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## ECHOES OF THE ABJECT: TRACING EXISTENTIAL DESPAIR IN GLÜCK'S POETRY

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### **Abstract**

*In literature, existential themes reflect the difficulty of claiming one's identity in a shattered modern world. In the face of existential uncertainty, existentialism emphasizes the value of emotional honesty, self-awareness, and sincerity while exposing the vulnerability of the human situation. Abjection is a physical and psychological reaction to that which threatens the sense of identity and rules and limitations we apprehend as the norm. This study aims to explore abjection in Louise Glück poetry from the theoretical lens of Kristeva's theory of abjection. The three poems "The Empty Glass", "Lamium", "Mother and Child" from various collection of poem *The Seven Ages* (2001), *The Wild Iris* (1992) exemplify the engagement of loss, alienation, suffering, emptiness, and breakdown of identity. The study is qualitative in nature, paying attention primarily on the themes as well as the presence of abjection in the poems due to the challenge of boundaries between self and other. Through an examination of the sharp differences between expectations and reality, the disruption of societal rules, and the deep sensation of absence and loss, this research shows how Glück's poetry expresses the existential struggle with emptiness. This study integrates to add deeper insight into works of Glück on how the battle for identity, fulfillment, and meaning in an indifferent and bizarre environment sheds light on the potent interplay between abjection and existentialism.*

**Keywords:** Existentialism, Abjection, Self, Abject, Object, Subject, Louise Glück

### **1. Introduction**

Existentialism is a sense of questioning the state of your existence. The roots of existentialism meet with the Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard (1813-1855), who contemplates on man's relationship with God. He termed man as finite and God as infinite which ultimately is an impossibility of meeting together. Other aspects like alienation, loss, suffering, and death are linked with existentialism. Alienation is a state of isolation and loneliness (Anjum, 2019). In other words, Erick Fromm refers to "alienation as a means of experience in which a person finds himself as an alien or more fully." separation is the source of alienation and by staying alone and isolated from the external world, the person ends up suffer and go through a sense of loss.

Louise Glück was a renowned American Poet and essayist. She had published numerous collections of essays on poetry along with her 12 books of poetry. She was born on 22 April 1943 in New York City and since her teenage, she suffered from anorexia nervosa. She wrote her first collection of poetry, *Firstborn* in 1986 and became an acclaimed poet after writing her second collection, *The House on Marshland* in 1975. According to Robert Hass, "She is one of the purest and most accomplished lyric poet new writing." Reviewers have labeled her poetry as "bleak" or "dark" because of the skillful manner in which she manages to include



rejection, loss, sadness, and loneliness in her poems. Stephen Burt said that she had visually captured alienation and sorrow in his assessment of her collection *Averno* (2006) (Green, 2024). Glück's poetry mostly deals with death-related trauma, rejection, loss, broken relationships, and attempts at healing and rebirth. Swedish Academy observed her poetry as "the self listens for what is left of its dreams and delusions, and nobody can be harder than she is confronting the illusions of the self." she effectively talks about disappointment, loss, death, and trauma in her poems which is due to her own experiences. As she shared in her interview:

"I have nothing—I've used up whatever it is that I had and must wait for the well to fill up again. That's what you tell yourself, but it doesn't feel like a sanguine experience of sitting quietly while the well fills up. It seems like an experience of desolation, loss, and even a kind of panic. The thing you would wish to be doing, you can't do. I've been through a lot of those periods, and what seems to happen, or what has happened in the past, is that after a year or two, or whatever the duration, another sound emerges—and it is another sound" (Cole, 2023).

The idea of the abject is evident throughout Louise Glück's poetry through themes of loss, alienation, and existentialism. Glück frequently examines the range of complex emotions brought on by loneliness, the pursuit of purpose in life, and the deep sensation of emptiness that can accompany bereavement. Kristeva's concept of abjection elucidates what disturbs identity, sense of self, system, and order often causing a sense of horror or repulsion as one faces the boundaries of self.

In this study, the poems of Louise Glück will be used to analyze how Glück heralds the boundaries between self and other, life and death, joy and sorrow. The elements like existentialism, emptiness, loss, suffering, and alienation are abject which disrupts the narrator's sense of self and identity. The narrator ended up getting into a state of existential and emotional turmoil. Kristeva believes that the narrator in a literary text is a subject that uses his/her work as a means of reflecting the crisis or feeling caused by internal conflict as well as the world surrounding him/her (Olya & Bahadori, 2022). The present article studies the concept of abjection in Glück's poems to point out the elements of existentialism, alienation, and loss.

### **1.1. Statement of the Problem**

There has been great focus of the frequent themes of loss, alienation, existentialism and suffering that related the person's feelings around modern world. Louise Glück is famous for her emotional and psychological intrigued layered poetry, which kept the spark of search for meaning in existential emptiness and identity dissolution of modern world. Despite her widespread contribution, there remains the limited scholarly work through the lens of Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection. However, the lack of focused analysis of Glück's voice in the for of various collection of poems with theory of abjection lack the critical gap.

### **1.2. Significance of the Study**

The study is significant in nature as it contributes to the nuanced reading of Glück's poems through newer lens of Kristeva's theory of abjection. The psychological and existential dimensions of the poem highlights the personal trauma and emotional fragmentation within ones life. The study aids to provide how Glück embodies rapture between self and other via connection between abjection and existentialism.



### 1.3. Delimitations

The study is delimited to the analysis of three specific poems “The Empty Glass”, “Lamium” and “Mother and Child”, selected from Louise Glück's collections *The Seven Ages* (2001), and *The Wild Iris* (1992). The analysis is limited to interpret poems from the lens of Julia Kristeva’s Theory of Abjection. The focus remains on the textual analysis of the poem from the thematic concerns of the study. It neither delves into Glück's whole body of work or discuss other theoretical philosophies like structuralism, feminism, or ecocriticism.

### 1.4. Research Questions

1. How themes of existentialism, alienation, loss, and suffering are present in Glück’s poems?
2. In what ways Julia Kristeva’s theory of Abjection provide deeper conception of the interplay between abjection and existentialism?
3. How does Glück's poetry's sense of loss and absence add to the existential investigation of fulfillment and meaning?

### 2. Literature Review

This section intends to analyze the already discussed themes in the poems of Louise Glück. Louise Glück is an American essayist and poet. She has also won 2020 Nobel Prize in literature. The judges praised her "for her unmistakable poetic voice that with austere beauty makes individual existence universal". Her collection of poems revolves around universal themes of Loss, suffering, death, failed relationships, nature, trauma, and survival.

(Alwash & Saeed, 2022) The Trauma Of Death In Louise Glück's Selected Poems: A Psychoanalytic Study throws light on trauma as a word from various perspectives. In Glück's collection of poems, *Ararat* (1990), the writer has analyzed the themes of death in the modern time period. The articles discussed how the poet's personal life experiences i.e., father's hollow life, dreadful irony, and inability of her mothers to express emotions have been reflected in her collection of poems. The study adopted Caruth C (2016) theoretical framework of Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, narrative, and History to analyze the trauma of death contemplated in the personal life and modern life of society. (Alwash & Saeed ) concludes that death is a primary part of her life as well as her father’s and mother’s life. and so that it is prominent in her text as well.

In addition, the themes of peace in the context of Nature have been discussed in the poems *Crater lake* and *Averno* by (Azcuy, 2013). The author analyzed how the poet employed ancient mythology in her poem *Averno* which hits the aspects of Homeric's *Hymn to Demeter* and Aristophanes *Peace* which talks about the milieu of post/11 war. The goddess of such ancient mythologies has been framed in her poems highlighting the conversations of violence and war. Moreover, the study also heralded the dilemmas faced by women in new-millennium wars and the post-modern world accompanying silence and post-humanism. Themes like war and peace, post-human, Mist, Myths, Peace, and Earth have been deeply studied with the conclusion that humans are triggering war till the end and that nature and peace is selflessly serving mankind. Additionally, six collections of Glück poems *Ararat* (1990), *The Wild Iris* (1992), *Meadowlands* (1996), *Vita Nova* (1999), *The Seven Ages* (2001), and *Averno* (2006) have been held together by (Yit mun, 2009) in his study titled *From Ararat to Averno: An analysis of the plot in Louise Glück's poetry*. The study aimed to interpret the plot in all of her poems including the lyrics and verses mentioned in the text. The study analyzed how all collections of the poems



are sustained by the particular plot in depicting the poet's life along with their journey of survival, emotional healing, and self-reliance in the phase of her quest to find meaning in her existence. The theoretical approach of Jonathan Culler "The Pursuit of Signs 165," who considers lyric mode as the triumph of apostrophic has been exerted in attempting to find the meaning and plot. Finally, the poet begins with a confessional voice in *Ararat*, followed by multiple dialogic voices in *Meadowlands* and *Vita Nova*, along with mythological ones in *Meadowlands*. As the poet's autobiographical journey of spiritual and existential self-discovery continues, *The Seven Ages* (2001) and *Averno* (2006) develop more and more allegorical voices. the apostrophic style of the poems, and the detached and oracular tone of the poet, the volumes go beyond narrating an individual journey and instead invite the reader to relate personally to the events and epiphanies in the poet's life.

(Gopan, 2023) states theoretical approach of Julia Kristeva's concept of *Abjection*, the theory of Abjection is a psychoanalytic concept which refers to the feeling of disgust and horror a person went through when something menaces one's sense of identity and boundaries. The theory asserts the distinction between object and subject. The object is the one that creates the distinction between self and other causing feelings of discomfort. The author talks about how Dalit women are facing discrimination based on gender, religion, healthcare, and economic opportunities. In India, Dalit women are deemed as an element of disgust, and oppression. The physic of Dalit women are regarded as "other" and they are treated as sexual slaves and impure. In this study, the author indicates how the disregarding of Dalit women frames their abjection as being part of marginalized group. The character Aleena is displayed as eliminated and rejected as in the poems she is chiefly represented as demons, vampires, ghosts, and mentally retarded. Through the lens of Kristeva's theory, the author summed up how Dalit women are in a miserable condition on the exploitation of their subjectivity by the hands of society. The dual existence lies in terms of fear and desire as the subject rejects the abject and society rejects the Dalits. The objectification of Dalit women is based on their dark complexion, Dalit identity, and female sexual orientation.

Furthermore, (Elahi, 2021) explored the abject in T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*. The study attempted to find out the themes of hopelessness and desolation in the poem through the theoretical lens of Julia Kristeva's concept of Abjection and Jacques Lacan's notion of *jouissance*. The study concluded that although the poem talks about desolation but The fundamental argument is that, despite the seeming horror of desolation, the poem is compelled to constantly refers to it, as if it were being driven to it despite its will. Therefore, death and desolation are not the subject nor the object rather they are abject of the poem. Meanwhile, the article "A Study of Golshiri's Prince Ehtejab, based on Kristeva's Abjection Theory", explored the theoretical aspect of Kristeva's abjection in clarifying the connection between psychoanalysis and the language as notion of abjection. The process of abjection occurs when the linguistic subject enters the symbolic domain, views everything that challenges its subjectivity as the other, and attempts to suppress, reject, and deny it. The novel deals with pains, sufferings, and evils of Prince Ehtejab's soul. In the end, the main character in his quest to rid himself of the pain and search for purity and desired individuality, ended up surrendering himself to death. The abjection symbolizes the text as a superior signifier. To sum up, the subject (main character) finds the abject both attractive and repelling therefore, the mother-child relationship and, denial of mother by the prince is an attempt to save the privacy of the subject as a result of fear and terror over the subject. Hence, it is said that the literary text is



regarded as signifier which aims to reveal sufferings, pain, sins of human (Olya & Bahadori, 2022).

Various researches have been conducted on various texts from the perspective of Kristeva's theory of Abjection. This research uses Kristeva's theory of Abjection to touch the aims of exploring the various aspects of existentialism, suffering, loss, alienation, pain in Louise Glück's collection of poems. Existential themes such as search for meaning, struggle with identity and isolation, mortality, and alienation can be explored through the application of Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection.

### **3. Research Methodology**

This research employs a qualitative analysis of texts to examine abjection and existentialist themes in Louise Glück's poems "The Empty Glass", "Lamium", and "Mother and Child". The poems are closely read using the framework of Julia Kristeva's theory of abjection with particular attention to the way Glück represents loss, identity disintegration, and emotional fragmentation. The study also employs existentialist concepts to illuminate how the poems capture inner struggle and the quest for meaning.

The primary data source for this research is the three poems picked from collection of poems from Louise Glück's poetry. Secondary sources include Scholarly papers, critical essays, and other pertinent theoretical works that offer different viewpoint on existentialism, alienation and concept of Abjection. The methodology is entirely theoretical and literary, relying on secondary sources for the interpretation of themes within Glück's broader dimension of work.

#### **3.1. Theoretical Framework**

Julia Kristeva is a French-Bulgarian writer, psychoanalyst, and notable figure in the movement of post-structuralism. She has prominently taken part in the development of post-structuralist literary theory. Her contributions to the social sciences and humanities were also honored by Holberg International Memorial Prize in 2004. She was complimented due to her innovative queries on language, culture, and literature including her theories of semiotics and abjection. She has published more than thirty books i.e., *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974) and *The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1980).

Kristeva in her theory of Abjection in "The Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection" (1980) explored the abject and abjection.

The literal meaning of the word 'abject' from *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, refers "abject" as "Brought low, miserable; craven, degraded, despicable, self-abasing." and the word "abjection" means "state of misery or degradation." however, this is ambivalent meaning of abjection. There are various aspects that society deemed as abjection women's bodies, human sacrifices, waste, death, loss, murder, cannibalism, and decay. The concept of abjection given by Kristeva is a bit different in that the word abject means the things that make us feel horror and disgust. The body of the subject and object are blurred out by the delicate boundary. The abjection is an act of separating the subject from the object. She gave the example of baby and mother initially child sees himself as part of the mother but as time passes, once the baby recognizes his reflection and seeks individuality, that baby becomes 'the self' and the mother becomes the 'other'. The rejection of the mother followed by the quest of self-reflection and individuality is the first act of abjection. As Kristeva (1982) says:

"The abject," she writes, "is not an ob-ject [object of desire] facing me, which I name or imagine. Nor is it an ob-jest [jettisoned object], an otherness ceaselessly fleeing in a systematic quest for desire." (Robbins, 2012).



In other words, Barbara Creed in *Horror And The Monstrous Feminine: An Imaginary Abjection*(1993) writes:

“The place of the abject is where meaning collapses, the place where I am not. The abject threatens life, it must be radically excluded from the place of the living subject, propelled away from the body and deposited on the other side of an imaginary border which separates the self from that which threatens the self” (Pentony, 1996).

Kristeva defines abjection as how and why human feels disgusted and horror towards particular things and why are they still attracted to them. Abjection is a physical and psychological reaction to that which threatens the sense of identity and rules and limitations we apprehend as the norm. Whereas, The term "abject" is usually used to refer to disgusting or unpleasant parts of our bodies, such as puke, menstruation, death, and delivery, as well as anything that compromises their integrity(Raine, 2024).

However, it is not "an object facing me, which I name or imagine," nonetheless, that this "menace" is, neither it is an object, an otherness ceaselessly feeling in a systematic quest of desire" (Kristeva 1982, as cited in Elahi, 2021, p.26). When an adult confronts the abject he/she feels threatened and encounters a sense of helplessness. The sense of self is something that is not a part of us in terms of recognition and non-identity, human and non-human, harasses the self. This is expressed concisely by Kristeva as follows: "*The abject has only one quality of the object and that is being opposed to I.*" (Kristeva, 1982). In addition, She defines" an abject does not 'respect borders, positions, rules' and 'disturbs identity, system, order' (Kristeva, 1982). Death is also included in abject. Not that which signifies death but that which "shows me what is permanently thrust aside to live".It is crucial to remember that those who are considered "filthy" or "unclean" are not deplorable because they are dirty; rather, it is because they are a part of the group that "disturbs identity, system, order." what disregards boundaries, rules, and regulations. Abjection involves a crisis of place. It draws the subject to the limits of its defining boundaries, bringing forth an identity crisis: what is that? Is that me? What am I?(Becker-Leckrone 32; Elahi, 2021, p.26).

This research paper will analyze the presence of alienation, existentialism, and suffering in the selected poems of Lousie Glück through the theoretical lens of Kristeva's theory of abjection. Louise Glück's poems deals with universal themes of loss, alienation, existentialism, which closely aligns with the theory of Kristeva. There are some of the poems of her which directly integrates abjection in her works. "*The Triumph of Achilles*", the abjection is embodied by the death of Patroclus and the subsequent grieving on Achilles. The dead body of Patroclus is a figure for the abject as it unsettles these boundaries—between life and death; between self and other. As he faces the tragedy and its devastating force, Achilles has a deep sense of alienation and an identity crisis during his grieving process. "*The Drowned Children*", "*Parable of the Hostages*" reflects the sense of abjection in the submerged bodies drowned in the water, cause disturbance between the life and death. The witnesses reaction of sadness and grief is a response to the confrontation with the abject. In later poem, the abject is the state of being hostage. Which eventually aids in disrupting the subject's identity and independence. The characters engaged experience an existential crisis as a result of the hostage scenario, which signifies a place where the barriers between life and death and freedom and captivity are fuzzy.The characters engaged experience an existential crisis as a result of the hostage scenario, which signifies a place where the barriers between life and death and freedom and captivity are fuzzy.



The required themes to be analyzed are presented in the poems of Glück, Kristeva's theory emerges in the moments of loss, alienation, detachment and more specifically in the disruption of self and order. This research aims to analyse how existential struggles are heralded in Glück's poetry evaluating on how the abject undermines the coherence of identity and stability of reconstruction.

#### **4. Analysis and Discussion**

The section of this research tends to focus on the presence of the elements of alienation, loss, suffering, desolation, and existentialism in various poems of Glück via the theoretical framework of Kristeva's concept of Abjection. The abject is something that is cast out and alluded to, the process of abjection is a psychological scenario in which an individual tries to detach himself from the abject to maintain his identity. This process is a reaction to the breakdown of the boundaries between self and other. This 'self' is a person's internal conflict and the 'other' is a person's surroundings meanings.

##### **4.1. The Empty Glass (*The Seven Ages*, 2001)**

The poem Empty Glass by Glück's touched on the themes of emptiness, loss, and existential crisis. From the concept of abjection, the "empty glass" is portrayed as an empty, hollow glass which is an abject, symbolizing a gap that shatters the speaker's sense of self and existential identity.

*I asked for much; I received much.  
I asked for much; I received little, I received  
next to nothing.*

*And between? A few umbrellas opened indoors.  
A pair of shoes by mistake on the kitchen table.  
(Glück, 2001, p.455)*

The contrast between asking for much and getting nothing but little reflects the sense of loss and the breakdown of meaning is depicted through the narrator's experiences of not receiving much in return and creating a void. The line *And between? A few umbrellas opened indoors. A pair of shoes by mistake on the kitchen table* illustrates the disturbance of social and symbolic order caused by the disorganization of objects like placing of pair of shoes on the kitchen table and umbrellas used indoors. The whole scenario creates a sense of ambiguity and haphazardness in the setting. The abjection is reaction of displeasure and meaninglessness.

*What are we without this?  
Whirling in the dark universe,  
alone, afraid, unable to influence fate  
(Glück, 2001, p.456)*

As Kristeva asserts, The liminal areas are home to the abject because this is where boundaries between subject and object, life and death, and self and other become hazy.

The speaker created an unpredictable state of her life despite her expectation from the universe. The above lines raise the existence of human beings in this universe. The narrator being a subject has used the words alone, afraid, and bad fate as an essence of the object 'universe.' the narrator states that she has been deemed aloof and She claims that, even as a little child, she



has always been cold and pessimistic. The speaker prayed out of fear when things started to go wrong in her life. The abject of the speaker's experiences about life has been expressed in confrontation with the void and sense of loss and fear. As Kristeva argues abject is "a weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me (the subject.)" (Karlyn, 2015).

#### **4.2.Lamium (*The Wild Iris*, 1992)**

The poem 'lamium ' explores the themes of emotional disillusionment. The speaker beneath the maple tree reflects the detachment from the outer world emotionally and mentally as a way of searching for self-reliance.

This is how you live when you have a cold heart.  
As I do: in shadows, trailing over cool rock,  
under the great maple trees.  
(Glück, 1992, p. 249)

The struggles of emotional crisis are symbolized by the "cold heart" that is present in the shadows under maple trees. The speaker reflects the sense of alienation and isolation, portraying shadow as fleeing connection with light, and warmth. Through the reference of the theory the abject is the object which makes a person feels disgusted and alienated from the positive aspects he witnesses around him. This manifests the "unassimilable" elements that are rejected from symbolic hierarchy to preserve one's integrity. The sense of disconnection from warmth, light, power of healing, and vitality has been defining by a speaker as an 'existing shadow'. The metaphor employed by the speaker as his existence is like a 'cool rock' under the 'great maple trees'.

*The sun hardly touches me.  
Sometimes I see it in early spring, rising very far away.  
Then leaves grow over it, completely hiding it. I feel it  
glinting through the leaves, erratic,  
like someone hitting the side of a glass with a metal spoon.  
(Glück, 1992, p. 249)*

The symbols like sun, alienation, loss, and detachment evoke a sense of abjection. The above lines display the sense of distance and desolation the speaker feels from the sun which rarely reaches him, even if it reaches, the obstacles like leaves obscured a glimpse of light that promptly shatters.

*Living things don't all require  
light in the same degree. Some of us  
make our own light: a silver leaf  
like a path no one can use, a shallow  
lake of silver in the darkness under the great maples.*



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*But you know this already.  
You and the others who think  
you live for truth and, by extension, love  
all that is cold.  
(Glück, 1992, p. 249)*

The speaker's loneliness and alienation from the warmth and vitality of their surroundings is highlighted by this self-generated light, which shines in the shadows beneath the maple trees. The above lines exert the themes of self reliance. The notion *Living things don't all require, yields* a form of resilience within the state of abjection. The lack of sunlight due to leaves evokes a sense of alienation in the speaker which is due to breaking of boundaries. The "lake of silver" and "silver leaf" under the maples signify a cold, reflecting light that originates within the abject, not derived from the sunlight, which is the source of warmth and vitality on the outside.

In the final lines, the speaker addresses the sense of loss by reflecting the embrace of abjection. The linkage between 'truth' and 'coldness' suggests an abject of rejection of comfort illusions and harsh realities of life, the 'coldness' regarded life as detached and alienated. *Think you live for truth and, by extension, love all that is cold.* The last line elucidates the nature of truth and inclination toward coldness and emotional alienation over warmth and connection. The sense of blurry and unmatched primordial horror is an abjection which integrate in the symbolic usage of specific elements in the poem. The complex relationship between truth, love hints at the abject of emotional connection and emergence of sense of detachment is search of identity and pursuit of truth.

#### **4.3. Mother and Child (*The Seven Ages*, 2001)**

This poem is a poignant example of the complex relationship between mother and child. The poem delves into the elements of love, separation, and suffering. The poem starts off with the love of mother and son and later the distance emerges in the second stanza which directly evokes the themes of mortality, and loss, as the child grows older becomes more independent, and seeks individuality. As Kristeva argues the subject finds the abject repelling and appealing. She also states that the first experience of abjection is faced by a child on separation from the mother. According to Kristeva, being rejected is an experience of unmatched primaeval horror that plunges the victim into the worst form of crisis imaginable; but, in the end, certain discourse modes have managed to articulate a terror as opposed to repressing it.

*We're all dreamers; we don't know who we are.  
Some machine made us; machine of the world, the constricting family.  
Then back to the world, polished by soft whips.  
We dream; we don't remember.  
(Glück, 2001, p.422)*

The speaker starts questioning the existence of self. The term 'machine' symbolizes 'mothers'. The sense of existential crisis, association of modern life with machines, and unending dreams that we don't remember leads a person towards abjection causes a breakdown in the sense of identity and longings. The authors gave a reason behind death and meaning of life. As Kristeva



asserts 'We feel a mixture of attract and terror when confronted with the abject because it makes us acknowledge the boundary that separates us from things that are viewed as foreign or disgusting. The line between the abject and the imagined is unclear, yet it nevertheless affects and tests our sense of self.' Following are the lines which pose the sense of existential identity, alienation and loss in life of the speaker. The sufferings, being ignorant are questioned by the speaker.

*Why do I suffer? Why am I ignorant?  
Cells in a great darkness. Some machine made us;  
it is your turn to address it, to go back asking  
what am I for? What am I for  
(Glück, 1992, p. 249)*

The mixture of attraction towards the loves and affection of mother along with repulsion towards the complexity of the relationship and feeling of alienation is a confrontation of abject. Abject is a source of pain for the self. The abject is unwanted and unaccepted outside of the self.

There is a copious amount of poems that reflect the sense of alienation, loss, and existential crisis i.e., Mock Orange (1985), Matins (1992), and October (2006). Albeit, her collection of poems Ararat (1990) and Wild Iris (1992) deeply observes themes of alienation, suffering, detachment, loss, and death.

In her influential book Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection (1980), Kristeva defines abjection as what happens when we encounter anything beyond the symbolic order, which opposes identification and poses a challenge to the unified sense of self.

## **5. Conclusion**

This implies that these characters face challenging situations in life that affect not just their own experiences but also the greater societal and existential realities they must traverse. The first objective of the study executed the themes of existentialism, alienation, loss, and suffering through the textual example and interpretation of various poems by Louise Glück. The second aim of the study aimed at the presence of Kristeva's theory of abjection in various poems alluding to desired themes. The abject and process of abjection has been deeply analyzed in various poems contemplating on those elements that provoke horror and challenge the boundaries of self. As the abject is like the dark underbelly of the subject, the inner, unconscious lack, loss, or desire that is pure desire. In the poems, elements of meaninglessness, and alienation can be detected in the tone, setting, and overall thematic concerns. Poems are written to bring symbolic significance underlying the hidden central meaning of the writer. The underlying meaning is layered with the tone, setting, structure, and terminologies in the text. The present study offers a new reading of poems from the concept of abjection, which we can utilize to delve into the inner beings of humans and the world surrounding them. The literary text acts as a signifier that reveals the sufferings, pains, loneliness, hardships, and sins, of human beings and aids to eliminate them. As Louise Glück's poems are reflections of her dealing with her life and the world around her.



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