolorous Story of the Formation of Subjectivity

Sara Tabatabaei <sup>1</sup>  0000-0002-5947-2534 Sarvin Rahimian <sup>2</sup>  0000-0002-7664-1029

1. Department of French Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: [s\\_tabatabaei@sbu.ac.ir](mailto:s_tabatabaei@sbu.ac.ir)

2. Department of French Language and Literature, Faculty of Literature and Humanities, Shahid Beheshti University, Tehran, Iran. E-mail: [Sarvi.rh@gmail.com](mailto:Sarvi.rh@gmail.com)

#### Article Info

##### Article type:

Research Article

##### Article history:

Received: 11 September 2022

Received in revised form: 30 January 2023

Accepted: 15 February 2023

Published online: Summer 2024

##### Keywords:

Abjection, Chora, motherhood, Julia Kristeva, Marguerite Duras, The lover.

#### ABSTRACT

The theory of the psychological phenomenon of “Abjection” based on Freud's (Oedipus complex theory) and Lacan's (mirror stage theory) theories was developed and discussed by Julia Kristeva. Abjection is a defense mechanism to help the subject in the difficult path of achieving individuality and identity independence. This happens for the first time in a place that Kristeva, inspired by Plato's opinions, calls “Chora”. Chora is the initial space in the world that the child experiences in the mother's womb, where he lives in a boundless wholeness and an imaginary unity with the mother in a symbolic and pre-linguistic environment. When the child is on the threshold of becoming a subject, considering the mother as abject, helps him to determine the boundaries between himself and the mother. The body that the child considers abject is the body that his life depends on, and thus the child is lead to consider himself abject as well. This abjection of the others and the self will undoubtedly be associated with the experience of negative feelings and emotions, and since the subject is constantly determining the boundaries of his identity, the abjection seems to be a phenomenon that never ends.

Duras surprisingly depicts a poetic expression of this process. In this paper, we see how, with the help of literary creation, Duras was able to recreate and depict chora's atmosphere in the novel *The Lover*, a space full of silence and immobility, where words have no role and dumb emotions and feelings are incomprehensible. The space of this novel is a strange, boundless and timeless space in which the characters are confused. In order to achieve her subjectivity, the narrator must distance herself from the mother. Therefore, she considers her an "abject" object. All the descriptions of the mother indicate a feeling of hatred and disgust towards her. But reading the novel from the Kristeva's point of view gives us the knowledge that the narrator's hatred towards her mother is a psychological reaction and there is no external cause. And as we have seen in the research, self-abjection is one of the consequences of the mother's abjection, and the young narrator's relationship with the Chinese lover, which appears to be the main theme of the novel, is merely a manifestation of the unconscious movement towards self-abjection. This is the price to pay to achieve individuality and independence. The novel is the story of the birth of a new identity for an artist who, by creating a literary masterpiece, recreates this process in the best possible way and purifies the pain and suffering and all negative emotions caused by it.

**Cite this article:** Tabatabaei , Sara; & Rahimian, Sarvin. "Psychoanalytic analysis of The Lover of Marguerite Duras: Dolorous Story of the Formation of Subjectivity". *Research in Contemporary World Literature*, 2024 29 (1), 151-169. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jor.2023.348101.2345>



© The Author(s).

Publisher: University of Tehran Press.

DOI: <http://doi.org/10.22059/jor.2023.348101.2345>