

**THE SENSE OF DISPLACEMENT IN DORIS LESSING'S
THE GRASS IS SINGING**

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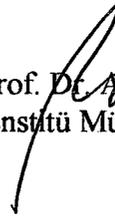


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ÖZET

Modern ve post-modern edebi yazıların çoğunun ana temaları: ‘çağdaş Batı teknolojisi’, dünya savaşları, ırkçılık, nesiller arası anlaşmazlık ve kadın özgürlüğüdür. Doris Lessing The Grass is Singing adlı romanında bireysel ve kozmik bilinç üzerinde yoğunlaşır, ve ütopyik düşüncelerle birey ve toplumu irdeler.

Lessing bu ilk romanında erkeklerin dünyasında yer alan bir kadının problemlerini işlemektedir. Ayrıca eserde sadece bir kadının dünyası üzerinde durulmaz ,farklı katı ilişkilerin (beyaz efendiler ve siyah köleler) sürekli karşılaştırılması da yapılır. Böylece, birbirlerine bağlı olan birey ve toplum kavramları romanda etkili ve kalıcı bir gösterge olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. İki kavram arasında sağlanan bu karşıtlık, herbirinin doğasını ve işlevini aydınlığa çıkarır. Böylece Lessing bu eserinde beyaz bir kadının trajedisi ve o dönemin siyah kurbanlarını vurgulayarak öğretici işlevini yerine getirir.

Sonuç olarak özellikle dünya savaşları sonrası ‘teknolojik çağdaş Batı’ kişi ve toplumda sosyal ve moral değişiklikler yaratarak bireyi izole etmiştir. Bu ilişki bireyin değişik kimlik arayış çabalarında vurgulanır.

ABSTRACT

In most of the modern and post-modern literary works the common elements are: 'modern West technology', world wars, racism, generation gap and women liberation. Doris Lessing in The Grass is Singing focuses on the individual and the cosmic consciousness, and deeply concerns about the individual and the society with utopian thoughts.

Lessing in her first novel concerns with the problems of a woman in men's world. Moreover, there is a constant juxtaposition not only of the world of a woman but also comparison of the different crucial affairs. (white masters and black slaves) Hence, the concepts of individual and society as the two key points which, interrelated to each other, shape the structure of the novel into what one might call the presentation of a dominant paradigm. The sustained conflict between the two concepts serves to illuminate the nature and the function of each. This is how the didactic function, that is, the task of underlining the tragic downfall of a white woman and the black victims of that period in Lessing's novel is fulfilled.

Finally, especially after the world wars 'technologic modern West' isolated the individual by changing the social and moral values of him and the society. This relation is reflected in the several efforts of the individual to have a different identity.

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INTRODUCTION

Doris Lessing, born in Persia in 1919, spent most of her childhood in Southern Rhodesia where her parents had emigrated to settle in 1924. Her formal education ended at the very little ages, but she learnt much by observing life in Colonial Africa. She was able to know their condition personally very well and she could reflect all her observations in her short stories and novels successfully.

In her first novel The Grass is Singing, published in 1950, it is dealt with the life of whites and the blacks in Africa. Lessing's this first novel includes several topics at all once. The story unfolds her concern with social, economic and political structures, the problem of women existing in a man's world and the crucial relationship between the white masters and the black servants.

While Lessing reflects all these problems, we can also find the concepts of abnormal consciousness, fragmentation, self-division and breakdown. The novelist also touches upon the matter of women's liberation. For instance, Mary Turner wants to get away from the shackles, she even goes back to her old job due to the loneliness. A woman's loneliness in the man's world is one of the basic problems in this novel.

Doris Lessing is also outstanding among many writers who have dealt with the problem of apartheid in their writing. She does not only discuss the racial problems, but she also recognizes it in terms of hostile social milieu, political corruption and colossal human tragedy. She tries to find a solution for universal happiness, and welfare of all human beings.

The Grass is Singing is the story of the weak members of the otherwise strong and superior white colonizers. Dick Turner is an unsuccessful white farmer. His wife, Mary, is disappointed and frustrated due to her husband's failures. She suffers from a nervous breakdown. And she has a bad name as a mistress because of her cruel behaviors to the blacks. However, Moses, who is whipped by Mary, is very different from the other blacks for Mary, but at the end of the novel he causes Mary's breakdown. Because despite all the social taboos, Mary sexually gets attracted to him, and finds herself in a conflict of love and hate towards a negro. Finally, her acute poverty and inner conflict, due to the sexual diversion towards a tabooed man, causes her mental disintegration, and her being murdered by Moses.

However it is an important point that Lessing does not only deal with the conflict between the individual and society, but also the conflict between two individuals as well as the conflict within the individual himself as it is in Mary Turner's consciousness, and Lessing does not put the blame on the

individual or society itself. Both the individual and the society are responsible from Mary and Dick's fate according to her. The social, biological and economic forces can canalize the individual to the different lives. Lessing tries to give all the aspects of these forces to her readers to make them understand that she is a universal novelist. For, she does not only insist on the collective conscience, but also the individual conscience.

In this thesis, I will deal with the displaced, lonely, hopeless tragic heroine who is in fact an example of modern anti-hero, together with her husband Dick, who can not communicate with the others and therefore bound to fail.

In The Grass is Singing, the downfall of the heroine Mary, who turns out to be an anti-hero, is reflected in all aspects. In the first chapter, the conflict between individual and society, and between two individuals and especially the conflict within the individual is going to be reflected together with the impacts of the Western Civilization. In the second chapter the sense of displacement and the state of anti-hero in the Western Civilization are going to be dwelt upon. And in the third chapter the reasons of the sense of displacement and the tragic downfall of the Turner family as the modern anti-heroes are going to be analyzed in details. The conclusion part is the sum of the previous chapters to establish the condition of modern man who suffers the strong sense of displacement, isolation and loneliness because he cannot cope

with the highly competitive life conditions and requirements which turn the hero's life into tragedy and lead to his tragic downfall.



CHAPTER I

THE THREEFOLD CONFLICT: BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY;

BETWEEN TWO INDIVIDUALS; AND WITHIN THE INDIVIDUAL

The Grass is Singing is a novel about the tragic downfall of a white British woman in South Africa. It records the decay and disintegration of both the society and individual. Lessing has been concerned with understanding and exploring the relationship between the individual and the collective as Shadia S. Fahim, in her essay The Grass is Singing explains;

Her insistence on the importance of descent-of developing the inner realm of consciousness as an initial step in order to achieve a healthy relationship with the collective-forms the pivot of this early novel, where Mary Turner's failure to understand her inner self intersects with the oppressive social pressure of her environment. That interaction is the cornerstone to understanding the tragedy developed in The Grass is Singing. (1994;19)

As we declared before, The Grass is Singing is a novel about the tragic downfall of a white British woman .In other words it is a tragic novel. If it is a tragic novel, it is definitely about a tragic conflict either between the individual and society or between two individuals (Sometimes who are near and dear in Aristotelian terms) or even both. Therefore it will be convenient to dwell upon tragedy beginning from the Classical Tragedy as an earliest literary genre. A tragedy as Aristotle argued in The Poetics, is itself the imitation an action that is serious and complete, with incidents arousing pity and fear through which it effects a catharsis of such emotions. The chief characters are noble personages (Better than ourselves says Aristotle) and the actions they perform are noble actions. The plot involves a change in the protagonist's fortune which he falls from happiness to misery.

The protagonist is not a perfectly good man nor yet a bad man. His misfortune is brought upon him not by vice and depravity ,by some error of judgment . In the classical sense ,the tragic hero is a man of noble stature. He has a greatness about him. He is not an ordinary man. Likewise, in Greek and Shakespearean tragedy, he is usually a prince or a king. The tragic hero's kingship is a symbol of his initial good fortune and the mark of his position. If the hero's fall is to arouse in us the emotions of pity and fear, it must be a fall from height. Though the tragic hero is preeminently great, he is not perfect, combined with his strength, there is usually a weakness in his character.

Aristotle says that his fall is caused by “some error of judgment”. With all his great qualities, the tragic hero is usually afflicted with some fault of character such as inordinate ambition, quickness to anger, a tendency to jealousy or overweening pride. This flaw in his character leads to his downfall. The characteristic quality which makes Shakespeare’s tragedies “the tragedy of character”, which also exists in the classical tragedies always with the great uncontrollable power named “fate”. Although “fate” in the Classical tragedies seems to control and direct the action, Aristotle did not believe that “fate is the dominating motive in tragedy. On the contrary, the tragic flaw in the character had always been emphasized by Aristotle as the cause of the downfall of the tragic hero.

Despite all these characteristic qualities of tragedy, in modern age men of letters have to deal with a new concept of tragedy. J. A. Cuddon explains the development of modern tragedy as follows:

Near the end of the nineteenth century some Scandinavian dramatists brought about a wholly unexpected revolution of tragic form and subject. Their works displayed the tragedy of disease, of eccentricity, of bad heredity, of madness and more or less psychotic and emotionally morbid states. Their tragic vision revealed a society that was

diseased, spiritually and morally corrupt and decadent .In Ibsen's case the vision gave great and bitter offense. What he exposed was to near the truth for almost anybody's comfort. One can say that their tragedies were unlike anything written hitherto, and like many that followed, far removed from classical and Aristotelian. (1986;710)

With this explanation, Cuddon conveys the changes of tragedy in the course of time. Now we have the grief, the misery, the disaster as well as the psychotic and emotionally morbid states of ordinary man: not a king or queen, but an everyday mother, peasant worker or salesman. As it is seen in The Grass is Singing, Lessing's heroine Mary Turner, a lonely, displaced tragic heroine, is not a queen or princess. She is an ordinary white woman in South Africa. Although the color of her skin was regarded as superiority in South Africa especially in 50ies;nevertheless she is not a queen.

Arthur Miller, in his "Tragedy and the Common Man" writes about the tragic feeling and tragic hero: "I think the tragic feeling is evoked in us when we are in the presence of a character who is ready to lay down his life, if need to be, to secure one thing his sense of personal dignity."(1966;329)

In fact Arthur Miller argues that from the ancient times to nowadays the struggle of man is to gain his rightful position in society. In the Classical tragedies he is a man who struggles to maintain his position in society. Actually the common fear of the human beings is being displaced as Miller argues;

The quality in such plays that shake us, however, derives from the underlying fear of being displaced, the disaster inherent in being torn away from our chosen image of what and who we are in this world. Among us today this fear is as strong and perhaps stronger than it ever was. In fact, it is the common man who knows this fear best. From Orestes to Hamlet, Medea to Macbeth, the underlying struggle is that of the individual attempting to gain his rightful position in his society.(329)

In modern plays ,the hero is a lonely, displaced person ,isolated from society, who either strives to gain or regain his position or creates a seemingly secure world for himself which is illusionary and therefore bound to collapse. In other words “Tragedy is about human isolation” (329) whereas for Miller, tragedy “is the consequence of man’s total compulsion to evaluate himself

justly.” (Eagleton 1983:92) Today the fear of being displaced is man’s common fear as reflected in the literary works of our age, and Mary Turner is a typical example of these lonely displaced characters. Since, she does not feel herself as a part of the society, she isolates herself from the world. She tries to create a secure place for herself, but it is impossible for her, because such a world is only an illusion. This subject is the common point of the modern literary works such as the plays of Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter. For instance, in Pinter’s The Room, the characters are the people who escape from the outer world because they are outcasts and therefore displaced and try to create a seemingly secure world for themselves which consists of a single room; which is, unfortunately, only an illusion.

As our characters in The Grass is Singing, Mary and Dick like Hardy’s Tess and Angel in his Tess of the D’Urbervilles, who are highly affected by the social pressures and environment, are the typical examples of that type of people. Mary, for instance, because of her drunken father, is indifferent to sexuality, even she is a frigid woman. Although she has a husband, she does not feel anything sexual to him because of his unsuccessful and distrustful life. However, Moses, despite his race and social status, is more stronger and more ambitious than Dick. Therefore she is attached to Moses despite all the social taboos. And her first sexual desires arise when she sees him bathing as it is reflected in the novel:

By ten in the morning, after he had brought her tea ,he would go off to the back behind the chickens- runs under a big tree, carrying a tin of hot water; and the house she sometimes caught a glimpse of him bending over it, sluicing himself, naked from the waist-up. But she tried not to be around when it was time for his bath.(165)

She does not want to be around him when he has a bath ,because she knows that he has a strong influence on her, which is strongly sexual. However, she is in a conflict because of her desires for a black man in such a prejudiced society, where the blacks are regarded inferior creatures especially by Mary ,herself.

Mary Turner is a displaced tragic heroine firstly because of her past experiences. However her downfall is not only because of past experiences, the effects of which are to be felt later as her faults, but also due to the effects of environment. In other words the reason of her tragic end is the conflict between individual and society. The tragic conflict either between individual and society or between two individuals or within the individual himself, is one of the most important qualities of tragedy which can also be found in naturalistic novels of the late nineteenth century, such as the novels of Emile

Zola in France and in England Thomas Hardy, even in some senses George Eliot's novels.

In Hardy's novels, such as Tess of the D'Urbervilles, we observe the downfall of the heroine Tess like Mary Turner. Hardy in his novels, largely substitutes a cosmic determinism as biological and environmental determinism instead of 'fate' in the classical tragedies. As M. H. Abrams argues in his study:

This thesis, a product of post-Darwinian biology in the nineteenth century, held that a human being exists entirely in order of nature and does not have a soul nor any mode of participating in a religious or spiritual world beyond nature, and therefore, that such a being is merely a higher-order animal whose character and behavior are entirely determined by two kinds of forces, heredity and environment .A person inherits compulsive instincts-especially hunger ,the accumulative drive, and sexuality and is then subject to the social and economic forces, the class and the milieu into which that person is born. (1993;175)

Tess who is a girl from the lower class , therefore sentenced to be a puppet in the hands of the society, viz. in the hands of the upper class, in short the dominant class. Her deficiency is to be born into a poor family with several children and to be a woman in such a class-conscious society. Her womanhood is exploited by a so called nobleman, Alex who is both wealthy and prominent. Nevertheless if she had a rich and influential family or had a good marriage with a well-to do husband, her destiny would not be a tragedy, but a happy end.

In modern drama and fiction, the tragic conflict arises because of psychological reactions of the hero or heroine who is trapped in a tangle of Freudian complexes as a result of the intolerance and cruelty of modern life and civilization. Thus the tragic downfall of a hero or heroine in our modern world can be seen anytime both in drama and fiction as in Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar (1960): the heroine has a similar life to Mary: an unhappy childhood with limited financial support which ends up in isolation from the society. Esther in this novel is in a struggle against life and society and tries to be an individual, but the circumstances are not convenient for her. Eventually, she began to suffer from a nervous breakdown and feels herself as a fetus in a bell jar where there is no way to escape. As Esther moves to city from her town, she realizes that life is not easy and the strong always defeat the weak. Esther is not a weak girl, but being a girl who was brought up and educated in country, she was not ready to deal with the obstacles of modern city life in

order to be successful. Her unhappy childhood and her family's financial problems have made her life hard even intolerable, which also led Esther to be in conflict with her own mother and friends who are supposed to be close to her. This failure, eventually led both characters to displacement and isolation ,even to madness.

When we have analyzed all these characters, it is possible to see the conflict between society and individual as well as the conflict between inner and outer worlds of characters. And such a conflict as Aristotle says, can be between those who are friends and enemies or those who are indifferent. According to Aristotle, if it exists between those who are near and dear, tragedy becomes more effective. In The Grass is Singing ,this conflict is not only between a white woman and a black man which is a taboo for such a society, but also the conflict between the husband and wife, who are supposed to be near and dear, as well as between the white individual and the white society , even within the individual ,is viz., Mary's own self: she is in conflict with own self because of her (sexual) attachment to the black servant Moses. The reasons of this threefold conflict is not only the personal faults of the characters ,but also the faults of the society, in short, both internal and external circumstances.

Mary is brought up in a family whose relations are broken with a drunk father and a mother with a deep hatred for her drunk and irresponsible husband which is the first tragic experience of her life. As a result her views of marriage are not optimistic and she had always been ,even after her marriage, indifferent and aloof the opposite sex.

Her second trouble is poverty which reduces man to nothingness in this so-called white civilization. This white and civilized society adapts an individual if she is rich enough, strong enough and if she is white. However although she is white, she is lonely, poor, isolated and powerless. As it is seen in The Grass is Singing, Mary becomes a woman who escapes from society and creates an illusory world in the end only for herself ,because she is not strong enough to stand on her own feet. The world she is created was illusionary for the society she was living in whereas it was real for her in the sense that she, as a human being , and as a woman went back to her roots, viz, sexuality which she had denied before. Thus she is lost in this cruel world and can not conform to life.

Her lack of confidence because she is a poor farmer's wife made her both financially and socially inferior, although she is a member of white race. Therefore, she suffers from vanity which is directly related to strong sense of insecurity and inferiority complex. In fact, she perhaps unconsciously longs to

have a powerful husband like Charlie Slatter who has a great influence on people because of his wealth and power to whom she might be sexually attached as a man too. Therefore, Charlie Slatter is an excellent outstanding figure for Mary. She always desires to see Dick as powerful as Charlie is; in a sense a typical tyrant, "the master" for the blacks. Yet it is impossible because of Dick's personality. Slatter's wife and the other women want to acquaint with Mary, but Mary does not want it. For, she is ashamed of her husband and her house, in short, her circumstances. In such a society, if she communicated with the others, she could find the ways that might lead them to a better life, but she never tries it. Instead, she satisfies her feelings and inferiority complex by torturing the blacks which becomes a way of showing her superiority over the blacks; but at the end of the book she can not perform even this role of superiority, except for her secret enjoyment of her strange relationship with the black servant Moses.

Life especially in such a cruel society is not easy. It is difficult to live and be successful even for a white unless he or she is well equipped and prepared for the socio-economic competition in this white civilization which is called "life". One of her failures in this cruel world is to marry a young man who is not able to cope with the difficulties of such a competitive life just like she herself is not able to. They are not aware of the requirements of marriage as husband and wife, therefore they can not understand each other. This situation eventually leads them to lack of communication.

CHAPTER II

THE SENSE OF DISPLACEMENT AND ISOLATION IN THE MODERN WESTERN CIVILIZATION

The Grass is Singing, was published in 1950, after Lessing's arrival in England from South Africa. This first novel as it was mentioned before, has been considered by many critics as mainly about the issue of racial discrimination especially the forbidden erotic relation between a white colonial and a black servant. The novel also records the decay and disintegration of both society and individual. The relationship between individual and collective, in other words, between man's private and social selves which help us to understand this disintegration of these two concepts: society and individual. In this chapter, the reasons that lie behind this problem are going to be analyzed.

In the late nineteenth century, owing to the social and economic changes, the concept of art changed. As a consequence the life styles of both the artist and the reader ,viz, the individual changed." Art for art's sake" became the dominant thought of the period. Owing to this view, the gap between the reader and the artist began to widen, as Oscar Wilde claims "All art is useless", viz, art should not teach us a moral lesson any longer, because art has no moral function in men's lives. On the contrary the end of art is aesthetic.

Therefore, the movement aestheticism in the late nineteenth century became dominant. According to this movement, art was free from any moral or political limitations, it was self sufficient .So art should not imitate life ,but life should imitate art, viz, the withdrawal from daily, factual life ,the imprisonment into one's own consciousness was inevitable.

In a way aestheticism was a reaction against materialism and capitalism of the late Victorian period and the early twentieth century. In the late Victorian period, after the decline of the importance of God and religion in men's lives as a result of the developments in science and technology ,industrialism and capitalism together and imperialism developed rapidly. The new developments in technology gave hopes to the individuals and the moral values including the concept of God and religion were shattered.

Men had so high hopes about science and technology that they were regarded as the only powers to bring happiness and well fare to mankind. As a result, materialism prevailed over intellectual and spiritual values much more than ever before in the novels of writers of the period as is reflected in Joseph Conrad's or D. H. Lawrence, E. M. Forster's novels.. The decline of the old moral values were best reflected , in Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness or D. H. Lawrence's Sons and Lovers, The Rainbow and Women In Love.

In the novel, Heart of Darkness, if the hero Kurtz had moral values and convictions, his destiny would have been different. Kurtz could not think of anything except wealth and power because of his extreme ambition. In this capitalist, imperialistic world, Kurtz is a typical representative of the Western Civilization. He loses his control because of his extreme ambition to obtain power which in fact causes his downfall. This extreme ambition is actually created by the materialistic world he lives in, because Kurtz realizes that if he has no wealth and power, he is reduced to nothingness in the eyes of the society. To live in this cruel world entails to be cruel and to exploit the others as Kurtz and Charlie Slatter did. However Dick who is not a part of the society because of his views, always fails and suffers and finally collapses.

In this materialistic and imperialistic world of Western Civilization, Darwin's famous "the survival of the fittest" was misinterpreted and turned in to a concept such as "might is right". In other words in the late nineteenth century many apologies for aggressive imperialism propped their arguments with illicit inferences from Darwinian principles, illicit, because Darwin was dealing with the competition between species and species, or between species and environment, but not between nations or races. The illicit argument was, as Watt writes:

It is a low nature that creatures should compete, and that the 'fittest' should survive and prevail over the 'unfit'. Therefore if Europeans seize Africa and subjugate the Africans, they are simply doing what they are naturally obliged to do-the fit can not help but prove their fitness.(1982:89)

In this manner both whites and blacks are responsible from their futures; it is not enough to be a white in a white society, he must be cruel, strong and ambitious, like Charlie Slatter and unlike Dick Turner. And Watts also writes:

In Heart of Darkness, Conrad retorts by turning Darwinism against the political Darwinism. If a goal of the evolutionary process is an equilibrium between the creature and its environment,(as The Origin of Species had suggested) then that goal has in Africa been reached by the natives whom Marlow observes on the coast, who wanted to excuse for being there and who blend with their setting, rather than by the Europeans, who appear absurdly enormous and perish rapidly there or survive as grotesques or brutal automata.(90)

Like “The survival of the fittest”, the concept of capitalism is misinterpreted as well . For, it is an economic system in which capital goods and means of production and distribution are privately owned. The concentration of wealth is in the hands of a few individuals or corporations as well as the power and influence that result from such concentration. In short it is an economic system: “a system of production and trade based on the private ownership of wealth, free buying and selling, and little industrial activity by the government.” (1987;141)

In other words capitalism seems to support the individual, but in fact it became a system which only supports a few wealthy and powerful individuals and corporations, Charlie Slatter or Kurtz viz. a minority unless certain measures such as trade unions, insurance systems ,Reform Bills are taken to protect and support the majority. In The Grass is Singing and in Heart of Darkness, capitalism supports such people like Charlie Slatter and Kurtz whose only aim is to gain the wealth and power by exploiting and torturing the natural inhabitants of South Africa in fifties when The Grass is Singing was written.

In South Africa, the life style was determined by the whites because they had wealth and power. They have exploited not only the land but also the

natural inhabitants, viz, the blacks as if they were not human beings, as if they came to this world to serve the whites. However it is disturbing that in this materialistic world, even a white can be annihilated if he or she violets or neglets the rules of the society. And he may share the same fate with that of a black, as Mary and Dick Turner in The Grass is Singing. In this cruel world ,Dick does not share the same ideas and attitudes with other whites. He has no excessive ambition for money and power, therefore he never oppresses the blacks. If this world is considered a wheel, Dick does not want to be a cog in this wheel.

As is mentioned above, following the decline of the old values in the late nineteenth century, the First world war destroyed so many ideals about European Civilization. The high hopes and ideals about scientific developments and technology were all shattered. For it, instead of well fare of the societies, brought about the war and destruction which corrupted and degenerated the European societies.

Hence , owing to the destruction of the old traditional human values to rely on the novelist had to turn his intuition, to his personal, private feelings to create a world of values and vision which resulted in the alienation of the artist and the emergence of “art for art’s sake”, as a movement. In other words, instead of the outer world, the inner world gains importance. The memories of

a character at present is the sum of his past experiences. By exploring in the depth of one's consciousness, it would be easy to reveal the character's life, as is rendered in some novels by either by flashbacks or the technique of the stream of consciousness which is observed in V. Woolf's major novels such as Mrs.Dalloway and To the Lighthouse and Joyce's Ulysses. J. A. Cuddon writes about this technique:

A term coined by William James in Principles of Psychology to denote the flow of inner experiences. Now on almost indispensable term in literary criticism, it refers to that technique which seeks to depict the multitudinous thoughts and feelings which pass through the mind.(661)

Thus, mainly in the novels ,written in this technique, there is no sharp distinction between past and present. Likewise, the famous French philosopher Bergson has the same idea with Freud that past and present actions can not be separated. The past memories and experiences are indications of present actions which brought about the idea that mental time is more important than the clock time. Hence, in all these novels, human psyche as human consciousness with a relation to past memories and experiences has been reflected.

Thus, in the novelists of the first world war period such as Woolf and Joyce the aim is to bring order to this chaotic world. Both Woolf's and Joyce's characters suffer from lack of communication and isolation and they try to overcome this problem by creating a visionary world of their own, such as Mrs. Dalloway, Mrs. Ramsay who create a universal love and unity, simply by relying on their inner selves, mainly on their intuition, as a creative power.

As is mentioned before, although there have been great material achievements in the twentieth century, there has not been a peaceful atmosphere due to the two world wars and economic depression. The barbarities of the wars, suffering and death which produced fears, exhaustion, chaos, ambiguity are well known by the contemporary intellectuals. Therefore according to some novelists such as Samuel Becket life was uncertain and futile, viz, in such a dark atmosphere man can hardly find his own way to solve his problems in an age of insecurity. The social order seemed false and artificial.

Thus, the old standards had to be rejected and new values had to be founded. While trying to find a way out, man was in mood of indecision and state of resignation. Feeling insecure and lonely, man had found himself in a dilemma. All these disturbances of modern life led man either to commit

suicide like Esther in The Bell Jar or to live in a world of illusion like Mary ,which is in fact ,a slow motion suicide and madness.

In Lessing's novel The Grass is Singing, Mary was in a dilemma. For her, past memories were the causes of her present actions. As it is already mentioned, she had an unhappy childhood with a drunken father. Therefore all her ideals about family and marriage were shattered and in the novel, human consciousness, viz, Mary's consciousness and its relation to past and present was analyzed:

Her feelings about home is reflected as in the following: 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 funerals-anguished, but as dry and as hard as rock.(37-38)

Because of her unhappy past memories, the meanings of many things such as marriage ,sex, children (and sex in particular) have changed for her:

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.(38)

In fact, this pessimistic view of life which was typical of the first half of the twentieth century was only due to imperialism and the two world wars: the influence of the outstanding philosopher A. Schopenhauer was remarkable and the impact of his philosophy in the field of literature was considerably great. In his work The World as Will and Representation, Schopenhauer argues that reality consists of two worlds: representation and will. According to him the world of representation means the world of materialistic objects, time and space. And the inner world of mind is the world of will. He also uses this term in the sense of volition. For him, will is destructive, and life is a constant round of pain and suffering.

However the concept of suicide is ruled out by Schopenhauer. According to him the only way to reach the truth is the denial of the will. Thus, Schopenhauer identifies salvation with self-denial, a complete overcoming of will. In short for him, human life has no goal, viz, it is empty and meaningless whether one overcomes his will or not. It is meaningless because as soon as you achieve your goal it loses its meaning and you begin to

long for something new which again means pain and suffering. Thus, in Sylvia Plath's The Bell Jar, the heroine Esther attempts to commit suicide many times. For she has no goal in her life, viz, she was not able to cope with the difficulties of life. Therefore, she tries to escape from the external world by attempting suicide.

Prof. Dr. Macit Gökberk in his work *The History of Philosophy* summarized Schopenhauer's views and he writes:

Our world is not a significant world.
Therefore the aim of the philosophy is to find
a significant and right way for human beings.
This world which has no meaning is
completely evil, so it will be better not to be a
part of this world. (1990;449)

We have mentioned the importance of the inner self of the individual. For the modernists, though modernism flourished and reached its peak in 20ies and 30ies, despite its decline it covers almost the first half of the twentieth century, it is impossible to reach a common truth owing to the conditions which destroyed the traditional values and truth to rely on. Therefore, it was impossible to perceive life completely. The only truth for them is the individual's truth that is solitary and unique as long as he gives a meaning to

his life , viz , it was relative and subjective. Our heroine Mary Turner tries to find a truth, a value to rely on, but she can not achieve it, both in her maidenhood and in her marriage, viz , throughout her life. Towards the end of the book her aimless and hopeless life is conveyed in her thoughts. For her the evil was a thing she could feel that had she not lived with it for years. The only truth she created or experienced was ever unusual relationship with the black servant , Moses which was only a temporary happiness.

As we mentioned before, through the technique of stream of consciousness, the consciousness of the individual can be dug up and concentration on the stream of consciousness led inevitably to the emphasis of the loneliness of the individual. Each consciousness is unique and isolated. If the public values which individuals rely on can not satisfy them and can not give a meaning to their lives, each man is condemned to create a world of his own and to live in this uncommunicatable prison which is closed for the others.

The human relations in such novels are easily distorted by the mechanical conventions of the society and these conventions which seem to be useful in fact prevent human contacts. Therefore the modern novels are about the difficulty of life and being human. In these novels the dilemma of outer and inner world of the character is never solved.

As it has already been mentioned, in the novels of the early twentieth century, in particular, there was an endless competition among men for wealth and power. Owing to the developments in the field of science and technology, scientific thought and approach became the motto of the late nineteenth century and early twentieth centuries. Thus, psychology for instance as a branch of science developed rapidly chiefly with the works of Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) who divided human psyche into three parts as Id, ego and super ego. Id represents instinctive motives and super ego represents conscience, viz, morality. Super ego reflects the prohibition and taboo of the society which is instructed to the individual by family or other adults. Therefore according to Freud there is an endless battle between Id and super ego because the individual's instinctive motives and the pressure of the society are always in a battle. Thus, to eliminate this battle between them, is the function of the ego, because ego is the conscious personality which takes the external realities into consideration. Because of this battle between Id and super ego, ego continuously suffers. Freud's life view is man's suffering because of this endless battle between desire and morality. According to him civilization is the consequence of the adaptation of man to these concepts which is usually depressive because it represses desire. Therefore, civilization which represents desires is the cause of pain and suffering.

Human nature is very complex and it could never be explained without his past and present life, viz , his consciousness and subconscious. According to Freud ,through his method psycho-analysis, one could dig in to the subconscious of the individual and could learn all the hidden realities about his personality. Therefore past and present could not be separated sharply.

Hence, the past especially the childhood of an individual ought to be known in order to understand his psychological problems. For instance in The Grass is Singing, Lessing narrates Mary's childhood to help the reader to penetrate into the events that the causes of Mary's behaviors which are the consequences of her unpleasant experiences.

In modern period ,it is obvious that individual and individuality lose their importance in such a techno-scientific culture. Today the individual is not single and unique as humanism advocates. One can not exist unless he belongs to a group; black or white, woman or man. Therefore in our novel The Grass is Singing, Dick and Mary Turner are isolated from the society, because they are not a part of it. Dick as a farmer is not a part of the group of cruel farmers such as Charlie Slatter. Charlie is one of the most respectful farmer in that area, because he has everything that the society requires.. He is a white and superior to blacks. He can torment them and be successful at black's expense.

But unlike Slatter, Dick is not the man of that time. He is not cruel to blacks as Slatter is. Furthermore, he is poor and therefore not powerful.

For Slatter and the other whites, the blacks are inferior creatures, but for Dick Turner the blacks are human beings as well. One day their first servant Samson leaves the house for a work and Dick is really sorry about his absence:

Mary watched the farewell scene, that took place on the back steps, from the doorway. She was filled with wonder, and even repulsion. Dick was really sorry to see the end of this nigger! She could not understand any white person feeling anything personal about a native; it made Dick seem really horrible to her. She heard him say, "when your work in kraal is finished, you will come back and work for us again?(69)

To hear these words from Dick astonishes Mary, because in such a society a man has to be indifferent and strong enough to have everything. In other words, a powerful master would not need the work and support of a "nigger" in Mary's terms. Besides, "feeling anything personal about a

native'' was repulsive for Mary. For, she could hardly understand such humane feelings which reflects Dick's character as well.



CHAPTER III

THE TRAGIC DOWNFALL OF THE TURNER FAMILY

The Grass is Singing is a novel about class and color bar and male-female relationship and the psychoanalysis of these relations. Therefore, all these relations will be analyzed in details in this chapter.

The Grass is Singing centers round three main characters, Dick, Mary Turner and Moses. Dick Turner is a total failure in life and his wife, Mary shifts closer to Moses. Moses gave her substantial emotional satisfaction but unfortunately the friendship between them could not be maintained because of the problem of apartheid.

The story of this novel unfolds Lessing's concern with social, economic and political structures, the problem of women living in a man-dominated world and finally the crucial relationship existing between white masters and the black African servants. Anita Myles in her work Doris Lessing, A Novelist With Organic Sensibility, reflects her ideas about Doris Lessing, as she argues:

We find her ideas clustering round abnormal consciousness, fragmentation, self-division,

breakdown, the subjective distortions of perception and the implicit questions about the external perspectives of events. The novelist touches upon the question of women's liberation, too. Mary Turner wants to get away from shackles. She even goes back to her old job due to loneliness.(1956;55)

A woman's loneliness in the man's world is the basic problem in this novel as well as in all her other novels. This is why almost all her novels are dominated by female protagonists. In The Grass is Singing, like T.S. Eliot's poem "The Waste Land", the corrupted infertile Western civilization and its corrupted, isolated and hopeless men are described. The characters are either taken from mythology or from modern life as in "The Waste Land", are hopeless men who can not achieve anything and can not communicate with anybody. Likewise, we have a woman in the novel who is about to become mad. Although Mary Turner who lives in Africa, and hates blacks, at the end of the book she is in need of a black man's intention. She is so attached to him that when Tony chases Moses, Mary shouts:

"He has gone", she cried, "he has gone!". Her voice was hysterical with relief .And then she suddenly pushed him away, stood in front of

him like a mad woman, and hissed, "You sent him away! He will never come back! It was all right till you came."(223)

In this scene, Mary's psychological outburst is obvious. She does not seem to be in conflict neither with her self nor with the society. On the contrary, she seems quite satisfied with this strange relationship and does not want to break it. In other words, what she did can be regarded as a defiance of the values that had changed her as a white woman, a member of the superior class (now her previous identity) was over. "Moses as a symbol of instinctual life sacrificed Mary for her denial of the vital connections between man, woman and cosmos not only by killing her but also by destroying her strong will even before her death." (Cederstrom 1990:28-29). In fact, in the novel, Mary Turner has a conflict within herself. She lives in a place where is dominated by the whites who hate the blacks. She has already personal and especially sexual problems, so to feel a sexual desire for a black man, which is a taboo, creates a greater conflict in herself. She knows it is an impossible relationship, however she can not control herself.

Her acute poverty and inner conflict, due to the sexual diversion towards a tabooed man, hastens up the process of her mental disintegration. She continuously struggles with the fact that Moses can redeem her from

her depression. But she can not take this help:
he is a black and therefore, inferior to her.(21)

In The Grass is Singing , Doris Lessing also reflects the problem of apartheid perfectly because she was nurtured in an atmosphere pervaded with racial conflict. She moved among the blacks and closely studied their way of life. It was a painful and hard experience for her to see the blacks as inferior creatures in the eyes of the whites. She conveyed how hard the blacks had to work under white masters and how little did they receive in return; it was enough for them to live. They were treated like slaves. Anita Myles explains the color problem:

The color problem took an unexpectedly monstrous turn due to the political nature of the issue and also because of the pressure of the military superiority of the white race, leading to their territorial expansion. Lessing's keen observation brings out the fact that the whites who were drop outs and misfits in the English society migrated other lands, specially those inhabited by the blacks.(19)

Most of the immigrant whites took the farming where the blacks were intensively employed. After the Second world war the whites lost many of their colonies. However Africa remained in their crucial hands. The problem of apartheid has been studied by many novelists with a deep concern. Like some of them, Lessing herself realized that only some of the whites were aware of the wrong attitudes which the blacks were subject to. Some felt like Lessing that the blacks were in no way inferior to them. However, the law of the society could not permit them to bring out this fact. They lacked real understanding and proper grasp of the South African predicament. However Lessing had realized this serious problem and had explored the problem as is seen in The Grass is Singing.

Firstly, she turns towards communism as an alternative. According to her "Communism could inculcate among the dwellers the feelings of equality and social justice."(21) There are some whites who formulate clubs consisting of both the white and black members but this also fails in the long run. The whites refuse some of the basic principles of communism. Later Lessing realized that even communism has drawbacks and its principles can be easily twisted to serve vested interests. Therefore her ideas about communism were shattered.

Lessing is one of the best writers who have dealt with the problem of apartheid and she also recognizes the racial problem in terms of social milieu, political corruption and human tragedy. She finds both the Blacks and the Whites equally responsible for their situations. In The Grass is Singing ,she reflects it through Tony:

If you must blame somebody, then blame Mrs. Turner. You can not have it both ways. Either the white people are responsible for their behavior, or they are not. It takes two to make a murder-a murder of this kind. Though, one can not really blame her either. She can not help being what she is , I have lived here. I tell you, which neither of you has done, and the whole thing is so difficult it is impossible say who is to blame.(23)

Except Tony, later he is himself, everybody tries to hide something and they do not discuss the murder and everything is quickly and neatly closed, because a relationship between a white woman and a black man can be harmful for the position of the whites in that society.Lessing reflects it in the novel . She writes:

For they did not discuss the murder; that was the most extraordinary thing about it. It was as if they had a sixth sense which told them everything there was to be known, although the three people in a position to explain the facts said nothing. (TGS:1-2)

In a way, it can be said that the whites who consider themselves the righteous, are responsible for the murder. Mary Turner who are of the strong and superior white colonizers suffered from a nervous breakdown and became irritable because of her unsuccessful husband Dick. She was also deserted by several servants for, she gained a bad reputation as a mistress. Throughout the novel, the novelist shows how cruelly the blacks were treated by the whites. Once Dick felt ill and Mary had to look after the farm. She was cruel to the workers, she even whipped a boy called Moses:

“Don’t speak to me” , she said and stopped. This man was shrugging and smiling and turning his eyes up to heaven as if protesting that she had forbidden him to speak his own language..... Involuntarily she lifted her whip and brought it down across his face in a vicious swinging blow. (20)

The boy who was whipped by Mary, was later assigned duties in her house. She can not openly revolt against Moses's employment in the house, but she is afraid of him and she eventually attracted to him. She does not want to admit the truth, not even to herself, as Cederstrom comments on Mary's faults:

Much of the fault is due to Mary's rejection of her archetypal roots she ignores her own womanhood, denies her husband's manhood, and leads them both into a crisis where economic success is substituted for spiritual connection...Without connection, without meaning or value to their lives, the Turners drift toward death in the wasteland of those who lack a living relationship with the cosmos.(20)

Actually, Cederstrom quotes Jung's definition of "archetypal roots" as "anima/animus" which is in plain words a longing for wholeness, for a sense of selfhood. (12) In other words, for Jung anima is an:

"eternal image of the woman, not the image of this or that particular woman, but a definite feminine image. This image is fundamentally

unconscious, a hereditary factor of primordial origin, an inprint or archetype of all the ancestral experience of the female, a deposit as it were, of all the impressions ever made by a woman.”(11)

Thus, it can be said that one of Lessing's main concerns was like Jung and Lawrence to reflect unconscious not as a store of repressed desires, but as an important potential for creatures' development.(Cederstrom 1990:99)In other words, Lessing does not only concern with social and economic problems, but also with psychological problems of the Turners as she depicts the causes of their downfall. The psychological problems are as important as the social and economic problems.

Mary Turner is gripped by the fear that once upon a time she had ill-treated and abused Moses and now he enjoys a strange hold over her. Later out of jealousy and revenge he murders her. Actually she is in a dilemma. The color barrier which is in fact class barrier had the power to stop the powerful feelings and to stop this kind of relationship. In the novel, it is a strange point that unlike several novelists, Lessing criticizes the position of whites as well. They are in no way better than the blacks. She knows that many such as Dick and Mary Turner existed within the framework of white superiority. Then the question is why the blacks are regarded as a condemned race? Therefore Lessing deals with the problems of the cruel system of white colonizers.

After a long explanation, it will be easy to understand the significance of the title of the novel. It indicates Lessing's views and aims clearly. The title of the novel is the part of a line which is in T.S. Elliot's (1888-1965) famous poem "The Waste Land" which deals with Western man's loneliness and sterility and so does Lessing's novel. The title of Lessing's novel was chosen deliberately because it symbolically indicates the spiritual degeneration of the contemporary society and need for change and regeneration.

In the novel, the protagonist Mary, merely faces the problem of racism. However in Lessing's other novel Martha Quest, Martha the protagonist participates actively in fighting the problem. However it is Mary herself who ill-treated the blacks. In The Grass is Singing only Dick Turner and Tony Marston have sympathy for the blacks; but it is not enough to have sympathy. The problem exists and it must be solved. Firstly the blacks tried to find a solution to this cruel conduct. The first attack was the development of the trade unions. After the Second world war, the blacks developed a sense of being conscious of their problems when the black railway workers go on strike ,and nothing like this had ever seen in the colony's seventy years of history.

In the beginning, the Africans were not at all conscious of their miserable plight ,and their poverty made them servile and docile. There were

some whites who tried to help the blacks. They led some blacks to join the Communist Party, so their problems could be solved. However, it was a hard task to revolt against the whites. Therefore not many things have changed.

As it has already been the novel The Grass is Singing is not only a novel about the problem of apartheid but also it is a work of psychological analysis. Black or white ,all human beings have consciousness and it must be analyzed to reach their subconscious as Sigmund Freud argues.

So far we have dealt with the black natives and their situation in society as if all the whites have good positions in their society. For instance in The Grass is Singing, Mary and Dick Turner and their neighbor Charlie Slatter are very different from each other because of their wealth and power. In white society, the Turners are regarded as second class whites ,therefore they are isolated from the society and also they isolate themselves from the society. If the personality of the individual is not strong enough, the breakdown of the individual is inevitable, like Mary. Here Freud's psychological analysis has an important role to interpret Mary's behaviors and attitudes. She had an unhappy childhood in poverty with a drunken father.

Her parents never quarreled over anything but money. Their lives were characterized by indifference to each other. Mary's father drank every evening

and arrived home late and his wife treated with cold indifference as if he was not there for her. Mary's unhappy childhood, due to her parents forms her future as Cederstrom argues in his work:

Because of her parents ,Mary lacks awareness of the creative, vital connection possible between a man and a woman. She sees marriage primarily as an economic contract, a wedlock rather than a hirogamy and in her later life, as a self-supporting young woman, feels no need for such arrangement.(21)

Social pressure rather than desire leads Mary to accept Dick as a husband. The young farmer becomes a focus for her own emptiness, all her restlessness, her vague feelings of inadequacy, centered on him. Actually neither Mary nor Dick are mature enough to maintain a marriage. Lorelei Cederstrom writes about Dick's feelings:

Dick falls in love with an image of a woman he sees in the reflected light of a cinema; Mary falls in love with Dick as an antidote to her emptiness. Dick and Mary are empty vessels for each other's projections and find, ultimately, only reflections of their own inadequacies rather than a vital otherness.(22)

Because of the lack of communication between them, the Turners move slowly toward mutual destruction. In her life the image of man is always her drunk, irresponsible father, therefore she needs a new better image who is much better than her father both as a husband and as a father. Likewise, she also needs a stronger image than herself who is successful enough to achieve his objectives. In that society the outstanding figure is Charlie Slatter who has wealth and power:

She needed to think of Dick, the man to whom she was irrevocably married, as a person on his own account, a success from his own efforts. When she saw him weak and goalless, and pitiful, she hated him, and the hate turned in on herself. (145)

The disintegration of Turners is brought to a climax when Moses who was whipped by Mary, is employed as a servant to their home. Moses represents all the creative masculine elements that destroy Mary throughout the book. Actually Moses is Mary's unconscious life which she had repressed; that's why she hated him. The most revealing scene is that when Mary comes upon Moses washing himself, and feeling as if she had put her hand upon a snake:

She was sitting in the front of room rigid with an hysterical emotion; when she remembered the dark resentful look of that native as he stood waiting for her to leave, she felt as if she had put her hand on a snake. Impelled by a violent nervous reaction she went to the kitchen, where he stood in clean clothes, putting away his washing things.(166)

Lorelei Cederstrom comments on this subject, viz. the snake as the symbol of phallus:

The Freudian implications of the snake are obvious; however, Mary's revulsion from the black man as snake is not purely a sexual aversion. The snake can be interpreted in Freudian terms as a symbolic phallus, but, it is, also, in Jungian theory, a reminder of the instinctual life and the creative forces of the unconscious. Moses as snake, confronts Mary with the realities of the archetypal masculine and feminine which she had denied.(27)

Like the concept of snake and its interpretations, Lessing uses other symbols which actually reflect the psychological mood of the individuals. For instance, Moses symbolizes Mary's dark, suppressed sexual desires as we mentioned above, and also the ruined appearance of the farm due to the poverty and neglect. And also the hot and dry weather symbolizes Mary's and Dick's fate and the influence of the nature on Mary:

And now she gave away. All day she sat numbly on the sofa with her eyes ,feeling the heat beating in her brain .She was thirsty;..... She thought of the heat a head with dread, but not able to summon up enough energy to fight it. She felt as if a touch would send her of balance into nothingness ; she thought of a full complete darkness with longing. She imagined that the skies were blank and cold, without even stars to break their blackness.(3)

And also the following quotation reflects her changeable attitudes, like nature:

The sunshine dazzled and glittered, but held no menace; this was not sun of October ,that insidiously sapped from within. There was a

lift in the air, an exhilaration... Mary felt healed-almost. Almost she became as she had been, brisk and energetic, but with a caution in her face and in her movements that showed. She had not forgotten the heat would return. It was as if this winter had been sent especially for her, to her from her helpless dullness. It was her winter; that was how she felt.(117)

Throughout the novel, Mary Turner has an unhappy, unsatisfied life due to her husband's failures and their poverty. Therefore she longs for her old life and job, and one day she escapes from the farm and applies to her old job. However, like the other things, her old job and friends have changed too. Everybody and everything is perfect and excellent there unlike exhausted Mary Turner. Lessing describes Mary's situation;

None of the girls working there knew her... She looked at the girls in their pretty frocks, with their dressed hair, and thought for the first time that she hardly looked the part. But it was too late now. She was being shown in to old employer's office, and immediately she saw on his face the look of the woman at the club. She found herself glancing down at her

hands, which were crinkled and brown, and hid them under her bag.(12)

Later she speaks with her old employer and realizes that it is too late for her. She does not belong to there anymore. But still there has been a hope that she can adapt herself to this new life:

But it was the first time that she admitted to herself that she had changed, in herself, not in her circumstances. She thought that she would go to a beauty shop and get her appearance at least restored to normal than she would not be refused the job that was hers by right. But she remembered she had no money.(113)

At last she realizes that she is not only isolated from the society, but also from herself as a woman. And again because of her poverty, there is no chance to achieve something better in her life. This unpleasant experience has an important role in her breakdown. After arriving home, she finds herself back in her usual routine life:

It was an effort for her to do anything at all. It seemed as if the trip into town had drained her reserves of strength and left her with just enough a each day to do what had to be done, but nothing more. This was the beginning of inner disintegration in her. It begin with numbness, as if she could no longer feel or fight.(115)

Throughout the novel, Mary Turner feels herself strong and trustful only when Dick becomes ill and when she becomes the new employer of the blacks who tortures them with a whip which symbolizes her strength, like Charlie Slatter. This strength fulfills her confidence:

She still carried the long throng of leather looped round one wrist. It gave her a feeling of authority, and braced her against the waves of hatred that she could feel coming from the gang of motives....And really she liked it. The sensation of being boss over perhaps eighty black workers gave her new confidence; it was a good feeling, keeping them under her will, making them do as she wanted.(126)

However one day she goes beyond her limits and whips a black man, Moses, because of his disobedience to her: Involuntarily she lifted her whip and brought it down across his face in a vicious swinging blow. She did not know what she was doing.(135)

She feels herself as the owner of the blacks, as if they are not human beings .She thinks that with the fear of the whip, the blacks have to do everything that she wants, like Charlie Slatter and unlike her husband Dick.

However throughout the novel , Moses' power over Mary grows rapidly. She begins to feel hopelessly in his power. Actually it is an impossible feeling for her to feel something to a black servant, however it is inevitable for her to escape from Moses' attraction. This destructive masculine principle of Mary's unconscious dominates her sleep. Twice, she dreams the native touching her ,standing over her, powerful and commanding. She also dreams of her father, holding her struggling mother in his arms. All these dreams emphasize the physical reality of the masculinity that she could not control, as Jung argues that our dreams reflect our subconscious. However, in our novel Mary begins to lose her control; her dreams and daydreams are mingled, even she talks herself like a mad woman:

In her fantasy, the native had forgotten to clean the bedroom that morning, and she was raging at him, thinking up cruel cutting phrases in her own language that he could not possibly have understood even if she had said them to him. The sound of that soft, disjointed, crazy voice was as terrifying as the sight of herself in the mirror had been. She was afraid, jerked back into herself, shrinking from the vision of herself talking like a mad woman in the corner of the sofa.(173)

Actually Moses' existence is a danger to Mary's marriage which is in fact an unhappy one. It is only Tony Marston who can realize this improper relationship and tries to obstruct it and also he is the only man who predicts Mary's breakdown. At the end it is decided that Moses has to go away from the farm and Tony dismisses him. Mary does not object to this idea ,however after Moses' departure, day and night; reality and illusion are mingled:

Listlessly she stacked the plates, carried them into the kitchen, filled the sink with water, and then forgot what she was doing. Standing still, her hands hanging idly, she thought," somewhere outside, among the trees he is

waiting.”..... Again for brief space, her brain cleared. (229)

After all these dreams and illusions that night Mary in a way consents her fate and deliberately waits for her death, because she knows that Moses is somewhere in the darkness to take his revenge. However, she makes no effort to protect herself from him. Mary's death scene is given in the novel as follows:

Then, as she heard the thunder growl and shake in the trees, the sky lit up, and she saw a man's shape move out from the dark, and come toward her... All her past slid away, and her mouth, opened in appeal, let out the beginning of a scream, which was stopped by a black wedge of hand inserted between her jaws. But the scream continued, in her stomach, chocking her; and she lifted her hands, claw like, to ward him off. And then the bush avenged itself: that was her last thought.(243)

This downfall of Mary brings out some facts about society. This novel is not only about the destruction of a marriage because of social and

economic forces, but also it is about the decay and disintegration of both individual and society.



CONCLUSION

Doris Lessing persistently grappled with all such social problems, but her main concern was racism, generation gap, sex and marriage and woman's liberation. The themes of her novels are generally about the social life and the problems of the individuals. The reason of this concern is obvious; after the technology and the two world wars there was nothing left for the individual to rely on. For God and religion has replaced by technology which brought about two world wars and destruction. Therefore, Lessing as an individual and as a writer, deals with these issues and tends to have an encounter with cosmic consciousness. She is deluged by a deep concern for the well fare of mankind and envisages a utopian golden age of superior mental power. In this sense, Doris Lessing has turned out to be one of the leading contemporary novelists of ideas.

Her first novel ,The Grass is Singing (1950) is of importance as it embodies the seeds of her later novels. It ensembles several varied topics all at once. The story unfolds her concern with social, economic and political structures, the problems of women existing in a man's world, and finally and the crucial relationship existing between White masters and the Black servants. We also find her ideas clustering round the abnormal consciousness, fragmentation, self-division, breakdown.

The heroine Mary Turner is isolated from the society because of her poverty and her inferiority complex .However she is isolated from herself too due to the conflict within herself. Throughout her life she could not find a secure place and a trustful person to rely on. Her parents and later her husband, Dick could not meet her needs. Therefore despite of all the prohibitions, she is attracted to a black servant that is an impossible situation in such a society. At the end because of her weak character ,everything is disrupted. The sense of displacement and inferiority complex causes a tragic downfall of a white woman in the novel. It is known that the blacks are the victims of the white society in those days, but it is obvious that even a white woman , who cannot fulfill the necessary conditions to become a 'white master' in the so-called civilizations can become a victim of that civilization.

Finally, in general in the modern Western Civilization, especially after the world wars , owing to scientific and technologic developments ,there has been social and moral changes in the life of the individual. And the individual removing aloof from the society and in the end he becomes isolated from the others. The reasons of these changes are reflected in many novels, like Lessing's The Grass is Singing. The aim of this thesis is to present all these changes and the struggle of the individual to have an identity.

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