

THEORIZING BLACK MOTHERING: THE ROAD TO MATRIARCHY

Hannah Woode Amissah-Arthur
Department of English
University of Cape Coast
Cape Coast, Ghana

ABSTRACT

*This paper looks at four African-American women's writings, Harriet Wilson's *Our Nig; or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black* (1859), Harriet Jacobs' *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* (1861), Alice Walker's *The Color Purple* (1982), and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* (1987) in an attempt to derive from the lives of black women, a structural formulation of motherism to serve as a framework within which most black women's lives and angst can be analysed. The paper looks at the ways in which the ambivalent nature of mothering in the novels theorize black mothering and therefore sets to authenticate the idea of theorizing black mothering. In employing all the main women characters considered as mothers while concentrating on the ambivalence in which they operate as black mothers, there is an attempt to portray the ubiquity of mothering in all the three periods in the African-American history, that is slavery, flight and freedom. This paper conclusively attempts to theorise the African-American concept of motherhood, by creating the terminology 'Motherhate'. This terminology of mothering is coined from the behavioural tendency of a mother towards her child(ren) and would be added to the plethora of motherhood within the African-American feminists and the novels of the African-American women writers.*

Keywords: black mothering, matriarchy, motherism, motherhate, motherhood, theory

Introduction

The concept of mothering has been given many sub terminologies including othermothering, matrifocality, motherline, amongst others to argue out the specificity of the nature of mothering being undertaken at a particular point in time. This has necessitated the style as well as the ideology in which many African-American women writers portray their experiences and emotions in their novels. The first of these sub-terminologies is the concept of othermothering which is a unique idea of mothering to the African-American people as well as Africans. As has been defined by Stanlie James (1999) and quoted by Andrea O'Reilly (2004), "Othermothering is the acceptance of responsibility for a child who is not one's own, in an arrangement that may or may not be formal" (5). This practice of othermothering brings to the fore the umbilical bond between Africans and African-Americans. This cord is as a result of the belief that the practice of othermothering is traced from some parts of the African Region, and believed to be retained by the African-Americans as it suits their situations as slaves in a new world. The issue of othermothering is essential to the fulfillment of the goals to increase the black population and to have more of their own at all costs.

The centrality of this concept is discussed through the literary and critical texts of African-American women writers. The depiction of female characters such as Baby Suggs (*Beloved*), Molly (*Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*), Celie and Nettie (*Color Purple*) attest to the fact that the periods of slavery, emancipation and freedom in the African-American history do not in any way break the phenomenal ideal of mothering known as othermothering. The issue of grandmothers' and great-grandmothers' othermothering their grandchildren or great-grandchildren due to the absence of the child's or children's parents is a very distinct aspect of othermothering in African-American history. Baby Suggs, Sethe's mother-in-law, played a very important othermothering role in the survival of Sethe's children when she was away from the children on two occasions: during her flight to freedom and when she was jailed for infanticide. Similarly, Linda Brent's grandmother, Molly, served as both mother and grandmother to Linda and her children. As a mother, she nurtured and raised both Linda and her brother Benjamin when their parents died. She became a confidante, a disciplinarian, a counselor and a friend to Linda as she grew up. As a grandmother, she cared and nurtured Linda's children when Linda abandoned her children to go into hiding. These were crucial times in the lives of their grandchildren and great-grandchildren as negligence on the part of these women would have been disastrous. In discussing othermothering, it is essential to note that this system worked for these women of colour in all the periods of slavery, flight and freedom and sustained the children around them, whether they were related to these women or not. From the evidence above, it is obvious the African-American community not merely upholds but also canonizes the practice of othermothering. The valorization of the practice reflects in the centrality of the notion in many works by African-American women writers.

The second terminology discussed is matrifocality. According to O'Reilly, this terminology is explained by Miriam Johnson (1990), as among other things, that which does not only refer to domestic maternal dominance, but also the prestige of the image of the mother, a role that is culturally elaborated and valued. Matrifocality is a notion that places premium on the

position of mothers in society. The concept positions the mothers as the fulcrum around which social organization, social productions, agency and development swing (10). According to Patricia Hill Collins (1993), the African-American practice of mothering differs from Eurocentric ideology in three important ways:

First, the assumption that mothering occurs within the confines of a private, nuclear family household where the mother has almost total responsibility for child-rearing is less applicable to Black families. While the ideal of the cult of true womanhood has been held up to Black women for emulation, racial oppression has denied Black families sufficient resources to support private, nuclear family households. Second, strict sex-role segregation, with separate male and female spheres of influence within the family, has been less commonly found in African-American families than in White middle-class ones. Finally, the assumption that motherhood and economic dependency on men are linked and that to be a “good” mother one must stay at home, making motherhood a full-time “occupation,” is similarly uncharacteristic of African-American families. (43–44).

The ideal of matrifocality is embedded in each of the novels under study. Each of the women characters is recognized as a mother at a point in time despite the challenges and interruptions they face as mothers individually and collectively. It is essential to admit that the society in which these mother characters find themselves firstly recognize, regard and accept them as mothers before condemning or chastising them for their acts of irresponsibility. These acts of murder and abandonment by which the characters, Sethe, Linda and Mag Smith are condemned are not before the admittance of their ability to ‘mother’ children. By this term ‘mother’, I am referring to the act of getting pregnant and being delivered of a baby. That process is the first phase of being called and regarded as a mother. As defined by Adrienne Rich (2004), “motherhood is earned, first through an intense physical and psychic rite of passage - pregnancy and childbirth” (12). Not only do the mother characters in all the four novels portray dominance, they also take pride in being mothers in the society. The terminology ‘matrifocality’ paves way for the centrality of mothers in the novels as well as a literary discussion in the rest of the thesis. For example, in relation to the plot, the structure, the narrative point of view, characters, characterization, symbols, imagery etc. Sethe in *Beloved* singlehandedly ensures her flight as well as that of her children to freedom regardless of the absence of her husband at the last moment. She tells Paul D:

He wasn’t there. He wasn’t where he said he would be...The underground agent said, By Sunday...Sunday came and he didn’t. Monday came and no Halle. I thought he was dead...then I thought they caught him...then I thought, No, he’s not dead because if he was I’d know it... (68).

The courage to do what she does in the midst of such a confused state attests to the notion of substantiating her prowess as a mother who can do without a male. Similarly, Linda’s fight for her children from the onset is without the help of the children’s father. Singularly, she fights and undertakes such hazardous tasks and decisions to protect her children from being perpetual slaves. These women do not only get pregnant and produce children. They also become the centre in the lives of their children in the absence of their fathers. This display of

boldness and assertiveness in the midst of danger, earmarks the general idea of matrifocality as discussed. Larson (1989) opines that the high status given to the position of mother in both the family and the society is what fashioned the basis of matrifocality. According to O'Reilly (2004):

In African American culture, motherhood is the pinnacle of womanhood. The matrifocal structure of black families with its emphasis on motherhood over wifedom and black women's role as economic provider means that the wife role is less operative in the African American community and that motherhood is site of power for black women (10). Wifedom therefore is predicated on an atmosphere of stability which is at variance with the status of a slave.

In the case of the terminology, motherline, there are many branches. Motherline, according to Naomi Ruth Lowinsky (1994), are some forms of maps that are exchanged through oral tradition that the woman can refer to either for warning or encouragement. To others such as O'Reilly, the motherline in an African-American society is representative of ancestral memory and traditional values of African-American culture. Other scholars like Toni Morrison are also of the view that motherline signifies ancestral memory. To lump up all three different schools of thought, motherline is practically the same ideology of reference to older and more experienced individual mothers or the group of mothers or both. To the African-American, the uniqueness of their mothering is one and familiar to similar ideologies and experiences irrespective of the era in which it is found. Hence in slavery, flight or freedom, each of the characters has a significant 'ancestor' she looks up to or reminisce about for empowerment.

This ancestor is not necessarily a dead person. An ancestor can also refer to a living being who is much older and has more experience. Due to the nature of slavery, families are denied the chance to trace their families. As a result, the immediate is made to substitute for the past, hence the term 'ancestor'. To Sethe, it is her mother-in-law, Baby Suggs; to Linda, her ancestor is her grandmother, Molly; to Celie, it was her late mother and her sister Nettie and to Nettie, it is her sister Celie. The idea of a map consistently becomes obvious in the lives of these women as they progress in life. Willingly or unwillingly, their lives are marked with road maps made by certain women who may be alive or dead or those who physically or mentally or even emotionally, encourage them or warn them about the inconsistencies of life. The mode of oral tradition underlined in association with motherline cannot be overlooked. African-American women writers recognize the role oral tradition has played in the history of the African-Americans. There is an impact on the lives of slave women who could neither read nor write; therefore, the only mode of communication was through orality.

The last of the terminologies is labelled "motherwork". According to O'Reilly (2004), Toni Morrison defines "motherwork" as a political enterprise that assumes its central aim the empowerment of children. Therefore, it is concerned about how mothers with children in a racist and sexist world protect and instruct them on how to protect themselves as well as challenge racism and teach their daughters sexism (1). This definition establishes the view that motherwork is characterized by three demands: preservation of their children, nurturing

the emotional and intellectual growth of their children, and finally, training and social acceptability of their children. To the African-American, these are, in sum, the duties of a mother. According to Patricia Hill Collins (1994):

Racial ethnic women's motherwork reflects the tensions inherent in trying to foster a meaningful racial identity in children within a society that denigrates people of color. . . [Racial ethnic] children must first be taught to survive in systems that oppress them. Moreover, this survival must not come at the expense of self-esteem. Thus, a dialectal relationship exists between systems of racial oppression designed to strip a subordinated group of a sense of personal identity and a sense of collective peoplehood, and the cultures of resistance extant in various ethnic groups that resist the oppression. For women of color, motherwork for identity occurs at this critical juncture. (57)

It is her obligation to work in her capacity as a mother to enable her children to achieve all these characteristics. These demands fit perfectly into the periods of slavery, flight and freedom. During slavery, the most important and crucial demand amongst the women are the survival of their children, whether they are with them on the same plantation or sold. The thought of uncertainty as to whether a child is alive or dead is enough torture for these women, for instance, Molly and Baby Suggs who both had their children sold. Nevertheless, these women othermothered their grandchildren defensively. In flight, Linda and Sethe ensure their children are alive and safe. Linda survives in the underground hole for almost seven years just for her children to survive, though there are times she wishes she could die. Similarly, Sethe, though tired from running and feeling very weak and defenseless and on the verge of dying, refuses to die though pregnant because of the baby inside her. These acts symbolically represent the important tasks these women undertake in order to preserve their generation. These women mask their identities for many years to protect the children they bear. In freedom, Mag Smith, in abandoning her daughter, ensures she preserves her life by abandoning her in a home she knows Frado would be catered for.

This same sense of self-preservation instinct pushes Frado out into the world to find a job in order to cater for her child even though she is sick. Celie takes care of her siblings and later her step-children to the admiration of all. Nettie ensures her sister's children are well cared for all the time. I must reiterate that all three demands- preservation of children, nurturing the emotional and intellectual growth of children and training and social acceptability of children work hand in hand to a very large extent. In the attempt to self-preserve, the children consciously or unconsciously are emotionally and intellectually groomed. The need to survive requires intellectual prowess and so in the case of Sethe who sent her children ahead of her in flight, the ability of the children to survive without their mother till she returns is a perfect indication of how they have been groomed emotionally. In a similar case, the absence of Linda Brent to her children and their ability to survive for many years without her is an emotional feat for children that young. The ability of her son, Benjamin, to withhold such vital information of his mother's whereabouts from the others when he is asked about his mother, Linda, marks a very important psychological and emotional growth in the life of a child. In a similar manner, Celie's ability to tell Harpo, her stepson to reason up and stand up

like a man challenges him to become a stronger version of himself and work hard to take care of his family.

In addition to the terminologies under motherhood discussed, this research also employs psychoanalytic feminism in creating an avenue for discussion and theorizing the concept of mothering. Therefore, using psychoanalytic feminism as a benchmark, one of the many ideas behind mothering has been explained by Nancy Chodorow (1987) as one that is based on instinctual components. These instinctual components necessitated the murder of her child by Sethe the very last moment upon seeing School master coming towards her. According to Chodorow, “women have mothering instinct, or maternal instinct, and therefore it is “natural” that they mother, or even that they therefore ought to mother” (21-22) It is this same instinct that makes Sethe recognize Beloved as her returned daughter when she set her eyes on her for the very first time seated on the stairs of 124. The instinctual component is a psychological manifestation which puts both mothers and children at very uncompromising situations most of the time. Linda Brent in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* plays on her instinct by hiding for seven years. The significance of instincts by mothers in the texts under consideration is always to save their children. In Linda and Mag Smith’s cases, the instinctual components took a gradual process in its establishment. There was the opportunity of thinking through what they wanted to do. The instinctual components can, therefore, be said to vary from character to character and from one circumstance to the other. Sethe’s instinct was abrupt as compared to that of Linda and Mag. It should be observed that instincts are very essential in the lives of black mothers since they help them in making decisions as well as their day to day activities.

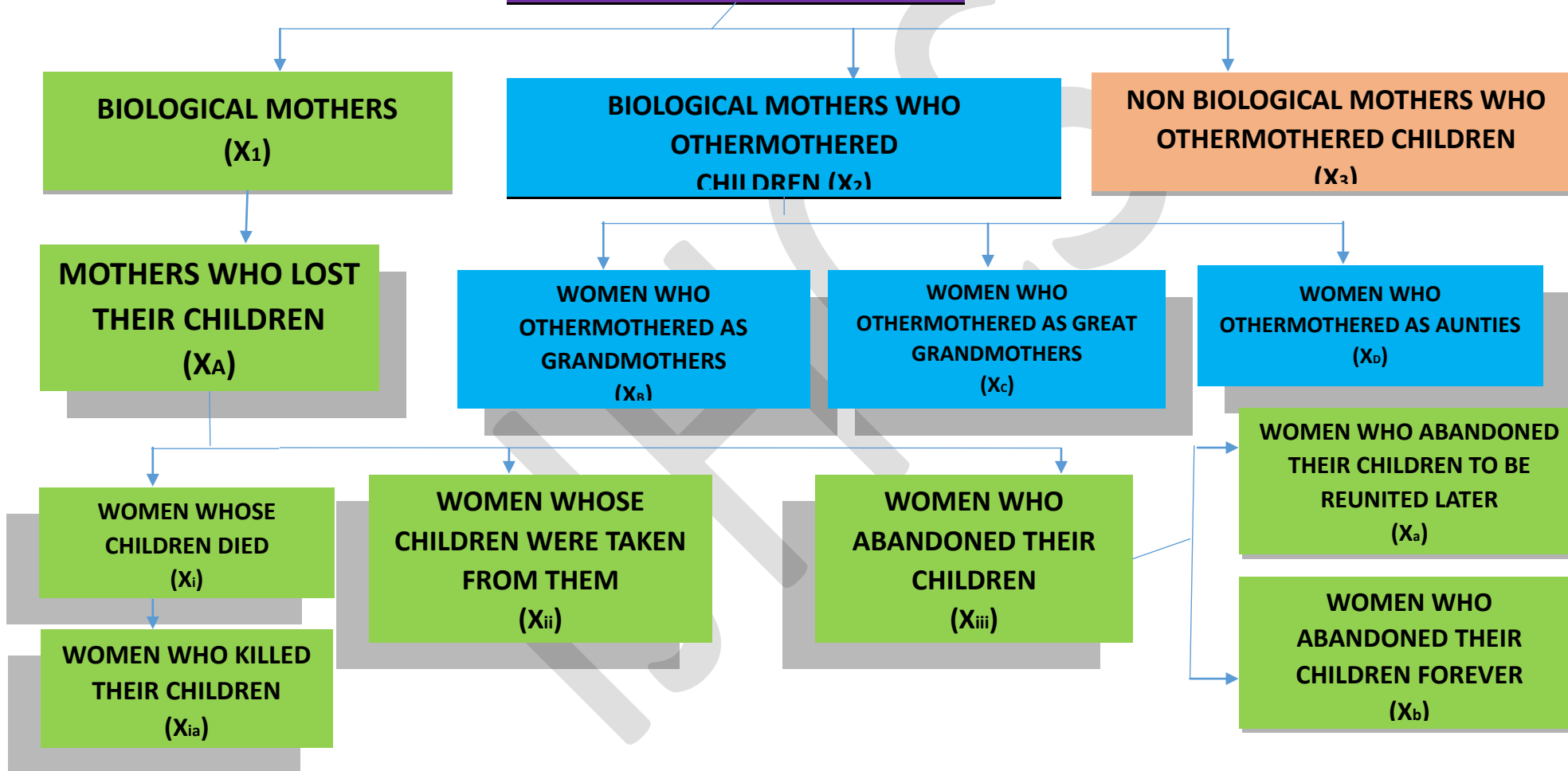
Rich (2004) defines motherhood, among other things, and identifies the first phase of motherhood as pregnancy and childbirth. Further, she makes mention of the second phase which is learning to nurture. This act of nurturance, she opines, does not come by instinct. This conflicts with the views of psychoanalytic feminists as discussed above about mothering or maternal instinct that says that mothering is based on instinctual components. I tend to lean towards the argument made by psychoanalytic feminists because I am strongly of the belief that the periods of slavery and flight especially did not give the slave mothers any opportunity to contemplate and decide how they should take decisions concerning their children. Decisions concerning nurturing their children always came with just enough pressure to rely on only their instincts.

Psychoanalysis feminists are also of the view that mothering is a natural rather than a social construct. Therefore, the practice of mothering and nurturing comes to a woman naturally. In view of the above, the issue of mothering, being self-empowered regardless of society’s patriarchal mentality of how mothers behave comes into play. The nature of black mothering brings out the uniqueness and identity of the natural essence found in women who have gone through so many experiences. Pregnancy through childbirth to nurturance defines the natural pattern as opposed to social construct. It can be observed that most of the characters employed in the analysis, specifically seven out of eight are biological mothers: Sethe, Baby Suggs, Linda, Molly, Celie, Mag Smith and Frado. Psychoanalytic feminists further describe biological mothers as providing an almost exclusive care in nurturing.

In order to argue out and propose my terminology labelled 'motherhate', I will delineate the category of mothers and employ Vladimir Propp's structural concept to analyse the category. This will take the format of comparing the characters by isolating the major mother characters.

IJHCS

MOTHERS (X)



For the purposes of this paper, the women characters employed would be labelled as actants. This labelling is to intimate that they are performers of certain functions which classify them under a certain phenomenon called mothering. The primary roles they perform would also be identified as constants. According to Vladimir Propp (2003), both constants and variables are present in various stories. He explains further that names and attributes of dramatis personae change but that does not in any way influence the constant action or function. Therefore, the story attributes identical actions to various personages. This possibility makes the study of the tale based on the functions of its dramatis personae (20).

I will therefore employ the novels presented and use the various characters with different names and group them according to their actions as mothers. To buttress this assertion, Propp argues that, "...it is possible to establish that characters of a tale, however varied they may be, often perform the same actions. The actual means of the realization of functions can vary and as such, it is a variable... But the function, as such, is a constant" (20). The variables converge and diverge in a form of a matrix which reveals how intricate the role of mothering is and how it varies over time and situations according to the individual actants and their variables under analysis. In analyzing the roles played by these actants, the actants will be given a universal umbrella known as mothers. This is represented by X. X, therefore, is the main factor for all the women who are considered mothers. This includes biological mothers, biological mothers who othermothered children, and non-biological mothers who othermothered children. To this effect, all the actants considered in this chapter are represented. X therefore is the ideal and only factor that brings all the actants under one very big umbrella. It is therefore known as the constant. There are other subsets that fall under X. These subsets known as variables will be represented with X1, X2 and X3. Biological mothers are categorised under the variable X1. The actants in the X1 category include Sethe and Baby Suggs (Beloved), Linda and Molly (Incidents in the life of a slave girl), Celie (Color Purple), and Mag Smith and Frado (Our Nig) who make up seven out of the total of eight actants. The variable X2 discusses biological mothers who also othermothered. These actants are Baby Suggs, Molly and Celie. It is interesting to note that out of these three actants, two of them othermothered in the capacity of grandmothers (Baby Suggs and Molly) and an additional role of great-grandmother (Molly), the other actant othermothered in the capacity of a step mother (Celie). These variables have been labelled XB, Xcand XD respectively. X3 represents women who are not mothers biologically but othermothered. In this instance, only Nettie can be mentioned as an actant. This structure, is therefore, a presentation of the major women characters found in the novels used. They are also representational of the theme of mothering found in this study.

The present analysis places emphasis on the variable which has the most actants and therefore the variable X1 will be given the most attention. Breaking down X1 further, concentration is given to biological mothers who lost their children. This category is labelled XA and the description therefore narrows the number of women to six, namely, Sethe, Baby Suggs, Linda, her grandmother, Celie, and Mag Smith. In discussing how they lost their children, XA is

subsequently broken down into four more variables. This is to justify the fact that the actants involved did not lose their children in the same manner. There are therefore the variables Xi, Xii, and Xiii to explain and categorise how they lost their children. Xi therefore represents mothers who lost their children through the means of death. In this case there is Sethe who attempted to kill her own children but managed to kill only one, named Beloved. There is also Linda Brent's grandmother, Molly, who lost her daughter, being Linda's mother. Xi is broken down to give Xia which represents a category of mothers who killed their own children, and that is represented by Sethe. Xii represents mothers whose kids were taken away from them. These women had no say in the welfare of their children. Baby Suggs had her children taken away from her one after the other and even lost memory of some of them at a point in time. Linda Brent's grandmother also had her child taken away from her. Celie in *Color Purple* had her children taken away soon after they were born by her step-father. Lastly, Xiii represents women who abandoned their children in one way or the other. This category is further broken down into two because of the implications brought about by the action of abandonment. In this category therefore, there are the variables Xa and Xb. Xa represents Linda who abandoned her children and hid underground for seven years in order to save her children from being sold.

On the contrary, Mag Smith, mother of Frado also abandoned her child and she represents Xb. Mag Smith abandoned her only daughter, Frado, at the age of six. That decision to abandon her child cannot be compared to that of Linda, neither can it be compared to that of any of the actants who lost their children. Mag Smith's case is different because she did not place her child first in her decision. It can be argued that Mag Smith hated her child because of how she was repulsed by the community for associating with a black and bearing a child out of that association. Mag Smith called her children "black devils", indicative of racism. It is surprising and uncertain whether she has been conditioned to adopt the discourse as proposed and used by all, regardless, thereby linguistically underscoring the importance of language as a tool of domination. In other words, maybe, she is ascribing a different meaning to same words or expressions in a racist context on her own children. She abandoned her child because she felt the need to move on in life and settle elsewhere. She felt her child would become a stumbling block for her and her new husband. It should be noted that right from the beginning of the structure above, all the actants performed their roles based on the need to protect their children in one way or the other except Mag Smith. The decision she takes changes the story line of most African-American women's writings with regards to mothering. In effect, Mag Smith's ability to turn away from her daughter without having to look back for even a second symbolically represents a skew in the diagram that has been provided. She represents a different kind of mother who performs for her own selfish gains though she falls under the category of mothers who abandon their children. Her act buttresses Propp's stance when he posits that "identical acts can have different meanings and vice versa" (21). Therefore, though her act is similar to that of Linda in *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl* and makes them all a subset of the same variable, her feeling towards her child is that

of hatred. She also prioritises herself as compared to what she sacrifices for her child. This is very unusual in African-American women's writings on stereotypical mothers.

It would be expedient to argue that Mag Smith may have this trait because of her White background as revealed in the novel. She is a white woman who marries a black man and has a baby for him. Her attitude toward her child Frado portrays the psychological impact having a mulatto child has on her. She calls her "black devil" (16), indicating her nonchalant feelings and attitude towards her own child. All these attitudes towards her child can be observed as hatred for a child she might never have dreamt of having in the first place. The child goes through both emotional and psychological apprehension as she awaits her mother's return each day of her life. This is aggravated by the abuses she receives in her new home where she works as a slave and a person of very little value. There is, therefore, the need to establish a name for this kind of mothering which diverges from the norm and I propose the term "motherhate."

Motherhate describes mothers who reject the maternal instinct of protecting their children regardless of the consequences but rather focus on the hatred they have for their children as well as their own selfish gains. This hate might not have any connection with the child's behavior; rather, it emits from the mother's consciousness and is revealed through her attitude towards her child. 'Motherhate', is the opposite of the terminology motherlove. Motherlove is used by many feminist scholars like O'Reilly. To them, motherlove is perceived as sensitive mothering as well as preservative love. Motherlove portrays the various approaches to which mothers express their love to their children. Motherhate is, a manifestation of the attitude of a selfish mother who happens to be a biological one as such towards her child (ren). Motherhate foregrounds the insensitivity of a mother towards her child. This terminology "motherhate" does not fall under the normative ideology surrounding either mothering or motherhood. Motherhate is a different kind of behavior that is uncharacteristic of African-American behaviour and writing. It can be recognized as a representation of the complexity of human reaction to racism.

Motherhate also suggests that African-American female writings are not a simplistic class of writing which are all uniform in their projection of African-American life. The divergence of motherhate from mainstream notions and practice reflect the fact that African-American life is more complex than the writers habitually project. Mothering in African-American context is very different from that of the European and other contexts. It is interesting to note that the acts of Sethe and Linda can never be described as motherhate though there was so much risk involved and even death at a point on the part of Sethe. This is because the mere normative idea of a mother protecting her child (ren) by all means just for the benefit of the child, surpasses any other condition or explanation for the term mothering. There are certain constant roles that are manifested amongst all the other actants in the four novels discussed who are blacks. These roles by the various actants as well as their functions delineated, brings to bare the ideal concept of mothering in the African-American context.

From the structural representation above therefore, we can make some observations. First of all, there are three main categories of mothers in the African-American women's novels: Biological mothers, Biological mothers who othermother children and Non-biological mother who othermother children. Secondly, most biological mothers lose their child (ren) in one way or the other. Thirdly, biological mothers who othermother other children do so in the capacity either as great-grandmothers, grandmothers or aunties. Finally, biological mothers who lose their children are categorized into two. Those who lose them reunite with them later, and those who lose them forever.

Conclusion

There are three main categories or actants established in the writings of African-American women writers. These are biological mothers, biological mothers who othermother children, and mothers without biological children who othermother children. The majority of the actants are biological mothers and, therefore, make up the most comprehensive category amongst the variables. It is, further, argued that the functions of these mothers though varied are, as Propp would put it, "stable, constant elements in a tale, independent of how and by whom they are fulfilled" (22). Therefore, though they are a variety of actants, their fates are alike in so many similar as well as divergent ways. This portrays the complex nature of mothering with regards to the African-American women's writings. The idea of matriarchy, runs through the various novels in this paper and justifiably argues that the African-American woman writer upholds and promotes the idea of matriarchy hence their voicing it both subtly and harshly in their writings. This justification counters T.S. Elliot's biographical fallacy which argues that what the characters say or do does not necessarily reflect anything of the author's own values and judgement. The terminology 'Motherhate' therefore becomes a terminology that does not fall under the normative ideology surrounding either mothering or motherhood. It is recognized as a representation of the complexity of human reaction to racism.

Works Cited

Chodorow, Nancy J. *The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the sociology of Gender*. London: University of California Press, 1978. Print.

Collins, Patricia H. "The Meaning of Motherhood in Black Culture and Black Mother-Daughter Relationships" In *Double Stitch: Black Women write about Mothers and Daughters*. (Eds.) Patricia Bell-Scott et.al. New York: Harper Perennial, 1993. Print.

Jacobs, Harriet A. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl: Written by Herself*. New York: Penguin Books, 1861. Print.

Lowinsky, Naomi R. *The Motherline: Every Woman's Journey to find her Female Roots*. Canada: Fisher King Press, 1994. Print.

Morrison, Toni. *Beloved*. New York: Knopf, 1987. Print.

O'Reilly, Andrea. (Ed.) *From Motherhood to Mothering: The Legacy of Adrienne Rich's of Woman Born*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004. Print.

O'Reilly Andrea. (Ed.) *Toni Morrison and Motherhood: A politics of the heart*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2004. Print.

Propp, Vladimir. *Morphology of the Folktale* (2ndEd.). Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003. Print.

Rich, Adrienne. *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as experience and institution*. New York: W.W.Norton& Company, 1986. Print.

Walker, Alice. *The Color Purple*. New York: Pocket Books, 1982. Print.

Wilson, Harriet E. *Our Nig, Or, Sketches from the Life of a Free Black: In a Two-Story White House, North: Showing That Slavery's Shadows Fall Even There*. New York: Vintage Books, 1859. Print.