

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Effects of Heredity and Environment in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*

A Thesis

Submitted to the faculty of humanities and social sciences in partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of the Master of Arts in English

By

Jhalak Kumar Gurung

Roll no. 89/063

Reg. no. 6-1-48-702-2000

Exam Roll no. 1030

Department of English

Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara

July, 2011

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

Prithvi Narayan Campus, English Department

Letter of Recommendation

This is to certify that Mr. Jhalak Kumar Gurung has prepared this thesis entitled “Effect of Heredity and Environment in Doris Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing*” under my guidance and supervision. I, therefore, forward to consider it for final evaluation, approval and acceptance.

Rajendra Prasad Tiwari

Associate Professor

Department of English

Prithvi Narayan Campus, Pokhara

Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Science

Approval Letter

This thesis titled “Effect of Heredity and Environment in Doris Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing*”

submitted to the Department of English, Prithvi Narayan Campus

by Mr. Jhalak Kumar Gurung

has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee.

Members of the Research Committee:

Advisor

External Examiner

Head

Department of English

Prithivi Narayan Campus,

Pokhara

Date: _____

Acknowledgement

First of all, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to my research adviser Mr. Rajendra Prasad Tiwari, Associate Professor of English Department, PN Campus, Pokhara, for his scholarly guidance, constructive comment, fruitful encouragements and kind co-operation.

I would like to express my special gratitude to my parents Harka Bahadur Gurung and Purna Devi Gurung whose contribution could not be expressed in words. I am also indebted to my dear wife Mana Gurung, my brothers Khem Gurung Resi Kapoor Gurung and Badal Gurung, and my uncle Yuk Bahadur Gurung who helped me a great deal for the completion of this research paper.

Finally, I would like to remember my friends, Mr. Gopal Gurung, Tika Uchhai Thakuri, Jit Bahadur Thapa, and other friends and relatives who directly or indirectly helped me to bring the present thesis paper in this form.

Jhalak Kumar Gurung

Date: July, 2011

Contents

Letter of Recommendation	ii
Letter of Approval	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Contents	v
Chapter 1. Lessing and <i>The Grass is Singing</i>	1-9
Lessing's <i>The Grass is Singing</i>	1
Review of Literature	7
Chapter 2. Naturalism	10-20
Naturalism: its Roots	10
Literary Concept of Naturalism	13
Chapter 3. Naturalism in <i>The Grass is Singing</i>	21-51
Socio-economic Environment of Mary in her Early Days	21
Mary and Dick: Environment and Instinct	26
The White Masters and the Black Workers	33
Charlie and the Turner: Darwinism	39
Mary and Moses: Sexuality and Death	42
Environment of Racism, Patriarchy and Colonialism	46
Consequences of Heredity and Environment	49
Works Cited	52-54

Chapter 1

Lessing and *The Grass is Singing*

Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*

Doris Lessing was born in Persia (now Iran) on October 22, 1919. Both of her parents were British. In 1925, lured by the promise of getting rich through maize farming, the family moved to the British Colony in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where she spent her childhood on her father's farm. Doris Lessing is an outstanding literary figure in English Literature. She received a Nobel Prize for literature in 2007. But like other women writers from Southern Africa who did not graduate from high school, Lessing made herself into a self-educated intellectual. She is mostly exploring the psyche of the characters. She presents the real context of the society and its relation to the people. Lessing was brought up in Southern Africa that is why we can find the socio-economic construct of Rhodesia in her novel. This novel *The Grass is Singing* explores the ideology of the whites in Africa, particularly the whites' perspective towards the black.

Lessing has described that her childhood had some pleasure and much pain. She was born to English parents who moved their family to Rhodesia in the hope of successful farming. At first she was educated in a convent school and later in a government run girl's school but her formal education ended at the age of thirteen. A voracious reader, Lessing had excelled in school and continued her education by reading the wealth of books her mother ordered from London. By the age of eighteen, Lessing had written two drafts for novels and was selling stories to South African magazines. When her second marriage ended in 1949, she moved to London and her first novel, *The Grass is Singing*, was published in 1950.

The books in the *Children in Violence*' series (1952-69) are strongly influenced by Lessing's rejection of a domestic family role and her involvement with communism. The novels are autobiographical in many respects, telling the story of Marth Quest, a girl growing up in Africa who marries young despite her desperate desire to avoid the life her mother has led. The second book in the series, *A Proper Marriage* (1954) describes the unhappiness of the marriage and Martha's rejection of it. The Sequel, *A Ripple from the Storm* (1958) is very much a novel of ideas, exploring Marxism and Martha's increasing political awareness. By the time this book was written, Lessing had become disillusioned with communism and had left the party.

With *The Golden Notebook* (1962), Lessing became firmly identified with the feminist movement. The novel concerns Anna Wulf, a writer caught in a personal and artistic crisis, who sees her life compartmentalized into various roles: woman, lover, writer, political activist. Her diaries written in different colored notebook each correspond to a different part of herself. Anna eventually suffers a mental breakdown and it is only through this disintegration that she is able to discover a new 'wholeness' which she writes about in the final notebook. This event is somehow similar to Mary in *'The Grass is Singing'*.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s Doris Lessing turned almost exclusively to write fantasy and science fiction in the *'The Canopus in Argus'* series developing ideas which she had touched on towards the end of *'Children of Violence'* and in briefing for a decent into hell. She made a return to realist fiction with *Diary of a Good Neighbour* (1983) and *If The Old Could* (1984), sent to her publisher under the pseudonym Jane Somers. They were turned down for publication several times and when published had only small print runs and few reviews.

Lessing's more recent novels have continued to conflict taboos and challenge preconceptions, generating many different and conflicting critical opinions. In *Good Terrorist* (1985), Lessing returned to the political arena, through the story of group of political activists who set up a squat in London. The book was awarded the W.H. Smith Literary Award. *The Fifth Child* (1988) concerned with alienation and the dangers inherent in a closed social group.

The acclaimed first volume of her autobiography, *Under My Skin* (1994), won the James Tait Black Memorial Prize (for biography), and was followed by a second volume, *Walking in the Shade*. Her fiction *Ben in the World* (2000), which follows the fortunes of a family through the Twentieth Century, set in London during 1960s and contemporary Africa. Her recent books include: *The Grandmother* (2003), a collection of four short novels centered on an unconventional extended family, and *Time Bites* (2004), a collection of essays based on her life experience. Her latest novel is *The Cleft* (2007). In this novel Lessing invites us to imagine a mythical society free from sexual intrigue, a society free man.

Her stories and novels set in African background, talk about the black Africans and white peoples, and expose the sterility of white culture in Southern Africa. The novel *The Grass is Singing* shows the effect of the heredity and environment. In 1996 in response to Lessing's courageous outspokenness, she was declared a prohibited alien in southern Rhodesia and Africa. Lessing's life has been a challenge to her belief that people resist the currents of that time as she fought against sociological and cultural imperatives. She fought through writings and she believes that she is freer than any general people. Lessing's work covers more than a half of century exploring the relationship and realities of the people, character used in the novels mostly have their own kind of ideology. They think that ideology as

knowledge, and automatically that knowledge changed into power makes them superior.

The novel *The Grass is Singing* opens with a brief newspaper account of the murder of Mary Turner and then moves to a description of the inquiry into her murder by neighbors and by colonial officials. The rest of the novel is about Mary's childhood, her life at town, marriage with Dick, her marital infelicity and her affair with Moses.

Mary's childhood was largely unhappy. She was brought up by her parents who ran a store in a farming community. Her father was a drunkard and her mother was bitter and twisted. Mary was delighted to leave home and get a job in the city. With a wide circle of friends, she had no desire to marry until she reached her thirties and her friends started to treat her as odd because she was still single. When Dick asked her to marry him, she agreed and went to live in his farm, where her life was completely changed. Dick, an unsuccessful farmer, lacked the mindset and risk-taking manner of a commercial farmer or entrepreneur. He was always in debt facing bad harvest. He was obsessed with the land but despite his best efforts, he struggled to make a go of it.

Mary, the central character of this novel *The Grass is Singing*, had very unhappy life in the beginning. Her father came home late night by drinking and her mother also used to go to the bar for drink. Her mother was bitter and did not treat her properly as a mother. So she did not like her child-hood. She was in the middle of the two forces, her father and her mother. Her parents used to quarrel in front of her that affected badly upon her mind. When she was sent to the boarding school her golden period began. She felt extremely happy there. She had a job in the girl's club. She had free life in the town. She went to meet her parents only in the vacation. She hated

boys which was the effect of her father. But when friends started teasing her, she tried to find a man for marriage. She got Dick whom she married and went to the country with him. After her marriage her golden period finished and again her unhappy days started.

Lessing has explored the socio-economic construct of Rhodesia in the novel. The novel explores the ideology of the white colonist in Africa. In particular, the idea that extreme racism develops out a need to justify economic exploration poignantly posed. In this novel heredity and environment has effected very badly upon the main character Mary Turner. Her marriage, relation, oppression etc. are the effect of these two things.

The novel begins with the newspaper. It also confronts the reader with two male pillars of the white South African community, Charlie Slatter, a farmer, and Sergeant Denham, a police officer, who are attempting to decipher the enigma of the dead body of Mary Turner, a white woman who has been murdered by the native houseboy, Moses. Present also at the site of the murder are Mary's husband Dick Turner who has gone mad and Tony Marston, recent migrant from England whose liberal view of the color bar has yet to undergo re-education into the culture of the apartheid state. The rest of the novel is about the early life of Mary, her life at town, marital life with Dick, her marital infelicity and life in love with Moses.

Mary's early life was not happy. The extremely bitter life of her parents made her decide not to get married. She has negative understanding of sex. The novel also exposes the twisted links between apartheid, and sexual repression between the color line and gender line. Mary hates marriage because of the situation of her parents. Her father's drinking habits and mother's bitter manner badly affect her. Psychologically she is very much affected by the behaviors of her parents. So, she does not like to

have a husband. She thinks that all the men are like her father who troubled her mother. On the other hand social background and her friends changed her life and she began to find a husband which is the effect of the environment. Earlier she hated man but later she felt uneasy without husband while her friends teased her.

In the same way the environment of the male society in the country where she went with Dick after marriage changed her manner. She did not hate the natives earlier but when they did not obey her order she started to treat them as animals which are the effect of the environment. She ordered the native workers to come to work in the farm and she whips inhumanly just for a pause for drinking water. She hates the native workers for using their language in suspicious manner. She regards the language inferior to her own. Mary Turner compares the suckling babies with the puppies.

Dick being physically tired shows no interest to keep sexual relation with Mary to fulfill her desire. He becomes busy in the planning and managing the farm. This situation creates a gap between them. This relation makes her to think of getting someone next. She meets Moses, a black boy, in her house. Though he was beaten by her, earlier she forgets the day gradually and gets attracted to him. Her repressed desire starts to stir. It is natural that if one is not satisfied with her husband she is certainly attracted to other man. Lessing has presented Moses as a sexual energy than a person. Mary was physically and emotionally attracted to her black servant, Moses.

The racist society blocks the relation. Marston, an English youth from England, sees Moses dressing and undressing her, who cannot tolerate this. Charlie Slatter, a white farmer, starts making a plan to separate them as Moses was a black house boy. When Mary's attachment towards Moses touches the climax, Moses

cannot repress it. When Marston arrived in the farm, she sends Moses away to hide the reality.

The protagonist is under the control of her instinct and environment. She becomes characterless due to the effect of heredity and environment. Power always suppresses the weaker one, which is obviously seen in this novel. Mary, the central character of this novel, could not control her instinct and she was also badly affected by her environment. In this thesis I would like to study or interpret this novel through the perspective of naturalism, or how heredity and environment badly ruin the characters.

Review of Literature

The Grass is Singing (1950) has been analyzed from various perspectives: Biological, African, Marxist, Feminist, Archetypal, Psychological, Political and Realistic among the others. There are some critics who relate the novel with *July's People*. Sheila Roberts in recent essay that compares *The Grass is Singing* to Nadine Gordimer's *July's People*, argue that though both novels intend to "interrogate racism", in the end they are "discomforting texts because of their barely submerged contradiction" (84).

By analyzing the text from realistic perspective Philip Dine acknowledges its failure to motivate anyone to change. Dine argues that the novel's formal characteristics lead us to conclude that this is "a classic realist text" in the Barthesian mode (30, 32). According to Dine's elegant argument, because of the in-built 'colonialism' may very well be a remarkable illustration of 'the salvation of one conscience', but it cannot convincingly be regarded as a basis for action" (34). By failing to formally break the bonds of classic realism, the novel seems complicit with the very system Lessing has apparently set out to challenge.

Another critic Roberto Rubenstein has interpreted Lessing's work from perspectives almost as diverse as her own diversity. Yet, perhaps because Lessing's criticism has until fairly recently been dominated by American critics, one underrepresented context is the African and colonial experience. Although Lessing left Rhodesia for England before publishing her first novel, *The Grass is Singing* (1950). South Africa obviously remained central to the subject matter and setting of much of her fiction for the next twenty years. Eva Bertelsen, a South African and the editor of highly informative and diversified collection of essays and other pieces argues that Lessing:

Has always been in combat with enclosed system which she regarded as the colonizers of the imaginative life. In special ways it is her Rhodesia experience that made her perpetual outside...One could justifiably claim that her African background writes the whole Lessing oeuvre. (25)

Interpreting the text from Marxist perspective Michele Wender Zak remarks that "life is determined by consciousness, but consciousness by life". *The Grass is Singing* in one of those works of fiction which acknowledges that basic truth of Marxian analysis. And as consequences of the acknowledgement, we have thrust upon us the bitter details of Mary's childhood and adolescence-the hot, barren countryside, the irresponsibility of her economically defeated father, and her enlistment as bewildered confidante by her profoundly disappointed mother. Then temporarily, our consciousness of her unhappy past records as Mary enters into the superficially contended existence of a single young woman in one of South Africa's "Large" town.

Commenting of Mary's dream-memory of the sexual game her father played with her, Eve Hunter remarks: "The dream...reveals that she is unable to protect

herself against pain and punishment because she has been taught that resistance is useless; to be a woman is to be powerless, at least in relation to man' (48)

Thus, the text has been analyzed through various perspectives by different critics. The issues of heredity and environment are the prime concern of this study. This research is especially focused on how the characters of *The Grass is Singing* are badly affected by instinctual, patriarchal, racial and colonial environment or elements.

Chapter 2

Naturalism

Naturalism: its Roots

All literatures are founded on some concept of nature of man. New concept of man and his place in the world appears when a major new literary movement begins. The critic Charles Child Walcutt views “Naturalism has its roots in the Renaissance its background in the middle ages” (4). The medieval idea of man was of a fallen creature in dualistic universe was divided into heaven and the earth, God and Satan, eternal and temporal in man, soul and body. Nature was under God’s curse, and man too, by his own fall and man was torn in the eternal battle between “good” and “evil” because of having both “body” and “soul”. Thus, in the medieval age the subordination of nature and dualism of universe took place vary widely.

During the medieval age the church was the main center of learning, and it emphasized to the churchman to find a theory of law to suit the needs of the time. Through the medieval scripture, the knowledge about the “God” was revealed. Science called “natural philosophy” was “the handmade of theology. “ This was pursued for the glory of God.

But in the Renaissance period, the subordination of nature and its dualistic separation from spiritual matters began to vanish and a new concept of the nature of man took shape. The changes which appeared during the Renaissance have been defined by the critic Charles Child Walcutt, “The change began with astronomy of the science further from man and society, but it got to man very rapidly, in a serious of great intellectual strides that may reviewed briefly by reference to the thinkers who made them” (5). The new concept of the nature of man in this period began with astronomy. The works of many astronomers and philosophers like Copernicus,

Keppler, Galileo and Descartes have already pointed out that the universe is constant and indestructible. They said that the universe is composed of billions of minute particles which are in ceaseless motion. But Newton implied that its laws are subject to God's miraculous and mysterious intervention.

But, one most important popular philosophy to be found in Newton's Theories is "Deism", Deism anticipated the social and moral consequences of Newton's theories which were set forth some twenty years before the publication of his *Principia Mathematica* (1687). The deist's belief about man was against the orthodox belief that he was fallen. The critic Charles Child Walcutt expresses the deist's view that man was innately and instinctively good, they doubted creeds and authority; and during the following centuries they put increasing emphasis on the worship of nature as God's only revelation in that science had not adequately implemented it with biological data.

In the 19th century, the scientific method, deistic faith and biological discoveries begun seriously to converge upon man and to suggest not only that his nature was good but also that his natural self was his ultimate self. Auguste Comte's positivism and Darwin's theory of evolution tremendously accelerated this trend. Positivism was presented as naturalistic method of finding truth by stressing the objectivity to affirm that the only significant reality is content of experience. Positivism is different from science in that "it was a touch to burn dark rubbish of the past and light the way into future" (Walcutt 6). But the function of science was to observe facts and formulate.

Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859) was a culmination in the field of biology of naturalistic temper of the period. This book revolutionized man's conception with regard to nature and the creation story based on Testaments that the universe was

created by God having certain “purpose” and “Design”. By studying man in the biological perspective and development inevitably emphasized his animal nature. To the horror of the pious people, this perspective appeared to destroy the foundation of religion and of morality. His further investigation revealed that biological evolution was maintained by random variation and natural selection.

Another interesting point of Darwin’s discovery is the “descent of man”. He traced the link of human to the lower forms of primates which shook the religious foundation has never before. Church would believe that man is the supreme creation of God, modeled out on him with divine “purpose” of ruling the earth as per the God’s command, with the discovery of man’s ancestor’s being apes are all shams. In the deeper elemental level of existence all the creatures including men are subject to the instinctual drives like anger, violence, sex, desire, etc. The present forms of civilization and moral uprightness demonstrated by man is merely a modified structure of human being to watch the rational level but the actual human nature is manifested in bloody battles and warfare for existence. The concept of man as magnanimous tolerant and virtuous is replaced by hostile and aggressive, and vicious brute in the natural world.

The procreative nature of every species causes the birth rate higher than the food and other essential can sustain. So for the sake of survival a ferocious battle becomes inevitable, where the victor is preserved and the vanquished wiped out. The same is true of the human species. Darwin’s concept of struggle and survival says as:

Individual having any advantage however, slight over others would have the best chance of surviving and of procreating their kind [...] any variation in the least degree injurious would be rigidly destroyed.

This preservation of favorable individual difference and variations, and

the destructions of those which are injurious, I have called natural selection or survival of the fittest. (54)

Literary Concept of Naturalism

Naturalism, a philosophical perspective, developed in the United States. It appeared as a new trend of realistic writing of 19th century in which the basic goal was reproduction of reality in literature and other figurative arts. It professed its views in counter to the literary modes like Idealism and Romanticism and had scientific and experimental nature. Webster's *International Dictionary* defines Naturalism in the following way:

The principle and characteristics professed or represented by a 19th century school of realistic writers, notably by Zola and Maupassant, who aimed to give literal transcription of reality, and laid stress on the analytical study of characters, and on the scientific and experimental nature of their observation of life (1631).

Naturalism denies the existence of supernatural, rejects faith, and institution as source of truth. The natural world of objects and events in space and time is all that is real. Man is completely a part of this natural world and he is only an incidental product of the world process. In this sense, we can infer that naturalism is close to materialism. For it all meaning originates in accordance with the general canons of scientific method. Naturalists question the existence of the supernatural anywhere in the universe and hold that if any non natural entities exist, they may be known by their observable influences on natural objects. For naturalists idealism is fickle in the sense that idealists believe in things abstract i.e. "idea" and imaginary unreal things which have no concrete existence.

In literature, naturalism is a style of fiction writing, which aims at scientific objectivity in the portrayal of characters and they are shown to be motivated primarily by biological, economic and social forces. The naturalists exposed the horror, filth, sordidness lurking around the society and human psyche. It was indisputably true that kind of writing would shock readers of that time; so the writers had to serve for sometime but soon people realized the reality and began to approve it which we can clarify by the evidence of success of naturalistic fiction.

With the help of Naturalism, writers started to depict real life more than realism. It was an influence in the movement towards pessimism and despair. In Naturalistic fiction, there is always a tension between hope and despair. The idea of perfect unity and brutal facts of experience come the themes, motifs, forms and style through which naturalism found literary expression.

Determinism, survival, violence and taboos are major themes and motives. “Natural law” and “Socioeconomic” influences are exposed being powerful than the human will, which carries the idea of determinism. ‘Emotion, Motivation and Conflict’ are the approaches for survival, which grows out of the application of determinism by leading the people to their roots. *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of English* defines the term Determinism as “The belief that the people are not free to choose what they like or how they behave because these things are decided by their surroundings and other things over which they have no control”. (417)

Determinism is a philosophical doctrine, which holds that every event has its antecedent causes. Certain set of factors of causes are responsible in the occurrences of every event or action. Past events and circumstances have much to do with the present and future events. Dependence, inevitability and predictability are the terms connected Determinism. Occurrence of any event depend on other causes; what is

bound to happen is inevitable or unalterable and given all the conditions or causes necessary for any event to occur, we can predict, what will happen in the future. That is to say specific set of conditions will determine a specific set of events and if these conditions are present again the same events may be predicted.

Most of the naturalistic fiction deals with the theme of survival, which grows out of the application of determinism to biological competition. The survival of animal is a matter of violence and intimate sexual disclosure of force against force. Like animals, the lower nature of man is also disclosed and explored by violence. From this violence and survival, there comes an attack on taboos. Sex, diseases, bodily functions, obscenity and depravity which are considered improper is known as taboos. In naturalistic novel taboo is found in the province of physical survival.

Emile Zola, Stephen Crane, Jack London, Frank Norris, Theodore Dreiser, John Steinbeck and so on are considered as the theorists of "Naturalism". In the nineteenth century, Naturalism became the mode of fiction in which many novels were written.

Naturalism is an approach which proceeds from an analysis of reality in terms of natural forces, e.g. heredity, environment, physical drives, and the naturalists tended to concern themselves with the harsh, often sordid aspect of life. The chief literary theorist of naturalism was Emile Zola who said in his essay *Le Roman Experimental* (1880) "The novelists should be like the scientist examining dispassionately various phenomena in life and drawing indisputable conclusions" (449). In Emile Zola's phrase human beings are "human beasts" so; the characters should be studied through their relationship to their surroundings to be impartial without moralizing about their nature.

Zola was deeply impressed by the scientific fidelity of the Concourts' *Germinie Lacerteux*. He reviewed it and wrote in Charles's Child Walcutt's book named *American Literary Naturalism: A Divided stream* that, "the drama is terrific, it has the powerful interest of a physiological problem, of a case of physical and moral illness, of a story which has to be true' (31). The experimental idea which he found in this novel derived Zola for more than 20 years.

Next philosophy to influence Zola was Taine's claim of manifestation of literary genius to be accounted for in terms of the race, the milieu, and the moment. But Zola challenged Taine for his negligence to give proper emphasis to the importance of individual temperament in art. For Zola, reality had to be converted into art where he writes as an experimental scientist in the place of *Therese Requin* (1867) that, "I have tried to study temperaments rather than characters. "There is whole book [...] my two heroes are the satisfaction of physical need" (Zola 32). Here, it is clear that the love of his two heroes is not the love of spirituality. His heroes intend to love not for spirituality but to fulfill their physical needs.

Zola's characters are primarily from the lower middle class or the lower class. The world of the common place and un-heroic life would seem to be dull and passionate which involve sexual adventure, display of bodily strength which at last culminate in desperate moments and violent death. Zola's attempt in novel was quite contemporary. That is, he employed the conditions of living of lower class in the novels just to find the identical in either of them reality of fiction.

Another naturalist writer Stephen Crane, who is known as Christopher Marlowe of American naturalism, shows his characters frustrated in a crazy world, where they do not function well enough to control their own destinies as well as unable to understand them very well. His naturalism is to be found in his attitude

toward received values, which he regularly attacked through his naturalistic method. Crane's success is a triumph of style, manner and meaning because these things are same, we can also label that his naturalism is descriptive. He says that the sequence of events is caused due to the will and judgment of the people involved. He simply portrays that men's will do not control their destiny.

Like other naturalistic writer Jack London also denies the existence of free will. He saw life as a "struggle" for existence in which the weaker is always denied and only the strong can survive. In this sense, London's thought was linked to Darwin. Strength is pure, and good and weakness is evil. London's focus is upon "atavism". From atavism man moves by natural steps to the superman whom he considers at one time to be superior because non-moral and at another antisocial irritant who cannot survive in the complex modern world. Charles Child Walcott's further comments about the nature of man as:

The world is a jungle, where men grapple with one another for life and its accessories murder and are in turn murdered, fly after pleasure, and resign themselves with store calm to energy and die, at the same expressing his individuality as best he can. (93)

The main problem of any naturalistic novel is the relation between characters and the external forces that oppress or control them. The external forces control man's will. According to M.H. Abrams naturalism is a product of Post Darwinian biology in the nineteenth century. Naturalism is entirely determined by two forces heredity and environment which change the behaviors of the character in the novel. "A person inherits compulsive instincts – especially hunger, the drive to accumulate possessions, and sexuality – and then is subject to the social and economic forces in the family, the class and the milieu into which that person is born". (261)

According to the book *Mendel's Principles of Heredity*, heredity is the transmission of traits from parents to offspring through genes, the functional units of heritable material that are found within all living cells. Gregor Mendel derived certain basic concepts of heredity, which eventually became the foundation for the modern science of genetics. Each member of the parental generation transmits only half its genes to the offspring, and different offspring of the same parents receive different combinations of genes.

Traditionally, perceptions have been thought of as mode of sensations. Sensations are divided into separate groups they are visual, tactile, auditory, gustatory, olfactory, etc. Some regions of the brain have been indentified especially important for various sensations, but just how or indeed why certain brain activities in critical regions produce sensations remains mysterious. Therefore, sensation is essentially private; we have no way the world appears to other people. Strictly speaking we cannot know another person's sensation is ultimately mysterious as consciousness is mysterious M. Rosenthal and P. Yudin defines the term, sensation. "The stimulus in the form of discrete impulse is transmitted along the nerve cannels the central part" (406).

Instinct is a form of psyche activity, a type of behavior. In a more specific sense, instinct is a type of behavior inborn in a given species of animals and fixed by biological heredity genetically transmitted from parent to offspring in the same way as anatomical features are. Freud defines instinct as, "Instinct is an urge inherent in organic life to restore an earlier state of things" (567). Freud has divided instinct into two parts, *Eros and Thantis*. The former is love instinct and later is death instinct. He has defined the two basic instincts in the given way:

The aim of the first basic is to establish ever greater unities and to preserve them thus – in short to bind together, the aim of the second, on the contrary connections and so to destroy things. We may suppose the final aim of the destructive instinct is to reduce living things to an organic state. (564)

So, instinct is a natural tendency of people and animals to behave in a particular way using the knowledge and abilities which were rather through or training.

According to M. Rosenthal and P. Yudin “Instinctive behavior is characteristics of animals” (218) which is based on biological forms of existence developed in the process of adaptation to the environment. But according to Paul Thomas Young instinctive behavior is “a behavior in which innate structure plays a dominant role, activation typically comes from the environment conditions combined with internal psychological factors” (69).

Likewise, the critics Julius Gould and William L. Kolb define the instinctive behavior as: “An action which we ourselves should require experience to enable us to perform by an animal more especially very young one without any experience and when performed by many individuals” (336). Thus instinctive behaviors are those actions or reaction to specific stimuli, shown in similar form of all normally developed members of species (sex or age group) without any specific life experience being emergence. Environment, milieu, ambiance, setting, surrounding all refer to what makes up the atmosphere or background against which someone or something is seen. Ambiance applies to the atmosphere of surrounding their mood or tone: an ambiance of ease and elegance.

The family is generally the environment in which the individual can mature personally and socially, self and society are reverse sides of each other. The self

grows and becomes enriched fulfilled only as it becomes sharable, social etc. Society flourishes as a function of selfhood or social person (Montagu 113). Social involvement and reaction further develops an individual's attitudes, beliefs, values and social consciousness. People's impression of others will have an implication on how the others will act (Worchel, 168). After an individual meets someone and forms an impression of the person, the individual tends to act in ways that will reinforce those impressions. Impressions are made on the basis early information, either real or perceived, and new information assimilated or discarded, based upon the observe beliefs and expectation of the individual (Worchel, 164).

According to Marx, it is not the consciousness of man that determines their being, but, on the contrary, their social being that determines their consciousness (qtd. in 4). Gazzaniga states that since we are continually interpreting behaviors product by independent brain modules as behaviors that are produced by their self, we come to the conclusion which is largely illusion which is largely illusionary that we act freely. The belief that we act of our own free will is such a powerful one, it must result from a basic further of human brain organization (7).

Genetic affects the neurological development of the early brain, which in turn impacts the way the individual perceives, progresses, and reacts to brain impact. "The physical structure of the adult brain, its size, number of cells and most importantly its neuronal pathways, establishes itself in intimate interaction with the environment of the developing individual (Fausto, 74).

Chapter 3

Naturalism in *The Grass is Singing*

Socio-Economic Environment of Mary in her Early Days

Mary Turner, the central character of the novel "*The Grass is Singing*" was born in a quarrelsome and poor family where her father used to come home by drinking and her mother, who was not happy with her husband, started shouting to her husband. Her childhood was very much boring to her. Her parents' conflict badly affects her psychology which is the effect of the heredity and environment in the family. Her father's attitude badly affect that she began to hate the men; she thought all the men are like her father. Her father spent his salary in drinking and mother used to go to the bar for enjoyment whenever she was frustrated with her husband. Lessing describes the conflict between Mary's father and mother as follows:

Sometimes her mother worked herself into a passion of resentment and walked up to the barman, complaining that she could not make ends meet, while husband squandered his salary in drink. Mary knew even as a child, that her mother complained for the sake of making a scene and parading her sorrows: that she really enjoyed the luxury of standing there in the bar while the casual drinkers looked on, sympathetically: she enjoyed complaining in a hard sorrowful voice her husband. (32-33)

Her mother was very much unhappy. She used to cry because she did not get any care from her husband. Due to the condition of the family, she was very much affected. She thought her house was like a hell, so she wanted to run away from her

family. Once her mother asked for the pocket money which was her right but her husband neglected her. Lessing describes the scene:

She would stand still, waiting for the condolences of the man who pocketed money which was rightly hers to spend for the children. But he would say at the end, 'But what can I do? I cannot refuse to sell him drink, now can I?' And at last, having played out her scene and taken her fill of sympathy, she would walk away across the expanse of red dust to her house, holding Mary by the hand – a tall, scrawny woman with angry, unhealthy brilliant eyes. She used to cry her sewing while Mary comforted her miserably, longing to get away, but feeling important too, and hating her father. (33)

Mary was affected badly by the environment of her family that made her to hate men. She hates her father and shows no love because of his alcoholic habit. She also found that her mother ridiculed her father and she treated him with a cold indifference. Her mother did not give much attention while her husband's friends came for tea. She did not find any love between her parents. Mary's father and mother used to fight over for the money. Father spent his salary in drinking so he could not pay the full bill of the rent of the house. At the end of the month they has sent the bill, her mother always appealing to the owner for just another month's grace. "Her father and mother fought over these bills twelve times a year. They never quarreled anything but money" (34).

Sometimes, in fact her mother remarked drily that she might have done worse: she might, for instance, be like Mrs. Newman, who had seven children. She had only Three mouth to fill, after all. There was only one mouth to feed, her own; for her

brother and sister both died of dysentery one very dusty year. Her parents were good friends because of this sorrow for a short while. Mary could remember thinking that it was an ill wind that did no one good; because the two dead children were both so much older than she that they were no food to her as playmates, and the loss was more than compensated by the happiness of living in a house where there were suddenly no quarrels, with a mother who swept, but lost that terrible hard indifference. That phase did not last long; however, she looked back on it as the happiest time of her childhood.

Mary's family had moved three times before she went to school because her father was unable to pay the bill of the rent house and they were expelled from the house. On the other hand the social environment also affects Mary negatively. She found dusty atmosphere with chickens around her resident which affected her childhood very much. The following lines show that the family background of Mary in her childhood was not good.

She remembered an exposed dusty village that was backed by a file of bunchy gum trees, with a square of dust always swirling and setting because of passing ox-wagons; with hot sluggish air that sounded several times a day with the screaming and coughing of trains. Dust and chickens; dust and children and wandering natives; dust and the store-always the store. (34)

Generally the child feels safe and happy in the family. But in this novel Mary felt unhappy with her family. She was tired with the manner of her father and mother who used to quarrel all the time in the house for money. She liked lonely life in the world because she was frustrated with the family members. Economically she had

unhappy life in the childhood. In this way Mary was very much affected by the socio-economic environment of the family in her childhood. Lessing writes: “Mary was pleased to be rid of him. Being alone in the world had no terrors for her at all, she liked it. And by dropping her father she seemed in some way to be avenging her mother’s suffering” (35).

Psychologically she was very much affected by the environment of her family.

Lessing writes:

When she thought of ‘home’ she remembered a wooden box shaken 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 as hard as rock. Mary liked other people’s children but shuddered at the thought of having any of her own. She felt sentimental at wedding, 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 years ago. (39)

But when she was sent to boarding school her life was totally changed. In hostel she felt very happy. She thought that the life in the hostel was like the life in heaven. The life in hostel was the golden period in her life. She was extremely happy there. She was free from hearing the words used by her father and mother quarrelling. She felt more comfortable in the hostel than in her rented house which was dusty and noisy. She went home in holiday to meet her fuddled father and bitter mother.

The main problem of the naturalistic novel is the relation between characters and the external forces that oppress or control them. The external forces

control man's will. Mary was also controlled by the external forces. She did not like to have marital relation with a man. But her decision was changed by the environment of the city life. She was very happy before she heard the gossiping voice made by her friends. But after hearing the conversation of her friends she changed her decision. They talked about her dress and her marriage. They said that she was nice and thin girl like sandpaper. She should marry someone years older than herself and a man of fifty would suit her.

She had a good job in an office in town. She had happy and comfortable life in the town. She felt being modern herself, who used to wear fashionable and pretty clothes. She had many friends. But later her decision was changed by the conversation of her friends. She heard accidentally the voice of her friends which made her unpleasant. The following lines made Mary unpleasant: "She should marry someone years older than herself. A man of fifty would suit her... you'll see, she will marry someone old enough to be her father one of these days" (40).

Mary became unhappy to hear the conversation of people. She never thought that people could discuss behind her back. But when she heard accidentally it made her to think about man. She started to think about the gossiping words of her friends. She questioned herself, "Why did they say those things? What is the matter with me?" In this way she was affected by the environment of the hostel which compelled her to think about man. And she started to find a man for marriage. The following lines show she was being serious about her friends who discussed about her:

"That little incident, apparently so unimportant, which would have had no effect on a person who had the faintest idea of the kind of world she lived in, had a profound effect on Mary. She, who had never had time

to think of herself, took to sitting in her room for hours at a time, wondering: 'Why did they say those things? What is the matter with me? What did they mean when they said that I am *not like that?*' (41)

It is said that the main problem of any naturalistic novel is the relation between characters and the external forces that oppress or control them. The external forces control man's will. Mary changed her decision which was the effect of socio-economic forces. The family background made her to destroy love towards men. But the environment in the hostel made her pleasant and she started to love men. In this way the socio-economic forces brought a great change in her life.

Mary and Dick: Environment and Instinct

Mary and Dick in this novel have no good relation from the beginning. Dick Turner disliked the town and liked to live in the country. In this way from the day of their marriage they did not have good relation. Mary was frustrated; she found everything against her will. The expectation of Mary was opposite. The tiny and untidy room, the low ceiling of the house, dusty and smelling places is the physical environment which affects Mary. Dick was grown up on the rural place. He worked hard on his land which he loved very much. He liked traditional rural life. In this way the couple's thinking, will, etc. are different.

They are from different socio-economic class. There is conflict between them due to the socio-economic condition in which they are brought up. Mary represents the modern city life whereas Dick represents the traditional rural life. Before getting married she used to work in a girl's club. She worked there for many years. So she was a person of some importance outside the girl's club s and the office. She used to like the crowd of girls and eating in a big dining room, and coming home after the

pictures to find friends her room waiting for a little gossip. She was so satisfied with her work, where she felt sufficient and capable, with her friends, whom she relied on; with her life at club. Which was as pleasant and as gregarious as being in a giant twittering aviary...?

Unfortunately, Dick happens to marry a lady from the very town which he hates. The life style of the rural life becomes quite different from that of the rural life. That is why the thoughts, interests and perceptions of Mary Turner never support the thoughts of Dick Turner. It is obvious that is a conflict. Here, the concepts of Mary are opposite to the concepts or ideas of Dick Turner. After getting married, Mary understands his hurried and blind need for her but she feels alien to him and she becomes unable to fit herself to his need because her desire and wants never meet him.

The novelist illustrates that the husband and wife deviate in their interests, desires, concepts, practices, etc. They grow a clash of ideas between them. That battle is nothing but that of two opinionated figures representing two different socio-economic classes. The forceful effect of Mary prevails over Dick to change in the ways of life because she feels and configures her to be more civilized, modernized and social: She has a strong psychological recognition that she is in the higher social hierarchy compared to the rank of Dick Turner. It can be, to some extent, argued that the socio-economic situation in which Mary Turner is now after her marriage is not only of Dick Turner but that of Mary too. However, the impact of the pre-marriage life style, her living standard of economic society is bold enough in the mind of hers so she cannot be 'one' with that or Dick Turner after her marriage. The ways off everyday life cannot match between husband and wife.

The materialistic facilities which Mary had got in town are not there in Dick's house. The life style of the two figures differs well because of their different environment in their lives. When she reaches at Dick's house she hears innumerable noises from bush. She thinks "as if colonies of strange creatures had become still and watchful at their coming and were not going about their own business" (52). For her everything seems to be strange thing. She gets a strong, musty, and almost animal like smell that makes her sick. She sits down, bewildered by the strangeness of it all. When Dick notices the signs of disappointments she forces herself to smile. She feels "weak with foreboding in the tiny stuffy room, the bare brick floor, the greatly lamp" (53).

On the other hand Dick Turner becomes so happy and finds a sort of pleasure because he feels that Mary is there to decorate his bare little house with her presence. It seems to him that he has been a fool to wait so long, living alone, planning a future that is so easily attainable, but, on the other hand, when he looks at her town clothes, her high heels, and her reddened nails feels uneasy. As a result, their marital life cannot prosper since their thoughts never match.

The social behaviors are shaped differently in the members of each and every society since the physical being of their world and their cultural concepts vary from person to person. That is why, the way the husband treats his house worker irritates the wife. She has never come into contact with natives before. She had been forbidden to talk to her mother's servants but now she has to face them. Dick spends most of the time with the natives. He gets up at half past five to rouse the boys in the compound close by and spends all the time in the land with his workers. He comes back for some time but pre-occupied. Mary does not understand a word when Dick speaks to

Samson (his house worker) because he speaks using the worker's language. He behaves kindly with the workers and there is a mutual understanding between them since Dick has spent most of the time with the natives.

Dick knows how to deal with the workers, how to behave them and how to make them work. But, Mary is from town and has never faced them and never worked with them before. She does not treat the workers properly. As a result, they leave the work in the house. Her behavior and thought makes Dick really be angry with her. When Samson, one of the house worker, leaves their home Dick feels sorry to see the end of the boy but Mary does not like any white person feeling anything personal about a native. Lessing writes:

She heard him say, "When your work in the kraal is finished you will come back and work for us again" The native answered, yes, bass,' but he was already turned to go; and Dick came back into the house silent and glum. 'He won't come back', he said. There are plenty of other munts, aren't they?' she asked snappily, disliking him. (65)

Mary Turner thinks herself superior to Dick Turner. She wants to be submissive, and wants him to do whatever she assigns him. When Dick takes her hand endearingly, kisses it submissively and says pleadingly, at that moment only she can bring herself to use endearments to him. She feels victorious and forgiving at such time and gets the greatest satisfaction. But Dick Turner cannot do all such things forever. He thinks that Mary is his wife and she should do whatever he tells her. Once they quarrel for water. They have to fetch the water twice a week from the bottom of the hill where the well is but Mary uses the water unnecessarily. Mary becomes so furious when Dick asks her for what she is using the water. She replies that she is so

hot and making herself cool. Then Dick says, “It costs money to fetch water and get into it, instead of wasting it and throwing it away each time?” (71).

Mary, disappointed and depressed by the ugly and primitive farm house that seems to hold back the threatening bush, nonetheless brings to bear on these inhospitable new surroundings the virtues of her former life. As long as possible she busies herself sewing curtains and furniture covers, embroidering her clothing, and otherwise adding to the meager comfort of the bare, unceilinged house. At last, there is nothing more to do, and she must surrender herself to the smothering heat and the oppressive loneliness of a farmer’s wife with the passage of time.

Most significant is her long-repressed recognition of why Dick’s farming has so consistently failed and her own opportunity to help him to material success. But after some disappointing efforts, she withdraws from that opportunity because demonstration of her superior ability would provoke Dick to destructive defensiveness and in part because she shrinks from real involvement with the hated farm. Another reason is that she needs to think of Dick, from his own efforts, when she saw him weak and goalless, she hated him.

For Dick, life is to meet the basic requirements in normal sense but for Mary it is to be more concerned with the society for social prestige too. She wants everything to be clean and tidy. But she does not find such environment in Dick’s house. Once, she goes into bathroom and stares down at the bath which seems dirty because it was made of zinc. “The arrangements for the bath were unbelievable, she cried, tearing herself to pieces with her own anger” (72).

She was tense with hatred. She remembered her past life. A few months ago she had been living her own life in town, surrounded by friends who loved her and

heed her. She began to cry, weakening into self-pity. The tension between them lasts for an intolerable week for the sake of their together. She has to smother her dislike of him because of the way he has behaved, but then, it was not so easy to smother since their thoughts and perceptions never match and she knows, in her moments of honesty, that he would never make money. Then she thought that there was nothing to prevent her running away and going back to her old life. The class perceptivity enhances them to develop class solidarity.

There were many reasons to leave the home. First, the environment of the country was totally different from the city. She had happy and comfortable life in the town with a good job but in the country she found it totally different. The low ceiling of the house, native peoples, hot places, the poor condition of her husband made her to leave the house. On the other hand she wanted to change her husband who believed only in traditional farming system. He always ignored her proposal. In this way she left the house. The following lines say:

When Dick had gone off to the land, she dressed, packed a suitcase, and left a note for him, quite in the traditional way, but saying merely that she was going back to her old job; exactly as if Dick had known her mind and approved of her decision". (98)

The given lines show that the main cause of leaving the house was to change her husband. She thought if she left the house, Dick would come to take her and he would understand her desire of a child and would start new farming which would promote them. And Dick brought her back by telling her that he would change. But he did not change the system of farming.

Not only Mary was unhappy with her husband but Dick also was unhappy with his wife who never supported him. She always refused his desire. She never supported in the farm work or at the house while coming from the farm. So, both of them had a kind of misunderstanding between them. Generally we think that a woman can bring a lot of change in the family, such as, economic success, happiness in the family, etc. But Mary does not support her husband. He did not do only maize farming but also rabbit farming, bees farming, etc. but he never got support from his wife Mary. In this way they had a kind of conflict.

On the other hand the society in that place was running under the control of men. Dick has used his patriarchal treatment over Mary. He refused the suggestion of Mary. He chose his house workers himself and never asked his wife. All day he worked with the black workers in the field, trying to find them to get some work out of them. He warned Mary many times. Once he showed his madness with Mary like this:

‘Listen to me,’ he said angrily, in a voice he never before used to her.

‘Listen to me! Every time I order the water cart to fetch water for the house, it means a driver, and two wagon boys, and two oxen off other work for a whole morning. It costs money to fetch water. And then you go and throw it away! Why don’t you fill the bath with water and get it, instead of wasting it and throwing it away each time?’ (71)

When Mary was brought back to the farm again Dick did not leave his patriarchal thinking and followed the same traditional method and could not fulfill the desire of Mary. She had begun to make physical relation with her house worker Moses. This was the result of Dick who could not satisfy his wife physically as well

as emotionally. She broke the rules of the society. During that time white women were prohibited to make relation with the black natives. If the white women made sexual relation with the blacks they would get the penalty. But Mary did not follow the traditional rules. The natural law allows instinct to fulfill the desire. Women who are not satisfied with their husband need other men to fulfill demand of their body. Mary kept relation with Moses; from the natural point of view it was not the mistake of Mary. Mary establishes her physical relation with Moses under the pressure of her instinct and environment.

The White Masters and the Black Workers

In this novel natural law and socio-economic influences have become powerful than the human will. It carries the idea of determinism. Determinism is the belief that people are not free to choose what they like or how they behave because these things are decided by their surroundings and other things over which they have no control. Emotion, motivation and conflict are the approaches for survival, which grows out of the application of determinism.

In this novel the white people are the leaders who are leading the natives in their locality. The story is about South Africa and the chasm between the races. During the time, when Lessing wrote the novel, the relation between the white man and the black woman was quite acceptable. But the relation between a white woman and a black man was quite unimaginable. The novel is not only a work of social science as it presents the dictates of society that cause annihilation of Mary but also a profound work on the issue of race that presents shifting picture of the discriminated blacks in the society influenced by the whites.

Mary Turners belongs to the middle class. Her ways of life, interests, perceptions are different from that of her workers, which are the effect of the environment. Samson was the first house worker whom Mary faced. "She had never come into contact with the natives before, as an employer on her own account" (Lessing 58). She had been forbidden to talk to the servants in her mother's house. And now she had to face it, this business of struggling with natives. There was perfect understanding between Samson and Dick. Samson hoped for better thing but Mary hates the Africans. She dominates and suppresses the natives. The decent, unassuming Africans that Dick hires to run the household variously enrage, horrify, and shock her, inspiring her to drive most of them away and label them sunning swine.

Samson, her workers, becomes the victim of Mary's suppression. She takes up the handbook on kitchen kaffir and spends all her time on it, practicing on Samson in the kitchen, disconcerting him with her un-good-humored criticism, but behaving with a cold dispassionate justice. Once she knows there had been enough raisins put out for the pudding, but when they come to eat it, there are hardly any. She blames the boy though he denies stealing them. She tells that she is going to take it out of his wages. "So Samson, who earned a pound a month, was docked two shillings. He accepted the information with a shut sullen face, saying nothing to her" (64). After sometime, he does not like working for her and left his kraal.

Mary feels delighted when she beats the natives. She feels pleased with herself because of her victory over the workers. Once a native comes to the back door, asking for work and wants seventeen shilling a month. She beats him, a youth, probably not out of teens. He is afraid of her and never takes his eyes off her. Later when he is kept in her house for the work, "she showed him all over the house, corner by corner, cupboard, explaining to him how things should be done" (67). He is very much afraid

of her since he is the house worker from the lower class and she is from the upper class. That is why he follows her like a sacred dog.

She never gets satisfaction from her workers as their interests and concepts never match. She hates her next day boy too, who had had years of experiencing working for white women and she treats him as if he was a machine. He replied gently, to everything she said, 'Yes, missus; yes, missus, not looking at her' (68). She gets irritated because he never meets her eyes. For her, it is merely a further evidence of their shifty nature. She does not know it is part of the native code of politeness not to look a superior in the face. Mary is very cruel to the natives. She never thinks of the natives as people who have to eat or sleep.

Mary badly treated her house workers. This is because she was dominated by Dick, She treated badly to the house workers to take revenge upon Dick. It is the law of nature that power suppresses the weak one. She could not fight with Dick who was a male of the white community. So, instead of Dick she behaved the house boys badly. In this way the bad behavior upon blacks by Mary was the result of the treatment of Dick. Lessing writes in the following lines about Mary's treatment to her house workers:

She called the boy and told him to scrub the bath, to scrub it until it was clean. He thought she mean the usual scrubbing, and in five minutes had finished. She went to examine it, it was just the same. Stroking her fingers over the zinc, she could feel the crust of dirt. She called him back and told him to clean. (72)

She makes him scrub the whole day but forgets about his food. He started to scrub from eleven in the morning and went on scrubbing until half past three. He said that he was going to his hut for food, and would go on with the bath when he came back.

She ordered them to work without food and water the whole day. The anger she showed towards the natives was the result of Dick. There was no doubt that initially she was burnt. Only because of the male dominated society she could not take revenge on him and showed her anger to the natives. All human beings feel unhappy if they cannot fulfill their desire. The same problem has come to Mary. So to challenge her husband she used the native workers.

Mary too hates black women when she sees them carrying their children. The idea of dealing with the blacks was nauseating when Dick opens a store for her.

Lessing writes:

Mary would stand there for half an hour perhaps, holding herself aloof, drumming with her fingers on the wood, answering questions about price and quality briefly. She would not give the women the pleasure of haggling over the price. And after a few moments she felt she could not stay there any longer, shut into stuffy store with a crowd of these chattering evils – smelling creatures. She said sharply, in the kitchen kaffir, ‘Hurry up now!’ One day one, they drifted away, their gaiety and the pleasure quite subdued, sensing her dislike of them. (95-96)

When Mary was murdered we find that the Sergeant is not seeking the truth. Mary’s image as a white woman murdered by the native must be untarnished. If the truth were uncovered her relation with black man would be exposed and that is what the community there did not like. The extreme case was presented when dead Mary

was put in the police car and Moses is made to walk all the way to the police station because “[...] one could not put a black man close to a white woman, even though she were dead, and murdered by him” (24). In this way the social system in that place compared the blacks as animals.

Mary’s relation with Moses is unforgivable for her society as white civilization never accepts a white person, and most particularly, a white woman having a human relationship, whether for good or for evil, with a black person. Thus, it can be said that any kind of racial struggle can be redeemed but the cultural bias can never be redeemed. The economic and political bias can be addressed by providing equal opportunities to both the races. But the society is unable to provide equal treatment. Society can enforce certain rules upon the citizens to conform but it is unable to provide the blacks equality that is necessary.

The white’s influence is seen expressed in the very first chapter where Tony is made aware that the sergeant is not really seeking the truth about murder but he is seeking Tony’s acceptance of the rules of the society. The narrative voice gives us clear idea of what sergeant and Slatter mean to say: “When old settlers say, ‘One has to understand the country’, what they mean is, ‘you have to get used to our ideas, or otherwise get out: we don’t want you” (18).

Domestic workers are seen as people whom their employers can use for anything and everything. The harassment is common in domestic service. On entering a place of work, domestic workers are put under pressure to function in an unfamiliar work place culture. This culture is largely based on the norms and traditions produced by white’s expectations governing acceptable behavior. Domestic workers who enter the workplace, therefore, not only have to learn to manage their insecurities about

their effectiveness, but they must also handle their insecurities as workers in a predominantly white environment. the pressures that the worker is put under, and the insecurities that he/she suffers, are well captures b Doris Lessing in the novel:

He was native straight from his kraal [...] he had never seen forks and knives before [...] she expected him to know the difference between a pudding plate and a dinner plate [...] she stood all over him while he laid the table. That night at supper he laid the table badly, and she flew at him in a frenzy of annoyance. The next day at lunch, the servant dropped a plate through nervousness, and she dismissed him at once.

(67-78)

The workers are regarded as stupid as they are not acquainted with the names and use kitchen articles, whereas it is simply ignorance of not having seen or used them before. Such attitude of Mary towards her domestic workers is largely influenced by the belief or racial system. The ideology of racism creates a sense of power and superiority on the part of white employers. The natives are subject to punishment for wrong doing and misdemeanors as ‘chickens’.

Lessing also illustrates racism and partially of the law that protects the offender in the case of physical abuse done by the employer. It is exemplified through Mary’s attitude towards the workers after assaulting him a whip his face, “It made her furious to think that this black animal had right to complain against her. [...] if this native had gone to the police station, she might have been cautioned, since it was her first offence, by a policeman who was European [...]” (120).

Charlie and the Turners: Darwinism

By studying men in the biological perspective and his biological development inevitably emphasized his animal nature. To the horror of the pious people, this perspective appeared to destroy the foundation of religion and of morality. Another interesting point of Darwin's discovery is the "descent of man". He traced the link of human to the lower forms of primates which shook the religious foundation never before.

In the deeper elemental existence all the creatures including men are subject to the instinctual drives like anger, violence, sex, desire, etc. the present forms of civilization and moral uprightness demonstrated by man is merely a modified structure of human being to watch the rational level but the actual human nature is manifested in bloody battles and warfare for existence. Another important point of Darwin is struggle and survival. People struggle and for survive they can do anything. Not only human beings but all the living creatures struggle for their survival.

The socio-economic being and the circumstances differ from person to person that help much to have difference in the way they think, they do and they expect others to do. Those different circumstantial stances are the factors to support for the creation of different culture in their lives. Mary Turner feels a sort of humiliation when Slatters come to her house because they are rich than Turners. The Slatters stance in society is higher than Turners. They have a "large house, three sons at university, and a comfortable life" (75). When Mrs. Slatter comes to her home, she looks keenly round the room pricing every cushion, noticing the new white wash and the curtains.

Once Charlie Slatter visited Dick Turner's lands and spend three hours to persuade him to plant tobacco instead of mealies and little crops. It is the harmful methods he used that led him to take an interest in the Turners at all: having exhausted the fertility of his own land, he needs Dick's for grazing. But Dick refused to go bankrupt on schedule-a refuses that puzzles Charlie that irritates his wife. Lessing writes:

I'll get of the mess my own way,' said Dick obstinately. 'You are a fool, said Charlie. 'A fool. Don't say I did not tell you. Don't come to me for loans when your wife's belly begins to swell and you need cash. 'I never asked you for money for anything', Dick replied. (81)

The given scene makes clear that Slatter was richer than Dick who has given loan time and again. When Dick refused his purpose, he warned Dick not to give loan again.

It is painful to those who are deprived and oppressed. It is pervasive, found in various forms in all the socially complex and technologically advanced societies in the world. Social inequality is dangerous in that the poverty, oppression, fear and frustration inherent in it resentment among the deprived and anxiety among the privileged, with the result of catastrophe and conflict. The inequality is the major cause of crimes like terrorism, civil war and international war. In this novel Charlie represents the ruler whereas Dick and the natives represent the slaves.

Dick likes to enclose with that type of people in the society who have similar interests and choices and such people who have earned a lot of money from farm. Lessing writes:

...he was absorbed in conversation with Charlie, discussing crops, prices, and – above all – native labor. Whatever two or three farmers are gathered together, it is decreed that they should discuss nothing but the shortcomings and deficiencies of their natives. (76)

The relation between Mary and Moses was popular. That was became the story, told all over the district to the accompaniment of headshaking and tongue-clucking. Charlie Slatter repeated continually that Dick should have let Mary go. Charlie had policy to separate Dick and Mary. In real Charlie wanted Dick's farm. It is true that big fish eats the small one. In the same way, Charlie like a big fish wanted to get Dick's farm. Lessing writes:

The real reason why the Slatters, particularly Charlie, maintained their interest in the Turners, was that they wanted Dick's farm still: more even than they had. And, since it was Charlie's intervention that precipitated the tragedy, though he can be blamed for it, it is necessary to explain about his farming. (169-170)

In this novel Charlie had enough money. He had more than five hundred acres dark soil though his desire to make farm is not completed. He needed Dick's farm badly, because the farms that bounded his on the other sides were taken up. Charlie wanted to suppress Dick who has negative thinking upon Dick. Charlie was fear that if Dick will progress and earned enough money more than him then he could not control over him. So he wanted Dick's failure, for years Charlie had been planning for when Dick would be bankrupt. The following lines clear that Charlie wanted to see Dick's failure:

Look here, Turner,' said Charlie abruptly. "Why don't you give up this business and get off the place? You are not doing yourself or your wife any good.' 'Oh, we rub along'. 'You are ill, man.' 'Why don't you sell out to me? I'll give you a good price for it. (174-175)

Charlie had used his full strength to lure Dick. He said Dick to make his manager if Dick sold his farm. It is better to go away for holiday at least for six months with your wife. Dick worked hard to survive but every time he was failed and could not success. And finally after a long argument he is ready to sell his farm. In this way Mr. Slatter was successful to get Dick's farm. He thought Dick will not get the job for a long time whenever he has money. The following lines present his policy to lure Dick:

At last, after a long argument, Dick agreed to leave at the end of a month, when he had shown Tony how he liked things done on 'his' land. Charlie, cheating a little, booked the railway journey for three weeks ahead. Tony went back to the house with Dick, agreeably surprised that he had not been in the country more than a couple of months before finding a job. (181)

In this way Darwin's theory could match with this novel and Charlie a rich and well knowledge farmer can swallow Dick and his land.

Mary and Moses: Sexuality and Death

According to Zola the person from middle or lower class life would seem to be dull and passionate which involve sexual adventure, display of bodily strength which at last culminate in desperate moments and violent death. In this novel Mary gets the

violent death penalty when she did not control herself. The relation between Mary and Moses started when Mary dismissed Samson. After Samson Dick brought a new house worker named Moses. For Dick he was the best among the natives. And the relation between Mary Turner and Moses becomes another important event in this novel. It is natural that anyone who is not satisfied with her husband or if husband cannot understand the desire of his wife she is certainly attracted to other man. In this novel too Mary the main female character started to be attracted towards her own house worker Moses when she was not satisfied with her husband.

The female sexuality has two aspects to be 'the fallen state' and 'not yet fallen'. The history of literature, religion, and are everything under sun is replete with example of man gaining superiority over woman. The woman on the other hand called fickle, petty and mere flesh that made to accept the authority of male. She could handle other house boys at ease and dismissed at her will. But Mary was unable to treat the new boy Moses as she had treated all the others. She felt uneasy the first time before the native. It is because of physical attraction of Moses and the other reason is that she could not get satisfy from her husband. The following lines say she is attracted towards Moses:

One morning she went out to the fowl-runs, which she often forgot to do these days; and when she had finished a perfunctory inspection of the nesting-boxes, and her basket was filled with eggs, she was arrested by the sight of the native under the trees a few yards off. He was rubbing his thick neck with soap, and the white lather was startlingly white against the black skin. (143)

It is the place where white people ruled over natives. A white culture never accepts that a white woman having a sexual relationship with a black person. According to the naturalistic view men and women are influenced by psychological, social, and economic forces so complex that their character and behavior cannot be easily judged or explained. In this novel Mary had lost her character and became characterless. She crossed her boundary and made sexual relation with Moses. She had begun to think about Moses instead of Dick. She remembered the thick neck with the lather frothing whitely on it, the powerful black stopping over the bucket, was like a goad to her.

Her attraction towards Moses made her weep silently and feel bitter her relation with Dick all the more. She would hate the idea of the contact in night with Dick's weary body and in dreams too she hopes Dick to be dead and sees Moses influencing her with his virility. In the waking hours too, Moses exerts his influence upon her which she cannot resist. She felt herself engulfed in his power. She is unable to name the feeling which she is experiencing now. Lessing writes:

[...] her feeling was one of strong and irrational fear, a deep uneasiness, and even – though this she did not know, would have died rather acknowledge – of some dark attraction. It was as though the act of weeping before him had been an act of resignation – resignation of her authority; and he had refused to hand it back. (154)

In this way the relation between Mary and Moses is becoming deeper and deeper. Both of them became mad in physical love. It was just because of Dick who could not satisfy his wife. When Mary showed her vulnerability by crying before him he was taking her hand and directing her to her room. Lessing writes:

[...] she stood up and held out her arms while the native slipped her dress over them from behind. When the gesture of a beautiful woman adoring her beauty. Moses was buttoning up the dress. She was looking in the mirror. The attitude of the native was of an indulgent luxuriousness. When he had vanished the buttoning, he stood back, and watched the woman brushing her hair. (185)

They were happy when their relation was secret. But it is difficult to hide the truth. And one day their relation is disclosed when Charlie studied their behaviors secretly. It is not good to mention about other but Charlie is that kind of people who wants other's failure. He told Dick about their relation and brought a new white house boy Tony to see the farm and the activities of Mary. When Charlie was successful to make Dick to leave the country for six months Mary was compelled to leave the place. Initially she did not like to leave Moses and it was not her betray, it is the affect of the environment which compelled her to leave. And emotion took place in the mind of Moses and tragic moment had appeared. He thought Mary betrayed him who did not give time to meet him. He became upset and could not control him and killed Mary.

Male's sexuality has been assumed as aggressive and possessive. Moreover the blacks are labeled as sexuality aggressive. Moses seems cultivating sexual access towards Mary and her subservience to him has been helpful in this regard. Men, in order to assert their power can go to any extent. But since Moses is bound within the racial regulations, he has taken a roundabout way. But when he finds Mary crying and complaining with Tony, his fury knows no bound. And at last to assert himself, he killed Mary and liberates her from her degenerated position to the utter disintegration in the form of death.

Environment of Racism, Patriarchy and Colonialism

The setting of the novel *The Grass is Singing* is Rhodesia of Southern Africa. It is the place where we find the gap between whites and the black natives. White people in this place maintain the colonial power. It is natural that power suppresses the weak. This place was ruled by white peoples so in this novel white people suppressed the black natives only because of their color different. The black natives were pushed to the margin. Their position was lower than a dog, as subhuman, animal. The white racism had destructed the culture, language, religion and human possibility of black natives. 'When you have been in the country long enough, you will understand that we don't like nigger murdering white woman'. (22)

The demarcation of color based on white and black of their skin was the main attributes among the whites and natives. The whites are master or boss or owner and the natives are workers or servants. The human dignity is covered up in the name of racism. The whites were prohibited to keep any human relation with black natives. They had to work all for the benefits of white people. They were dominated in every respect. The white had a Eurocentric approach of belief that culture, language, religion and civilization is superior to others, so they never understood the value of the natives, their culture, language, religion and civilization.

The social environment is affected badly in this novel. Charlie Slatter, a white farmer and strong pillar of apartheid society, explains to a new migrant England to take up the farm management from Dick Turner about the white racism, that they have double standards. Even though murder itself is a crime and subject to denounce by all, perhaps the white society may like white murdering white woman instead of nigger. The blacks are degraded in such way that even a dead body of white is more

pure than a black native. “They could not put Moses, the murder into the same car with her; one could not put a black man close to a white woman, even though she were dead, and murdered by him” (24).

Lessing’s first novel is not only a work of social science as it presents the dictates of society that cause annihilation of Mary but also a profound work on the issue of race that presents shifting picture of the discriminated blacks in the society influenced by the whites. The whites influence is seen expressed in the very first chapter where Tony is made aware that the sergeant is not only really seeking the truth about murder but he is seeking Tony’s acceptance of the rules of the society. The narrative voice gives us clear idea of what sergeant and Slatter mean to say: “When old settlers say, ‘One has to understand the country’, what they mean is, ‘you have to get used to our ideas, or otherwise get out: we don’t want you” (18).

The condition of Mary was dreadful in the house. She married with a hope of happiness but she was entrapped within the narrow confinement of the hot room without any hope of escape. She was forced to live in the hot house without experiencing what maternity actually is. She knew only to suffer; suffer without complaining. ‘So she used to sit on that sofa her eyes shut, suffering because of the heat, and feeling at the same time tenderly sorrowful and queenly [...] because of her willingness to suffer” (66).

Mary told her husband to repair the ceiling of the house, to change the traditional farming system etc. but he never listened to her voice. It was not only Dick’s fault because he was born in the society where women were dominated. Dick also was affected by the environment of that male dominated society and dominated Mary. He never takes suggestion from his wife while selecting the workers. She

waited Dick to put in an appearance, since her economic dependence places her at his disposal. She was only element in the masculine life while Dick was her whole existence. Dick has his occupations outside the home, and Mary has to put with his absence all day long.

Southern Rhodesia was British colony named after the Britain called Rhode. The set up "*The Grass is Singing*" is colonial southern Rhodesia. The protagonist, Mary Turner, her husband Dick Turner, Charlie Slatter, a white farmer and strong pillar apartheid rule, Sergeant Denham another pillar of apartheid rule and Tony Marston, a fresh graduate from England are a few notable characters represent white colonizer, whereas Moses, the farm labor, the house boy Samson and others are the characters represent colonized. The relation between these two communities cannot be seen beyond the definition of apartheid rule. The workers work for the benefit of their owner. They worked long time without food and water. The condition of the natives in colonial place is miserable. They struggled for survive.

The novel expresses the apartheid relation between the whites and the natives, in Southern Rhodesia. "White civilization, will never admit that a white person, can have a human relationship, whether for good or for evil, with a black person" (26). The colonial white settlers' society regarded themselves as superior. The natives are regarded as sub-human. Even an educated people from white society could not keep human relation with the natives because of the environment. Mary had treated very badly. If the workers could not come in time she could dismissed them. She hated the way the women laugh and stared at her, and the filthy underfed children gathered around her brought the feeling Mary's mind that these natives are filthy and wild.

Consequences of Heredity and Environment

The Grass is Singing is the novel of Doris Lessing, the Nobel Prize winner laureate for literature in 2007. The novel portrays the story of Southern Rhodesia, where the white apartheid rule was in existence. The protagonist of the novel, Mary Turner, gets a tragic end due to the effect of the heredity and environment.

All the events in this novel happened due to the effect of heredity and environment. Mary's childhood, her hostel life in town, her marital life in the village, and the relation with Moses are the main events in this novel. In her childhood she was affected by the family. Because of her father's attitude and mother's condition made her to hate the men. But in the hostel life she heard her friend's gossiping which encourages her to have a husband. And she found Dick with whom she married but their conjugal life was not happy. Mary's happy life in town ends because of the effect of the environment in the hostel. After marriage she tries to lead a "full and active life" by helping Dick. She encounters his obstinacy and gradually fades into passive dependence on Moses.

Women who suffer from depression are often focused on the meaning of their lives and the importance that they place in themselves. They become depressed about their marriage or inability to find a worthwhile career. They become depressed as well as in the job. She thus suffers from restriction and lack of fulfillment. And she made relation with her house worker, Moses. When the relation between Moses and Mary became stronger Charlie Slatter who wanted Dick's farm tried to break their relation. And finally Moses came in emotion and killed her. In this way instinct and environment brought a tragic end of Mary in this novel.

Similarly, the novel deals with the conflict between two people, representing two different socio-economic conditions. Mary Turner represents the modern city life whereas Dick Turner stands for the traditional rural life. These two parties, since they are husband and wife, have to live together under the same ideology has no harmony. Dick Turner lives a simple life that pays much heed to his farming. So he has time to be concerned with the desire and choices of his wife. The thoughts, ideas, choices, perceptions never match with each other. Dick's consciousness is found to be guided by his lower standard rural-world.

A survey of socio-economic structure of these two characters is made who belong to different life style, having a considerable gap in their pre-married life style and materialistic facilities. Similarly, the conflict between Turners and Slatters was due to the socio-economic condition. Mary Turner feels humiliation when the Slatters come to their home because she thinks the status in which Dick is living is not only of Dick but hers as well since she is his wife. The conflict between husband and wife remains till she leaves Dick. That is the extremity of conflict in the family.

Mary never gets satisfied by her husband, Dick. It is natural that women have desire of child after marriage. In this novel Mary had desire for the child but her husband never understood her desire. He was busy all the time in the farm work and with the workers. She suggested him repairing the ceiling of the house but Dick did not care and said that she had to wait for the next time. In this way the desire of Mary was suppressed. This behavior of Dick made Mary unhappy and compelled to choose other man for the fulfillment of her sexual desire. Dick was not able to satisfy his wife. So Mary chose Moses for the fulfillment of her sexual desire which is the effect of her instinct or compulsive drive of heredity.

The race is another factor which affects the character in this novel. The color difference is the main thing which brings the problems in this novel. The relation between the master and the workers is not good in this novel. The natives were behaved as animals. They worked for a long time without any food and water. They were treated very badly; in their minor mistake too they were expelled from their job. There is no love and respect between these two parties. Hate, anger, etc. took place between them. This was only because of their color difference.

The tension shown in the novel is usual in the sense that such conflicts take place in human society time and again. Mary and Dick are two different personalities having two different set of interest, choices, value, institutions, behaviors etc. So the conflict in *The Grass is Singing* is not limited between two people but extended to different socio-economic classes. The family conflict in this novel is beyond dispute of familial level, and it becomes a class-conflict.

Works Cited

- Abrams, M.H. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. 7th ed. Banglore: Earl Mc Peek, 2003.
- Bertelsen, Eva. "The Persistent Personal Voice, Lessing on Rhodesia and Marxism".
Interview Lessing Newsletter. Ed. Mulan, John. London: Worchip Ludachrist,
1985. 261-264.
- Darwin, Charles. "The Descent of Man and Selection to Sex". *What was Naturalism:
Materials for an Answer*. Ed. Stone, Edward. New York: Ohio University,
1995. 27-33.
- - -. "On the origin of Species". Ed. Stone, Edward. 24-26.
- Dine, Philip. "The Formal Implication of Anti-commitment: A Comparison of Doris
Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* and Katab Yacine's *Nedjma*". *Literature,
Language and Nations*. Ed. Esthmanuel, Nagara and Andrew Morrison.
Harare: Assoc. of Uni. Teachers of Literature and Language, 1989. 30-34
- Fausto, Sterling. *Myth of Gender*. New York: Basic Books, 1985.
- Freud Sigmund. "The Instincts" *The Modern Tradition: Background for modern
Literature*. Ed. Richer, Ell Mann and Charles Feidlson. New York: OUP,
1965. 27-41.
- Gazzaniga, Michael. S. "The Social Brain". *Discovering the Networks of Mind*. Ed.
Handbook of Cognitive. New York: Basic Books, 1985. 254-260.
- Gould, Julius and Kolb William L, eds. *A Dictionary of the Social Science*. New
York: The Free Press, 1964.

- Hunter, Eve. "Marriage as Death: A reading of Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*". *Women and Writing in South Africa*. Ed. Clayston, Cherry. Marshalltown: Heinemann, 1989, 139-162.
- Lessing, Doris. *The Grass is Singing*. London: Flaming – Harper Collins, 1994.
- Mendel, Gergor and Bateson William. *Mendel's Principle of Heredity*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1909.
- Montagu, A.A. *On Being Human*. New York: Hawthorn Books, 1966.
- Robert, Sheila. "Sites of Paranoia and Taboo: Lessing's *The Grass is Singing* and Gordimer's *July's People*". *Research in African Literature*. Ed. Thompson. The Dolphin: Washington Post, 1993. 73-85.
- Rosenthal, M. and Yudin P, eds. *A Dictionary of Philosophy*. Moscow: Progress Publisher, 1967.
- Rubensline, Roberta. "Doris Lessing by Eve Bertelsen". *Research in African Literature*. Vol. 19, No. 2. Special Issues on Women's writing. 1988. 56-63.
- Scholes, Robert, et al. eds. *Elements of Literature*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1991.
- Stone, Edward, ed. *American Literary Naturalism: A Devided Stream*. Minneapolis: Uni. of M. Press, 1956.
- Tucker, R.C. *The Marx Engels Reader*. New York: Norton and CO. 1978.
- Walcott, Child Charles. "Frank Noris and the Search for Form". Ed, Stone, Edward 14-153.

- - -. "Jack London: Blond Beats and Superman". Ed. Stone, Edward. 87-113.

Webster's New International Dictionary. 2nd ed. Massachusetts: G. and C. Merriam Company, 1957.

Worchel, S. and Cooper, J. *Understanding Social Psychology*. Illinois: Homewood, 1978.

Young, Paul Thomas. "Instinctive Behavior and Drive". *Motivation and Emotion: A Survey of the Determinants of Human and Animal Activity*. Ed. Thomas, Y. New York: University of Illinois, 1963. 63-108.

Zak, Wender, Michele. "The Grass is Singing: A little Novel about the Emotions". *Contemporary Literature*. Ed. Rubenstein, Roberta. Ithaca: Indian University Press, 1976. 106-109.

Zola, Emile. "The Experimental Novel". Ed. Stone, Edward. 52-58.

- - -. "The Foundation Head of Naturalistic Theory and Practice." Ed. Stone, Edward. 30-35.