

## MARY TURNER'S MARRIAGE LIFE IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE GRASS IS SINGING*

Monalisa Vidia Ratna

English Literature, Faculty of Language and Arts, Surabaya State University, m.vidiaratna@gmail.com

### Abstrak

Penelitian ini berjudul *Mary Turner's Marriage Life In Doris Lessing's 'The Grass Is Singing'*. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah untuk menjelaskan bagaimana kehidupan pernikahan dari Mary Turner dan bagaimana reaksi penentangannya terhadap kehidupan pernikahannya sendiri. Penelitian ini akan menjelaskan hubungan antara karya sastra dan masa penulisan karya sastra tersebut. novel yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah *The Grass Is Singing* karya Doris Lessing. Sumber data diambil dari novel tersebut, sumber-sumber tertulis, dan berbagai macam sumber dari internet lainnya; dalam bentuk kutipan, komentar, dan percakapan yang menggambarkan kehidupan pernikahan Mary Turner dan bagaimana reaksinya terhadap kehidupan pernikahannya. Permasalahan tersebut akan dianalisis menggunakan teori sastra terkait. Teori-teori tersebut terdiri dari eksistensi feminisme dan konsep pernikahan. Teori eksistensi feminisme digunakan untuk menganalisis eksistensi wanita, terutama Mary, yang membuat posisinya lebih rendah daripada pria. Konsep pernikahan digunakan untuk menganalisis peraturan pernikahan yang membuat Mary terkekang dan merasa tidak nyaman dalam pernikahannya sendiri. Sementara itu, metodologi penelitian yang digunakan adalah deskriptif-kualitatif. Penelitian ini menjawab pertanyaan dari rumusan masalah bahwa kehidupan pernikahan Mary Turner jauh dari kata bahagia, karena tekanan dari masyarakat. Terlebih lagi, ia kehilangan jati dirinya dan harus berjuang untuk menemukannya kembali di dalam pernikahannya sendiri. Hal itu membuat Mary berjuang demi situasi yang sama sekali tidak diinginkannya. Reaksi atas penentangannya terhadap kehidupan pernikahannya dapat dilihat ketika ia secara tidak sadar mempunyai ketertarikan seksual terhadap Moses.

**Kata Kunci:** perlawanan perempuan, kehidupan pernikahan, pernikahan paksa, eksistensi wanita, feminisme, deskriptif-kualitatif, jurnal.

### Abstract

This study entitles *Mary Turner's Marriage Life In Doris Lessing's 'The Grass Is Singing'*. The purpose of this study is to describe Mary Turner's marriage life and how to reveal her resistance towards her own marriage. This study explains the correlation between works of literature and the writing time of the works of literature. The novel used in this study is *The Grass Is Singing* by Doris Lessing. The data sources are taken from the novel mentioned, textual sources, and other sources from the internet; in the form of quotations, comments, and dialogue that represent how Mary Turner's marriage life is and her resistance towards it. It is analyzed using the related literary theories. They are the theory of existentialist feminism and the concept of marriage. The theory of existentialist feminism is used to analyze the women's existence especially Mary's, that makes her subordinate to men. The concept of marriage is used to analyze the marriage rules that make Mary struggle in her own marriage and feel uncomfortable in her marriage. While the research methodology used is descriptive-qualitative approach. This study gives the conclusion that Mary Turner's marriage life is unhappy, because of the social pressure. Moreover, she is losing her identity and has to fight to find herself in her marriage life. That makes her fight back on her situation she does not comfortable with. Her resistance can be seen when she unconsciously has a feeling for Moses.

**Keywords:** woman's resistance, marriage life, unwanted marriage, woman's existence, feminism, descriptive-qualitative, journal.

### INTRODUCTION

In the twentieth century, the gender issue emerged as one of the most intractable problems that women have faced. Women still assume the chief responsibility for the family, and do most of the work of reproduction and child-rearing. This "double burden" restricted their participation in economic, social, and cultural life and is now the major source of gender inequality in Western societies. Women's existence in 20<sup>th</sup> century is totally different with the situation in 21<sup>th</sup> century. In 20<sup>th</sup> century,

or usually called as a Victorian Era, the position of women was always lower than the men. Women did not have any rights to be more prominent than men. They had to say yes and did everything what men command all the time. They could not state their mind directly to the world. Men were always better than women in every way. It always brought the stereotypes that women were inferior to men. Women were destined to marry and to have children. Many people believed that women, especially married women, had to stay at home, took care of the children and did the house works. They only could put on make up to their faces, dress up well for the

men, and be good housewives for them. Because of that false belief from society, women did not get the proper education or job like men did.

The emancipation of women exists now because the feminist thinkers in that era are always being vocal about the status equality between men and women in every way. Many literary works in Victorian era discuss about the oppression and exploitation of women especially in marriage life. The literary works seem to show how the women suffered from their marriage life in that era. Women were thought to be the weaker gender, not only physically but also emotionally. It was believed that women needed someone to look after them. If they are married, their husband is expected to look after them. While some people still assume that women can do nothing better than men, feminist thinkers come up with several arguments that women are equal with men. Women have the same rights with men, nowadays. Women get the same education and job like men, and men are no longer become the superior ones. No one consider them as men's property anymore.

This kind of suffering women must deal makes them struggle to get a happiness they want in their marriage life. They keep fighting to stay strong in order to have a life they want at last. As in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*. The novel is the reflection of the woman's life in her marriage during the twentieth century. Women really suffered because of a false belief that they cannot do something better than men. This study is discussing about the woman's marriage life, as reflected in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* that the marriage is far from happiness. The unfair status between men and women becomes the main reason of the feminist movement to liberate women from the roles of a wife that blocks women's freedom.

The condition of women in a marriage in the novel shows how women suffered from the marriage life with all of the rules and false beliefs in the society at that time. The rules that blocked the women's freedom and space in the world, like having no good education, no place in industry and in society, which indicated that women could do nothing better than men. Those things worsened the situation. Because of that unfair condition for women, it needs to explore women's existence in marriage and how far women take part in their marriage. In this case, the marriage life of the main character and her reaction towards it will be the main focus in the study.

There are two statements of problem that will be the main discussion in this study. These statements of problems are: (1) How is the marriage life of Mary Turner in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*? (2) How is Mary Turner's resistance towards her marriage life?

In order to answer the problems above, the purposes of the study are: (1) To describe the marriage life of Mary Turner in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*. (2) To reveal Mary Turner's resistance towards her marriage life in the novel.

This study can help readers understand and realize the terms of women existence in Victorian era. By

discussing the identity of women in marriage, expectantly, this study can motivate and inspire all women, especially married women, to reach their dreams and not to feel that the marriage is just an obligation if the women do not completely love the husbands. Instead of fulfilling the society demands, women should start to find their own happiness in their own marriage.

The limitation of the study is limited into the main character Mary Turner. How Mary positions herself in her marriage when she has to marry the man whom she does not in love with, just because of the pressure from the society. This situation makes her struggle to face the very unhappy marriage. The concept of marriage and theory of existentialist feminism will become the two aspects that will explain the problems.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study uses library research method. Meanwhile, the approach used in the study is descriptive-qualitative approach. The main source of this study is taken from novel, *The Grass Is Singing*. It is written by Doris Lessing, published by Harper Perennial Modern Classics in 2008 as the data source of this study. The data are in form of direct and indirect speech of the character and also dialogue between the characters which represent the case.

The data is taken by close reading and analyzing literary elements, both intrinsic and extrinsic elements. The references are taken from library and internet to support the theory and concept that are used in this study. It includes the quotations, phrases, and dialogues or monologues that shows the speech, thought, actions, and the behavior of the characters which relevant with Mary Turner's marriage life.

In analyzing process, the theory of feminism will be used because the problems are relevant with this theory. Marriage life is a form of feminism, existentialist feminism to be exact, that explain about Mary Turner's marriage life. Furthermore, this study will use two concepts of marriage life and suppression to reveal Mary Turner's resistance towards her own marriage life.

This study requires sequential steps which are started by reading the short stories comprehensively and deciding whether they are qualified to be used as materials of study. The first step to analyze is collecting the data. It aims to solve the problems on statement above. After the quotation ready, it will be collected on a group based on the sub chapter of analysis. Then the discussion will be done based on the statement above. It guides the marriage life of Mary Turner which is depicted in the novel. The last action will be analyzed with specific theory as stated above. The last step in analyzing is producing the conclusion on each chapter.

## Existentialist Feminism

There are many kinds of feminist thoughts. Existentialist feminism is one of the feminist thoughts that are quite controversial. The existentialist feminism is only a further of articulation of Jean-Paul Sartre's idea, at

first. Then it develops, not only based on Sartre's idea, but also on de Beauvoir's idea with her "*The Second Sex*".

Sartre with his "Being and Nothingness", made the distinction between the observer and the observed by dividing beings into two parts: being-for-itself (*pour-soi*) and being-in-itself (*en-soi*). Being-in-itself refers to repetitive, material existence of humans share with animals, vegetables, and minerals; being-for-itself refers to the moving, conscious existence humans share only with other humans (Tong, 174). The distinction between being-in-itself and being-for-itself is useful in an analysis of the human person, if being-in-itself is associated with the body. The body has constant and objective being. Because it can be seen, touched, heard, smelled, and tasted and the body is the perceived. In contrast, the perceiver-the entity that does the seeing, smelling, touching, hearing, and tasting is not itself perceptible object, but still has a certain kind of being: Being-for-itself. Being-for-itself as a subject, as a self precisely by defining other beings, as an object, as others, as the action of consciousness, sets up a system of fundamentally conflictual social relations. (Tong, 1998:174-175)

Being-for-themselves must define themselves through the mutually related processes of decision making and action taking. In contrast, all non-conscious beings, or being-in-themselves, are *massif*. In other words, they are what they are. Conscious beings supposedly yearn for the safe, uncomplicated state of non-conscious beings. The questions that afflict conscious beings, the possibilities that haunt them are, said Sarte, their painful "freedoms". (Tong, 1998:176)

De Beauvoir discussed about how women become not only different and separate from men but also inferior to him. She claimed that although biologist, Freudian psychoanalyst, and Marxist economist help to illuminate the reason for women's "otherness", existentialist philosophers provide the best explanation for it. For example, biology describes the respective reproductive roles of males and females:

"The sperm, through which the life of the male is transcended in another, at the same instant becomes a stranger to him and separates from his body, so that the male recovers his individuality intact at the moment when he transcends it. The egg, on the contrary begins to separates to female body when, fully matured, it emerges from the follicle and falls into the oviduct; but it fertilized by a gamete from outside, it becomes attached again through implantation uterus. First violated, the female is then alienated-she becomes, in part, another than herself." (de Beauvoir, 1974:24)

De Beauvoir was disappointed when she looked beyond biology to psychology, especially psychoanalysis for better explanation of women's "otherness". Although, de Beauvoir conceded Freud's genius-which for her,

consisted in his having forwarded the bold idea that sexuality is the ultimate explanation for the human condition which she nevertheless rejected this notion as simply:

"The enslavement of the female to the species and the limitation of her various powers are extremely important facts; the body of woman is one of the essential elements in her situation in the world. But that body is not enough to define her as a woman; there is no living true reality except manifested by the conscious individual through activities and in the bosom of society. Biology is not enough to the question that is before us: why is woman the Other?" (de Beauvoir, 1974:41)

### The Marriage Life

In struggling to enlarge women's sphere, the feminists have to work hard to cut through a great deal of myth along with move palpable kinds of resistance (Gorsky, 1992:17). Through the years, literature both maintains and undercut the myth. Without doing the actions, feminists will have difficulties to achieve the freedom and open opportunities for women's life widely.

The American feminist and abolitionist Sarah Grimke asserted in Susan Robinov Gorsky's "Femininity to Feminism: Women and Literature In The Nineteenth Century" that absolute equality between husband and wife would lead to a "true relation" that free of "difficulties" (Gorsky, 1992:19). It means that in marriage, there should be a congeniality between men and women in education, job opportunities or giving an opinion, so that they can live together in perfect harmony. Because a marriage is not about living individually but togetherness between men and women to create the natural center of life and a family.

Unfortunately, there is still no marriage that proves the "uncongenial" situation. When men can get more and women get the less, it can be concluded that the marriage is not only about love but also about women's oppression.

"Because these women were not allowed to exercise outdoors lest they tan their lily-white skin, they lacked of healthy bodies. Because they were not permitted to make their own decisions, they lacked liberty. And because they were discouraged from developing their powers of reason-given that a great premium was placed on indulging self and gratifying others, especially men and children-they lacked virtue." (Tong, 1998:12)

The quotation above means that women have no right to speak, have no place in the job field, and have no better education. Hence, they become less intellectual and have less self-development. Based on this condition the feminists focus on the rights of women so there would be no more gender injustice in every aspect of life,



especially in education. So that, the women's lives will be no longer less intellectual and have less self-development.

The injustice gender does not only make an uncongenial situation in marriage, but also creates the false beliefs that blocking the women's entrance to the worldwide. Rosemary Putnam Tong's "Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction" says that the women's oppression will not happen if men and women are in the same "cage". Having no better education, job, and trust from the society to do something useful, men will feel the suffering women feel.

"If it should happen that when women and men are given the same education and civil right, few women achieve eminence in the sciences, arts, and professions, then so be it." (Tong, 1998:02)

Wollstonecraft also claimed that unlike emotional and dependent women, who routinely shirk their domestic duties and indulge their canal desires, rational and independent women will tend to be "observant daughter", "affectionate sisters", "faithful wives", and "reasonable mothers". What Wollstonecraft wants for women is personhood. Women are not the "toy of men, his rattle", which "must jingle in his ears whenever, dismissing reason, he chooses to be amused" (Wollstonecraft, 1975:34). On the other words, women are not an instrument of someone else's happiness or perfection. Women are an end, a rational agent whose dignity consists of having the capacity for self-determination.

### Suppression

Feminism is closely related to women oppression. Feminism was born because of women being suppressed by people or condition around them. Based on [www.thefreedictionary.com](http://www.thefreedictionary.com) the definition of suppression is "the conscious avoidance of unpleasant thoughts" (<http://www.thefreedictionary.com/suppression>). About.com also stated that "sometimes we do this (avoidance of unpleasant thoughts) consciously by forcing unwanted information out of our awareness, which is known as suppression" ([http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/ss/defensemech\\_4.htm](http://psychology.about.com/od/theoriesofpersonality/ss/defensemech_4.htm)). Utah psych also said that "suppression is the effort to hide and control unacceptable thoughts or feelings". All of the statements above agree that suppression is the condition to control to avoid in paying attention to an emotion or thoughts consciously. The more someone tries to ignore something, the more he ends up thinking about it. People tend to have intrusive unwanted thoughts about the thing they are trying to suppress. Worse, once they have stopped trying to not about something, there is a tendency to think more than usual about that thing for some time after. This is called the 'rebound effect' (Wegner et al, 1987). This effect gets stronger when the person tries to suppress something emotionally. And it is known that

people with anxiety or depression tend to find it even more difficult to suppress unwanted thoughts.

It is worth noting that the term "suppression" has different connotations from the Freudian concept of repression. Thought suppression refers to the intentional and conscious removal of a thought from attention, whereas the popular usage of repression connotes as unintentional and unconscious forgetting. One of the reasons that thought suppression may have such strong appeal to depressed individuals is that they view it as an expedient method of controlling the unwanted thoughts that are undermining their emotional well-being (Wenzlaff, 1993). Unfortunately, the perceived promise of thought suppression causes a process that can produce a preoccupation with the very thoughts that one hoped to eliminate.

Wegner's ironic process theory suggests that when people try to suppress thoughts, they activate two distinct processes (1994). First, it sets up an operating process that tries to create the state of mind one wants. It therefore acts to seek out contents that are in agreement with the desired state (i.e. anything other than the suppressed item). This process is deemed to be conscious and effortful, and it shows the reason why thought suppression feels like hard work.

In line with this argument, studies have reported that thought suppression can have behavioural consequences. Thus, Macrae et al. (1994) demonstrated that participants who suppress thoughts about a skinhead, subsequently, chooses to sit further away from a skinhead when offered a free choice of seats relatively to participants that had not previously suppressed.

The results of the pattern above are that the longer a person suppresses a thought linked to a behavior, the more the behavior will rebound later. This is particularly pernicious, as it does not allow individuals to notice the causal significance of thought suppression in the later occurrence of the rebound behaviour. Another note in the thought suppression literature suggests that thought suppression can also affect what people perceive as having caused the action that they have performed.

The trouble comes when a person tries to *consciously* stop distracting himself and the *unconscious* process carries on looking out for the thing he is trying to suppress. What will be seen is that the target triggers the thought again and he goes into another loop of thinking the same thought he is desperately trying to forget about.

The irony of thought suppression, then, is that the more someone tries to manage actively his own mind can sometimes do more harm than good. Although it makes perfect sense to try and suppress unwanted thoughts, unfortunately the very process one uses to do this contains the seeds of its own destruction. The more one tries and pushes intrusive thoughts down, the more the thoughts pop back up even stronger than ever.

### ANALYSIS

#### Marriage Life of Mary Turner

In early 1900's, marriage was comparable to master—and—slave relationship. Women had the least

role in the marriage. The women's place was in the house; raising the children, cleaning the house, and doing other "womanly" tasks. Women were subordinate to men and became men's property. The statement above is supported by these following quotations:

"Marriage offers women contentment, tranquility, and security, but it also robs women of the chance to be great." (Tong, 1998:184)

The rules and the beliefs of the society, that block the women's freedom and take away the women's chance to be great, disturb the feminist writers, at the time, in creating a literary work that brings the voices of women's liberation. As in the Doris Lessing's *"The Grass Is Singing"*. This novel tells about how Mary Turner struggles for her own will against the unwanted marriage.

Mary Turner grows up as her "confidante" of her mother, "hating her father" (2008:30). She "inherited from her mother an arid feminism" though does not so much use to her (2008:32). The effects of growing up with resentment against her father are also reflected in Mary Turner's adulthood later in the novel, such a troubled family, and its financial problems which do not leave Mary much room to develop a healthy personal identity and a sense of belonging to a family unit as she only feels important when she is comforting her mother: "Mary comforted her miserably, longing to get away, but feeling important too" (2008:30). This shows that Mary Turner's existence, in her childhood, finds its meaning with the need of her mother feeling for her. It is only these moments that somewhat anchored her sense of belonging to a family.

The relationship between Mary Turner and her mother has a major effect on Mary Turner's sense of identity. It is because the limitation of the female identity is closely related to the relationship between the mother and daughter. Mary Turner's role model: her mother, who is desperately poor without any emotional support, unavoidably brings Mary Turner to the point where the mother was earlier. Therefore, the protagonist repeats the errors of her mother and dies. Ironically, Mary Turner, while trying to avoid becoming like her mother, finds herself playing a role which is very similar to her mother.

Mary Turner's relationship with her father is the second major factor that effects her female identity and her sense of belonging to female society during her adulthood. The fact that "Mary was pleased to be rid of him" clearly displays the nature of the father-daughter relationship in the novel (2008:32). The father, being a heavy drinker and a pumpman working for the railway, influences

Mary Turner's relationship with men. "There had been little privacy" in the small farm house where she grows up; therefore she develops "a profound distaste for sex" (2008:37). The narration of Mary Turner's dream clearly shows that she continues to be affected by the traumatic experiences: detaching her from adult sexuality.

As the result of these factors, in her socially-active town life, as a working woman, Mary Turner comes to develop just friendships with men; she is "a good pal, with none of this silly sex business." (2008:37). With her unhappy childhood, Mary Turner turns to be an independent and strong woman. She can do everything she wants to do without bothering others. The novel stated:

"There was nothing to prevent her living by herself, even running her own car, entertaining on a small scale. She could have become a person on her own account...She seemed impersonal, above the little worries. The stiffness of her manner, her shyness protected her from many spites and jealousies. She seemed immune." (2008:34)

As a woman in that era, who mostly was dependent on people around them, especially men, Mary Turner can take care of her business on her own. Socially, Mary Turner has a lot of friends. Her friends, not only women but also men, like to hang out with her. She is a friend to half the town. She also can adapt very well in every occasion when it is needed, as stated below:

"If a visiting cricket team came to town and partners were needed, the organizers would ring up Mary... She would sell tickets for a charity dance or act as a dancing partner for a visiting fullback with equal amiability." (2008:36)

Mary Turner has never thought about marriage before she accidentally overheard her friends gossiping about why she stays single. She thinks that she does not have to get married because she has a pretty good life. She is happy with her life. She feels satisfied with her job, where she feels sufficient and capable; and also her friends, whom she relies on. Mostly, her unwillingness to get married is because of the reflection of her parents' marriage. Most of her childhood is filled with the quarrelling from her father and mother about the bills they have to pay.

"When Mary thought of "home" she remembered a wooden box shaken by passing trains; When she thought of marriage she

remembered her father coming home red-eyed and fuddled; when she thought of children she saw her mother's face at her children's funeral—anguished, but as dry and as hard as a rock. Mary liked other people's children but shuddered at the thought of having any of her own. She felt sentimental at weddings, but she had a profound distaste for sex; there had been little privacy in her home and there were things she did not care to remember; she had taken good care to forget them years ago." (Lessing, 2008:37)

It is also partly Mary Turner's refusal to come to terms with the sexual side of marriage that causes the later sterility of her own marriage.

However, everything goes differently after she overheard the talk about her being single. She starts to think about getting married. She does not expect that her friends do such thing behind her back. That incident has a profound effect on Mary Turner. She wonders, if there is something wrong with her. Her life becomes the object of other people's concern since "she was not playing her part, for she did not get married" (2008:35). When she overhears friends discussing how "she just isn't like that," she spontaneously looking for a marriage partner in order to fulfill the patriarchal expectation (2008:38).

When the society, including her friends do not accept her decision for not getting married, Mary Turner starts to look for a husband. And just like what her gossiping friends have predicted, she allows a much older man than herself to approach her. Mary Turner prefers "a widower of fifty-five with half grown children" because she "felt safer with him [. . .] because she did not associate ardours and embraces with a middle aged gentleman whose attitude who almost fatherly" (2008:40). At this point, the influence of Mary Turner's oedipal trauma caused by her father becomes obvious once again in the novel. Mary Turner's distaste for sex and her decision to marry an old man carry implications of Freudian ideas, which explains female adult sexuality by means of the relationship with the father in childhood. In other words, Mary Turner predictably chooses an old man to flirt, in order to compensate for the fatherly affection she lacked during her childhood. But, when the old man tries to kiss her, she runs away and the whole town learns about this humiliating situation. The reaction of the society is meaningful because "when people heard it they nodded and laughed as if it confirmed something they had known for a long time" (2008:42).

As she keeps looking for a husband she also becomes the laughing stock of the town, which consumes her even to a greater extent than traumas she has to go through. When Mary Turner lets her social environment direct her life by influencing the decisions she makes, Mary Turner's life starts to revolve around the expectations of the society. As Mary Turner leads the life of an independent town girl, the society expects her to quit that role and assume a new one that suits her age. She is expected to become a wife and a mother. Mary

cannot do this because, deep down, she suffers from matrophobia, a phobia of being a mother, and because her sexuality is impaired because of her childhood trauma, namely, her untimely exposure to sex. This intricate interplay between her familial background and the harshly demanding attitude of her social environment forces her into marrying anybody literary to save her face among her friends. The statement above is supported by the quotation below:

"Then she met Dick Turner. It might have been anybody. Or rather, it would have been the first man she met who treated her as if she were wonderful and unique. She needed that badly. She needed it to restore her feeling of superiority to men, which was really, at bottom, what she had been living from all these years." (2008:43)

Lessing makes it clear that Mary needs an ego booster which a man can provide. She yearns to be remained that she is "wonderful and unique" since she lost her self-worth when the society, embodied in her friends and their opinion of her, confronts her and shatters her self-image, demands her to change.

Mary Turner's marriage life is far from the concept of living happily ever after. For the first time of her life, she begins to feel uncomfortable with men around her. Even, she starts to lose herself.

"She felt as she had never done before; she was hollow inside, empty, and into this emptiness would sweep from nowhere a vast panic, as if there were nothing in the world she could grasp hold of." (2008:42)

From the quotation above Lessing portrays Mary losing her strong personality. She cannot help herself when it comes to the society. She cannot just ignore what the society believe and has to deal with a marriage that she does not even want to.

She marries Dick Turner due to fulfill the social pressure; however she is immediately unhappy because her pride is so bruised in the process that she feels relieved to be away from the town and its people.

### **Mary Turner's Resistance Towards Her Marriage Life**

Mary Turner's relationship with her husband Dick is based on Mary's gratitude to Dick for acknowledging the fact that Mary married below her by accepting him. Mary accepts Dick because his worship restores "her feeling of superiority to men" (2008:43). Dick is aware that he drags Mary into a miserable poor farmer's life by proposing her. Although he is very determined and hardworking, in the end he is poor and becomes a jinxed farmer; he thinks that "he had no right to marry" (2008:57). His sense of guilt manifests itself as shyness and meekness whenever they have a fight. He is intimidated by the fact of him not having been fair to



Mary by marrying her. In other words, he has a certain latent inferiority that Mary comes to appreciate and enjoy in time.

"But she knew she could not easily ask, and bring that heavy tormented look on his face. For by now she had become used to that look. Though really, she liked it: deep down, she liked it very much. When he took her hand endearingly, and kissed it submissively, and said pleadingly, 'Darling, do you hate me for bringing you here?' she replied, 'No, dear, you know I don't.' It was the only time she could bring herself to use endearments to him, when she was feeling victorious and forgiving. His craving forgiveness, and his abasement before her was the greatest satisfaction she knew, although she despised him for it." (2008:69-70)

This intricate relationship is sustained; thanks to the silent agreement between the two. Dick retreats in most of arguments, and Mary's ego is boosted by Dick's pangs of conscience. For instance, when Dick accuses Mary of wasting water by having frequent baths to cool herself, Mary gets furious. The story said: "She opened her mouth to shout at him, but before she could, he had become suddenly contrite because of the way he had spoken to her; and there was another of those little scenes which comforted and soothed her: he apologizing, abasing himself, and she forgiving him" (2008:76). That is the nature of their relationship being so. It can be said that Mary does not conform to the wife role as she pictured it when "unconsciously, without admitting to herself, she was looking for a husband" (2008:41).

When she experiences love-making for the first time with her new husband, she is unable to meet him sexually. Instead, "she (is) able maternally to bestow the gift of herself on this humble stranger and remain untouched" (2008:56). In relief, she thinks, "it was not so bad [...] not as bad as *that*. It meant nothing to her, nothing at all" (2008:56). She finally had the sex experience, but even after, she does not want children. Maternity has a deeper meaning; a more personal confrontation with her sexuality, which she refuses to acknowledge.

Mary Turner's horror of sexuality is inextricably linked to inescapable past. Although she banishes thoughts of her childhood from her consciousness, her fear of her father becomes manifestation in her dream life. Dreams reveal her need to reconcile with her past in order to live in a whole and balanced life in the present. In one unpleasant dream, "there was her father, the little man with the plump juicy stomach, beer-smelling and jocular, whom she hated, holding her mother in his arms [...] Her mother was struggling in mock protest, playfully expotulating. Her father bent over her mother, and at the sight Mary ran away" (2008:185-187).

Mary Turner does not learn from her past, and her past comes to haunt her marriage to Dick Turner. The union is a mistake, since she marries him in order to prove

she is like her conventional friends, who seem to settle happily into marriage and family life. Mary Turner cannot become like them because she is willing neither to remember her childhood nor to learn from it. Because of this failure, she is emotionally and physically not mature.

Not only reconciling with her past, Mary Turner also does not attempt to adapt herself to her hated present. For example, she dislikes accompanying Dick out on to the lands and shrinks from having to observe the unprofitable farm, which traps her. She does that because she holds fast to the racist assumptions about Africans taught to her by her parents. She becomes fearfully persistent that their workers are pilfering her household belongings. Day after day in the house, with the sunbeating down relentlessly on to the roof directly above, her entrapment forces her into a close contact with Moses, who makes her confront her abhorrence and fear of African people and her lack of knowledge about them. Paradoxically, when Moses becomes her house servant, he gains power over her. This is because she cannot forget the time when she once hit him. She fears that he will retaliate. To Mary Turner, then, sex, fear, and violence are intimately connected. Moses mesmerises and obsesses her as he carries out his household duties in clothes that are too small for him, in a house which seems too large and filled up with his bulk.

Because of Mary Turner's inability to act satisfactorily within patriarchal and social boundaries the marriage is doomed to failure. Lessing comments of Dick (the statement applies equally to Mary Turner) that "it is terrible to destroy a person's picture of himself in the interests of truth or some other abstraction. How can one know he will be able to create another to enable him to go on living" (2008:42). Mary's marriage to Dick forces her to enter an adult life for which she is not ready to live in, and to abandon her life as a popular companion in the town for a life of solitude and isolation.

Although Dick and Mary had similar childhoods, they do not seem to form a bond out of this common point. It can be seen in the novel through this following quotation:

"She knew so little about him. His parents were dead; he was an only child. He had been brought up somewhere in the suburbs of Johannesburg, and she guessed, though he had not said so, that his childhood had been less squalid than hers, though pinched and narrow. He had said angrily that his mother had had a hard time of it; and the remark made her feel kin to him, for he loved his mother and had resented his father. And when he grew up he had tried number of jobs. He had been clerk in the post office, something on the railways, had finally inspected watermeters for the municipality. Then he had decided to become a vet. He had studied for three months, discovered he could not afford it; and, on an impulse, had come to Southern Rhodesia to be a

farmer, and to 'live his own life.'" (2008:155-156)

Although Mary Turner recognizes his good personality traits, she cannot help despising him for being a failure despite his various attempts to make money on the farm. He tries farming, raising pigs, chicken, bees, rabbits, and turkeys and finally opening a store. Each attempt makes him lose more money; and earns himself a nickname of "Jonah" (2008:46). She supports his initiative at first, but with failure following failure, she loses all hope in Dick. During this period, Dick's incompetence becomes for a while the focus of her own fears. First, she wonders why Dick's farming is so failed constantly, and then she also tries to help him to material success. Later, she starts patronizing him to such an extent that Dick calls her "boss" twice in the narrative (2008:101;142). Realizing that "demonstration of her superior ability would provoke Dick to destructive defensiveness, she withdraws all her support including going to the field with him just "to sustain him with her presence" (2008:154). She realizes that there is no hope for them. The novel states:

"The women who marry men like Dick learn sooner or later that there are two things they can do: they can drive themselves mad, tear themselves to pieces in storms of futile anger and rebellion; or they can hold themselves tight and go bitter. Mary, with the memory of her own mother recurring more and more frequently, like an older, sardonic double of herself walking beside her, followed the course her upbringing made inevitable." (2008:98)

Thus, the parallelism between Mary and her mother is made clear once again in the novel. They both marry men who are no good for their wives. The only difference between Mary's father and Dick is that Dick is not a drunkard or lazy. Moreover, Dick is a hardworker and has respect for Mary, even his nervous wonder at her efficiency, her energy and her intelligent fail to save her from her mother's fate. Mary becomes aware of Dick's real character, and starts to appreciate Dick's positive qualities much later in the novel as their marriage is not based on the two knowing and loving each other.

As Mary's mental breakdown becomes obvious, Dick realizes that she is ill and suggests that she "go into the town and stay with some of her friends," and now he cannot send her on holiday (2008:139). This encouragement to socialize is also turned down by Mary who "appeared horrified" (2008:139). She dreads to think of seeing her friends who knew her "when she was young and happy" (2008:139). "The memory of her friends checked her" when she wants to run away from Dick and his farm, and now she does not want to be seen in the present, miserable state, "with her record failure" by the friends who made her marry (2008:107).

Because of her inability to perceive her childhood and her earlier life in the town as steps in the inevitable

creation and re-creation of her identity, Mary Turner is trapped in a hard situation when she refuses to take positive steps towards creating her own sense of self. She thinks, instead, that her past is segmented into distinct life-stages which one can forget or return to at will. This belief means that she leaves Dick to take up employment in her old firm as soon as a position is advertised (2008:108). Once there though, she realizes the differences between her present existence and past, and becomes aware that she is too old for the position. She has cracked brown hands of which she is ashamed of, and wears an old dress. When Dick comes to town to pick her up, she returns to him without argument. She painfully awakes of the fact that she is not the woman she once was or believed herself to be. It becomes "an effort for her to do anything at all. [...] This was the beginning of an inner disintegration in her. It began with numbness, as if she could no longer feel or fight" (2008:113).

Mary Turner degenerates into madness because she fails not only to reconcile herself with her past and her past selves, but also to integrate successfully into her self such facets as her sexuality. The whole idea of race, traps Mary Turner just as the idea of womanhood limits. Unable to view Moses except as a danger and a threat to her existence, Mary feels that "she had lost her balance; she had no control over her actions" (2008:164). Moses' polished black skin symbolizes the threat he poses to Mary, the power which he exerts over her when "he forced her, now to treat him as a human being [so] [...] she never ceased to be aware of him" (2008:174). He also symbolizes her own sexuality, which she fears, loathes and views as evil. When Mary becomes hysterical after Moses asks to leave, he guides her to her bed: "it was like a nightmare where one is powerless against horror: the touch of this black man's hand on her shoulder filled her with nausea; she had never, not once in her whole life, touched the flesh of a native" (2008:172). Her world disintegrates partly because of her inability to live the life of white "missus." Without her adherence to the strict cultural and racial protocols of her society, she has nothing stable upon which to base her existence.

Mary Turner's dreams, her fear about her sexuality, the problems she has with accepting her past, and so learning to live in the future, all occur in her house. Therefore, it comes to symbolism of the disintegration of Mary's conscious self which leads to her death, and to represent Mary's literal, emotional and psychological entrapment.

Unfortunately, Mary's attempts to forget her past serve only to alienate her from her neighbours as well as her husband. Intent on leading a decent life, she offends her good-willed neighbours by her aloofness and refusal to participate in the expected round of social visiting.

Mary Turner's collapse into madness occurs because she does not have the strong psychological motivation to integrate her various aspects of a integrated self. Lacking of courage to confront her past and to thrust herself into a new environment, she continues to measure herself against the old standards of the town. The harmless



comment made by her friends about her lack of relationships and sexual awareness obsesses her to the extent that she allows Moses to help her into her dresses, while she remains still, doll-like and childish. Such an action reveals her alienation from her essential self as well as from the standards of both town and country. The episode also violates the formal pattern of black-white relations. Dick her kind-hearted husband, becomes to her as "a torturing reminder of what she had to forget in order to remain herself" (2008:220). She refuses to allow herself to become close to him since that means she would become vulnerable. Instead she forces herself to endure the nights with him. In everything she remains passive, and she makes no attempt to carve out her own existence.

When she waits for her death at the hands of Moses (who murders her with the same weapon she once used against him), she wonders "what *had* she done? Nothing, of her own volition. Step by step, she had come to this, a woman without will, sitting on an old ruined sofa that smelled of dirt, waiting for the night to come that would finish her" (2008:224). Tangled in the ideology of patriarchy, Mary is at first sure that Tony will rescue her because he is aware of the menace Moses appears to her to represent (2008:228), but although Mary dies an inevitable death, she does achieve some form of limited knowledge, for when she has visited Tony, it becomes clear to her that he can not help her. She has a thought then that "she would walk out her road alone. [...] That was the lesson she had to learn it, long ago, she would not be standing here now, having betrayed for the second time by her weak reliance on a human being who should not be expected to take the responsibility for her" (2008:231). But, unfortunately, Mary Turner's realization of her need for self-reliance and for self-absorption comes too late.

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#### CONCLUSION

This section will briefly answer the statement of the problems in this study. It will be divided into two parts in this study. The first one is the description of the marriage life of Mary Turner. Mary Turner's marriage life is far from word happily ever after. She never thinks about marriage before, because she already has a life that she wants. She has a decent job with a good salary. She does not need the presence of a man in her life. But, when she overhears the gossip about her about being single at her 30's, she decides to look for a husband. So, when Dick Turner proposes her, without a second glance, she accepts it. Dick Turner is a jinxed farmer back in Southern Rhodesia, South Africa. Mary Turner's miserable marriage life starts when her husband takes her to his home. Mary Turner, who basically hates farming and black people, feels immediately unhappy towards her

marriage. She is forced by the society to do the things she does not like. She is not only has to live in a farm, but also has to do the work as a farmer, when her husband gets ill.

Moreover, her marriage also makes her losing her identity as a strong and independent woman. She has to live away from the town, lose her job as well as her friends. Being married, at that time, women have to stay at home with their husbands and not allowed to have a job. All they can do is doing the house works, taking care of their children and being good housewives. Mary Turner has to let go everything she has built, her decent job, her friends, and the town she loves the most. This situation brings her into madness, because she does not know how to deal with herself, while she loses all the things that makes her happy.

Second, Mary Turner's resistance towards her own marriage. Mary Turner gets married only because of society demands. This unwanted marriage takes away who she was. Mary Turner's marriage to Dick forces her to enter an adult life for which she is not ready to live in. When things are getting hard to handle, she runs away from the farm and leaves Dick. When she gets into the town, she sees the advertising about her old job, and planning to apply once again. But then, she realizes the differences between her present existence and past, and becomes aware that she is too old for the position. And also, she dreads to think of seeing her friends who knew her. She does not want to be seen in the present, miserable state, with her record failure by the friends who made her marry. So, when Dick comes to town to pick her up, she returns to him without argument. She painfully aware of the fact that she is not the woman she once was or believed herself to be.

As mentioned before, Mary Turner has to stay at home after got married. Her entrapment forces her into a close contact with Moses, who makes her confront her abhorrence and fear of African people and her lack of knowledge about them. She views Moses as a danger and a threat to her existence. So, when Moses becomes her house servant, he gains power over her. This is because she cannot forget the time when she once hit him. She fears that he will retaliate. To Mary Turner, then, sex, fear, and violence are intimately connected. Moses also symbolizes her own sexuality, which she fears, loathes, and views as evil. When Mary becomes hysterical after Moses asks to leave, he guides her to her bed and takes care of her by his delicate touch, something that she never gets from her own husband. At this point she finally feels love for the first time since she got married.

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