

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Class Conflict in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*

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CLASS CONFLICT IN DORIS LESSING'S THE GRASS IS SINGING SURENDRA RAJ JOSHI 2008

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Abstract

In this research, Doris Lessing's novel *The Grass is Singing* is examined through Marxist perspective. The novel deals with the problem of dialectical relationship between two different classes: working class and middle class. Mary Turner, the protagonist of the novel represents the middle class whereas other workers represent the working class. There is a conflict between husband and wife representing two different socio-economic conditions. Mary Turner, the wife, represents the modern city life, whereas Dick Turner, the husband, represents the traditional rural life. Since they are from two different socio-economic conditions their interests, choices, ideas, perceptions, thoughts never match with each other. As a result, there is always conflict between them which is not only a familial conflict but a class-conflict.

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY
Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Mr. Surendra Raj Joshi has completed his thesis entitled "Class conflict in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*" under my supervision. He carried out his research from March 2008 to November 2008. I hereby recommend his thesis be submitted for viva voce.

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled "Class conflict in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*",
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Contents

I. Doris Lessing's Life and Literature`	1-12
Introduction	1
Contextual Background	2
Literature Review	4
Lessing and her works	7
The Grass is Singing: A synopsis	10
II. Marxist Criticism	13-34
General Development of Marxist Criticism	13
Historical Development:Marxism	14
George Lukacs:Art as a Socio-historical phenomenon	18
Frankfurt School Marxism	19
Ideological State Apparatus: Althusser	21
Modernism, Postmodernism and Marxism	24
Class and Class Conflict	27
Materialist Dialectics	30
III. Class Conflict in Doris Lessing's <i>The Grass is Singing</i>: A Textual Analysis	35-54
Class and Society: The Conflict	35
Conflict between Mary Turner and Her House workers	36
Conflict between Turners	41
Ideology and Class Consciousness	50
IV. Conclusion: Society, Class and Conflict	55-57
Works Cited	

I: Doris Lessing's Life and Literature

Introduction

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. Lessing has described her childhood as an uneven mix of some pleasure and much pain. Lessing is an outstanding literary figure in English Literature. She received a noble 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 regarded as a feminist writer, who has been writing novels about the social issues related to the Feminism, Sexuality, Marxism, Psychoanalysis and Racism. Her novels mostly explore the psyche of the characters. She presents the real context of the society and its relation to the people.

During the post-war years, Lessing became increasingly disillusioned with the communist movement, which she left altogether in 1954. By 1949, Lessing has moved to London with her young son. That year, she also published her first novel, *The Grass is Singing*, and began her career as a professional writer. Lessing's fiction is deeply autobiographical, based on her early experience in Africa. She portrays the injustices of racial inequality as well as the dialectic between individual and collective and how both individual and group relate to the whole. She also writes about the clashes of culture, especially those of Blacks and Whites in Southern Rhodesia. Her stories and novels mainly set in Africa, published during 1950s and early 60s condemned the dispossession of black Africans by white colonials and expose the sterility of the white culture in Southern Africa. In 1956, Owing to Lessing's

courageous outspokenness, she was declared a prohibited alien in both Southern Rhodesia and South Africa.

Lessing believes that she was freer than most people because she became a writer. For her, writing is a process of setting at a distance, taking the raw, the individual, the uncriticized, the unexamined, into the realm of the general. *The Grass is Singing* is her first novel published in 1950. In the early years of its publication it did not receive much critical attention, but later it became a center of attraction for many critics in Britain, America and in many European countries. It was well reviewed, translated into ten languages and it launched Lessing's career as a professional writer. The novel draws Lessing's childhood memories and her serious engagement with politics and social concerns to recreate the horror of the women's struggle against the societal norms and values.

Contextual Background

Lessing is regarded as one of the most genuine post war writers in English. *The Grass is singing* is written in the context of post war South Africa. This novel analyses the claustrophobic atmosphere of the small locale, Rhodesia, and isolated veldt and oppressive nature of male dominated world with racism and its impact on the protagonist Mary Turner. The confrontation with racism and poor economic condition results into the psychic disturbance of Mary Turner in the novel. This novel keeps away the endless cataloging of apparently self-perpetuating dislocations psychological and social that serves as substance for much of what has come to be called modernist literature. Lessing rejects the world view of the modernist, preferring instead to portray the dialectical relationship that Marxism insists to exist between the individual circumstances of one's life and the material nature of the social and economic system within which one lives. The novel digs out the racism and dynamics

of the native versus colonist relationship in a tragic story. The text shows the colonial aspect of the people in Rhodesia. The power manipulation of whites on the native black shows a tragic ending as an outlet to avenge with racial discrimination.

The novel deals with the problem of dialectical relationship between the farmers and the workers, mainly Mary Turner and her house workers. Mary Turner dominates and oppresses them both physically and mentally. She has no sympathy towards them. She assigns them to work the whole day with nothing to eat. She doesn't even pay the wages properly. Once a native came to the backdoor, asking for work, he wanted seventeen shillings a month so she beat him, feeling pleased with herself because of her victory over him. The next day at lunch, the servant dropped a plate through nervousness, and she dismissed him at once.

Lessing, in her novels, portrays social, political and psychic features of woman's subjectivity. Her novel shows the need and the way to radical social change. This research focuses minutely on the dialectical relationship between the individual circumstances of one's life and socio-economic conditions in which one lives. Every character does have their own circumstances along with the social barrier and restrictions which they have to face. The main factor of the conflict is the socio-economic conditions in which they live. The conflict between Mary and Dick is only because of the socio-economic conditions that is Mary represents the modern city life whereas Dick the traditional rural life. Their thoughts and actions vary each other and make them separate psychologically and physically too. There is a conflict between Mary and her house workers only because of the ideology constructed by the society that they are of lower classes. She thinks that the boy is black in race whereas she is white, a colonist member. We find the conflict between protagonist and antagonist, Moses, vehemently in relation to

sexuality triggered by racial differences. They are detached with each other because of social barrier and restriction. The entire society cast and ironic eye to Moses, the black boy who has cultivated an illegal relationship with a white woman Mary Turner breaking the societal codes.

Literature Review

The novel opens with a brief newspaper account of the murder of Mary Turner by her house boy and then moves to a description of the sham inquiry into her murder by neighbors and by colonial officials. Since her husband has been rendered incurably mad by the shock of the murder, we are left to judge the community's response through the perceptions of the single resident on the Turner property, Tony Marston. A young man recently over from England, who had been preparing to assume management of the Turner farm and is still very much an outsider in his adopted country, Marston wonders incredulously at that response. He understands, finally, the gentleman's agreement that prevents inquiry into the motive for the murder, rife as it is with implication of forbidden human – perhaps even sexual-contact between the victim and her suspected assailant. Marston's astonished groping after a clearer vision of what is customary in this country furnishes us with a contextual account of the narrow and oppressive world in which Mary Turner was born, went slowly and undramatically mad, and violently died.

In the early years of its publication it did not receive much critical attention but later it became a center of attraction for many critics. In this regard Katherine Fishburn says:

I want therefore to (try to) stimulate further discussion of *The Grass is Singing* and to ask why in the past it has not received as much attention as it might have. One explanation for its relative neglect, of course,

could lie in the fact that its meaning seems to be so self evident, so readily accessible, that no formal exegesis is necessary (katherine 1).

The novel traces Mary's story, from her young and happy days in towns, through her unwise conjugal relationship with Dick, to her eventual derangement and death while reflecting Mary's situation, the narrative weave recounts her growing frustration with her situation. Moreover, Lessing's motive in this novel is to present the evils of colonialism and evil of patriarchal societies. Mona Knapp has opined:

As early as *The Grass is Singing* (1950), the stunted vision of the protagonist, Mary Turner, while clearly shown to be determined by the politics of the family and the mores of colonial society (262).

Lessing's novel portrays the two worlds in mid-twentieth century's South Africa: the modern, the severe, well run, relatively domesticated suburban world and the traditional, the uncontrolled chaotic, unattainable and intimately evil world of the high veldt and bush land, Dick loves. Regarding the life of Mary, it is kind to her in town. It is fatal to her in the high veldt, where the incompatible worlds of colonizers and colonized clash more openly. Mary does not like African laborers whose sweat has made possible the privilege all the colonizers enjoy. Lessing's novel demonstrates the transition in colonized Africa from the dominant phase to the hegemonic. The transition, of course, is symbolized by the changes in Moses as he moves from an early version of colonial oppression to the later system of that which saves the sense of his identity to ensure him in a more oppressive situation. His initial and relatively harmless rebelliousness is evident in the scene where Mary whips him. But, later, when he is taken to do house work at Dick's house, he becomes someone an individualized human being to Mary. In the destruction of both Mary and Dick, the novel also seems to suggest that chaos lies always on the margins of white civilization

in colonial Africa. To forestall such chaos or evil, the novel implies, the colonizers must maintain absolute vigilance over each other, even to the point where need be, of sacrificing the weakest members.

Barry Taylor, another critic comments by giving this novel a feminine quality. He opines like this:

It is a feminine book. It has the patience of analysis and the sympathetic, horrific calm that a woman can sometimes bring to the most unpromising of themes. But it is also an urgent book. There is a strong narrative line, not in any way diminished by our knowledge of the ending, and the characters, though few, are clearly made. The failure is in the African character, Moses. Like an 'eminence noire', he plays the role of the disillusioned mistress of Mary. (25)

Another critic Michele Wender Zak comments through Marxist perspective. He opines:

The Grass is Singing is one of those rare works of fiction which acknowledge that basic truth of Marxian analysis. And as a consequence 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, her enlistment on bewildered confidante by her profoundly disappointed mother. (484)

The novel deals with the problem of psychological confrontation in relation to sexuality. This is faced by the central character who is consciously and perpetually tormented by her present role as a wife and former life as an independent woman. Mary's degeneration in the novel is the degeneration of a vivacious mind –out of

ennui, or failures, or anger, or helplessness. She deteriorates within and it starts flowing out- through anger and lust for the black. The most recurring theme in the novel is the love-hate combination. Mary hates Dick, but marries him. She hates Moses for being a powerful Black, but cannot resist him.

Lessing

and Her Works

Lessing's fiction is deeply autobiographical, much of it emerging out of her experiences in Africa. Lessing has described her childhood as an uneven mixture of some pleasure and much pain. Drawing upon her childhood memories and her serious engagement with politics and social concerns, Lessing has written about the clash of cultures, the gross injustices of racial inequality, the struggle among opposite elements within an individual's own personality, and the conflict between the individual conscience and the collective good. Lessing's mother, obsessed with raising daughter, enforced a rigid system of rules at home; then kept Lessing in a convent school. Lessing was sent to girl's high school soon. Since then, she made herself educated intellectual. This is similar to the case of Mary in *The Grass is Singing*. The book explores the complacency and shallowness of white colonial society in South Africa.

The books in *The Children Violence* series (1952-69) are strongly influenced by communism and rejection of a domestic family role. This is a formally conventional novel of education about the growth in consciousness of her heroine, Martha Quest, a girl brought up in Africa who marries young despite her desperate desire to avoid the life her mother has led. *A Proper Marriage* (1954), the second book in the series, describes the unhappiness of marriage and at last Martha's rejection of it. The sequel *A Ripple From the Stream* (1958) is very much a novel of

thoughts, exploring Marxism and Martha's increasing political alertness. After then, Lessing's novel advocates the feminist view.

Lessing broke new ground with *The Golden Notebook* (1962), a daring narrative experiment, in which the multiple selves of a contemporary woman are rendered in astonishing depth and detail. Lessing became firmly identified with the feminist movement. In this novel Anna Wulf, a writer like Lessing herself strives for ruthless honesty as she aims to free herself from the chaos, emotional numbness and hypocrisy afflicting her generation. She sees her life compartmentalized into various roles: woman lover, writer and political activist. Anna finally suffers a mental breakdown and it is only through this disintegration that she is able to discover a new wholeness. In the 1970s and 1980s Lessing began to write science fiction. Her inner-space fiction deals with cosmic fantasies, e.g. *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971), dreamscapes and other dimensions, e.g. *Memoirs of a Survivor* (1974).

We can read her fantasy and science fiction in *The Canopus in Argos* (1979-1983) series. Lessing's other novels include *The Good Terrorist* (1985), awarded with the W.H.Smith Literary Award and the Mondello prize in the Italy (1985), deal with the political issues. Lessing's more recent novels have continued to confront social taboos and challenge preconceptions generating many different and conflicting opinions. *The Fifth Child* (1988) talks about human attributes concerned with alienation, and it has received the Grinzane Cavour Prize in Italy and was nominated for the Los Angeles Times Book Award in 1988. She also published two novels under the pseudonym Jane Somers, *The Diary of a Good Neighbor* (1983) and *If the Old Could* (1984).

In addition, she has written several nonfiction works, including books about cats, a love since childhood. The acclaimed first volume of her autobiography, *Under*

My Skin (1994) won the James Tait Black Prize (1995) for best biography. It also received a Los Angeles Times Book Prize (1995). After being out of print in the U.S. for more than thirty years, *Going Home* and *In pursuit of the English* were republished by HarperCollins in 1996. These two fascinating and important books give rare insight into Mrs. Lessing's personality, life and views.

In 1996, her first novel in seven years, *Love Again*, was published. Late in the year, *Play with a Tiger and Other Plays*, a compilation of three of her plays was published. This volume was only published in U.K. and it is not available in U.S., to the disappointment of her North American readers. *Walking in the Shade*, the anxiously awaited second volume of her autobiography was published and nominated for the 1997 National Book Critics Award in the biography/autobiography category. This volume documents her arrival in England in 1949 and takes us up to the publication of *The Golden Notebook*. Her another novel, *Mara and Dann* was published in the U.S. in January 1999 and in the U.K. in April 1999. Her fiction *Ben, in the world* (2000), a sequel to *The Fifth Child* and *The Sweatest Dream* (2001) which follows the fortunes of a family through the twentieth century set in London during 1960 and contemporary Africa.

Her other book *The Grandmother* (2003) is a collection of short stories centered on an unconventional extended family and the *Times Bites* (2004), essays are based on her own experiences. Her most recent novel is *Alfred and Emily*. She has announced it is her final book. In 2001 she was awarded the prince of Asturias Prize in literature, one of Spain's most important distinctions, for her brilliant literary works in defense of freedom and Third world causes. She also received the David Cohen British Literature Prize. She was on the shortlist for the first Man Booker International Prize in 2005. In 2007 she was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature.

Her stories and novels set in African background, talks of the dispossession of black Africans by white colonials, and expose the sterility of white culture in southern Africa. Lessing's work covers more than a half of country exploring the relationship and realities of the people. Her novels depict the relationship between the individual circumstances of one's life and the socio-economic condition within which one live. In *The Grass is Singing* too, different characters have their own circumstances and the restriction created by the society to them. In this novel 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, her enlistment on bewildered confidante by her profoundly disappointed mother. In 1956, 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 their time, as she fought against biological and cultural imperatives. She fought through writings, and she believes that she is freer than any general people since being a writer.

The Grass is Singing: A Synopsis

Born to British parents, Lessing was brought up in Southern Africa, that is why we can find the socio-economic construct of Rhodesia in her novel. *The Grass is Singing* explores the ideology of the whites in Africa, particularly the white's perspective towards the black. They have the idea that extreme racism develops out of a need to justify economic exploitation.

Regarding the novel, Barry Taylor, writes, " The story concerns a tragic South African marriage between an amiable, idealistic farmer, Dick Turner, and his citified, uncomprehending wife, Mary"(25) .Telling about the thematic aspects of the novel,

Rowe writes that *The Grass is Singing* has been read as social critique, mythic novel, romance and detective story.

The novel 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. Brought up by parents who ran a store in a farming community, her father was a drunk and her mother 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 reaches her thirties and her friends start to treat her as odd because she is still single. When Dick asks her to marry him, she agrees and goes to live on his farm, where her life completely changes. Dick, an unsuccessful farmer, lacks the mindset and risk-taking manner of a commercial farmer or entrepreneur. He is always in debt facing bad harvest. He is obsessed with the land but despite his best efforts, he struggles to make a go of it.

As a character, Mary is particularly well-drawn. She is the focus of the story and her past and feelings are covered in great depth. Her early life is not happy. She having seen the extremely poor life of the parents decides not to get married. Her instinctual desire for sex is repressed and hidden. When she is sent to town for study, her life becomes full of rejoice and romance but lacks sex. She marries a man that she doesn't really love in order to fulfill her friend's expectation of her. Her only acquaintances apart from her husband are the servants and as she has been brought up to look down on the natives, her relationship with them is very stilted. Still without an operational sense of self, she withdraws increasingly from normal intercourse with the surrounding farm families, for isolation provides at once her only safety from threat of

engulfment and her ultimate destruction. Eventually her only social expression becomes her overweening hatred for the blacks whom she treats with exaggerated cruelty and impersonalness because they threaten her not only as men, but as usurpers of her only useful, though hated, function on the farm – housekeeping.

After the last for material success has failed, and after he ignores her motherhood and sexuality makes Mary think of getting next someone. She meets Moses, a black whom Mary had struck with a whip some years before, and is hired by Dick to be the new houseboy. Her repressed desire gets melted as she gets attracted to him. The relation strengthened is blocked by the racist society. When Tony Marston, an English youth from England, sees Moses dressing and undressing her, he can not digest this and starts making a plan to separate them. Charlie Slatter, a neighboring person to Mary and Dick, helps him for the same. When relation is disrupted the psychological conflict between them touches the climax. The desire for sex in Moses gets repressed. He kills Mary in emotive states of stressed mood. Relating the life passes and the world she faces and its result, Zak writes “[...] furnishes us with a contextual account of the narrow and oppressive world in which Mary Turner was born, went slowly and undramatically mad, and violently died”(482).

II: Marxist Criticism

General Development of Marxist Criticism

Criticism is an art of making judgements. It is concerned with defining, classifying, analyzing, interpreting and evaluating works of literature. It began and developed along with the development of art and literature and it primarily examines the excellence and deficiencies of literary works. There are various critical approaches to literature. Twentieth century has proved to be quite revolutionary from the point of view of the development of new critical trends. Marxist, Psychoanalytic, Linguistic and Stylistic, Formalism, Myth Criticism and Existentialism are the leading critical trends developed in this century.

Marxism is a materialist philosophy i.e. it tries to explain things without assuming the existence of a world or of forces beyond the natural world around us, and the society we live in. Marxist literary criticism is related to sociological theories of literature in that it treats literature within a larger framework of social reality. Its opposite is idealist philosophy which believes in the existence of spiritual world called transcendental. Plato and Aristotle talk of idea and essence respectively, and work of art as a mere photocopy of that transcendental. Plato, in *Book X of Republic*, makes a full scale examination on the nature and value of imaginative literature. He views poetry as a collection of copies of the ideas, or forms that it mentions. For him, the poet, restricted to imitating the realm of appearances, makes only copies of copies, and his creation is thus twice removed from reality. Since the poet's activity leads men away from truth, Plato considers him dangerous to society.

Quite contrarily, Aristotle takes it as true, serious and useful where Plato shows imaginative literature to be false, trivial and harmful. He does not believe that the world of appearances is merely an short-lived copy of the changeless ideas. He

believes in change and regards it as a creative force with a direction. For him, a poet is an imitator and a creator. He compares history and poetry in their presentation of reality and states that history is limited as it is created on some specific past happening, but poetry enjoys absolute freedom and it expresses universal truth. However, the very premise of Marxist literary theory is to defy any transcendentalism in general. Marxist literature criticism maintains that a writer's social class, and its prevailing ideology have a major bearing on what is written by a member of that class. So instead of seeing authors as primarily autonomous inspired individuals whose genius and creative imagination enables them to bring forth original and timeless works of art, the Marxist sees them as constantly formed by their social contexts in ways which they themselves would usually not admit. As this research is centered on Marxist approach, let's briefly examine its historical development.

Historical Development: Marxism

Towards the middle of nineteenth century, Karl Marx (1818-1883) in association with Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) invented radical economic, social and political theories which spread with amazing effect throughout the world heralding the dawn of new era. Views of Marx and Engels on art and literature have been drawn up on differently by various scholars and interpreted and developed to divergent ways. The same theories, which are known as Marxism today, have been capable of influencing the whole world by furnishing strong ideological basis especially for political movements. Marx formulated the most revolutionary and scientific theories in the time of tremendous socio-economic changes resulted from the scientific discoveries and establishment of large scale production industries. His theories explicitly disprove the bourgeois economic, social and political system establishing the philosophy of proletariat – the lowest stratum of the society. They initiate the

movement of the proletariat, i.e., the movement of those who do not furnish material things but work against those who possess abounding amount of wealth without much labour. The emancipatory movement initiated by Marxism aims abolishing the concentration of wealth in the hands of tiny minority by seizing political and legal power from the hands of bourgeois class. Thus Marxism as a political theory advocates class struggle of the proletariat against the ruling class until the political power is seized and socialist emancipatory society is established.

Marxism treats literature as expression of socio-economic life and judges it on the basis of how far it has fulfilled this function. Its struggle stresses literature should be useful to life. Although Marxism is primarily a theory of social, economic, political and revolutionary activities, it treats art and literature with special care. Disproving the early concept of them Marxist theoretician have developed their own theories, which are known as Marxist theories of art and literature. Majorities of these theoreticians believe that literature has social as well as political implications and it must be committed to the cause of people. It should be used for advancement of society. Marxist theories of social and historical development have lasting effect in all social, economic and political activities. Marxism brought significant change in bourgeois ideology. It challenged the old viewpoint of philosophy itself.

As Marx himself explicitly stated that "philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it" (qtd. in Selden 24), and explained life and work from quite a different perspective. His theories that aim at intensifying the inevitable process of change, brought considerable change in the concept of art and literature as well.

Although, Marx and Engels didn't propound any systematic theories regarding art and literature, they are found to raise some basic questions about them in relation

to their discussion about base and superstructure. According to Marxist, base affects the superstructure and with the change in base, superstructure also automatically gets changed, especially, to say the change in socio-economic relations brings change in ideology, politics, religion, art and literature as well. They believe that each economic structures; e.g. feudalism, capitalism or socialism of society leads to its own type of social organization and production of its own literature, art, culture and religion. So, basic characteristics of literature and art is determined by socio-economic factors. Orthodox Marxist theoreticians, therefore, are of the opinion that the origin, development and success or failure of a literary work should be examined on the basis of its relation to socio-economic life of the contemporary society.

However, such relation is quite complex and contradictory. Development of art and literature even when socio-economic life was in quite a backward stage has proved their autonomy to a certain extent. The achievement of art and literature, have been found perpetually occupying their dominant position even after complete revolution in socio-economic situations. Most of the Marxist critics are aware of this fact and recognize their partial autonomy; therefore, they do not entirely neglect the literary values despite their emphasis on sociological aspects. They are of the opinion that literature can play active role in the development of human understanding and beside its aesthetic purpose, it can be used as vehicle for non-literary ideas. Though their development is rather an independent phenomenon, they are capable of influencing each other.

Till nineteenth century, all criticism was sociological, therefore Marxist criticism is often said to have originated from the earlier. The fundamental differences between Marxist and Non-Marxist, sociological realistic criticisms is that the Marxist criticism examines how far a literary work embodies ability in altering human

existence and lead it in the path of progress, prosperity and emancipation, whereas others give emphasis to interpretive function and examine whether a work is successful in interpreting life and world appropriately. For this type of criticism aesthetic interpretation is the primary function of art and literature. But, Marxism, a living body in thought, aims at revolutionizing the whole socio-economic life establishing new political system led by proletariat. Orthodox Marxism theory of literature strongly insists that a work of literature should reflect the class relations and be committed to the cause of working class people. A writer's success or failure should be judged on the basis of his works, which exhibit his insight of the socio-economic situation of the epoch. It demands the authors to produce reality objectively with special attention to class divisions, especially the exploitation of the lower class by upper. So, literature instead of rendering outward superficial appearance of reality, should explore the inner causes. In order to capture, reality successfully, an author needs to have deep intellectual power and penetrating vision of the historical forces of the period. Outward, superficial depiction of the things like that of naturalism and modernism which brackets off all the inner causes can never lead to reality. Literature, for Marxist critics, should be auxiliary in spreading ideology of working class.

Marx and Engels not propounded any systematic theories on literature and art, though they "achieved a revolution in philosophy in political economy and in political theory" (Slaughter 22). Not only Marx and Engels but none of the great Marxist political revolutionaries, except Trotsky who was 1979 charged to be reactionary and sent in exile, have been found leave any systematic theories about them. Therefore, we do not find uniformity in Marxist theories about art and literature. Some of the

general theoretical principles developed by some of the Marxist theoreticians are discussed below.

George Lukacs: Art as a Socio-historical Phenomenon

George Lukacs, one of the most important Marxists critic, doesn't see literature as a reflecting reality in the way mirror does. Reflection of reality is key idea of this theory of art. Art for him is socio-historical phenomenon. But the reality in literary works and the reality in the actual world need not have one to one correspondence. Artistic representation is not photographic as the artist is not a machine. A photographic machine presents everything indifferently as it can't react, whereas, an artist is a sensitive creature, he feels and reacts. So, a picture presented in a literary works like novels, dramas, poems etc. ultimately passes through the active and sensitive mind of the author. The previous experience and his own liking and disliking influences his interpretation of the world. For Lukacs, the world is chaos from where an artist picks up the required materials. During this process of selection he may give priority to one aspect of reality neglecting the others. Similarly, the objective external reality is mingled with the artists feelings and emotions which are purely subjective. In the process of creating work of art, the objecting reality which lies in the chaotic state is given form and arranged in a sequence.

Lukacs' major argument in his works is that literature reflects reality outside it. However, the idea of art and literature as reflection was begun in the primitive age with Plato and Aristotle in ancient Greece. We find them discuss about art as proper or improper reflection of reality. Plato, in the *Republic Book X* discusses about art in detail. He opposes all kinds of art as he argues that they can't reflect the original He discusses about the nature of the artistic imitation and demands to exile all the poets from the ideal state as poetical imitations, in his opinion, are ruinous to the

understanding of the hearers. He argues that not only political but also all kinds of imitators are far removed from truth and reason. They neither carry any healthy aim nor have any utility so they are idle sources of amusement.

The key idea of his theory of art is the reflection of outside reality. David Forgacs in his brilliant essay *Marxist Literary Theories* observe that according to Lukacs:

To be reflected in literature reality has to pass through the creative form giving work of the writer. The result, in the case of correctly formed work, will be that the form of the literary work reflects the form of the real world. (Forgacs 171)

Thus, for Lukacs, literary creation is a process of putting selected matters together. This process of selection and combination imposes bound to the chaos of objective reality. Forgacs says, in Lukacs' view form is "the aesthetic shape given to content, a shape manifested through technical features such as time and the interrelationship or characters and situation in work" (Forgacs 171).

Frankfurt School Marxism

Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, and, later Jurgen Habermas belonged to Frankfurt school Marxists who openly denounced the realist theories like Lukacs' which take literature as reflection of outside reality. While sharing the basic principles of Marxist criticism, Adorno departs significantly from it in that he rejects the traditional Marxist concept of art or literature as mirror of society. His ideas are in direct opposition to the Lukacsian theory of reflection. According to Adorno, events and work of art has gap which is covered up by language that is external events and the work of art has the meditation of language.

Something external, when depicted in art, is bound to change. In fact, art, for Adorno, is distance from reality. Art for him is not reflection but deflection of society.

Unlike Lukacs and Macherey, Adorno sees literature as alienation from reality. Adorno, regards literature, as negative knowledge of the real world, and gives definite value to the works of the modernist authors. Interior monologue or the stream of consciousness as literary technique was much criticized by Lukacs. Adorno, however, emphasizes "the interior monologue, far from cutting the literary work off from reality, can expose the way reality actually is" (Forgacs 188). But, for Adorno this reality is not photographic as for Lukacs and at the same time the duty of the author is not to give shape to the objective reality pre-existing in the society. However, according to David Forgacs, Adorno by negative knowledge "doesn't mean non-knowledge, it means knowledge which can undermine and negate a false or refined condition" (Forgacs 189).

Pierre Macherey, a French Marxist theoretician, has developed a theory of literary creation which remarkably differs from other Marxist theories. *The Theory of Literary Production* (1966) is Macherey's most substantial theoretical work which discusses about production of art and ideology. He stressed, the supplementary claim that a literary text not only distance itself from its ideology by its fiction and form, but also exposes the contradictions that are inherent in that ideology by its silences or gaps – that is, by what the text fails to say because its ideology makes it impossible to say it. Such textual absences are symptoms of ideological repressions of the contents in the text's own unconscious. The aim of Marxist criticism, Macherey asserts, is to make these silences speak and so to reveal, behind what an author consciously intended to say, the text's unconscious content, that is, its repressed awareness of the flaws, stresses, and incoherences in the very ideology that it incorporates. For

Macherey, the author of any text does nothing more than working out with already existed materials such as language, genres, ideology etc. The production of literature, for him is inseparable from social practices. Macherey is of the opinion that creation of literature basically is a linguistic phenomenon.

Literature, according to Macherey, produces ideological effect and the material for literature are the 'ideological contradictions' which are political, religious etc. As he states that the fundamental material for literary text is "contradictory ideological realization of determinate class positions in the class struggle" (Macherey 68). Regarding the effect of the literary text, Macherey states that it provokes:

their ideological contradictions which can sometimes be recognized as literary ones but which are usually merely aesthetic, moral, political, religious discourses in which the dominant ideology is realized.

(Macherey 68)

Ideological State Apparatus: Althusser

Louis Althusser, whose views on art and literature are rather different from traditional orthodox Marxist theoreticians, is influenced by the structuralist and post-structuralist movements that dominated the whole European intellectual atmosphere during 1960s.

He revolutionized Marxist theory, especially the theory of ideology. For all of us who live in a society that is good on top, Althusser shows us how to make sense of the literature and the culture we produce and read in that society. It is only on the basis of this kind of understanding, he argues, that we can contribute to changing it. Luke Ferretter, a critic, says, "As long as the live in a society based on a capitalist economy, in which goods are produced in order to be sold at a profit, we will not be

able to understand the literature and culture of that society without thinkers like Althusser" (Ferreter 1).

In "ideology and the state", his most arresting essay, Althusser has developed the theory of reproduction of ideology. According to him the "ideological state apparatuses" which include the church that is religious institutions, the family, the media that is radio, television, press etc, and cultural "ideological state Apparatuses" which includes literature, the arts, sports etc. play very powerful role in reproduction of ideology. In his famous essay entitled *Ideology and Ideological State Apparatus*, Althusser remarks Marx' notion of ideology:

an imaginary assemblage, a pure dream, empty and vain, constituted by the Days' residues from the only full and positive reality, that of the concrete history of concrete material individuals materially producing their existence [. . .] represents the imaginary relationship of individual to their real conditions of existence. (Althusser 153)

Further he differentiates between the ideologies that belong to the private and public domain. According to him, the state apparatus contains the government, the administration, the army, the police, the courts, the prison etc. which primarily function by violence whereas ideological state apparatus function by ideology. He also adds that state apparatus and ideological state apparatus, however, may function both the violence and ideology:

. . . The (repressive) state apparatus functions massively and predominantly by repression (including physical repression, while functioning secondarily by ideology" . . . "the ideological state apparatuses function massively and predominantly by ideology, but they also function secondly, by repression, even if ultimately, but only

ultimately, this is very attenuated and concealed, even symbolic."

(Macherey 56)

Ramon Selden, in his account of *Contemporary Literary Theory* considers Althusser under "structuralist Marxism", and recognizes his abiding influence on Marxist literary theory mainly in France and Britain. Selden tries to justify the relation of Althusser's works with structuralism and post-structuralism. According to him, for Althusser, art is not simply a form of ideology. It can be located "somewhere between ideology and scientific knowledge." He doesn't think that it merely expresses "the ideology of particular class."

Bertolt Brecht, a German Marxist, was an unorthodox intellectual, who also supported modernist and non-realistic art, have had considerable influence on non-Marxist as well as Marxist criticism. Impressed by Marx's works, he become interested towards lower class people and attempted to write didactic plays for working class audiences before seizure of power by Nazis in 1933. Although Brecht was influenced by Marxism he was neither a member of communist party nor was in favour of prescribing any rules to the writers as by orthodox Marxist theoreticians. Brecht was influenced both by Marxism and the formalist theory of art and literature developed by Russian writers that advanced the idea of "defamiliarization." His best known theatrical device, the alienation effect is partly derived from that very concept of 'defamiliarization'. He, not only opposed the 'socialist realism', he was against each and every kind of rules that attempted to restrain the freedom of an author. Bretolt Brecht rejected what he called the Aristotlean concept that a tragic play is an imitation of reality. As a dramatist, he couldn't stop opposing the established Aristotlean theory of drama that emphasized the unity of plot and of each and every situation to truth. Brecht proposes instead that the illusion of reality should be deliberately shattered by

an episodic plot, by protagonists who do not attract the audience's sympathy, by a striking theatricality in staging and acting, and by other ways of baring the artifice of drama so as to produce an alienation effect. According to Ramon Selden, Brecht tried to reverse such assumption and emphasized "the alienation effect", that is, the facts of real life conditions, in his views, are to be presented as if they were shockingly unnatural and totally surprising.

Modernism, Postmodernism and Marxism

Walter Benjamin, was both an admirer of Brecht and briefly an associate of the Frankfurt school. He was primarily a literary critic then Marxist, therefore, he was not pre-occupied by Marxist theories of economic, social or philosophical. In his essay, *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, he argues that in order to resist the influence of bourgeois art such as cinema, telephone, radio, television etc., revolutionaries have to "become producers in their own artistic sphere" (Selden 37). Benjamin is of the opinion that revolution in art can be achieved as revolutionizing to the technique itself.

Cliff Slaughter in *Marxism, Ideology and Literature* discusses Benjamin's Theory under quite inappropriate title "against the Stream: Walter Benjamin."

Discussing his concept about art and literature slaughter states:

Benjamin directed his polemical writings against and those who drew from Marx's progress only the conclusion that writers should 'take the side' of working class in conceiving their subject matter demonstrating some automatic progressiveness of the productive forces which must be Victorians against the production relations . . . To imagine that a common sense adoption of 'progressive' themes within existing

literary forms constitutes a revolutionary line in art and literature was considered by Benjamin to be pure nonsense. (Slaughter 174)

According to him, Benjamin was of the opinion that it was essential to do so but it was not sufficient to appropriate the conquests of the art and literature of the past.

Frederich Jameson is a versatile Marxist critic well established among the contemporary literary intellectuals. Although Jameson is generally apprehend "as the American exponent of Marxist criticism, his works also display an intellectual powerful grasp of the whole range of structuralist and post-structuralist theory" (Lodge 372), observes David Lodge in *Modern Criticism and Theory*.

In his book, *The Political Unconscious Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act*, he views that, narrative is a 'socially symbolic act'. It shows how Marxist readings need not read literature merely as a reflection of its particular context. It is not matter of learning something of the historical context and then reading the text off against that as a form of background.

Jameson reflects the idea that historical subtext is 'extrinsic' to the work: something which he, not the text, bring to bear upon it. As he writes:

A definition we think as paradoxical only because such theoretical strategies have tended to be situated as oppositional to one another. Formal patterns in the work are read as symbolic enactments of the social within the formal. (Jameson 77)

Raymond William's cultural materialism utilizes criticism of literary texts and other cultural forms to promote a general socialist vision. He doesn't believe in structuralist and post-structuralist theories although he positively responds the late 20th century developments in art and literature. He does not approve the general concept that

realist novels have seized to exist and literature has made departure from reality. He insists that 20th century novels still holds to reality.

According to him, there is much similarity between art and ordinary day to day communication. Art, in his view, is active powerful expression of human experience and what is often called creative imagination is the capacity to find and organize new descriptions to experience, and is common to all, therefore, an artists work becomes art only by his extra ordinary skill in transmission of this experience. As William believes in arts affinity to reality, he disproves the idea that any artist's activity is purely creative or an artist creates something entirely new.

Explaining artistic creation from Marxist perspective he clearly justifies the inseparable relation between art and ordinary experience. He says that art can not be excluded from serious practical concerns. Neither art can be dismissed as unpractical or secondary nor it can be distinguished from ordinary living.

Terry Eagleton, a leading theorist of Marxist criticism after Raymond William in England, was anti-postmodernist and anti-structuralist. He vigorously attacks his contemporary Marxists who appeared to be liberal towards the detached new developments in the field of art and culture.

Eagleton rejects Althusser's view that literature can distance itself from ideology. It is a complex reworking of already existing ideological discourses. As he writes:

In any society ideology has a certain structural coherence. Because it possess such relative coherence [. . .] and since literary texts 'belong' to ideology, they too can be the object of such scientist analysis. A scientific criticism would seek to explain the literary work in terms of the ideological structure of which it is part, yet, which it transforms in

its art; it would separate out the principle which both ties the work to ideology and distances it from it. (Eagleton, 18)

Eagleton means that literature and ideology both are the object of scientific interpretation. Because science gives the conceptual knowledge of a situation whereas art gives us the experience of that situation which is similar to ideology.

Class and Class Conflict

The society where we live is divided into the classes of oppressor and oppressed. The oppressors are a small handful while the oppressed form the overwhelming majority. In the primordial time the society was not divided into classes. People lived in small kinship groups and were still at the lowest stage of development in a condition approximating to savagery, an epoch from which modern civilized human society is separated by several thousand of years. They used to work together for their common necessities and there was no sign of oppression and exploitation at all. At that time there was no state, no special apparatus for the systematic application of force and the subjugation of people by force.

Later the production in all branches increased which gave human labour power. The capacity to produce a large product than was necessary for its maintenance . At the same time, it increased the daily amount of work to be done by each member of the family. Which brings the new labour forces. Hence, the first great social division of labour took place which divided the society into the classes of masters and slaves, exploiters and exploited. Frederick Engels write:

The increase of production in all branches – cattle-raising, agriculture, domestic handicrafts – gave human labour power. The capacity to produce a large product than was necessary for its maintenance. At the same time it increased the daily amount of work to be done by each

member of the gens, household commodity or single family. It was now desirable to bring in new labour forces, war provided them, prisoners of war were turned into slaves. With its increase of the productivity of labour and therefore of wealth and its extension of the field of production the first great social division of labour was bound in the general historical conditions prevailing to bring slavery in its train. From the first great social division of labour arose the first great cleavage of society in two classes: masters and slaves, exploiters and exploited. (The Origin 194)

The society has now splitted into two opposites and entangled in a insoluble contradictions within itself. The powerful group not only owed all the means of production, the land and the implements however poor and primitive they may have been in those times but also owned people. State arose on a special apparatus of the classes of exploiters for coercing the exploited classes.

In slavery the state defended the slave owners who were only recognized on citizen with full rights. The slaves were not regarded not only citizens but also as human beings. So the state facilitated the slave owners in coercing the slaver.

The age of slavery was followed in history by another feudalism. The fundamental division of society was now into feudal landlords and peasant-serfs: As far as the peasant serf was concerned class oppression and dependence remained but it was not considered that the feudal landlord owned the peasants as chattels but that he was entitled to their labour and to compel them to perform certain services. (Lenin, State 8)

That is why, we can say that the form of exploitation changed but the society still remained divided into the classes of exploiters and exploited. In place of the slave-owners, feudal lords began to exploit. Later within the development of trade, the world market and the money circulation, a new class arose within feudal society-the capitalist class.

The story of a middle class and working class begins with the rise of bourgeoisie capitalism. Generally the working class is defined to be a team of the workers in the commercial work who earn their living by working manually. They have no modern technological instruments to use in their profession. They sell their labour in the market. They have no ownership and management over the economic and social institutions.

Regarding to the leveling of incomes in society, Lopreato and Lewis claim that it is not the skilled workers who are paid higher but the "traditional" middle-class employees only because they are from the middle class background. They write, ". . . the working-class identifiers are the ones who prove to be on the margin, the difference between the subgroup medians being more than one thousand dollars. This puts the "traditional" middle class well ahead of the skilled [Working-class] workers" (Loperato and Lewis 205).

Hence, class exploitation does not end until the classless society is established and it cannot be possible to eliminate the classes completely only by overthrowing the exploiters, the landlords, capitalists and their rights of ownership but it is also necessary to abolish all forms of violence of men as well as the whole system of private ownership of the means of production. Lenin says:

Clearly in order to abolish class completely it is not enough to overthrow the exploiters. The landlords and capitalists, non enough to

abolish their rights of ownership; it is necessary to abolish the distinction between town and country as well as the distinction between manual workers and brain workers. (Great Beginning 13)

Materialist Dialectics

The theory of materialist dialectics holds the view that development arises from the contradictions inside a thing. This internal contradiction exists in every single thing hence its motion and development. The class struggle is the internal contradiction of society which pushes its development forward. Marx and Engels writes:

The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle.

Freemen and Slave, Patrician and Plebian, lord and serf, guidemaster and journeyman, in a word, oppressor and oppressed stood in constant opposition to one another carried on an uninterrupted, now hidden now open fight, a fight that each time ended, either in a revolutionary reconstitution of society at large, or in the common ruin of the contending classes. (Manifesto 32-33)

The structure of materialistic property and distribution of wealth in a community does not get equality. In certain time being, the socio-economic structure meet revolution.

The unequal distribution of opportunities makes a clear area of generating consciousness, in one's psyche, of the other the 'one' is discontent with the 'other'.

There is formed class consciousness and class hostility or clash out of that. This is the foundation of class conflict in a society. Turning to the other corner of exploring foundation of such conflict, it remains quarter-done if the hegemonial concept is kept aside for it is the life of an individual that shapes the mental territory and the mental

shape discharges behaviours. The conflict in a society based on class is the conflict between the dissimilar, thoughts, behaviours and values.

So far the class consciousness is concerned, it accumulated its stuff form status consciousness, structure consciousness and interest consciousness subjective and objective both in nature. It implies that on construction of class ego, only the psychological drive of an individual does much less rather other physical components and factors too are inseparable complements. such consciousness makes a person aware about who he/she is, what is his/her position in the class system and what is his/her relationship to others. This awareness of a person gets firm that beliefs of matching with the certain class cause much to create boundaries so as to distinguish from the other group-status. The desire a person has and the interests one keeps relating to a class are contradictory to that of other classes. The persons affiliating to a certain class have a strong sense and knowledge that they do always find a ground of differentiating the values, institutions, concepts, desires, choices and interests of them from that of the other class.

Society is a mass of individuals where stand necessarily the probability of varying in linguistic, cultural, attitudinal and behavioural manners. A class of people possess a distinct set of cultural values and beliefs, religious concepts, institutional notions, mental and emotional traits. They have a harmony in the formation of subjectivity and consciousness. Where exists a type of ideology regarding ideology Eagleton says, 'Ideology can be explained as those modes of feeling, valuing, perceiving and believing that exist within inform our everyday lives and connect us to wider structure of power in society in ways that contribute to the maintenance and reproduction of social power' (American Cultural studies 9).

When two classes have a contact, such ways of life raise in form of ideological inadequacy. Landing down to the individuals' practical life, when two persons representing two different socio-economic classes find a state of intersection, that type of ideological inadequacy produces conflict at that level. In such conflict there grows nothing but that of a tussel between the contradictory beliefs and manners the class representatives carry on.

In recent years, the development of critical cultural studies has been largely promoted by groups on the margins of power, excluded from the mainstream: women, ethnic, minorities, gays and others. Through their exploration of new critical approaches, the old system of representation and power have been interrogated and resisted. For example, multiculturalism, that is, the belief that a healthy culture is made up of many different people with diverse systems of beliefs and practice, has encouraged the analysis of relationship of domination and oppression, social stereotyping, and focused upon resistance to domination, the need for self-definition and the assertion of differences. Cultural studies goes in order to debate the issues and assumption about identity, gender, class, the family, education, ethnicity, the environment, religion and technology. In so doing, it reveals how power and ideology work to legitimate social inequalities, but it also explores how forms of resistance emerge as part of this complex cultural contest.

Cultural studies seeks to listen to the marginal voices and to the perspective they bring to the debates about power, authority, and meaning. These forces are connected to a term-hegemony. This is a term that helps explain the way that power works within culture that is in itself 'free' and democratic. Hegemony refers to the ways in which a dominant class doesn't merely rule but leads a society through the exertion of moral and intellectual leadership so that a consensus is established in

which all classes appear to support and subscribe to its ideologies and cultural meanings, incorporating them into the existing power structure. Hegemony theory in cultural studies operates not always quite as formulated by Gramsci. The concept has been expanded and elaborated to take into account other areas of struggle. whereas for Gramsci, the concept is used to explain and explore relations of power articulated in terms of class, recent formulations in cultural studies have extended the concept. To include, for example, gender, race, meaning and pleasure.

Thus, we can say that the basic assumptions of cultural studies are Marxists. All its major texts are informed, one way or another, by Marxism; whether or not their authors regard themselves as Marxist, Marxism informs cultural studies in two basic ways. First, to understand the meaning of culture we must analyse it in relation to the social structure and its history. Second, cultural studies assumes that capitalist industrial societies are societies divided unequally. Culture is a terrain on which there takes place a continual struggle over meaning, in which subordinate groups attempt to resist the imposition of meanings which bear the interests of dominant groups.

As more than one socio-economic classes exist in the society that contributes to found varying psycho-structure of the people directly related to their objective world. The ways of life, interests, concepts, perception, interpretations etc. of such individual vary provided they belong to different classes. The clash between the ways of life, perception, interpretation etc. is in other terms class conflict: it is a subjectively objective issue.

In this connection the present study focuses on the conflict between the protagonist, Mary Turner and her house workers. Mary Turner belongs to the middle class whereas her house workers belongs to the working class or lower class. Mary Turner's thoughts never matches with those of her workers. She always dominates and

suppresses them both physical and mentally. Similarly, there is a conflict between Mary Turner and her husband, Dick Turner. The main factor of this conflict is the socio-economic conditions in which they live. The conflict between Mary and Dick is only because of the socio-economic conditions that is Mary represents the modern city life whereas Dick the traditional rural life. Their thought and action vary from each other and make them separate psychologically and physically too.

III. Class conflict in *The Grass is Singing*: A Textual Analysis

Class and Society: The Conflict

The conflict in a society based on class is the conflict between the dissimilar thoughts, behaviors and values. The unequal distribution of opportunities makes a clear area of generating consciousness in one's psyche; on the other the 'one' is discontent with the 'other'. Class hostility or clash is formed out of that class consciousness. This is the foundation of class conflict in a society. As more than one socio-economic classes exist in the society that contributes to form varying psycho-structure of the people directly related to their objective world. The ways of life, interests, concepts, perceptions, interpretations etc, of such individuals vary as they belong to different classes. The clash between the ways of life, perceptions, interests, interpretations etc, is in other terms class conflict: it is a subjectively objective issue.

In this connection it can be claimed that the conflict between the protagonist, Mary Turner, and her workers also generates the class conflict existing in that society. Mary Turner and her workers belong to two different classes. Mary Turner, a white, represents the middle class. She is educated and civilized, and her interests and choices match with that of the higher class.

It had never occurred to her to think for instance, that she, the daughter of a pretty railway official and a woman whose life had been so unhappy because of economic pressure that she had literally pined to death, was living in much the same way as the daughters of the wealthiest in South Africa, could do as she pleased-could Marry, if she wished, anyone she wanted (35).

On the other hand, her house workers, uneducated and rarely exposed to the civilized society, has the psychological traits of working class community. This

conflict between them is not simply that of between the protagonist and her house workers but in general, a conflict between classes: working class and middle class.

Similarly, there is a conflict between Mary Turner and her husband, Dick Turner. The main factor of this conflict is the socio-economic conditions in which they live. The conflict between Mary and Dick is only because of the socio-economic conditions, that is, Mary represents the Modern city life whereas Dick the traditional rural life. Their thought, concept, interest as well as action vary each other. As a result, the marital relation no longer remains harmonious since the clash in the interests leads the family towards disintegration.

Conflict between Mary Turner and Her House Workers

In this novel, the protagonist, Mary Turner belongs to the middle class. Her ways of life, interests, perceptions are different to that of her workers. Samson was the first house worker whom Mary has faced. "She had never come into contact with natives before, as an employer on her own account." (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" (59). There was a perfect understanding between Samson and Dick and Samson hoped for better thing but Mary hates the Africans, whom she identifies with the threatening wilderness. So, in this novel we see Mary dominating and suppressing 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 cunning swine." With the natives she was a virago" (69). When Dick decides to build a store for his native workers and their wives Mary is unrelentingly venomous in her attitudes toward the women.

Samson, her house worker, 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 ungood-humoured 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 doesn't like working for her and left for his kraal.

Mary Turner feels pleasant 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 by 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 scared dog.

The living standard of the upper class people is quite different from that of lower class. If a man or woman from lower class works in the house of upper class, he/she has to confront many difficulties. They even don't know the name of many things and many things they would not have seen before. So is the case with this boy in Mary's house.

"He had never seen forks and knives and plates before, though he had heard legends of these extra ordinary objects from friends returning from service in the white men's house. He did not know what to do with them, and she expected him to know the difference between a pudding plate and a dinner plate she stood over him while he laid the

table; and all the afternoon she kept him at it, explaining, exhorting and spurring him on" (67).

Once a night, at supper, he lays the table badly, and she flows at him, in a frenzy of annoyance.

Hierarchally, the upper class is superior to the working class since the psychology of the individuals of the upper class is some how self-dependent. On the other hand the working class people seem to be more or less dependent on the upper class men in the society or elsewhere. They have a prior consciousness that they belong to the lower status, values and conditions because they are the manual workers. The middle class has a higher rank economically in community and never want to lose that standard. Mary Turner, in this novel, too, does the same. She says, "I won't let go my standards. I won't why should I? It is bad enough..."(68) in response to Dick's suggestion to her that you must go easy with the boy. The next day at lunch, the servant drops a plate through nervousness, and she dismisses him at once.

She never gets satisfaction by her workers as their interests and concepts never match. She hates her next boy too, who had had years of experience working for white women and she treats him as if he is 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 and dishonest nature. She doesn't know it is part of the native code of politeness not to look a superior in the face. Mary is so cruel to the natives. She never thinks of natives as people who have to eat or sleep and what their lives are when they are out of her sight. Once she assigns the boy to scrub the bath for many hours.

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. She has forgotten about his food. He has started to scrub from eleven in the morning and at half-past three "he said that he was going to his hut for some food, and would go on with the bath when he came back" (74).

Dick, the husband of Mary, observes the way her wife does. He wants to convert his wife to his line. He is furious with Mary for her lack of consideration and tact. By becoming irritation with Mary's behavior and attitude towards her house workers, no one wants to work in her house. This very boy also wants to leave. "He could not work like that; his child in his kraal was ill; he wanted to go at once" (78). Mary immediately loses her temper when she hears the boy's utterance and knows that Dick is alien and hostile to her; her irritation finds a permissible outlet in this exasperating native. "She went straight into the kitchen, gave the boy the money he has owned, counting out the shillings as if she grudged them, and dismissed him" (79).

After some days, when Dick becomes ill, she has to face the farm native herself. She behaves with them in the same way as with the house workers. The natives knew of Dick's illness, and were not there in the farm, having dispersed, days before, to the compound. She goes to the native to call them for the work and knows the real situation of the native. Here; we are informed the condition of the natives;

The huts were closely clustered over an acre or two of ground. They looked like natural growths from the ground. They were grass roofed, with pole walls plastered with Mud and Single low doors, but no windows Flies were everywhere. They hummed round Mary's head

in a cloud as she walked, and they were clustered round the eyes of the dozen small black children who were pot - bellied and mostly naked, staring at her as she her way through the vines Native women, draped in dirty store - stuff, and some naked above the waist with their slack black breasts hanging down, gazed at her from doorways. (109-110)

She sits in the car waiting for the natives. At the end of an hour, though she gives the time of ten minutes, not more than half of the laborers were present. She calls the head boy to her, and takes down the names of those who are absent. The thoughts and interests of Mary do not match with the natives because of the two different classes. While working in the land, the natives hardly talk with each other. Mary thinks that they are resisting her through silence. "There was hardly any talking among them. They worked reluctantly, in a sullen silence; and she knew it was because they resented her, a woman, supervising them." (111). It is difficult, for Mary, to sit in the car with the heat filtering through the roof, but what about the natives who are working in the farm. When one of the men pauses for a moment in his work to rest, or to wipe the running sweat from his eyes, she waits one minute by her watch and then calls sharply to him to begin again. "... It seemed to her an insolence directed against her authority over them when they stopped, without permission, to straighten their backs and wipe off the sweat" (112).

Being quite fed up with her behavior and interests, as they are not paid their wages properly, one after another speak to the bossboy who is the head of the workers, saying they want to leave. There is a sullen murmuring amongst the natives; and as there is a small storm of protest brewing, the boss boy moves to the low wall

and begins arguing with them in his own language. She hates when she knows they are discussing her and making what are probably obscene remarks against her.

The well to do class people have more opportunity to join to another work but difficult for the people from lower classes. The upper class people feel the universe, know the abroad and concern the higher since they can meet lots of materialistic facilities but for the native the compound is the universe, know the huts and nothing else. All these materialistic facilities nourish the psychology of the upper class people so as to bear a wider sense of the world, have a more comfortable life, speak a more advance language to show their superiority etc. That is why, the religious norms and values, the cultural do's and don't, social belief, institutions; in general the psychological structure of one class is different from that of the other class.

Conflict between Turners

Dick Turner, the husband and Mary Turner, the spouse are from the same class, but there is a conflict between them due to the socio-economic condition in which they live. Mary represents the modern city life whereas Dick the traditional rural life. Before getting married she used to work in a girls club. "She chose to live in a girl's club, which had been started really, to help women who could not earn much money. . ." (37). She worked there for many years. So she was a person of some importance outside the girl's club and the office. She used to like the crowds of girls, and eating in a big dining room, and coming home after the pictures to find a friend in 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 the club, which was as pleasant and as gregarious as being in a giant twittering aviary . . ." (39-40) Mary's concept regarding the profession is entirely narrowed to the club. For her that's the only easy discipline for earning life. She doesn't like the life after her

marriage. She objects with extreme strength being disappointed and depressed by the ugly and primitive farmhouse that seems to hold back so temporarily the threatening bush. She leaves Dick when he was not in the house. "When Dick had gone off to the lands, 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).

On the other hand, Dick Turner is from the traditional rural life. He grew up on the very land where he works. He loved his land very much. He unlike Mary likes the rural life and hates the city life. He rarely goes to the town, except when he has to buy goods he could not get at his local store, and that happens perhaps once or twice a week.

Dick Turner disliked the town [. . .], he felt ill at ease and uncomfortable and murderous He suffered from claustrophobia. He wanted to run away-either to run away or to smash the place up. So he always escaped as soon as possible back to his farm, where he felt at home. (45)

Unfortunately, he happens to marry a lady from the very town which he hates. The life style of the different style of the urban 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 courtship 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 with him.

The novelist illustrates that the husband and wife deviate in their interests, desires, concepts, practice and else. 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 herself to be more civilized, modernized and social; because 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 can't be 'one' with that or Dick Turner after her marriage. The ways of everyday life can't be matched between husband and wife." At the weekends, when she worked in town, She had often gone out for picnics with crowds of young people, to sit all day on hot rocks in the shade, listening to a portable gramophone playing dance music from America . . ." (51)

The materialistic facilities which Mary long for and that facility which she has got in town is not there in Dick's house. The life style of the two figures differs well because of their different materialistic being in their lives. When she reaches at Dick's house she hears innumerable noises from the 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 every thing seems to be a strange thing. She gets a strong musty, almost animal like smell and makes her sick. She sits down, bewildered by the strangeness of it all. When Dick notices the signs of disappointment she forces herself to smile. She feels "weak with foreboding in the tiny stuffy room, the bare brick floor, the greatly lamp" (53) and this is not what she had imagined. On

the one 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 he feels uneasy. As a result, their marital life can not prosper since their thoughts never match.

The social behaviours 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"(58). She has been forbidden to talk to her mother's servants and now she has to face them. But 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 native, he knows how to deal with them, how to behave them and how to make them work. But, Mary Turner is from town and never faced them and never worked with them before. She doesn't treat the workers properly. As a result, they leave the work in her house. Her behaviour and thought makes Dick seem really 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 any thing personal about a native.

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 there?' she asked snappily, disliking him. (65)

Mary Turner thinks herself superior than Dick Turner. She wants Dick 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 can't do all such things forever. He thinks that Mary is his wife and she should do what he tells her. Once they quarreled 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 then you go and throw it away. Why don't you fill the bath with water and get into it, instead of wasting it and throwing it away each time?" (71) Mary never wants to be submissive to her husband in particular and to the males in general. She accepts Dick because his worship restores her feeling of superiority to men, which is really at bottom, what she has been living all these years.

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, certain outlets for her energy and intelligence present themselves. 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, the man to whom she is irrevocably married, as a person on his own account a success from his own efforts, when she saw him weak and goalless, she hated him.

The objectivity of an individual has a great deal to do with the subjectivity as Dick and Mary, the dominant personalities in the novel has perceived the objective being in their behaviour because of the growth in different families having distinct structures of property, possession and relations their natures of perceptions have different dimensions. The truth they create pertaining to the material being in one's life has almost no over-lapping point since their objective lives have fully influenced the subjective lives. For Dick, life is to meet the basic requirements in normal sense but for Mary it is to be more concerned with society for social prestige too. She wants everything to be clean and tidy. But she doesn't find such environment in Dick's house. Once, she goes into the bathroom and stares down at the bath which seems dirty because it was made up of zinc. "The arrangements for the bath were unbelievable, she cried, tearing herself to pieces with her own anger" (72). She calls the boy and tells him to scrub the bath until it is clean. She makes him scrub the whole day without giving anything to eat. In response to Dick's argument that a zinc bath goes like that, it's not dirt but changes colour, she said "I will never get into that

bath again until it is really clean. How can you allow your things to be so filthy I can not understand" (73). The ego of introducing her prestigious stance in her society gives off fuel to have that type of thought. She looks through Dick's things for darning and mending but he wears nothing but shirts and shorts. Dick goes to the farm in the morning and comes home in the evening. He doesn't pay much attention to the household matter but to the farm only. He is fully obsessed with the farm and the natives. That is why, he knows how to behave with the natives but doesn't know how to behave with the guests. She wants to put ceilings on the house because it is too hot. "The sweat poured off her all day; she could feel it running down her ribs and thighs under her dress, as if ants were crawling over her" (66). But he doesn't care much about this and goes on to tell to Mary about how to behave with the workers. Once a native wants to leave because of the behaviour of Mary, at that moment Dick says to the native that the new missus doesn't know much about running a house yet and she will learn that. He was furious with Mary for her lack of consideration and tact. But Mary is quite stupefied with rage and thinks how he dares to take the natives part against her.

'How dare you!', She said, her voice stifled.

If you must do these things, then you must take the consequences', said Dick wearily. 'He's a human being, isn't he? He's got to eat. Why must that bath be done all at once? It can be done over several days, if it means all that to you?

'It's my house', said Mary. 'He's my boy, not yours. Don't interfere'.

'Listen to me'. said Dick curtly. 'I work hard enough, don't I? All day I am down on the lands with these lazy black savages, fighting them to get some work out of them . . . (78).

When Dick told to Mary not to expect too much then she said, wanting to hurt him. "You expect me to live like a poor white in this pokey little place of yours. You expect me to cook myself everyday because you won't put in ceilings . . ." (79). He wants her to live like other farmers wife and says "And there are farmers' wives all over the country living no better, and not making such a fuss . . . I have lived in this house for six years and it hasn't hurt me" (79). She is tense with hatred. She thinks only a few months ago she had been living her own life in town, surrounded by friends who loved her and needed her. She begins to cry, weakening into self-pity. The tension between them lasts for an intolerable week for the sake of their life 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 thinks that there is nothing to prevent her running away and going back to her old life. The class perceptivity enhances them to develop class solidarity. Dick likes to be close with that type of people in the society who have similar interests and choices and to such people who have earned a lot of money from farm.

". . . he was absorbed in conversation with Charlie, discussing crops, prices, and - above all - native labour. Whenever 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 ideas, interests and other subjective matters do not harmonize because of the consciousness of their class belongingness that creates the conflict and the circumstance of hating each other. Class awareness gets bolder in Mary and both pays much awareness towards the activities of the other. Dick is also conscious of his socio-economic being. The feeling and consent of being located at the lower social

rank shrinks him. The psychological impact in Dick Turner of his low hierarchy in the society and his poorer economic life have a direct link with the low standard of his life. "The soil, the black labourers, always so close to their lives but also so cut off, Dick in his farm clothes with his hands stained with oil - these things did not belong to her . . . " (97). So time and again, the memory of her old life haunts her and persuade herself to go back into town for that lovely peaceful life, the life she is made for, to begin again, "And when Dick had gone off to the lands, she dressed, packed a suitcase and left a note for him . . . saying merely that she was going back to her old job" (98).

Likewise, we can find the conflict between Turners and Slatters. The socio-economic being and the circumstances differ from persons to persons 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 then Turners. Slatters' stance in society is higher than Turners. They has a "large house, three sons at university, and a comfortable life" (75). When Mrs. Slatter come to her home, she looks keenly round the room pricing every cushion, noticing the new white wash and the curtains. When the visit comes to an end Dick feels regret because he wants to talk more about the farm but it gives relief to Mary. She doesn't want to talk anything which has any relation to money because they are poor than the Slatters and Mary feels humiliation. Slatter is a powerful enough figure in the district that he is able to replace his own version of events with that of the gossips. The more one becomes rich the more he/she wants to possess more in every society. When Charlie enters the Turner's house he is shocked by Mary's dolled up, ravaged appearance, for she is desperately thin, with sun

bleached and dried out hair. Mary want to live a high standard life which becomes difficult for her in Dick's house. Charlie Slatter visits Dick Turner on the lands and spends three hours to persuade him to plant tobacco instead of mealies and little crops. It is the harmful farming 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 and irritates his wife.

"I'll get out of the mess my own way,' said Dick obstinately

'You are a fool', said Charlie. 'A fool !. Don't say I didn't tell you. Don't come to me for loans when your wife's belly begins to swell and you need cash.

'I have never asked you for anything', Dick replied." (81)

A harmonious community is that which yields homogenous current of the life practices of the community members. The conflict in this novel begins from the difference in their socio-economic condition along with the clash in thought and ideas. The class is determined by the socio-economic condition. Since the class or living standard changes their thoughts and ideas too changes accordingly. The consciousness of different socio-economic condition creates the widening gap between every individual in this novel.

Ideology and Class Consciousness

Ideology is a thought and conception of a society, of a class or of an individual. The ideology that is dominant any era conceived to be ultimately, is the products of its economic structure and as the result of class relations and class interest. Marx represented ideology as a 'superstructure' of which the contemporary socio-economic system is the base. So *The Grass is Singing* is one of the works of

fiction which acknowledges that basic truth of Marxian analysis that life is not determined by the consciousness but consciousness by life. And as a consequence of the acknowledgement we have thrust upon us the bitter details of Mary's childhood and adolescence -the hot, barren country side, the irresponsibility of her economically defeated father, her enlistment as bewildered confidante by her profoundly disappointed mother. Althusser remarks that ideology is bound up with the constitution of the subject that man is an ideological animal by nature-meaning that people constitute or define themselves as human through ideology. In this novel, the protagonist, Mary's subjectivity, is constituted by her past or childhood life. "She had inherited from her mother an arid feminism" (35). The stunted vision of Mary Turner is clearly shown to be determined by the politics of the family and the mores of the colonial society.

In this novel, the writer has presented Mary as "the daughter of a pretty railway official and a woman whose life had been so unhappy because of economic pressure" (35). They never quarrel over anything but money. When Mary reaches at Dicks's house after they both marry, she sees there was no door between this room and the next, but a heavy curtain of sacking hung there and she begins to feel that it is not in this house she is sitting, with her husband, but back with her mother, watching her endlessly contrive and patch and mend. Later, Dick introduces Mary to a old house worker in a pleasant way but Mary is rather outraged at this "stock market attitude" (57) because she has a negative attitude towards the native. She has never come into contact with natives before and her mother's servants she has been forbidden to talk to. Her perception towards the natives is different from that of the Dick because in her childhood she has been forbidden to walk out alone and when she has asked why she has been told in the furtive, lowered, but matter of fact voice that they were nasty and

may do horrible things to her. But, Dick has the different thoughts about the natives because he has been with them for many years and knows everything about them and behaves accordingly. Dick swore at them but laughs with them afterwards but Mary never laughs. She hates natives very much. That is why, every individual's subjectivity is created out of the objectivity, that is, the ideology or the superstructure of a person is shaped or maintained by their base.

Class consciousness is not any natural matter but culture produced in the specific society itself. In recent mode of thought the social classes are no more supposed to be inherited from the past. Concrete departure dwells at present from the natural distinction of the classes; certain class was marked in the sense of representing the wealth acquisition through market place, to a cultural one. The new sense of social classes and structures agreed with the mutability of an individuals class affiliation. Here, Mary Turner's life is not so good in her childhood. Her parents usually fight for the money but later at sixteen she leaves school and takes a job in an office in town. Now her life is changed she is living "in much the same way as the daughters of the wealthiest in south Africa could do as she pleased -could marry if she wished, any one she wanted" (35). Over a width of time those people who had their involvement into a particular category of profession can have mobility into the other. The people who fall into a category are similar to each other in social and economic characteristics so as to identify a class provided the mobility of occupation, the class, status and their consciousness changes since the attitudes, the behaviours, the interests find a sort of variation along with the chance of variation in class membership.

In this novel, Mary is more civilized and her interests and choices match with that of the higher class. As a result, the marital relation no longer remains harmonious since the clash in the interests leads the family towards disintegration.

Class consciousness holds control over the activities of an individual or a group. A creature can be imagined, amid a thorny bush close, it has enough knowledge of existence of the hereabout, the possible risks and dangers as well, it produces a level of thoughts and notions at the moment because of the situation consciousness. The situational consciousness guides the way it moves right and left or to and fro. Parallel to that an individual or a group bears consciousness amid the social classes, that form a shape of their thought and the activities of the concerned ones are highly directed by the existing consciousness residing in the inside. The action of the whole class is based on the economic status: the wealth and property they possess, earning they make, and their social being in crisis-cross. Here, Mary Turner was the personal secretary of her employer before her marriage, "and was earning good money. If she wanted, she could have taken a flat and lived the smart sort of life" (36). So her interests and thought are of the higher class which are not fulfilled in Dick's house because he do have no sufficient money to meet her choices. He is obsessed with the land that he has bought, but despite his best efforts, he struggles to make a go of it. His relationship with his wife is difficult; he finds it hard to understand her conduct and doesn't always appreciate the position that his wife is in.

The conscious state of the people based on a certain economic criteria remaining distinct from the others is class consciousness. They introduce the economic position, source of earning, structure of wealth and property of the self and other. In this novel Mr. Slatter and Mrs. Slatter come to visit Dick's house. Slatter's has a large house, there son's at university, and a comfortable life. It shows that they belongs to the upper class and they do have such consciousness that they are the people of upper class. She has heard that Mary is a town girl and feels "Sorry for Mary who had married a good-for-nothing like Dick" (75). Before her marriage, Mrs.

Slatter too was poor, so she remembers well the sufferings and humiliations of poverty. Similarly, Mary is feeling humiliation before them and not accepting her sympathy and her help. The belief that the class affiliation of a person has much to do with the way he does. The desire a person has and the interests one keeps relating to a class are contradictory to that of the other classes. The persons affiliating to a certain class have a strong sense and knowledge that they do always find a ground of differentiating the values institution, concepts, desires, choices and interests of them from that of the other class. Class consciousness holds control over the activities of an individual or a group.

As the economic background of the Turners themselves and with the Slatters have no corner matching, the ways of their lives and all other physical do and donts deviate in their life. The material being, to which they belong to, shapes the thoughts, consciousness, interests, behaviours and so many other fragments in their lives. All these fragments appear to be trivial ones to each other that harm their psychological identity. Even the trivial factors arouse a sort of clash in their behaviours. Exploring the background of that clash, is their affiliation to the different socio-economic classes.

IV. Conclusion: Society, Class and Conflict

In our society we don't find all the people having the same life style, same status, same economic level since the structure of materialistic property and distribution of wealth in a community does not get equality. So every society is a platform where exist a variety of socio-economic classes. It is the social, economic and subjective factors that determine a certain class in society; it is range of income, nature of occupation, governing or governed, social conditions and values that locate the upper class has a higher rank economically in community. Hierarchally, this class is superior to the lower class since the psycho being of the individuals of this class is somehow self-dependent. On the other hand, the lower or working class people seem to be more or less dependent on the upper class men in the society or elsewhere. So it is clear that the members from different social classes can not have a conflict less life as long as they have to live together because the interests, choices, concepts, practices, behaviours, manners and so many other phenomena do not match.

Lessing's novel, *The Grass is Singing* can be examined from the perspective of existing two different classes: the working class and the middle class along with the conflict between two different socio-economic condition. The novel deals with the problem of dialectical relationship between the farmers and the workers, mainly Mary Turner, a representative of middle class and her workers. Mary Turner dominates and oppresses them both physically and mentally. She has no sympathy towards them. She assigns them to work the whole day will nothing to eat. She doesn't even pay the wages properly. She never thinks of natives as people who has to eat or sleep: they are either there, or they are not, and what their lives are when they are out of her sight she never thinks, she thinks if she behave easily with them then her standard will go down, sometimes she even whips them feeling pleased with herself because of her

victory over them. The workers doesn't like her behaviour with them and leaves her. There is always conflict between Mary and her workers since their thoughts and ideas never match because they belong to two different classes.

Similarly, the novel deals with the conflict between two people, representing two different socio-economic condition. Mary Turner represents the modern city life where as Dick Turner the traditional rural life. These two parties, since they are husband and wife, have to live together under the same roof but they indulge in the war of ideas and behaviours because their ideology have no harmony. Dick Turner lives a simple life who pays much heed to his farming. So he has much less time to be concerned with the desires and choices of her wife. The thoughts, ideas, choices, perceptions never match with each other for he is in contact with the personalities of the working class, his psychological world has been crucially influenced by the working class life. How he thinks and how he explains are the issues to be interpreted on the basis of his life outside because the consciousness of a being is guided by the materialistic or physical life in other terms, the subjective sector of human life is directed by the objective domain and vice-versa. Dick's consciousness is found to be guided by his lower standard rural-world. On the other hand, Mary Turner is from town. She is sent to boarding school and later she takes a job in an office in town. She was very happy before her marriage. Once she became the personal secretary of her employer, and was earning good money. If she had wanted she could have taken a flat and lived the smart sort of life. This type of socio-economic being has deep influence upon the nature of Mary's consciousness.

A survey of the socio-economic structure of these two characters is made who belong to two different life style having a considerable gap in their pre-married life style and materialistic facilities. Similarly, the conflict between Turners and Slatters is

due to the socio-economic condition. Slatters are rich than Turners. Mary Turner feels humiliation when Slatters come to their home because she thinks that the status in which Dick is living is not only of Dick's but of Mary as well since she is her wife. The conflict between husband and wife remains till she leaves Dick. That is the extremity of conflict in the family.

The conflict in this novel has its foundation of distinct classes. The tension shown in the novel seems to be 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 interests, choices, values, institutions, behaviours 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.

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