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Keywords:

Dorothy Allison, body language, unconsciousness, Freud, verbal language, non-verbal language

Article history:

Received: 2024-06-25 Accepted: 2024-10-20 Available online:2025-02-01







ISSN: 1812-0512 (Print) 2790-346X (online)

Wasit Journal for Human Sciences

Available online at: https://wjfh.uowasit.edu.iq



Body Language: Secret Thoughts of Characters in Dorothy Allison's *Trash*

ABSTRACT

One of the most effective nonverbal communication tools is body language, which can disclose a person's innermost sentiments and ideas. Body language is a vital technique for understanding human communication since it can reveal concealed emotions. By studying gestures, an individual can gain insights into real impulses and emotions. Sigmund Freud famously referred to body language as "Freudian slips", where unconsciousness influences body movements, exposing latent ideas and emotions towards someone or something. With the ability to read body language, individuals can uncover an individual's true awareness and intentions. Most human communication, according to researchers, heavily relies on gestures, positions, and distances to reveal the covert thoughts. This suggests that a person can use body language analysis as a scientific way to understand and influence the innermost thoughts of others and, in turn, their own. In her collection of short tales Trash, Dorothy Allison employs body language to reveal the innermost thoughts and sentiments of her characters towards objects and people. She conveys the stories behind the story she tells.

25 wjfh.Wasit University https://doi.org/10.31185/wjfh.Vol21.Iss1/Pt1.650 لغة الجسد: الأفكار الخفية للشخصيات في قصص قصيرة (شخص تافه) للكاتبة دوروثي اليسون م.م. صالح جاسم صالح وزارة التربية

المستخلص

لغة الجسد هي شكل فعال من أشكال الاتصال غير اللفظي الذي يكشف عن أفكار ومشاعر الفرد الخفية. المشاعر الخفية تعكس من خلال الحركات المرئية للجسد؛ مما يجعلها أداة أساسية لفك شفرة التواصل البشري. من خلال دراسة الإيماءات، يكتسب الفرد الرؤى حول الدوافع والعواطف الحقيقية. أشار سيغموند فرويد إلى لغة الجسد باسم "الزلات الفرويدية"؛ إذ يؤثر اللاوعي على حركات الجسم، ويكشف عن الأفكار والعواطف الكامنة تجاه شخص أو مشيء ما. مع اكتساب القدرة على قراءة لغة الجسم، ويكشف عن الأفكار والعواطف الكامنة تجاه شخص أو الزلات الفرويدية"؛ إذ يؤثر اللاوعي على حركات الجسم، ويكشف عن الأفكار والعواطف الكامنة تجاه شخص أو شيء ما. مع اكتساب القدرة على قراءة لغة الجسد، يمكن للفرد الكشف عن وعي الفرد الحقيقي ونياته. يؤكد الباحثون أن معظم الاتصالات البشرية تعتمد بشكل كبير على الإيماءات والمواقف والمسافات، التي يمكن أن تكشف عما لا أن معظم الاتصالات البشرية تعتمد بشكل كبير على الإيماءات والمواقف والمسافات، التي يمكن أن تكشف عما لا أن معظم الاتصالات البشرية تعتمد بشكل كبير على الإيماءات والمواقف والمسافات، التي يمكن أن تكشف عما لا أن معظم الاتصالات البشرية تعتمد بشكل كبير على الإيماءات والمواقف والمسافات، التي يمكن أن تكشف عما لا أن معظم الاتصالات البشرية تعتمد بشكل كبير على الإيماءات والمواقف والمسافات، التي يمكن أن تكشف عما لا المعظم الاتصالات البشرية تعتمد بشكل كبير على الإيماءات والمواقف والمسافات، التي يمكن أن تكشف عما لا أن معظم الاتصالات البشرية تعتمد بشكل كبير على الإيماءات والمواقف والمسافات، التي يمكن أن تكشف عما لا الميطرة على الأخرين أو استغلالهم من خلال قراءة أفكارهم السرية. وهذا يعني، بالنسبة للشخص، أنها الطريقة الملمية لفهم والسيطرة على أفكار الأوعاة، فنلا عما سبق، يمكن لدراسة لغة الجسد أن العار الغرون العميقة، وبالتالي نفسه. في مجموعة قصصها القصيرة، استخدمت دوروثي العلمية لفهم والسيطرة على أفكار الأخرين العميقة، وبالتالي نفسه. في مجموعة قصصها القصيرة، الحكوس ألموان الحكوس ألموسة الحكان الومان عالمه، في مجموعة قصصها المرضة الحرين العميقة، وبالتالي نفسه. في مجموعة قصصها القصيرة، الحكوس قصصها الحكايات المحبة وراء الأشخاص والاشياء. الم أوصلت الحكايات المحبأة وراء القصة التي وراءة أفكار عوالفهم تجاه الأشخاص والاشيام والاشيا، الخرين العمية، وبالم

الكلمات المفتاحية: دوروثي اليسون، لغة الجسد، اللاوعي، فرويد، اللغة اللفظية، اللغة الغير لفظية.

Introduction

Dorothy Allison was born in April 1949 to a teenage single mother in Greenville, South Carolina. Because her mother, Ruth Gibson Allison, had to work as a server to support the family when her father passed away while she was a young girl, the family was impoverished. At age five, she began to experience sexual abuse from her stepfather following her mother's marriage. Up until the age of eleven, there was sexual abuse. Allison contracted gonorrhea as a result of his actions, which prevented her from getting married (Adams, 2004, p. 87). Three books of poetry, a novel, and short tales were written by Allison. To encourage authors who assist independent booksellers and small presses, Allison was given the Independent Spirit Award in 1998. She authored *Trash*, one of her short stories, in 1989 (Allison, 2024).

Sigmund Freud discovered that the slips of the tongue or pen, as well as actions, played a significant role in explaining humans' motives or purposes. He analyzed them in order not to predict the hidden thoughts in an individual's mind. He explained them in accordance with his theory of unconsciousness (Fromkin, 1973, p. 83). A person may say one thing, but in his deep unconsciousness, he wants to say another. Freud and his followers believe that lapses symbolize the guilty person's hidden motives (Roback, 1919, p. 274). Freud reportedly observed that a patient was inadvertently taking her wedding ring on and off her finger even while she was vocally proclaiming her satisfaction in her marriage. Understanding the significance of this inadvertent gesture, Freud was unsurprised when marital issues started to surface (Pease, 1988, p. 5). Body language is a type of nonverbal communication, according to Pease (1988). The majority of communication in daily activities, according to studies, occurs nonverbally. In summary, humans convey approximately 7 percent of their messages verbally, 38 percent vocally, and 55 percent non-verbally. Additionally, people who manage their gestures and body signals can communicate effectively. Body language can reveal an individual's unarticulated thoughts. In some circumstances, a person may not be able to express their feelings due to shyness or fear. An expert can detect more signals of a person's thoughts through facial expressions and body movements. Individuals may be able to deceive others, but their body language will always expose them. Without any personal attitude, one can inform others about weather, history, and news using verbal language. Non-verbal language's first goal is social communication and relationships (Beattie, 2004, p. 20). In other words, body language expresses our emotional attitude towards something or someone. Simply, it exposes the inner emotional states. Ultimately, non-verbal language reflects an individual's attitude towards objects or people, whereas verbal language provides information. In Two or three things I know for sure, Allison (1996) writes, "behind the story I tell is the one I don't. Behind the story you hear is the one I wish I could make you hear" (p.23). By using her characters' body language, she conveys nonverbal signals.

Literature review

Many research studies and books tackle body language. The researcher is interested in the significance of non-verbal messages because they serve as a second language of communication. In addition, the

researchers assert that the non-verbal messages influence the text. Most writers expose the importance of body language in their lives and writings. The issue at hand was how these writers bridged the gap between verbal and non-verbal language (Taylor, 2008, p. 2). On the other hand, researchers consider body language symbolic, which has many interpretations and meanings. Despite that, they assert that both body language and verbal language complement each other. Furthermore, they assert that human communication encompasses not only verbal language but also facial expressions, widely recognized as a highly effective means of expressing emotions (Neama & Al-Husseini, 2014, p. 707). To that end, there is a difference between words and their intended meaning. As the actual language is non-verbal, the distinction between verbal and non-verbal communication is crucial to this study. Communication through language has an overt meaning, while body language has a covert one. The balance between spoken and nonverbal communications is the source of the issue. The most trustworthy proof for expressing genuine feelings and meanings, according to the research, is nonverbal communication. Stated differently. It investigates meanings that go beyond the spoken language.

Methodology

The psychological theory serves as the foundation for this study. According to Freud, the Freudian slips reveal individuals' innermost sentiments and emotions (Fromkin, 1973, p. 8). He was aware of the significance of body gestures because they reflect hidden thoughts in the unconscious. To get a precise understanding of body language, one must observe gestures and the harmony of verbal and non-verbal language. The field of body language science has evolved from Freud's original notion. In this branch of science, the main points of study are the following: facial expressions, head movements, arm movements, eye movements, and mouth movements. Observers of body language focus on the true meaning of the feelings, which may contrast with what people have already said. The issue lies in the lack of harmony between verbal language and non-verbal cues. Consequentially, the observer discovers the truth beyond the curtain of spoken language (Pease, 1988, pp. 5-6).

Body Language in Trash

If language was given to humans to hide their ideas, then gesture was meant to reveal them, according to Scottish mathematician and physicist John Napier. A 16th-century proverb called the eyes the windows to the soul. Eye contact, gestures, posture, position relative to the listener, and the speaker's attire are all ways to communicate without verbal means (Steele, 1999, p. 2). The story, *The River of Names*, begins with the recognition of body language. The mother refrains from making the first contact because she wants her child to avoid experiencing trauma. She turns her child's head away so she will not see her cousin's lifeless body, "someone started screaming...Turning her back, her mother held her head" (Allison, 2002, p. 1). During a meeting, the first visible body language is the way one looks. Hence, it is the most prominent interaction signal (Gregersen, p. 59). The child is interested in physical contact, and her body language

conveys more than a spoken one, she returns her mother's embrace and shuts her eyes. She is speechless (Allison, 2002, p. 1). On the other hand, Allison (2002) portrays the protagonist's description of the cruel stepfather through his own eyes. Being compelled to return to her residence with her unemotional stepfather, "cold-eyed stepfather" (p. 9). The main character becomes antagonistic. If a person clenches his fists, that means he is in a defensive attitude (Pease, 1988, p. 51). She evokes her past when she struggled to control herself. She remembers all the times her hands have clenched into fists and she was just about to let go (Allison, 2002, p. 10).

In Meanest Woman Ever Left Tennessee, Shirley Boatwright asserts that she can discern others' thoughts about her by looking into their eyes. She believes she possesses a particular behavioral quality. It's clear who she is. No matter what, it's in the eyes (Allison, 2002, p. 12). Repressed feelings are expressed by thin lips and a tight mouth (Hartley & Karinch, 2007, p. 93). Mattie's mother, Shirley, tries to hide her emotions by thinning and tightening her lips, but her mate, Tucker Boatwright, disagrees, saying that closed lips reveal an uncaring spirit and an undeveloped character (Allison, 2002, p. 13). After hearing his comment, Shirley tightens her lips and remains silent. As Tucker returned from his shift at the mine the following day, he saw the doors barred against him; his wife kept on soundless but continued to purse her lips even more (p.13). To put it succinctly, she suppresses her emotions, and her body language expresses her attitude towards her husband. When she hears his scream, she sends a non-verbal courtship message by smoothing her hair. According to body language, the act of arranging hair for women is an appealing experience (Steele, 1999, p. 29). Her husband is shouting outside; nevertheless, she prepares herself for an intimate relationship. Looking straight in front of herself, she smooths her hair under her immaculate white collar with just her right hand (Allison,2002, p. 13). Shirley quarrels with Mattie, her stubborn daughter, on a daily basis. The latter demonstrates her hostility by gazing back at her mother. It hurt her that Mattie would look back at her and not close her eyes. (Allison, 2002, p. 14). A prolonged stare is interpreted as a nonverbal challenge (Pease, 1988, p. 78). Staring heightens our alertness. Staring is a sign of a suspicious, alarming, or odd person; it tends to be impersonal, distant, or confrontational (Navarro, 2018, p. 19).

Our hands are the mirror of our emotions. Our use of them involves manipulating the environment. Additionally, hands convey a non-verbal message about individuals' inner thoughts. A person who is nervous tends to have nervous hands. Therefore, the hands are the most expressive means by which people express their mood and intention on their bodies (Rose, 2017, p. 13). The description of the Boatwright family conveys a vivid picture of their nervous moods. They all looked alike, with worried hands and faces that were pinched together (Allison, 2002, p. 15). People's stress results in non-verbal behavior. Thus, the shaking and nervous hands are an indication of suppressed feelings of fear and anger (Goman, 2011, p. 44). Shirley's aggressiveness is at its most intense when she puckers her lips. Her lips are sealed tightly. Shirley's mouth had become so constricted that it appeared as though she had gone completely lipless (Allison, 2002,

p. 18). When you purse your lips, it indicates that you are facing an aggressive or threatened person (Ellis, 2012, p. 7).

People send signals to express interest in someone or something. To be precise, one of these indications is a smile. When a person smiles, they convey a sense of happiness and interest (Steele, 1999, p. 27). When James Gibson sees Mattie, he smiles. Mattie believes that he likes her, particularly when he initiates a conversation with her. Every time he laid eyes on her, he couldn't help but grin from ear to ear (Allison, 2002, p. 19). The act of laughing at others sends out a negative message to them. As a result, they take precautionary measures (Steele, 1999, p. 86). Mattie becomes more suspicious as the other Gibson's boys start laughing at her. She was disappointed in the mornings when one of the other Gibson lads was there. She wondered what James had said to them about her because they usually laughed when they saw her (Allison, 2002, p. 19). On the other hand, a frown is a sign of anger or disdain (King, 2014, p. 11). When serving food to her family, Shirley is required to have a smile. The family's true meeting occurs at the table of food. Her frown is a way of conveying that she is not affectionate. Under her breath, Shirley scowled. It seemed as if something was happening beyond her comprehension (Allison, 2002, p. 20). Mattie receives the non-verbal communication and transmits a corresponding sign through her eyes. Because she looks at her mother without blinking, Mattie's inner emotions are true. When people tell lies, blinking rates increase (Hartley & Karinch, 2007, pp. 86-87). She says to herself that she hates her mother. She contemplated her appearance, which she perceived as both aged and unsightly. Steadily, her canines engaged in chewing. She did not blink her eyelids (Allison, 2002, p. 21). Nonverbal communication exposes the family's dysfunctional relationship. Shirley's hatred and bad memories are the only thing left. Granny Mattie consistently maintained that Great-Grandma Shirley led an excessively lengthy life, but why did no one wish to prepare her corpse for burial after she passed away (p.22). Eventually, Allison tells us that Shirley's conduct and aggressive non-verbal language are the main reasons why she receives the most abhorrence. She says that the story of the great-grandmother Shirley, the most vicious woman to ever emigrate from Tennessee, is what you share with them (p.22).

The Spoken and The Non-Verbal Truth

Allison tells the tale of the concealed reality in her story *Mama*. Her intention is to expose the truth about the earlier mishaps and the psychological fallout they caused for her characters. People will shrug their shoulders if they are unsure about the replies (Navarro, 2018, p. 63). To further express their true feelings, they shrug their shoulders, regardless of what they say (Webster, 2014, p. 36). Upon hearing Aunt Alma's description of her injuries, the mother reacts by shrugging her shoulders and suddenly shifting the subject of the conversation. Her mother responded with a shrug and stated that she was definitely destined for larger biscuits and thicker gravy when the daughter queried her about it (Allison, 2002, p. 23). Nonetheless, the

mother asserts that Aunt Alma's speech is untrue. The mother accuses Aunt Alma of telling lies solely for her own amusement, " your aunt is always laying things"(p.24). The fact of the matter is that there was a hit-and-run accident. Therefore, she attempts to avoid answering the question about the accident, but her body language reveals her true intentions. Despite that, she does not share Aunt Alma's opinion. She shrugs her shoulders in disapproval of the proposed idea (Goman, 2011, p. 24).

Trembling hands is a sign of anxiety. Also, it has the potential to indicate fear (Glass & Sullivan, 2012, p. 16). The mother attends her husband hitting her daughter. She does not have the power to stop him, nor does she allow her daughter to suffer. Through her body language, her shaking hands reveal her unconscious feelings. The daughter stated that after the beating had stopped and the door had been opened, she would not return to herself until she saw her mother's face, her hands shaking as she reached for her. Only then would she be able to return to herself. (Allison, 2002, p. 26). The correct conduct in this case is to touch the suffering daughter. The touch conveys friendliness and triggers a feeling of pain relief. Touching helps release the hormone oxytocin, which has the ability to reduce pain, according to studies (Goman, 2011, pp. 91-92). In an attempt to alleviate her daughter's suffering from her tyrannical stepfather, the mother rubbed her daughter's back. Akin to her hand resting on the daughter's side. It was then that she did not have any stories in her thoughts, and she did not feel any animosity; rather, she felt an immense sense of appreciation for the fact that she was lying quiet with mother's hand on her and the door was locked against her stepfather. (Allison, 2002, p. 27). The mother instructs her daughter not to disclose the event to anyone. Given the hostile nature of those around them, the mother recommends that her daughter suppress her emotions. Fear of consequences dominates the scene. The mother advises her daughter that she has not told anyone. It is not safe for them. There are individuals in the world who are as well, but they are not the same as them. It would be impossible to name all of the dreadful things that would occur (p.27). Despite the darkness and dryness of the feelings, there is a sensitive touch within them. The arms and hands are the heart's second channel. Touching someone with hands can send a non-verbal message of love and moral encouragement. A true lover is the one who can handle the highly charged energy (Lowen, 1975, p. 85). The daughter remembers the joyful moments when she was with her grandmother. She evokes the touching, high energy of her grandmother's hand. She felt the strength when her grandmother touched her shoulder. Putting her hand on her daughter's shoulder, she pressed it down firmly. She had experienced a sense of being thick and powerful beside her, as well as a sense of self-assurance that she had not felt since she had last experienced it (Allison, 2002, p. 31).

Attempting to lower one's stress level involves taking a deep or prolonged breath (Webster, 2014, p. 95). The mother takes deep breaths to show that she is stressed while her spouse sits next to her bed. The mother expresses her disgust in a nonverbal way. The daughter asserted that her mother took deep breaths as her husband sat down next to the bed and whistled his sobs upon his arrival (Allison, 2002, p. 32). People nod

their heads to tell the speaker to keep talking and to let them pay close attention to him. It's also a good sign that everyone understands and agrees (Kuhnke, 2016, pp. 31,93). Talking with her daughter is similar to preaching to an audience. The daughter gives a nonverbal cue that her mother should continue talking. The daughter gives her mother a nod of encouragement to carry on speaking. Despite the intriguing nonverbal cues, the daughter is unconvinced by her mother's words. She affirms that when her mother arrived to sit next to her, she informed her of this. Her head slowly nodded. Nevertheless, she secretly wished for her to be angry as well. As she mumbled, "I'll make do," she did not show her anything, and she only nodded in response (Allison, 2002, p. 32).

Individuals who clench or grind their teeth convey feelings of dread, rage, and anxiety (Greene, 2010, p. 101). In addition, the clenching of the teeth results in tension in the jaw and mind (Kuhnke, 2016, p. 31). Being wary of other people is what the mother tells her daughter to do. By clenching her teeth, the mother uses her body language to express wrath, fear, and anxiety. When the entire world is screaming for things to stop, her mother is the one who makes do, "my mama clamps her teeth" (Allison, 2002, p. 32). When people cover their mouths while speaking, it signals an untruthful event (Webster, 2014, p. 28). The mother shows a sign that she is lying when she tries to comfort her daughter. Despite that, the daughter believes what her mother says. Every time her mother spoke, she paid attention. In the daughter's mind, there was no doubt that she was telling her the truth. While she was listening to her remarks, she also paid close attention to her face. She had a habit of lowering her head and hiding with her palm the teeth that were in poor condition (Allison, 2002, p. 33). The daughter loves her mother. Conversely, they both harbor a strong dislike for the stepfather. They do not speak about their relationship, but their bodies do. The mother used to lie to her daughters at the kitchen table in the early morning hours, telling them that she would leave her husband as soon as they were older. they recall their mother's crying as she did this. It was a little simpler now; she would go (pp. 35-36).

In the *Gospel Song*, nonverbal communication continues. Allison bases her narratives on her characters' nonverbal cues. An open mouth conveys a surprised expression (Ellis, 2012, p. 44). Shannon doesn't have any friends because she is an arrogant person. Danny Powell can't believe Shannon has a supporter when he finds out she got a seat on the bus. The protagonist describes Danny Powell and her friend's body language. She scowled at Danny's gaping mouth, but he turned away from them (Allison, 2002, p. 39). Individuals experiencing anxiety may seek comfort by instinctively touching their hair (Edwards, 2013, p. 68). Reese feels uncomfortable when she sees that Shannon has taken a seat. Presuming to be alone, Reese drew a lock of her fine blond hair and placed it in her mouth (Allison, 2002, p. 39). People try to avoid others by lowering their shoulders and avoiding eye contact (Edwards, 2013, p. 85). Regarding this fact, Sharon's body language indicates her avoidance from others. She lowered her shoulders, partially closed her eyes, and removed her spectacles. That would be something she would be cognizant of. She simply

prefers to maintain some distance from everything surrounding her (Allison, 2002, p. 40). Humans' brains reflect other people's states of mind through what are called "Mirror neurons" (Browne, 2018, p. 14). In other words, when people smile, they activate smiles from others. Shannon's lack of consideration for others results in others avoiding her. Shannon's behavior reflects the reactions of others. Although she attempted to have a protagonist's grin at Shannon, the latter deliberately avoids her, just like everyone else does (Allison, 2002, p. 40). Allison conveys a hidden story of animosity through her characters' nonverbal communication. The author's intention is to communicate that her main character possesses a heightened sensitivity to the genuine inner thoughts of individuals, as evidenced by their non-verbal signals. Body language conveys a non-verbal expression of intense dislike or animosity. Shannon would sometimes say that she liked the protagonist's family, even though she knew it was a polite lie. While she eyed the protagonist's too-tight, raggedy dresses, Shannon would occasionally express her affection for them. The smug, superior faces of her stepfather's sisters, their laughter at their mother's loose teeth, and her sister's curls tangled in paper scraps flooded the protagonist's mind (p.42). An individual's sentiment towards another is contingent upon their mutual gaze (Navarro, 2018, p. 19). Her inner hatred extends beyond her family to include her uncle's friends. She claims that the males, who had black heads and blasted, roughhewn faces, kept resembling her uncle Jack in her eyes. What caused them to become so rigid and emotionless—hatred or grief? (Allison, 2002, p. 43).

Allison focuses on the language of body parts and movements. People stare at each other's faces when they first meet. People show others their faces before any other portion of their bodies. Furthermore, the mouth, eyes, and cheekbones can reveal a person's psychological state. Thus, the face plays a role in self-expression as it conveys a person's identity and emotions (Lowen, 1975, p. 90). The author's observations on this fact are evident in the advice given by the mother to her daughter. She told her daughter that you could see animosity and a lack of compassion on someone's face; she added that it was like seeing into a person's soul. All the resentment she felt inside was something she tried to hide (Allison, 2002, p. 43). When people dislike something or someone, they rub or close their eyes. This is referred to as 'the blocking behavior' (Edwards, 2013, p. 39). In an effort to alleviate the pain, Shannon starts scratching her eyes. Shannon would rub her eyes and grumble about a headache until her mother brought us RC Colas (Allison, 2002, p. 46). Those who are fatigued, defeated, submissive, or grieving bow their heads. Additionally, it suggests that other people's ideas are rejected (Webster, 2014, p. 5). Shannon informed her that occasionally she finds her mother to be simplistic. She kept her head down and not wanted to say anything at one of those occasions. She wants Shannon to close (Allison, 2002, p. 46). Certain facial signs, particularly the opened mouth, reveal the shocked expression. (Edwards, 2013, p. 10). When a man sees Shannon's face, he is astounded. A look of horror and astonishment was on the man's face, as he continued to stand with his mouth hanging open (Allison, 2002, p. 48). People display their hesitancy when they grin only a little bit

(Browne, 2018, p. 10). When Mrs. Pearl first saw the man, her hesitancy was visible in her half-smile. She stated that she enjoyed listening to him sing, with a hint of amusement (Allison, 2002, p. 49). Shannon stares at her mother and the man when she hears her mother's words. The stare of a person indicates the hatred. Shannon extricated herself from her and gazed upward at them both. The hatred that was evident in her countenance was appalling (Allison, 2002, p. 49). An expression of frustration can be seen toward the conclusion of the story. Hands clenched together is an expression of annoyance (Kuhnke, 2016, p. 121). The main character pursues justice. Because all she sees is hostility, she questions whether justice exists in the world. She laced the fingers of her hands together. If there was a God, then there would be justice. If justice existed, Shannon and she would one day set them all ablaze (Allison, 2002, p. 50).

In short, the short stories in Trash are filled with non-verbal messages that convey the true feelings and notions of the characters towards each other. Allison narrates tales of hardship without revealing the truth. Despite that, the body language of the characters tells the truth about their agony. Other short stories serve as a gateway to comprehending the quest for truth, primarily through the use of body language. People's body language always betrays their inner thoughts and feelings, no matter how hard they try to hide the truth.

Conclusion

Dorothy Allison is an American writer and activist. She wrote many stories and poems that reflected her sufferings in society. She wants to uncover the stories behind the stories she tells. Hence, she uses body language to convey a non-verbal message about the true feelings of her characters.

Body language reveals the true feelings and notions about someone or something. Sometimes, people say something, but they mean something completely different. Body language can reveal the hidden meaning. Furthermore, it reveals the unspoken truth. As researchers assert, communication among people depends mostly on body language. Fear, anxiety, anger, and hatred expose through body language. People tend to gaze first at the face, which is the most visible part of the body. Then come the other body's parts. The shoulders, head, and hands convey non-verbal notions. The lack of harmony between verbal and non-verbal languages exposes the hidden truth.

In her short stories, *River of Names, Meanest Woman Ever Left Tennessee, Mama, Gospel Song*, Allison depicts the struggle among her characters to conceal the truth. She carefully portrays her characters based on their bodies. The characters' conversation holds significance, yet their body language vividly reveals their true meaning. The mother tries to isolate her child from the hostile world. The first thing she did was turn her daughter's head away in order to avoid seeing the terrible accident. The characters expose their worry, fear, disappointments, and disbelief through gestures. Their eyes reflect their wishes to stay in touch or avoid others. Consequently, people's nonverbal cues convey a great deal about their innermost thoughts and feelings. The lack of harmony between the spoken language and body language reveals the true

emotions of the characters, despite their efforts to conceal them. Allison's works contain a multitude of body language indicators, prompting a thorough examination to comprehend the motivations behind human behavior. The researchers are concerned with the search for meaning beyond the spoken words.

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