

SETHE'S MERCY KILLING IN MORRISON'S *BELoved*

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Abstract: The aim of this research study is to describe the causes of Sethe's doing Mercy Killing. The objects of the study are words, phrases, clauses and sentences taken from the novel. The data are collected by the process of recording in cards and tables. The instrument of the research is the researcher herself. The method used in this research study is qualitative method in which the reliability and validity is acquired by expert judgment. The findings of the study show that Sethe's doing Mercy Killing are caused by the disharmony problems of the *id*, *ego* and *superego* in Sethe's personality. This study reveals that finally Sethe's *superego* controls her personality which leads her to kill her baby. Sethe's mercy killing happens because she was an exslave woman, she was an African American woman, Sethe wished her daughter in a better place than her, and she hoped her daughter who had been killed by her getting a freedom forever.

Keywords: psychoanalytic study, mercy killing

INTRODUCTION

In the middle of the century, Negro slavery was still a fact of American life "The nation was being split in two by it, the south defended slavery more and more vigorously" (Bode 1987, 52). In this period racism worked strongly therefore black American lived in suffering especially for slaves. In slavery regardless they were men, women, old or young they got bad attitude from white people. Being killed, underestimated, raped, abused and so on for black people were some things very common at that time. For them, staying and living were very difficult, moreover for a slave who had run away from slave holders. They could live in America but they got inappropriate responses by white people.

In 1800s, America was full of Negro slaves when there were many injustice actions done by white people to black people. It was not amazing when the position of black people was as similar as animals because white people treated them inhumane. They were bought and sold as slaves and there was no reason

for them to have the same rights as white people.

Toni Morrison is an American educator and author whose novels are characterized by visionary force and poetic import. Morrison's memorable characters are drawn with a particularity and skill that renders them transcendent. She has sought to move the work of American – American writers from the periphery to a central place in American culture. Her novels deal with the efforts of African – Americans to survive cultural, economic, and social disruption in their communities. She described black people live in America. She portrays it in her novels include *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, *Tar Baby*, *Beloved*, and *Jazz* (*The Encyclopedia Americana* 1998, 475).

Beloved, her famous novel which won The Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988, got many complements because the novel was full of insights, both piercing and tender, lyric beauty, memorable characters, a brilliantly conceived story, and a milestone in the chronicling of the black experience in America that should not be missed.

Toni Morrison's narrative strategy much like the structure of psychoanalysis-acts as a conditional operative, offering her creative opportunities to deal with the real, the fantastic, and the possible events that make up slave history. Her narrative strategy functions in *Beloved* as a project in historical mythmaking. Utilizing both American and African interpretations of the psyche, Morrison succeeds in destabilizing stereotypic "remembering" on slavery.

Toni Morrison demonstrates a powerful, passionate, magic, love story and story about the self-sacrifice of motherhood. She portrays an African American, Sethe as the main character that should fight and escape from a slave holder continues her life which is shadowed by the past. Sethe made a decision in the past to end her baby's life. Certainly, she loved her baby very much until she did it rather than she led the baby to be a slave like her. There had to be no slave anymore in her family, even though as a result of it there was a ghost of the baby left in her house.

This novel is a realism and fiction, which is mixed up in a beautiful story and is added with a beautiful lyric inside. *Beloved* falls into realism and fiction because it presents in a very realistic manner a fictional account that is historically true. Morrison's novel is based on a true account of 1855 "a slave woman named Margaret Garner, when chased by her owner to Cincinnati where she had escaped to her mother-in-law's, tried to kill her four children without remorse, she had preferred death for them to slavery" (<http://www.luminarium.org/contemporary/tonimorrison/beloved.html>). Also, it reveals psychological aspects, which are the impacts of slavery. Firstly, Sethe lives in Sweet Home (a place for treatments and inappropriate actions by a slave holder). Secondly, she runs away from a slavery place in pregnant condition on bare foot and makes a

decision to end her daughter's life by killing her to get a freedom forever. This present study is an attempt to investigate the psychoanalysis aspects.

Psychoanalysis is a very famous theory that was developed by Sigmund Freud, and that cannot be far away from literary works. As what Freud applied in his theory through literary works such as *Oedipus Rex*, *Hamlet*, *Gradina*, *The Brothers Karamazov* etc. (Zeeb 2001, 36), the researcher of this study analyzes *Beloved* by using Freud's theory that is called as psychoanalytic theory.

Rosada (2000) also made a thesis but her thesis discusses the need of reviving history of black people during slavery era as reflected in Toni Morrison's novel *Beloved*. According to the theme, this thesis digs up why the history of slavery era described in the novel needs to be revived, how Morrison revives the history, and the significance of the revival to Toni Morrison both as an individual and as a black writer. Furthermore, this thesis aims to find out the importance of historical revival of black experience, to know Toni Morrison's ways in reviving history, and the significance of the revival towards Toni Morrison as an individual and as a black writer. The researcher here uses American Studies as the guide to reveal those problems with the assistance of library research. Since, American Studies need interdisciplinary approaches to reveal the American experiences in the novel, the researcher applies historical approach, sociological approach, and biographical approach. Besides those approaches, the researcher also uses formalism and structuralism approach to materialize the evidence of American experiences.

Psychologically, the struggle in *Beloved* may appear to be a particular trouble that can happen in human life. The problems that occur in this novel are discrimination, racism, and sacrifice of motherhood. Basically, Sethe's problems were such as struggling in

escaping from a slave holder, struggling for broken marriage, life in far of society, struggling as a single parent and struggling in hiding for killing her daughter. In another word, Sethe had done "a mercy killing" for her daughter's freedom. Mercy killing is an action of killing someone for her or his sake. It was not easy for a woman especially an exslave woman who really had felt how terrible and horrible she was when living under the authority of slave holder that treated her as an animal.

Morrison describes Sethe as a mother who has unstable personality. This is because of the hovering when she was still as a slave that led her for doing "mercy killing" to her baby by sawing the baby's throat. Therefore, the main cause that makes Sethe do a mercy killing is her personality in unstable condition that comes up from external environment. As Ryan (1999, 35) says psychoanalysis also concerns with the dynamics of interpersonal relations and with the way the self is formed through interactions with its familiar and socio culture. This is meant that Sethe has no another choice except killing her daughter for her freedom forever.

As mentioned above, the researcher only focuses on Sethe although other characters cannot be ignored. In order to be appropriate with the purpose of the analysis, the researcher finds the factors and the personality of Sethe for doing mercy killing to her baby that are caused by the environment and the socio culture at that time which forced her to do it.

The objective of this research study is to investigate the causes and the ways of Sethe's doing mercy killing.

LITERARY REVIEW

Personality

Personality is a word from the Latin word *persona*, which means "mask" (Hurlock 1979, 6). The mask here means actors used a mask to hide their identity on stage. Allport (in

Hurlock 1979, 7) says "Personality is the dynamic organization within the individual of those psychophysical systems that determine his characteristic behavior and thought". Dynamic refers to the constantly evolving or changing nature of personality. Not only the personality becomes more complex in structure as the individual's physical and psychological characteristic development but also from time to time and from situation to situation, there are changes in the structural organization.

Every person and event is unique. However, there is enough similarity among many people and the events of their lives to consider what they have in common. Different from Pervin (1984, 3) who defines personality strictly as the ways in which individuals ascribe to themselves and use to function in society. There are some other definitions of personality (Hurlock 1979, 6) they are as follows:

Woodworth defined personality as 'the quality of the individual's total behavior', according to Dashiell, an individual's personality is the 'total picture of his organized behavior, especially as it can be characterized by his fellow men in a consistent way', and Munn gave a more comprehensive analysis, pointing out that personality is 'the most characteristic integration of an individual's structures and activities'.

Those representative early psychological definitions stressed manifesting aspects of personality. The personality can be observed by learning what a person is, how to think and feel and what is included in the total psychological makeup will be revealed through the speech and behavior.

On the other hand, Sullivan (in Hall 1985, 173) says personality is the relatively enduring pattern of recurrent interpersonal situations that characterize a human life. Personality in Sullivan's view is hypothetical entity that can be conceived of only on the

context of interpersonal behavior. Through out life, each of us operates in a social field, from our very first day on earth; we are involved in interaction with others. Even when we are alone, others are present in our thoughts, our feelings, and our fantasies.

Hurlock (1979, 39) states there are three characteristics of abnormal personality: those are *manic syndrome*, *psychopathic personality*, and *delinquent personality*. An effective stage of eagerness and joyous excitement, which is characterized by talkativeness, over activity, lack of restraint and impatience is called as *manic syndrome*. Unrealibility, deceitfulness, egocentricity, improvidence, promiscuity, and extreme emotional shallowness as shown in an ability to express anger or love are involved to the characteristics of *psychopathic personality*. The last characteristic of abnormal personality according to Hurlock is *delinquent personality*, which is characterized by strong drives, weak conscience, dissatisfaction, defensiveness, anxiety, tension, emotional, immaturity, rebellion, and hypersensitivity.

The influence of the past, present and future on behavior is also strong to form a personality. Pervin (1984,16) states the present can be influenced by experience of the remote past or of the recent past. Similarly, what one is thinking about in the present can be influenced by thoughts about the immediate future or about the distant of past and future.

Mischel (1968, 198) says in the view of social behavior theory that "such terms as mental illness, maladjustment, and abnormality all refer to social judgments about a person's behavior rather than to hypothesized diseases or to traits or states that reside in the person who displays the behavior". Moreover the abnormal personality can appear because of the influence of social behavior or judgment, it can lead

persons for changing their personalities. Behaviors can be evaluated psychologically by the immediate and long- range consequences they produce for the individual and for other people. The judgments about behavior like all social value judgments depend on the specific circumstances in which the behavior occurs and on the social role and status of the individual.

The significance of the hereditary foundations in determining the personality pattern has been stressed by Rainwater (in Hurlock 1979, 19), he says:

Personality is formed from the interaction of significant figures (first the mother, later the father and siblings, later extra familial figures) with the child. The child brings to this interaction a certain biological constitution certain needs and drives and certain intellectual capacities that determine his reactions to the way in which he is acted upon by these significant figures.

Therefore a family is a basic for forming a good personality. A mother is a role that her stereotype is to care for the child and her personality pattern consists of such traits as kindness, understanding, helpfulness, and self-sacrifice.

Socioeconomic status is very influencing for parents to protect their children and how to keep them in right way and what their rule is used inside. Hess, Shipman, Kamii, and Radin (in Maccoby, 1980, 400-401) observed that low socioeconomic families tend the parents to stress obedience, respect, neatness, cleanliness, and staying out trouble. The parents are more controlling, power – assertive, authoritarian, and arbitrary in their discipline, and they are more likely to use punishment.

Kartono (1992, 30) states the features of mother are classified into two terms, those are the quality of her personality or character and emotional feeling. A mother's feeling always

reflects to take care and love her children. The instinct of a mother to her children is stronger than a father. It occurs since a mother has baby that she has to seriously take care of her baby by her affection.

According to Sullivan (in Hall 1985, 177) "the good mother is out of its experience of being nursed and cared for tenderly but the bad mother is out of its experience of the mother's anxiety or anger". A good mother will always love her children and will do anything for their sake. Caring her children in affection and protect them in full attention. Sometimes, she has to over protect to her children because of some reasons.

All humans have personalities but not all of them can have balance personalities mean that someone who has a good balance of personality will be a good person. It can be considered that a good or bad person can be seen from their personalities. Sometimes an abnormal personality can occur because of family, social treatments or judgment, and it can be of the mental illness.

Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud is the very famous person in psychoanalysis history. Freud's psychoanalytic theory of personality is presented as an example of a psychodynamic approach to the study of human behavior. The psychodynamic orientation holds that unconscious mental conflicts control the person's behavior. Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, based on his psychodynamic concepts almost entirely on extensive clinical observation of neurotic patients as well as self – analysis (Hjelle and Ziegler 1992, 125). On the other hand, Berry (2001, 1) says that psychoanalysis is a psychological system and method of therapy for personality disturbance.

Hjelle and Ziegler (1992, 86) state that the term of "psychoanalysis" has three meanings, (1) a theory of personality and psychopathology, (2) a

method of therapy for personality disturbances, and (3) a technique for investigating and individual's unconscious thoughts and feelings.

Freud (in Pervin 1984, 71) claimed, "Psychoanalysts aims and achieves nothing more than the discovery of the unconscious in mental life". Basically, psychoanalytic theory in Freud's view is a psychic life, which can be described in aware and unaware. The basics and principles of psychoanalysis theory in Freud's view are as follow.

The topographical model

For a long time in the theoretical development of psychoanalysis, Freud employed a *topographical model* of personality organization. According to this model, psychic life can be represented by three levels of consciousness – the conscious, the preconscious, and the unconscious. Taken together, Freud used this mental "map" of the mind to describe the degree to which mental events such as thoughts and fantasies vary in accessibility to awareness. There are three basics in the topographical model, those are:

1. The conscious

The conscious level consists of whatever sensations and experiences that is aware of at a given moment in time. Freud insisted (in Hjelle and Ziegler 1992, 87) that only a small part of mental life (thoughts, perceptions, feelings, memories) is contained in the realm of consciousness. His example of consciousness occurs when someone is beginning to get hungry.

2. The preconscious

The preconscious domain sometimes is called "available memory" that encompasses all experiences which are not conscious at the moment which can easily be retrieved into awareness either spontaneously or with a minimum effort (Hjelle and Ziegler 1992, 87). In Freud's view the preconscious

bridges the conscious and unconscious regions of the mind. For instance, under the influence of tertian therapeutic techniques, unconscious material may emerge into the preconscious and from there it becomes conscious. The examples include memories of everything you did last Saturday night, all the towns you ever lived in, your favorite foods etc.

3. The unconscious

The deepest and major stratum of the human mind is the unconscious. It is the store house for primitive instinctual drives plus emotions and memories that are so threatening to the conscious mind that they have been repressed, or unconsciously pushed into unconscious mind. Hjelle and Ziegler (1992, 87) give examples of material that might be found in unconscious include a forgotten trauma in child hood, hidden feelings of hostility toward a parent etc.

Hall (1985, 30) says the unconscious is the area of our experience that is not normally accessible to us either because its contents were never conscious (traces or events that happened before we had language, when we were infants) or because its contents have been repressed, or pushed out of awareness, because they are in some way threatening us. For example a woman may forget that her friend is chronically late for appointments until each time it happens because she is afraid if she expresses her anger, the friend will become angry too.

The structure of personality

The theory of personality that Freud has formulated consists of three important systems: the *id*, the *ego* the *superego*. If they work in harmony and utility someone will have a good personality, spirit, motivation and move

efficiently and sophisticatedly in the environment. However, it often happens when someone has past experience that becomes an obstacle for the present and future because the three systems do not work in harmony. The three important systems of personality according to Freud are as follows:

1. The *id*

Taylor, Sluckin, Davies, Reason, Thomson and Colman (1982, 562) say the *id* is the product of heredity and is the instinctual level of response. It is the main source of mental energy and is concerned with self-preservation, reproduction and aggression against threats.

The "*id*" comes from the Latin word for "it" and refers exclusively to the primitive, instinctive, and inherited aspects of personality (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1992, 88). The *id* functions entirely in the unconscious and is closely tied to instinctual biological urges such as to eat, to sleep, to defecate and to copulate that energize the behavior. The *id* is the oldest and original structure of the mind. It expresses the primary principles of human life.

Developmentally the *id* is the oldest portion of personality. Freud (in Monte 2003, 99) states, "The *id* obeys the inexorable pleasure principle". The *id* operates on the principle that whatever brings satisfaction to a want, desire, or wishful impulse is good; whatever hinders or frustrates such satisfaction is bad. Because the *id* is ruled by primary thinking process, condensations and displacements of its energy are not only possible for the *id* but also they are in inevitable result of the *id*'s striving for satisfaction without due regard for the goodness, evilness, realness, or appropriateness of its objects.

The irrational, instinctual and unknown unconscious are part of the psyche. Freud calls them as the

id and the *id* wishes only to fulfill the urges of the pleasure principle. (Bressler 1999, 150)

Feist (1985, 25) says *id* is the core of personality and completely unconscious to the individual are the psychical region. Here, it means the *id* is unable to distinguish between objective reality and subjective perception and the *id* for adult cannot differentiate the objective reality of a juicy steak from a mental image of one.

2. The *ego*

The *ego* is those activities of the brain which express themselves in intelligent actions. (Taylor 1982, 562) The *ego* is often threatened by impulses from the *id* as well as by external dangers in the environment and when this happens anxiety occurs. Freud regarded anxiety as a regular and powerful source of pain which played a basic role in the organization of the person.

Hjelle and Ziegler (1992, 88) state that the *ego* is the decision – making component of the psychic apparatus that seeks to express and gratify the desires of the *id* in accordance with the constraints imposed by the outside world. The *ego* is the “executive” of personality and the seat of intellectual process and problem solving.

According to Freudian theory, *ego* defense mechanisms are activated when an individual confronts serious anxiety and emotional conflict. Among the most common self-defense mechanisms are as follows:

a. *Repression*. In repression, an unacceptable or threatening thought or impulse is driven from conscious awareness. Such as when children have been taught that aggression and masturbation are “bad” they may repress knowledge of their own involvement in such

practices. By repression they avoid conscious feelings of anxiety and guilt (Zanden, 1985, 37).

- b. *Projection*. People use the mechanism of projection attribute to someone else their own impulses or acts that are too painful to acknowledge. Projection is the way to reject guilty feeling by blaming somebody else or others. For instance, angry children who have learned that rage is socially unacceptable often project their aggression onto a playmate and justify their own behavior as “self-defense” for instance they say, “He started it” (Zanden 1985, 37).
- c. *Displacement*. The expression of an instinctual impulse is redirected from a more threatening person or object to a less threatening one. A common example is the child who is scolded by her parents and proceeds to hit her little sister, kick her dog etc. (Hjelle and Ziegler 1992,105).
- d. *Denial*. At times people protect themselves from unpleasant reality by simply not perceiving it. They refuse to acknowledge its existence. For instance, a child with hostile mother may deny that she hostile and rejecting. Instead, the child insists that the mother is kind, loving person. The device of denial spares people the emotional pain that would follow from recognizing the truth. In other side, mother may deny that she is angry to her children because she loves her children (Zanden 1985, 37).
- e. *Sublimation*. In sublimation, unacceptable behavior is repressed and reemerges in a socially acceptable manner. Such as, a coin collector is

sublimating a desire to retain feces, a boxing fan is sublimating aggression, and an artist is sublimating sexual energies. (Zanden 1985, 37).

- f. *Regression*. Individuals who are under stress may invoke behavior that was characteristic of an earlier stage of development. For example, six years old child who regresses to thumb-sucking or bed-wetting when confronted with a new baby in the home. Woman who ever had pain in the past can lock herself in her imagination world (Zanden 1985, 37).
- g. *Rationalization*. People rationalize by finding a convincing reason for doing something that would otherwise be viewed as unacceptable. For instance, a girl who wants to break with her boy friend but she feels guilty because her boyfriend is good to her. She can go ahead and make the break if she can justify it through rationalization her boyfriend will be better off if he can get to know some other girls (Zanden, 1985, 37).
- h. *Reaction formation*. In reaction formation, people protect themselves against recognizing aspects of their personalities that they would find unacceptable by developing the *opposite* behavior. For instance, woman who has masculine personality will cover herself from her femininity as the result she will become somebody else (Zanden 1985, 37).

3. The *super ego*

The *super ego* is the last component of personality to be developed and represents an internalized version of society's norms and standards of behavior (Hjelle and Ziegler 1992,

90). The *super ego* results from the child's prolonged dependence upon parents. It makes its formal appearance when the child is said to know right from wrong, good from bad, moral from immoral. The *super ego* may consider an individualized reflection of society's "collective conscience" although the child's perceptions of the real values of society may be distorted. The *super ego* attempts to inhibit completely any *id* impulse that would be condemned by society, also tries to guide the person toward absolute perfection in thought, word, and deed. In short, it tries to persuade the *ego* that the pursuit of perfectionistic goals is better than pursuit of realistic ones. According to Taylor (1982, 563) the *super ego* is a refinement of the *ego* – function. It defines the values accepted by a person as a result of identifying with parents in childhood. The *super ego* is also based on social experience. It can be as irrational and impulsive as the *id* in prompting responses which threaten the *ego* and provoke anxiety. The *ego* must control and refine the promptings of the *super ego* and produce sophisticated and rational moral values out of cruder material. Conflicts can occur in these processes which are as stressful as those from the functioning of the *id* system. Freud meant to emphasize that once the *superego* was established within the personality to be fed by the energy of renounced *id* impulses. He says:

From the point of view of instinctual control, or morality, it may be said of the *id* that it is totally non-moral of the *ego* that strives to be moral and of the *superego* that it can be super-moral and then become as cruel as only the *id* can be (Monte 2003, 102).

The *super ego*, therefore, is structured both conscious and

unconscious components and, as a moral or ethical agency. It functions both consciously and unconsciously. That is to say, the super ego has relations with both the *ego* and the *id*.

The *super ego* has two subsystems: they are the *conscience* and the *ego ideal*. The *conscience*, results from experience with punishment for improper behavior. The *ego – ideal* develops when a child is rewarded for proper behavior (Feist 1985, 27). A primitive conscience comes into existence when the child conforms to parental standard out of fear of lasso love or approval. Lateral these ideals are internalized through identification with mother and father.

The theory of dreams

Dreams have been a source of fascination for centuries but it is only comparatively recently that they have become the subject of scientific attention. Freud (in Taylor 1982, 156) gave the study of special dreaming impetus by assigning dreams a crucial role in the preservation of sleep and by claiming that the analysis of dream content was a powerful instrument for the exploration of the unconscious.

Freud (in Danarto 2001, 204) explains that there are some materials which make somebody has a dream, they are:

1. Past experience

The expression of experience of the day before can induce dreams. A dream tends to show the impressions or experiences of the past. For instance the dreamer represents a beautiful girl in his dream whom he saw in the meeting a few days before.

2. Ignored experience

A dream may work as a process of selection according of principles which exist in the outside of one's consciousness. Here, the dreamer will not remember the essential experience but exactly, he will

remember the subordinate or trifling facts and they are often ignored.

3. Childhood experience

A dream saves the impressions from one's childhood age and illuminates in detail from the period of life. The dreamer will remember a good or bad experience in his or her childhood. Then unconsciously the experiences exist in his or her dream.

The notion of mercy killing

Mercy killing is the action or an instance of killing somebody out of pity, e g because they are in severe pain (Hornby 1995, 732). This action can happen to someone whose close relation is in suffering because of pain.

Mercy killing can be called as euthanasia (Greek "easy death"). Active euthanasia or mercy killing is putting to death of a person because of preventing unavoidable suffering. Euthanasia boards were created to make decisions about person said to be suffering from incurable disease or who were in some other way a burden on the state (*Grolier Academic Encyclopedia*, 1983, 310-311).

There is a different opinion about mercy killing such as Hauser says in his essay:

Just as an individual has the right to life, he has the right to death, as he commented on the issue of euthanasia. He continued, from the moment an individual is born, he strives to obtain as much pleasure as possible from life with as little suffering as possible. For this reason he should have the right to decide on matters concerning his life and death with full autonom.

Somehow, there are many different opinions that appear for considering about mercy killing and this happens until the present, especially, thinking about the positive function of mercy killing. In fact it is still done for some reasons and done by someone who wishes that after doing a mercy killing

he or she will get freedom from the pain or horror life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research study uses the qualitative approach to analyze the data. Ratna (2004, 47-48) states that qualitative method is a descriptive analysis whose characteristics of the content almost give full attention to the meaning and message. This method is more mainly to the analysis process rather than to the result of the analysis, therefore the meaning is always changing.

Different from Barelson (in Bautista 1988, 23) who says qualitative analysis is more likely to take the materials as a whole on the assumption that meanings reside in the total impression, qualitative analysis is not in the atomistic combination of measurable units. The basic content unit of analysis is likely to be more complex in qualitative than in quantitative. Quantitative analysis tends to break complex materials down into their components so that they can be reliably measured. Qualitative analysis is not in numerical measurements. In qualitative analysis is more often centering in events that have meaning to be interpreted.

The process of collecting data is considering the substantial of the content, which is observed. The process of this research study is not only based on the interpretation but also the comprehension of the data. In comprehension of the data need an approach and a method. Therefore, this research study uses the method qualitative content analysis.

The data were analyzed by using the content analysis technique. Endraswara (2004, 162) says that content analysis is a hidden message in phenomenology communication, whose content is property for the readers. He says three basics of the content analysis are objective, systematic, and generalization. Objective is held by

theories; systematic because it uses transparent steps; and generalization because of all about the content to get the inference.

Meanwhile, Krippendorff (1981, 21) states that content analysis is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. As a research technique, content analysis involves specialized procedures for processing scientific data. This research technique purposes to provide knowledge, new insights, a representation and practical guide to action.

The data of the research are events whether words, phrases, or sentences that occur in *Beloved* that was written by Toni Morrison. She describes the struggle of life through the main character. The struggle of the main character are living in slavery place, running away from slavery place, as a single parent and protecting her children from slave holders. The struggle of life leads the main character to behave bravely to solve her problem that is a "mercy killing" to her daughter. It occurs because of many causes that lead her to do it.

The main source of the research is *Beloved* by Toni Morrison who is an American African whose novel got a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1988, because of her power in giving messages to the readers in America. The focus of the research is events, which show a "mercy killing" through the main character Sethe who deals with her problems of her life.

The main instrument in this research is the researcher herself. The researcher takes the role as the designer, data location, data analysis, interpreter, and the researcher also uses data cards, related documents and computer to help her work with data.

The data were taken from the words, phrases, clauses, and sentences in the novel which related to the case of Sethe's behaviors. The researcher read the texts comprehensively and

interpretively according to the needs to find the information that is appropriate to the research objectives, and then she made notes of all the data collected into data sheets. The data that are available in units of language are classified according to their relevance. To classify the data, the researcher uses 15 x 11 cm cards which contain units of data, page number, data number and the category.

DISCUSSIONS

In this part, the researcher presents the description and discussion of the research study. In this step, the data of the study are used to verify and clarify the findings and discussion.

The data sources which are applied in these research findings are from the evidences in the novel *Beloved* and they are called as data analysis. Data analysis is reflected into data cards that they show some evidences that are needed. Data cards are classified into three topics. The first topic is the causes of Sethe's mercy killing, this topic consists of four subtopics those are: Sethe is an exslave woman; Sethe is an African American; To get a better place; and To get freedom forever. The second topic is the way of Sethe's mercy killing. The last topic which is discussed in this chapter is the impacts of Sethe's mercy killing. This topic has four subtopics, those are: toward herself; toward her family; toward the society; and toward her love.

The Causes of Sethe's Mercy Killing

The researcher divides the causes of Sethe's mercy killing into four parts as follows: Sethe is an exslave woman; Sethe is an African American; to get a better place; and to get freedom forever.

Sethe is an exslave woman

In slavery time life was not easy. This also happened to Sethe as a woman who was sent to the slavery place (Sweet Home) since she was a teenager until she married with Halle and had four children. Sweet Home was a place for slaves who were treated inhumanely by slave holder. The slave

who stayed in Sweet Home would choose to run away from that house because they could not stand with the treatment of slave holders. It was just the name but it was not sweet at all. Sethe ever lived in that place but she succeeded running away from Sweet Home." 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...It wasn't sweet and it sure wasn't home" (Morrison, 1988, 14). She was pregnant when she had to run away because she could not stand anymore with the treatments of white (school teacher) who treated her like an animal rather than like a human.

Eighteen fifty-five. The day my baby was born. You had that baby did you? Never thought you'd make it.... Running off pregnant. Had to. Couldn't be waiting. She lowered her head and thought, as he did, how unlikely it was that she had made it. And if hadn't been for that girl looking for velvet, she never would have (Morrison 1988, 8).

Sethe's condition was very weak at that time. She was afraid of slave holders if they could catch her, moreover she was pregnant. In her mind was only run and run. Her *conscious* level of her past experience influences her life basically in her personality. It can be proved that she could not forget her past experience. Her memorizing of her past experience leads her mind to form self-concept that she did not want to get her past experience anymore. It can be said that she got the trauma because of her past experience. Such as, Sethe bore her baby almost by herself even though there was a white girl helped her it was not easy for her.

All by yourself too. He was proud of her and annoyed by her. Proud she had done it; annoyed that she had not needed Halle or him in the doing. Almost by myself. Not all by myself. A white girl helped me. Then she helped herself too, God bless her (Morrison 1988, 8).

Sethe was thirteen when she was sent to sweet home "Sethe was thirteen when she came to Sweet Home and already iron eyed" (Morrison 1998,10). Psychologically, it is not good for a teenager's mental who was a slave. Sethe's childhood almost was spent in slavery place. She was too young for learning a life with the wildness there. Therefore, her personality concept is abnormal than other children in a normal condition and situation. Sethe's background is different from other people. It makes Sethe's view is also different with other people. Sethe always remembered when she and her friends (six Pauls they are Paul A to Paul F) lived in Sweet Home "The boy had done what Sweet Home had, what working like an ass and living like a dog had not" (Morrison1988, 41).

Moreover, Sethe saw her mother was hung in front of her eyes and this influenced her life so much. She didn't understand and she felt unimpressed when she saw it. "Hung by the time they cut her down nobody could tell whether she had a circle and across or not, least of all me and I did look" (Morrison 1988, 61). Sethe always memorized the treatment of slave holder to her mother. She brought her past memory into her present of her life. It means that she never forget her past memory to continue her life.

Sethe's suffering did not end, it always came continuously even after she had been married by Halle. This marriage, she hoped, was a good shine to go ahead for having a future but in fact she didn't get at all about the future. She was raped in front of her husband when both of them as slaves in Sweet Home.

I am full God damn if of two boys with mossy booth, one sucking on....the other holding me down, their book reading teacher watching and writing it up. I am still full of that God damn it. I can't go back and add more. Add my husband to it, watching, above me in the loft – hiding close by – the one place

he thought no one would look at him looking down on what I couldn't look at all. And not shopping them – looking and letting it happen (Morrison 1988,70).

The evidence above shows that she was really alone, there was no protection, no judgment, no fairness, and no defense from her husband or another person. Being a slave was so hurting for Sethe, "They took my milk and he saw it and he didn't come down" (Morrison 1988, 69). Occasionally, Sethe could forget all her past but she could not do it. Her past was too hard to forget, it was too nasty for her life even after she had a freedom from Sweet Home and she freed herself by running away. The present of her life was not easy either. The nastiness of her life and the meanness of the dead made her stronger to continue her life in the present.

Suspended between the nastiness of life and the meanness of the dead she couldn't get interested in leaving life or living it, let alone the fright of two creeping-off boys. Her past had been like her present – intolerable – and since she knew death was anything but forgetfulness, she used the little energy left her for pondering color (Morrison 1988, 4).

Being slave women are different from being normal women because everything for slaves is limited. For instance, slave women cannot give their love as similar as normal women. This case also happened to Sethe that she could not give love much to her children.

For a used – to – be- slave woman to love anything that much was dangerous, especially if it was her children she has settled on to love. The best thing, he knew was to love just a little bit everything, just a little bit, so when they broke its back, or shoved it in a croaker sack, well, may be you'd have a little love left over for the next one (Morrison 1988, 45).

Intuition of a mother to her children is taking care of them. Sethe

loved her children but her affection in giving love to her children was limited because she was a slave. She only could give her love to her children just little. She could give everything to her children just little bit. Basically, a person can have a good personality when he or she has a good past experience but in contradictory if someone has a bad past experience such as being a slave, it will influence the continuing of his or her life. In Sethe's case, she always memories her bad past experiences. Her bad past experiences always hover Sethe's life. Her *conscious* in memorizing the bad past experiences forms her personality. Then, her personality becomes unstable because of Sethe's background. It leads her to do something without considering with other people such as when she decides to kill her daughter.

Sethe is an African American

Sethe is an African American, it means that she is a black woman and usually white people call her a Negro "Sethe had had twenty-eight days-the travel of one whole moon- of unslaved life....days of company: knowing the names of forty, fifty other negroes, their views, habits; where they had been and what done" (Morrison 1988, 95). That word describes life is not easy for an African American. Sethe was a black woman who could not love her children and it was something miracle for caring children for her as a Negro (African American). Baby Suggs (Sethe's mother-in-law) said to Sethe:

Not a house in the country ain't packed to its rafters with some dead Negro's grief. We luck this ghost is a baby. My husband's spirit was to come back in here? Or yours? Don't talk to me, you luck. You got there left. Three pulling at your skirts and just one raising hell from the other side. Be thankful, why don't you? I had eight. Every one of them gone away from me. Four taken four chased, and all. I expect, worrying somebody's house into evil. (Morrison 1988, 5).

In addition, Mr. Garner as the slave holder of Sweet Home would call every black man as he wanted without any of human consideration and in his mind black people were always not more than as slaves, "I wouldn't have no nigger men round my wife" (Morrison 1988, 10-11). Some white people called black people as nigger. Black people under white did not have any right to do what they wanted and it happened almost in America even there were some different ways, "white people better here than Kentucky but you may have to scramble some." (Morrison 1988, 41). This evidence is a comparison of how white people treated black people in Ohio and Kentucky. Somehow, Sethe lived in Ohio after she ran away from slavery place.

Black people were sent to America in spread and they were governed by white separately from their families so they had to find them and it was so hard.

Odd clusters and strays of Negroes wandered the back roads and compacts from Schenectady to Jackson. Dazed but insistent, they searched each other out for word of cousin, an aunt, a friend who once said "call on me anytime you get her Chicago just call on me". Some of them were running from family that could not support them some to family: some were running from dead crops, dead kin, life threats, and took – over land (Morrison 1988, 52).

The description above shows how most of black people were treated regardless their age, body, and gender badly by white people. African American who lived in America as slaves were far from their family. It was because they were sent from Africa to America in spread. Some of them tried to find their family who were still alive. Some were running from dread crops, dead kin, life threats and took-over land. Negroes or African American lived in a fear of the slave catchers who would catch them anywhere and anytime. They would be caught by slave catchers for becoming them as slaves.

And him. Eighteen seventy – four and white folks were still on the loose whole towns wiped clean of Negroes; eighty – seven lynching in one year alone in Kentucky: for colored schools burned to the ground: grown men raped by the crew: property taken, necks broken. He smelled skin, skin and hot blood. The skin was one thing. But human blood cooked in a lynch five was a whole other thing. (Morrison 1988,180).

The evidences above described black people were treated inhumanely by white people. Black or African American people who lived in America were treated more like an animal than a human because they were slaves. Sethe is an African American and she was a slave. Therefore, she feels that white people treated her like an animal. She is not respected by white people because she is a black woman .Sethe does not have any authority to fight or to against white people in physically. Related to her mercy killing is to show the disagreement of slave holders and white people who treat black people or African American as similar as animals.

To get a better place

Everyone in the world has reason to decide something, therefore they can continue their normal life. In similar perspective, Sethe had decided to do a mercy killing because she had many reasons, one of her reasons was to get a better place for her daughter who had been killed by her. It could not be avoided that the place where Sethe was a slave was the very bad place and she thought that no one of her children had to go there, that was enough for her only but not for her children, not for them.

If you go there and stand in the place where it was it will happen again, it will be there for you, waiting for you, so, Denver you can't never go there. Never. Because even though it's all over-over and done with – it's going to always be there waiting for you. That's how come I had to get all my children out. No matter what. (Morrison 1988, 36).

The reason above is one of Sethe's *consciousnesses* when her perspective led her *id* for doing mercy killing.

In self-defense mechanism there is *repression* which avoids conscious feelings of anxiety and guilt. This also happened to Sethe that she defended herself with what she had done and she thought that was right and she had strong reasons that it was not her mistake,

Well, all I'm saying is that's a selfish pleasure I never had before. I couldn't let all that go back to where it was and I couldn't let her nor any of them live under school teacher. That was out (Morrison 1988, 163).

Sethe felt the suffering of life when she was still living in slavery place. Abruptness of School teacher was really influencing her personality. After she ran away from Sweet Home, she wished only for protecting her children from slave holder or catcher. It was looked as selfishness but she did not care what other people would say about her. She just wanted her children did not go back to the slavery place and lived under School teacher. Her *ego* here worked strongly and probably it came out from her memories of her past when she was a slave, they were too strong and hurt her much. Meanwhile, she always covered her attitude like she never did a mistake and she felt that she was right

Yeah. It didn't work, did it? Did it work?...It worked. She said how? Your boys gone you don't know where. One girl dead, the other won't leave the yard. How did it work? They didn't at Sweet Home school teacher ain't got em. May be there's worse. 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, what you did was wrong Sethe. I should have gone on back there? Taken my babies back there? There could have been a way. Some other way (Morrison 1988,165).

She believed that she was right with her decision. She explained it to Paul D that her baby was in a better

place. She also felt right that all of her children were not in Sweet Home as slaves. She thought that she had protected her children from slave holder. In fact, she lost her sons because they ran away, one of her daughters died and another one still lived with her.

She made her decision as a rational reason even though in other people's perspective it could not be accepted and in self-defense mechanism it is called as *rationalization*. "They did not belong to an exslave who had probably never carried one hundred pounds to the side or picked okra with a baby on her back" (Morrison 1988, 137).

According to Sethe's thought what she had done was right. Having a better place was the main reason for Sethe in doing mercy killing. This reason could not be accepted by a normal person. In the other words, Sethe had an abnormal personality because of her bad past experiences.

To get freedom forever

In this part Sethe showed how strong, how right her decision for doing mercy killing was, or such kind of self-defenses. *Projection* was appeared by Sethe's *ego* because too much white came to her house and she thought that they would take her children and because her past always hovered her life

To Sethe, the future was a matter of keeping at the past at bay the better life. The "better life" she believed she and Denver were living was simply not that other one. The fact that Paul D had come out of "That other one" into her bed was better too; and the notion of a future with him, or for that matter without him, was beginning to stroke her mind. As Denver the job Sethe had of keeping her from the past that was still waiting for her was all that mattered. (Morrison 1988, 42)

Sethe's *id* existed in irrational for other people's view but not for her. She believed that her baby would get a better life, a freedom by her hands. A reason to get freedom forever was right

according to Sethe's perception but it was not for the other people. In contradictory, the other people could not understand what she had done. It is called *sublimation*.

What she go and do that for? On account of beating? Hell, He'd been beat a million times and he was white. Once it hurt so bad and made him so mad he'd smashed the well bucket. Another time he took it out on Samson-a few tossed rocks was all. But no beating ever made him....I mean no way he could have.... What she want to go and do that for? And that is what he asked the sheriff, who was standing there amazed like the rest of them, but not shaking. He was swallowing hard, over and over again. What she want to go and do that for? (Morrison 1988, 150).

Most of people who was standing and watching the incident of mercy killing that had been done by Sethe confused how she dared doing that to her baby. Some of them were amazed of her doing, they did not believe it and did not understand the aims of Sethe's action. On the contrary, Sethe convinced herself with her reason that she was right. Her action of trying to kill her children was performing abruptly. She showed that action among the sheriff, slave catcher, School teacher and her nephews. Sethe's *ego* raised when they saw her tried to kill her children there was no doubt to kill her children in front of them for rescuing her children's life.

All testimony to the results of a little so-called freedom imposed on people who needed every care and guidance in the world to keep them on form the cannibal life they preferred (Morrison 1988, 151).

Sethe's *ego* worked stronger because her *regression* had been watched by the other people who saw it. The *ego* came to Sethe's mind because of her memorizing of slavery place. She did not want her daughter became a slave. She loved her daughter but she had to protect her daughter from slave

holder. It was a difficult choice for her but she had to decide it. Then, she killed her daughter.

Moreover, Sethe had thought that she succeeded in doing mercy killing to her daughter who got freedom forever. Her obsession was making the condition of her children was different from her condition in the past such as when she had desire did not need permission.

A woman, a child, a brother – a big love like that would split you wide open in Alfred – Georgia. He knew exactly what she meant: to get to a place where you could love anything you chose – not to need permission for desire – well now, that was freedom (Morrison 1988, 162).

Sethe thought that her daughter's life was in her hand. She had a right to control her daughter life. She did not need an advice how to care, to protect and to love her children because she felt that she had right for her children's life. Therefore, Sethe's desire for doing mercy killing could not stop her *id* and it was continued to her *ego* then it led to her *superego* and she did it.

The Way of Sethe's Mercy Killing

Something happened is to answer how it could happen. In this topic the researcher presents how Sethe did mercy killing after finding some evidences in the novel *Beloved*. In psychoanalysis, this part can be called as the successful *superego* that a baby was killed by her mother.

Not only did she have to live out her years in a house palsied by the baby's fury at having its throat – cut, but those ten minutes she spent pressed up against down – colored stone studded with star chips, her knees wide open as the grave, were longer than life, more alive, more pulsating than the baby blood that soaked her fingers like oil (Morrison 1988, 5).

It happened suddenly and quickly and it was started by the coming of School teacher, slave catcher and a sheriff, "When the four horseman come – school teacher, one nephew, one slave

catcher, and a sheriff." (Morrison, 1988:148) After the coming of them then Sethe's *id* rose to her *ego* and soon she did a mercy killing and her *superego* came up. The well- developed *super ego* acts to control aggressive impulses through the process of *repression*. It cannot produces *repression* by itself, but can order the *ego* to do so. The *superego* watches closely over the *ego* in judging its actions and intentions.

Smile even, like a child caught dead with his hand in the jelly jar, and when you reached for the rope to tie him, well, even, then you could not tell. The very nigger with his head hanging and a little jelly-jar smile on his face could all of a sudden roar, like a bull or some such, and commence to do unbelievable things. Grab the rifle at 'its mouth; throw himself at the one holding it-anything. Otherwise you ended up killing what you were paid to bring back alive. Unlike a snake or a bear, added nigger could not be skinned for profit and was not worth his own dead weigh in coin (Morrison 1988, 148).

The existence of them there was as the witnesses of the tragedy that was made by Sethe. Most of them who stared there did not understand what made her become so wild and uncontrolled such as an animal. She had an attitude like an animal because she was influenced by her back ground. Her personality was not stable anymore like normal person. Her childhood was spent in slavery place and she commonly was treated like an animal there. Her thinking was limited because she was an ex-slave woman. Therefore, she did not think other ways except kill her daughter.

Inside, two boys bleed in the saw-dust and dirt at the feet of a nigger woman holding a blood – soaked child to her chest with one hand and an infant by the heels in the other. She did not look at them; she simply swung a second time, when out of however – in the ticking time to stare at – the old nigger boy still mewling, ran through the door behind them and snatched the baby

from the arch of it's mother's sing (Morrison 1988, 149).

Killing her daughter by a saw and cutting her baby's throat could not be imagined how it hurt her baby. It was very complicated to understand, "She turned to him, and glancing at the baby he was holding, made a low sound in her throat as though she'd made a mistake, left the salt out of the bread or something" (Morrison 1988,151).

Sethe had an unstable personality and it could be called as an abnormal personality. It was caused of her past experiences. In her past experiences she lived in abnormal way that she lived such as an animal than a human. She was not ever thought by the teacher how to live in a right way. She learned to live in the world by herself. Her self-concept was formed by the experiences in the slavery place. That incident was not a normal incident, it was too strange, too hard to be accepted. Even, for her daughter's goodness it was too rough for a woman but she did.

Sethe reached up for the baby without letting the dead one go. Baby Suggs shook her head. "One at time" She said and traded the living for the dead, which she carried into the keeping room. When she came back, Sethe was aiming a bloody nipple into the baby's mouth.... So Denver took her mother's milk right along with the blood of her sister (Morrison 1988, 152).

After killing her baby her expression was just silent. She took her baby from Stamp Paid and carried it on her shoulders. She brought her baby to the keeping room and gave the baby milk. So, the baby (Denver) took her mother's milk right along with the blood of her sister. Obviously, Sethe had a different behaviour from a normal woman. She led her baby took her milk while her body was bloody. She did not clean it first but led it be. She was an abnormal woman because she could do it in front of a lot of people there without any fear feeling.

In abnormal personality, Sethe is categorized into *delinquent personality*.

She did it in weak conscience but here, she also can be categorized in *psychopathic personality* because she expressed her anger to the white people by killing her daughter. It can be seen as a rebellion to them as a thought that she disagreed with their treatments to the slaves.

CONCLUSION

Beloved is one of Morrison's works. The *Beloved* novel describes the situation of slavery time in America. At that time slavery influenced an individual very deeply, especially for African American slaves. Their problems did not only finish when as slaves but also continued when they did not become slaves anymore. It means the hovering of the slavery time is so strong until it can influence an ex-slave person for doing anything to get a freedom. It influences the slaves not only physically but also psychologically.

The conclusions of this research study are past experience, personality and mercy killing. Those parts answer this research study in relation to Sethe's mercy killing. In getting the conclusions the researcher analyzed and studied the novel through the main character.

Someone will have a good personality if he or she has a good past experience. In fact, persons always remember what had happened in the past as the memory to go ahead to their future. On the contrary, the bad past experience may hover someone who has it. She or he will not live as normal as common people who have a good past experience. A person who has a bad past experience can do anything as a form of defense to protect his or her property. According to him or her that attitude is normal and logical but it is not for the other persons who have a good past experience. The bad past experience is too strong in influencing the person who has it and it can change him or her not only physically but also psychologically.

Personality of persons can be seen from their attitudes or behaviors. There are two kinds of personality; those are normal and unstable personality. There are many causes in the formation of good or bad personality. One of the causes is past experience because it determines what kind of personality a person will have. Logically, if a person has a good past experience, she or he will have a good personality. On the contrary, someone who has a bad past experience she or he will have bad personality. For instance, a person who has a bad past experience will do anything to protect her or his property without considering what other people will say. She or he can kill someone whom she or he loves as a form of too much love. In this case, the result might be in the form of mercy killing. The way of killing can also reflect the kind of her or his personalities. Other people will say it as an abnormal personality, but not for those who regard it as self-defense for their personal reasons. Hence, she or he can be said has an unstable personality.

Somehow, mercy killing invites pro and contra perception until today. In this research study mercy killing is little bit different from other cases because it happens not because of illness but for protecting from slave hunters. Moreover, mercy killing here is done by a mother to her daughter. She did it as a self-defense and saving her daughter from slave hunters. In fact, the effect of it gives her more sufferings than good things. Therefore, only regretting is left for her.

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