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Doç. Dr. Rıfat IŞIK

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İÇİNDEKİLER

BÖLÜM 1

THE ESSEX SERPENT BY SARAH PERRY: A REFLECTION OF THE SINCERITY MOVEMENT AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF ROMANTICISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

BÖLÜM 2

REPRESENTING THE TRAGEDY OF SYRIA IN ENGLISH LITERATURE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BEEKEEPER OF ALEPPO BY CHRISTY LEFTERI

BÖLÜM 3

RULING BODIES, RUINED LIVES: COLONIALISM AND PATRIARCHAL CONTROL IN THE GRASS IS SINGING

CHAPTER 1

THE ESSEX SERPENT BY SARAH PERRY: A REFLECTION OF THE SINCERITY MOVEMENT AS AN IMPORTANT PART OF ROMANTICISM IN ENGLISH LITERATURE
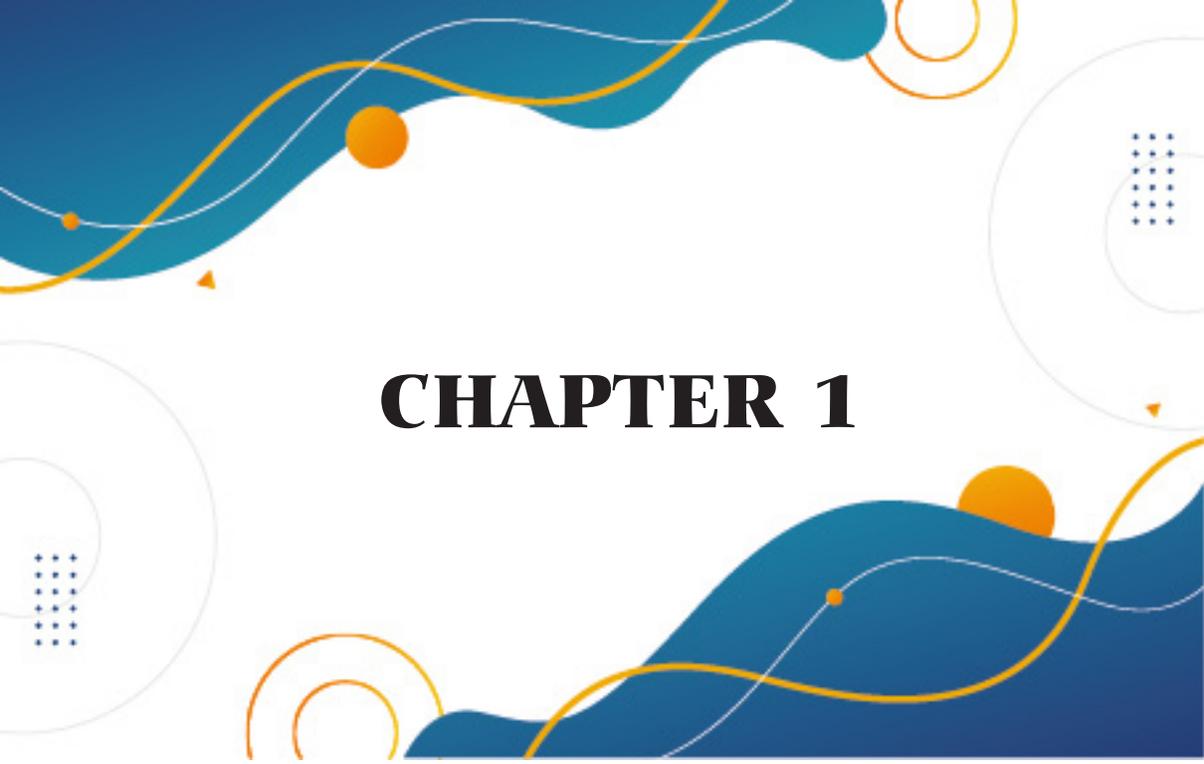
Duygu KORONCU ÖZBİLEN[1][2]

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1   Yıldız Technical University, School of Foreign Languages, Department of Basic English, Istanbul-Turkey

2   Corresponding Author: dozbilen@yildiz.edu.tr

This chapter looks at how the sincerity movement in English literature has changed over time, starting from Romanticism, moving through Modernism, and continuing to today's works. It pays special attention to Sarah Perry's book, *The Essex Serpent* (2016). Romanticism began in the late 1700s and focused on personal feelings, individual experiences, and a strong love for nature. It often reacted against the logical thinking of the Enlightenment. This movement focused on being honest with emotions and expressing oneself, paving the way for later writing that explores truthfulness. In the novel, Perry creates characters who are genuine and curious, pushing against the traditional views of the Victorian age. Cora Seaborne, the main character, challenges standard gender roles by loving natural history and not following typical expectations for women. Her relationship with Reverend William Ransome shows a genuine bond that goes beyond social expectations. It highlights the conflict between faith and reason, as well as science and superstition. This study shows how Perry's story connects Romanticism and Modernism, highlighting that truth is an important way to understand literature. Romanticism emphasizes personal feelings and being genuine, which connects with Modernist literature's focus on personal experiences and the complicated nature of truth. Perry's book explores these themes by showing characters who honestly express their wants and beliefs, giving a deeper view of human experiences. This analysis highlights the ongoing importance of honesty in writing to understand and express human experiences. This study looks at how emotional honesty, deep thinking, and society's expectations interact in The Essex Serpent. It shows how today's literature deals with themes from Romantic ideas, updated through Modernist views, and made relevant for current readers.

Keywords: English literature, sincerity, romanticism, modernism, literary authenticity

Introduction

The sincerity movement in English literature is a novel approach implemented in the realm of emotional expression where raw emotion, honesty, and experience take center stage. Sincerity began during the Romantic period and was at the forefront of writers like William Wordsworth and Lord Byron, aiming to diminish the ugliness brought about by transformation and industrial supremacy. Romanticism in literature was embedded in the "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings" in the heart, guiding its practitioners straight to the human core through a narrative or a poem. Such ideals shaped new literary paradigms and set the foundations for a

new critical discourse regarding narrative voice and emotional authenticity understood as sincerity.

This article traces the development of sincerity, particularly, on its illustration in *The Essex Serpent* by Sarah Perry (2016). There is the historical context which serves as a bridge in Perry's novel that emphasizes the roots of the movement on sincerity and its current iteration and shows how the themes such as emotional truth, individuality, and the struggle between faith and reason infuse the book. The plot revolves around Cora Seaborne, a widow breaking the traditions of the Victorian era, along with Will Ransome, a vicar losing faith while investigating the world of science. Their combined efforts demonstrate the importance of sincerity in all the connections that the characters are trying to satisfy, whether internal or external.

The emotional struggles faced by Perry's players mark them with a romantic protagonist trademark, unaffected by bending to the status quo. Cora's effort to escape from her stifling marriage encapsulates the feminist concept of self-determination and honesty. Her interest in paleontology, a male-dominated field, seems to be in a quest for freedom, which was the purpose of the sincerity movement set out to challenge the existing standards in society. Likewise, the tension that Will experiences regarding the clash between faith and science is indicative of a more complex aspect of the movement: it is a general human condition, where sincerity is not merely a feeling, but a matter of existence.

The novel is located in the context of Modernist tendencies, especially the fragmentation which is one of the hallmarks of 20th early literature. Perry takes the story further by attempting to examine the nature of social phenomena through the eyes of her characters who hold different social paradigms. This dynamic, or Cora and Will's transactive relationship which is between emotional sincerity and theoretical reason, helps to understand the images in a better perspective.

Perry, in this case, broadens her participation in the Sincerity movement by negating faith vs reason, nature vs civilization, and individual vs society. The Sincerity movement reflects a two-dimensional conversation between the exterior and the interior by attaching human efforts to make sense of the unexplainable while also being met with the unknown. *The Essex Serpent* encapsulates both fear and interest which embodies this duality. The vivid portrayal of the novel marshes places Perry's story where all the characters experience intense emotional and intellectual restlessness that corresponds with Romanticism's connection of nature as a means of finding oneself.

Cora's acknowledgment that she is in a "state of disgrace" - seems a rather painful admission at this point in her life (Perry, 2016, p.134). The

same is true of the author's example of Will recalling miracles. *"So man's faith in science? So Science is a religion?* (p. 183) These reflections contain a central truth about sincerity. The quote illustrates the relevance of Perry's work to the Romantic and Modernist movements and at the same time its independent place relative to other currents of contemporary prose.

Through an examination of Perry's novel and combining it with the significant pieces of literature from Romanticism and Modernism, the article shows that the concept of sincerity continues to be upheld as a literary order standard. In the novel, these elements are combined to form a story that seeks to illuminate the significance of sincerity in addressing human complexity.

The Movement of Romanticisim

Romanticism in English literature emerged as a significant artistic and intellectual movement during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It emerged as an answer to the Enlightenment, which emphasized reason and logic, as well as the Industrial Revolution, which brought rapid changes and mechanization to society. This new era led writers and artists to explore feelings, nature, and me in ways that were often neglected in previous periods. As Wu (2012) points out, romanticism celebrates emotional expression as a central theme, encouraging individuals to connect deeply with their feelings and experiences. Contrary to the focus of the Enlightenment on rational thinking, romantic writers believed that emotions were essential to understanding humanity and the world. This emphasis on emotion created a powerful contrast with the pragmatic views of the time, allowing a richer exploitation of the human condition.

Another important aspect of romanticism was its profound appreciation for nature. Romantic poets and novelists usually describe nature not only as a scenario but as a vital force that influences human emotions and experiences. Nature has been seen as a source of spiritual inspiration and renewal, providing comfort in a quickly urbanizing world. Writers like William Wordsworth have given great importance to the beauty and power of the natural landscape. This relationship between humanity and nature was central to the romantic vision, reflecting the desire to reconnect with the natural world, which was increasingly overshadowed by urban development and industrial progress.

Individualism also played a fundamental role in the Romantic movement, when writers began to celebrate the unique perspectives and experiences of the individual. This focus on the self-included an exploration of personal feelings and the internal functioning of the mind. Authors such as Samuel Taylor Coleridge and Lord Byron investigated the complexities of

human identity and the struggles of the individual against the expectations of society. The romantic hero used to incorporate a sense of isolation and challenge, seeking authenticity in a rapidly changing world. Through their work, these authors highlighted the importance of personal experience and individual thinking, fundamentally changing the scenario of literature and arts.

By emphasizing emotional expression, the power of nature, and the importance of individualism, romanticism has thrown the foundations for new ways of thinking and writing. His legacy can be seen in the works of later authors who continued to explore these themes, making romanticism a crucial movement in English literature that left a lasting impact on understanding human experience., Emotional expression is a change in romantic literature, marking a significant change in rational thinking that characterized previous periods. Romantic writers have focused on personal feelings and experiences, often valuing the emotion of logic. This movement was largely a reaction against the Enlightenment, which emphasized reason and scientific thinking. Instead, romanticism celebrates the internal feelings of individuals, showing how emotions shape human experiences.

William Wordsworth, one of the main figures of the Romantic movement, emphasized the importance of emotion in his poetry. He believed that nature could evoke deep feelings and insights. In his preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, a collection he was co-author of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Wordsworth said poetry should be a "spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings." This idea reflects the romantic notion that poetry must come from profound emotional experiences rather than just intellect. Wordsworth's poem *I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud* exemplifies this focus on emotional expression (Robinson, 2010). The poem captures the joy and beauty felt when finding a field of narcissus. The visible personal emotion in Wordsworth's work deeply connects to readers, showing how powerful feelings can transcend time and resonate with others.

Samuel Taylor Coleridge (2011) also played a crucial role in highlighting the emotional expression in romantic literature. His works usually mix the supernatural with intense emotional states. In *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge uses vivid images and emotional depth to explore topics of guilt, remorse, and redemption. The sailor's deep emotional struggle shows how powerful feelings can lead to deep transformations. In the poem, Coleridge suggests that genuine emotions and love are essential to a significant life. He tries to connect feelings with moral and spiritual dimensions.

Richardson (1994) notes that the romantic era marked a transition in which emotional expression became crucial to understanding human ex-

periences. He argues that the main romantic authors sought to reveal the inner functioning of the human heart, challenging readers to connect with their emotions. This emphasis on feelings allowed writers to exploit complex themes of identity and existence, making their work resonate with a sense of authenticity. In addition to Wordsworth and Coleridge, poets like John Keats further exemplify the romantic emphasis on emotion. In their odes, Keats (2009) explores beauty and desire, reflecting on the transient nature of life. The use of sensory details of Keats immerses readers in their emotional landscape, illustrating how romantic poets adopted the depth of feeling associated with beauty.

In general, emotional expression in romantic literature is a crucial turning point. In assessing feelings, romantic writers such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Keats have opened new ways to understand human experience. His works emphasize that embracing emotion is essential for personal and artistic fulfillment. Through their poetry, they invite readers to experience the power of feelings, encouraging a deeper connection between the self, nature, and the world around them., In romantic literature, nature plays a crucial role as inspiration and a reflection of human emotion. Many romantic poets, such as John Keats and Percy Bysshe Shelley, express their deep connection with nature in their works. This link between nature and feelings is essential to understanding the romantic movement since it highlights how the natural world influences human experiences.

John Keats (2009) is known for his vivid images and rich descriptions of nature. In poems such as *Ode to a Nightingale* and *Autumn*, Keats explores the beauty and transience of the natural world. His writing often captures the moments in which nature reflects his emotional state. For example, in *Ode to a Nightingale*, Keats uses the night song to express his desire for transcendence and escape the pain of life. It contrasts the eternal quality of bird music with its fleeting existence, showing how nature evokes feelings of joy, melancholy, and a desire for permanence.

Similarly, Percy Bysshe Shelley (2005) also emphasizes the importance of nature in his works. In poems such as *Ode to the West Wind* and *A Skylark*, Shelley finds inspiration in natural elements, often representing them as powerful forces that can cause emotional responses. In *Ode to the West Wind*, Shelley addresses the wind directly, looking for his help to spread his ideas and passions. The wind, which represents the unstoppable energy of nature, becomes a metaphor for the poet's wishes for change and revolution. The use of Shelley's nature in this way highlights how both a source of empowerment and a mirror for human emotion can be.

Burwick (2015) analyzes the importance of nature in romantic literature, arguing that it acts as a means through which emotions are expressed

and explored. The deep emotional connections that Keats and Shelley experience with nature are emblematic of this idea. Through his poetry, the natural world becomes a place of comfort, inspiration, and introspection. Romantic poets perceive nature as more than a backdrop; They intertwine with their identities and feelings.

In addition, the issue of nature as a reflection of individual emotion is a recurring concept in romantic literature. Nature is often portrayed as a living entity that responds to human experiences, improving the emotional landscape of poems. This idea can also be seen in William Wordsworth's works. In his poem *I Wandered Only as a Cloud*, Wordsworth represents the image of the narcissus dancing in the breeze. This scene not only captures the beauty of flowers but also reflects the inner joy of the poet and the relief that he finds in nature, showing how interactions with the natural world can raise human spirits.

In general, the examination of the role of nature in romantic literature reveals its profound influence on emotional expression. Authors such as Keats, Shelley, and Wordsworth demonstrate that nature serves not only as a source of beauty but also as a mirror that reflects the complexities of human feelings. This narrow link between nature and emotion is a defining characteristic of the romantic movement, which illustrates how deeply intertwined these elements are to shape the literature of the time., Nature plays an important role in romantic poetry, often serving as a source of comfort and a way to escape the tumultuous changes caused by industrialization. A key poet who embodies this theme is William Blake. In his works, Blake frequently illustrates the beauty and tranquility of the natural world, contrasting with the harsh realities of urban life. His poem "Auguries of Innocence", for example, presents nature as a pure and preserved kingdom that can provide comfort to those who are looking for it. This idea reflects the conclusions of Kelly (2016), which explains how romantic writers often portray nature as a healing force at a time when industrialization disrupted traditional lifestyles.

In *Songs of Innocence*, Blake highlights the innocence found in nature, where children play freely in the middle of flowers and animals. This representation of the carefree interaction with the natural world contrasts strongly with factory smoke and the noise of the growing cities of the time. Kelly (2016) underlines that for Blake, nature is not only a backdrop for human experience; It is an integral part of identity and emotional expression. Blake's work often completes his poetry, transmitting more the idea that nature is a sanctuary. His illustrations represent idyllic landscapes that invite the spectator to find peace and balance, suggesting that nature can offer a retreat from modern life.

In addition, in works like *London*, Blake criticizes the negative impact of industrial progress on humanity and the environment. He portrays the city as a place of suffering and desolation, where the souls of its inhabitants are tainted by the oppressive forces of industry. This tension between the purity of nature and the corruption of urban environments is a recurring theme of Blake's poetry. By wishing a return to a more harmonious existence in nature, Blake encourages readers to take refuge in the natural world.

Kelly (2016) maintains that Blake's approach reflects a broader romantic ideal that raises nature as a means of obtaining transcendence. Blake thought that through introspection and communion with nature, individuals could draw from deeper spiritual truths and heal their emotional wounds. Nature offers not only exhaust but also a way to find its real self. Its poetic accent on natural imaging, such as trees, flowers, and rivers, is used to strengthen the idea that the natural world is a place of tranquility and inspiration.

In short, Blake's poetry lives in a living way of the restorative power of nature, illustrating why it is a central theme of romantic literature. Peace and beauty found in nature strongly contrast with the industrial scenes of its time, stressing the importance of seeking comfort in the natural world. The desire to reconnect with nature as a source of emotional refuge and spiritual illumination is a feeling that resonates deeply throughout romantic poetry, making Blake a significant figure in this exploration of the relationship between humanity and the natural environment., Romanticism in English literature is known for its strong focus on individualism. This idea is important because romantic writers believed in the unique experiences and feelings of individuals. They sought to understand what human beings mean, focusing on the personal identity and inner functioning of the mind. Two prominent authors who exploit individualism in their works are Jane Austen and Mary Shelley.

Jane Austen's novels, particularly *Pride and Prejudice*, show individualism through the search of the characters by identity and self-entrance. Elizabeth Bennet, the protagonist, is a willpower character who seeks to define herself in a restricted society. Austen emphasizes Elizabeth's personal choices, her thoughts, and how she sails in the expectations of society. This focus on personal agency demonstrates the romantic belief in the importance of the individual. As Newlyn (2003) points out, Austen's characters express their unique identities, often challenging social norms to find true happiness.

On the other hand, Mary Shelley's (2013) *Frankenstein* plunges more into the consequences of individualism. Victor Frankenstein's character

incorporates the spirit of romantic individualism through their ambition and desire for knowledge. However, his search leads to tragic consequences, illustrating a more cautious story about the extremes of individualism. Shelley's novel examines the complexities of human experience, highlighting the struggle between personal desires and social responsibilities. This reflects the romantic idea that while individualism can promote creativity and passion, it can also lead to isolation and despair.

Both authors uniquely exploit individualism but share a common belief in the meaning of personal experiences. Austen's focus on social relations and the development of character contrasts with Shelley's darkest meditation on unmistakable ambition and the human condition. This variety of representation shows the breadth of romantic literature and its exploitation of individual identity. The romantic movement also encouraged the idea that each person's emotional truth is valid and worthy of exploitation. The characters in Austen and Shelley's works intensely express their feelings, reinforcing the belief that emotion is central to human experience. This emotional expression is especially evident in Shelley's portrait of the creature in *Frankenstein*. The desire of the creature for acceptance and understanding highlights the importance of empathy and connection in individual experience. This powerful emotional core serves as a reminder that individualism is not only self-discovery but also the impact of someone's actions on others.

In short, the portrait of individualism in romantic literature emphasizes the importance of personal identity and emotional truth. Jane Austen and Mary Shelley provide rich examples of how characters sail in their individual experiences. His works reflect the central belief of romanticism in the value of the individual and the accompanying complexities. Newlyn (2003) supports this understanding, illustrating that the exploitation of individualism in romantic literature is essential to a deeper understanding of human nature and social dynamics., Romantic writers in English literature often emphasized individualism as a key issue that defies social norms and conventions. This approach to individuality allowed these authors to criticize the restrictions imposed by society on personal desires and feelings. They created characters who fought against the expectations of others, showing how the search for personal identity often disagrees with social rules.

These works suggest that romantic writers were deeply aware of conflicts that arise between personal desires and social expectations. The tension often leads to tragic endings or deep personal transformations, which shows the importance of the voice of the individual against social norms. The writings of these authors embody a resistance to reading the readers, inspiring readers to consider the value of personal truth and authenticity.

Literary critic Jerome McGann (1985) frames this challenge against social norms within the context of the broader objective of romanticism of redefining the importance of the individual in literature and society. He points out that romantic writers also recognized the inherent conflicts that accompany individualism, suggesting that the search for personal identity often results in a distancing from others. This duality reflects the struggles faced by the romantic characters, whose trips become emblematic of the universal search for self-discovery amid social limitations.

The romantic emphasis on individualism reveals a critical tension between personal identity and social conventions. Authors such as Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley show that the exploration of the self can lead to liberation and conflict, illustrating the complexity of human experience within social frames. Through their works, they force readers to reflect on the balance between individual desires and the expectations imposed by society., text, The political context of the Romantic period played a significant role in modeling the literature of the time. Many romantic writers have been deeply affected by the events that occurred around them, such as the French Revolution and the Industrial Revolution. These historical changes have aroused strong feelings and ideas on freedom, individuality, and the direction of society. Chandler (1999) claims that the romantic movement did not only concern emotions and nature; It was also an answer to the political upheaval and looking for a social change.

A key figure is Lord Byron (2009), who is known not only for his poetry but also for his political opinions. Byron has experienced a time when England has faced many challenges, including social disorders, and requires reform. He often used his works to express his dissatisfaction with the political system and to defend freedom and justice. His poetry *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* reflects his complex feelings on the world. It shows a mixture of personal reflection and social comments, encapsulating the romantic ideal of the hero as a stranger who is preparing for his place in society. Byron's works illustrate how romantic writers often felt as if they were in contrast to the world around them. They tried to intensively express their emotions, showing the individual struggle against social constraints. This individualism was not just personal research; It was an answer to the political situations they faced. For example, the Byronic Hero's concept of Byron, who describes a rebellious and passionate figure, can be seen as a reaction to the oppressive political climate of his time. In addition, political ideas in Byron's poetry align with the wider movements of his times. The push for democracy and the rise of the revolution influenced his writing, which often criticized authority and social norms. In this way, Byron's artistic work became a reflection of the turbulent era, in which writers began to use their voices not only to express personal struggles but also to face

and challenge political injustices. Chandler (1999) underlines that this intersection of literature and political movements is crucial to understanding how romantic poets have modeled and modeled from their times.

In the same way, other romantic poets such as William Wordsworth and Percy Bysshe Shelley have also expressed their political opinions through their writings. Wordsworth often used nature as a metaphor for freedom and resistance against oppressive systems. His works transmit a conviction in the intrinsic goodness of humanity, which he considered corrupt by political institutions. Shelley, known for its most direct political themes, supported social change and has written passionately on issues such as tyranny and the need for reforms.

Romantic writers collectively emphasized literature and politics deeply intertwined during this period. Their emotional explorations reflected the struggles for social and political change. By understanding these crossings, we acquire information on the wider influences that have modeled romantic literature and how writers such as Byron have committed themselves to urgent issues of their age., Romantic literature has had a complex reception both during its time and in today's society. Initially, the romantic movement had to face criticism and skepticism from the consolidated literary community. The values of the Enlightenment of reason and order were still very influential and many traditional critics considered the highest emotional expression and individuality in romantic works such as chaotic or excessive. Critics, such as the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, had to defend the validity of emotion in art against the nationalist feelings of the time. Mee (2003) discusses how these tensions have created an anxiety of reception, while romantic writers fought to carve out their space inside the literary canon.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, many readers were fascinated by the daring themes in romantic texts, which often revolved around the passion and sublime beauty of nature. However, the emphasis on personal emotion and the unique perspectives sometimes alienated those who preferred the conventional narrative. The impact of this gap can still be observed today since romantic literature has been celebrated for its innovation and criticized for its introspection. Even now, some contemporary readers find the emotional intensity in the works of poets such as William Wordsworth and John Keats overwhelming, leading to various interpretations.

In addition, romantic literature is seen through the lens of cultural meaning, reflecting the socio-political struggles of its time. Authors like William Blake often incorporated ideas on social justice and individual rights, resonating with the public who were supporting change. Mee (2003) notes

that these rebellious themes against conformity and emphasis on the inner life of the individual have echoed the feelings of the time, gaining popularity among the various social movements. Today, many of these issues are still relevant, since they speak to current issues on identity and expression of oneself.

Romantic literature continues to cause discussions and analyses, showing its lasting impact. For example, the representation of nature in romantic texts acts as a precursor of modern environmentalism, since contemporary readers find parallels in the way in which romantic authors have expressed the relationship of humanity with the natural world. The way Wordsworth wakes nature as a spiritual source reflects the ongoing dialogues on our need to reconnect with the environment, indicating that the legacy of romanticism is not simply a historical note but an ongoing conversation.

The tension between individuality and collective experience in romantic literature can be involved for the modern public that navigates their identities within a society that often emphasizes compliance. This connection highlights how the challenges posed by romantic authors are still significant today, encouraging readers to explore their emotions and place in wider social contexts. Mee (2003) articulates this relevance by emphasizing that romantic literature invites contemporary readers to face one's feelings of alienation and desire for authenticity.

In summary, the welcome of romantic literature has evolved since its beginning, illustrating historical and cultural changes. The works of authors such as Byron, Shelley, and Wordsworth continue to challenge and inspire, making them a central part of the literary panorama that transcends their original period., The themes of emotional expression, the influence of nature, and individualism on romanticism remain vital to understanding English literature. The Romantic writers surpassed the limits of how emotions were portrayed in their works. They felt deeply and expressed these feelings crudely and powerfully, a removal from the narrower styles of previous literary movements. Authors such as William Wordsworth and Samuel Taylor Coleridge emphasized emotional authenticity, illustrating how feelings shaped human experience. This emotional depth has established a connection between the reader and the text, allowing readers to explore their own emotions through the lens of the characters and situations presented.

Nature also plays a critical role in romantic literature. Writers saw nature not only as a background for their narratives but as a living entity with the power to inspire and transform. Wordsworth, in particular, celebrated the beauty of the natural world, linking -to personal and spiritual growth.

His poetry usually reflects moments of reflection, where nature serves as a source of comfort and insight. Wordsworth captures the essence of how nature influences human thinking and feelings. Nature becomes a character in itself, guiding individuals on a journey of self-discovery and emotional liberation. This profound connection between human beings and the natural world highlights the idea that understanding ourselves is deeply linked to understanding nature.

Individualism is another crucial theme of romanticism, as writers like Percy Bysshe Shelley and John Keats celebrated the unique voice and perspective of the individual. In Shelley's poetry, one can see a defender of personal freedom and the search for self-identity. His works encourage readers to break free from social norms and embrace their personal beliefs, shaping an ideal where individual thinking and creativity are precedence. Similarly, the use of sensory images and emotional depth by Keats reflects his concern for the personal experience and subjective nature of beauty. Focus on individual voice and experience challenges the collective ideals of previous literary movements and paves the way for modern expressions of identity in literature.

The ideas obtained by examining these themes - expression of emotions, influence of nature, and individualism - illustrate the lasting effects of romanticism on contemporary literature. Scholars such as Wimsatt and Brooks (2021) highlight how these themes shape modern literary discourse, showing that emotional landscapes, reverence for nature, and the celebration of self-produced by romantic writers continue to resonate with today's authors and readers. This rich legacy promotes in-progress conversations about identity, emotional authenticity, and interconnectivity of human beings and nature, which remain crucial elements of literature in the 21st century. Thus, the exploitation of the Romanticism of these central themes not only defines their era but also provides structures that remain relevant among literary movements and genres. In analyzing the main works and their lasting impact, it can be appreciated how romanticism fundamentally reformulates our understanding of literature and human experience.

Tracing the Evolution of Sincerity in Literary Movements

The evolution of sincerity in literature begins with the romantic movement, which sought to express genuine emotion and individuality in a rapidly modernized world. Romantic authors, particularly William Wordsworth and Lord Byron, were fundamental to shaping the concept of literary sincerity through their works, emphasizing a deep connection with personal truth and emotional depth in response to the invasive industrialization of society. Wordsworth poetry often reflects a deep reverence for

intrinsic nature and emotions associated with human experience. His emphasis on personal experience as a source of inspiration is aligned with the romantic spirit that prioritizes subjective reality and internal experience on the objective conditions of society.

This period in literature can be understood as a reflection of social changes, in which the growing impact of industrialization and urbanization caused a reaction against the direct vest of the rationalism of lighting. As Löwy and Sayre (2002) articulated, romanticism can be seen as a challenge against the limitations imposed by modernity, advocating an authentic artistic expression that often sought comfort in nature and introspection. The romantic ideal of sincerity becomes a powerful environment by which the artist affirms individuality against social pressure, highlighting a change marked in the literary expression that privileges the author's authentic voice.

In addition, the ideals of romanticism substantially influenced later literary movements by establishing authenticity as a reference point for emotional depth. This was critical to reformulate the understanding of the author's role and intentions in narrative construction. Simpson (1993) postulates that the general emphasis of the Romantic period on personal emotions established the pattern for later artists, which would deal with the complexities of sincerity and authenticity in various cultural contexts.

When refining these ideas of sincere expression, romantic literature contributed to expanding discourse on emotional authenticity, an element that would deeply resonate with the subsequent increase in modernism and beyond. Figures like T.S. Eliot and Virginia Woolf emerged at the beginning of the 20th century and navigated the complexities of sincerity in an increasingly fragmented world. For example, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* by Eliot (2021) presents a marked confrontation of personal emotion juxtaposed with social alienation, which reflects a deep introspection that challenges and redefines sincerity in expression. Woolf (2008), through his current of consciousness current in works such as *Mrs. Dalloway*, similarly examines sincerity within the nuances of subjectivity, where the internal lives of their characters reveal deep emotional truths in the middle of the disorder of Modern life.

As such, the romantic search for sincerity not only raided the way for future literary movements, but also catalyzed continuous dialogue about the nature of authenticity, emotional depth, and sociocultural implications of the narrative voice. This complex interaction of sincerity within the literature reflects the changing social contexts and the intentions of the author that continue to evolve, marking a persistent examination of what it means to write authentically in the widest tapestry of literary history. The legacy

of the romantic emphasis on sincerity remains a critical touchstone, influencing and challenging the authors among generations as they negotiate authenticity demands in the context of their cultural realities. The emergence of modernism has further complicated the notion of sincerity by questioning the validity and feasibility of objective truth. This literary movement, which took on importance at the beginning of the 20th century, was significantly shaped by the traumatic experiences of the First World War and subsequent societal upheavals. Writers such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce have used innovative narrative techniques - particularly the flow of consciousness - to dive into the subtleties of subjective experience, thus reflecting the fragmented realities of post-war society (Olson, 2009).

In this context, sincerity has taken up new dimensions, intrinsically linked to the perception of the individual rather than adhering to the universal truths of morality or authenticity. The modernist concern of subjective experience has forced authors to navigate these personal landscapes, enlightening how individual interpretations of reality can deviate considerably from collective understanding. Consequently, the author's intention has become less to transmit an absolute moral message and more focused on the representation of the multifaceted truth of personal existence - in any case, it could be fragmented or contradictory. The accent put modernist consciousness as a main narrative medium and has urged a re-evaluation of sincerity, inviting readers to question the nature of the truth, and consequently, the reliability of the authors themselves. An author could no longer claim omniscience in the representation of experiences; Instead, they presented a lens shaped by their unique perceptions and emotions, filtered through the subjective nature of their narration. This change posed important dilemmas concerning the role of sincerity because the fractured accounts have often left the readers struggling with the tenuous contextual truths and the ambiguous motivations behind the actions of the characters (Ball, 1964).

In addition, the decline of the notion of sincerity in its traditional sense, as established during romantic and realistic movements, has turned into a nuanced exploration of authenticity in subjective realities. The modernist literary landscape included protagonists who were often inappropriate individuals - alienated not only of society but also of themselves - embodying the struggle for sincere expression in the middle of a chaotic and disintegrating world. The existential requests raised by modernist writers illustrate a pivot of the external validation of sincerity to an introspective quest for truth, often marked by disillusionment with societal standards and a feeling of isolation which reflected the broader dissatisfaction of the age.

As literature evolved through these movements, the changing expressions of sincerity underline the current dialogue between the social con-

text, the intention of the author, and the literary form. This commitment illustrates how literary modernism represents a critical stage in the exploration of sincerity, integrating it into the complexities of subjectivity and existentialism, ultimately reshaping our understanding of this vital aspect of human expression within the Literary canon.

The Relationship between Romanticism and the Sincerity Movement

Romanticism and the sincerity movement both focused on being real and honest with emotions, opposing anything fake. Both groups started as a response to the limitations of neoclassicism and the Enlightenment's focus on logic, objectivity, and proper behavior. Romanticism aimed to bring back feelings, intuition, and the deeper aspects of human experience in writing, with sincerity being a key idea in this movement. Romantic writers thought that writing should openly show a person's true feelings and ideas, without being limited by strict rules that used to control art. The truth movement supported Romantic ideas by promoting a style of writing that was honest about feelings and very personal, without being influenced by what society expected.

Romanticism often showed sincerity by using first-person storytelling and personal experiences. Many Romantic poets and novelists based their works on their life events, making it hard to tell what is real and what is made up. The focus on personal truth can be seen in Jean-Jacques Rousseau's book, Confessions, which is considered an early example of Romanticism and the sincere writing trend. Rousseau believed that real literature should show the author's true feelings and thoughts honestly, without any fake parts or decorations. This idea had a strong impact on later Romantic writers. He believed in being open about his feelings and experiences, which matched the Romantic idea of focusing on personal feelings and perspectives.

William Wordsworth's poetry was deeply rooted in honesty. In Lyrical Ballads, he claimed that poetry should represent "incidents and situations from common life" in a language "really used by men" (Wordsworth, 1802/2003, p. 112). This refusal of fancy language in favor of a more straightforward and genuine style shows the Romantic desire for honesty. Wordsworth believed that real emotions should be the basis of poems. This was a new idea at the time, and it matched the sincerity movement, which aimed to eliminate artificiality in writing.

John Keats was another important person in this friendship. He believed that being sincere is vital for creating beautiful poetry. His letters show that he cares a lot about being genuine, especially in his thoughts on

"negative capability." He explained this idea as being able to stay comfortable with "uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts, without desperately trying to find facts and answers" (Keats, 1817/2001, p. 96). This idea proposed that real truthfulness in writing comes not from insisting on strict reality, but from being open to feelings and experiences as they are, without holding back. Keats's writing, especially his Odes, shows this by letting the speaker fully experience brief feelings without forcing any strict meanings.

In addition to poems, being sincere was also very important in Romantic writing and the new style of novels that was starting to develop. Mary Shelley's Frankenstein looks at the conflict between being real and being fake, especially when Victor Frankenstein does not take responsibility for what he has made. The book uses letters to tell the story, showing the Romantic interest in personal thoughts and honesty. This supports the idea of being sincere. Shelley shows different viewpoints, giving a close look at personal struggles and deep questions about life, which are key features of Romantic honesty.

Lord Byron's complicated views on honesty show how the two groups are connected in a detailed way. Byron was known for his cleverness and awareness of his writing style, but his works also had many moments of real emotional depth. In Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, the narrator represents the Romantic hero—someone who is restless, disappointed, and looking for meaning. However, his thoughts come across as very personal and genuine, even though the way he speaks is carefully crafted (Byron, 1818/2004, p. 278). Byron's skill in combining performance with real feelings highlights how earnestness can change in the Romantic movement.

Romanticism and the sincerity movement both focused on nature as a place for true emotions and art. Romantic poets often drew inspiration from nature because they felt it helped them describe their feelings more honestly. Percy Bysshe Shelley's poem "Ode to the West Wind" shows this idea. The speaker talks to the wind, using it to represent new creativity and strong feelings. The sincerity movement supported the Romantic idea by emphasizing that nature is a pure setting where people can share their true feelings.

Romanticism valued sincerity, which showed in their dislike for teaching lessons or moralizing in writing. Unlike earlier literature that aimed to teach readers directly, Romantic literature focused more on inner understanding and emotional impact. This change was especially clear in the poetry of Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who thought that poetry should make people feel emotions instead of teaching them moral lessons. In The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, Coleridge takes the reader into a vivid and dreamy story, focusing more on feelings than on logical reasoning. His

way of writing shows how the earnestness movement values being real and honest, letting the reader connect with the text in a very personal way. The Sincerity Movement is both a result of and a support for Romantic ideas. Romanticism focused on showing emotions and personal experiences in literature, while sincerity made sure that these artistic works were genuine and reflected the author's real feelings. These movements changed the strict rules of earlier literary styles and made the writer's job about sharing beauty as well as genuine personal feelings and emotions.

Romanticism and the sincerity movement are closely connected because both aimed to change literature into a space for open self-expression and genuine emotions. Romantic writers went against the rules of neoclassicism and Enlightenment thinking. They focused on expressing personal feelings and ideas instead of following strict artistic rules. The earnestness movement emphasized that literature should directly connect the writer's feelings with the reader's emotions. By supporting each other, both groups changed what people expect from writing, leading to a new idea of genuine artistic expression. A key part of this connection was the Romantic belief in valuing real emotions over fake ones. This was especially clear in verse, where writers like Wordsworth, Keats, and Shelley wanted to remove overly complicated language from the past and use words that reflected real human feelings. Wordsworth believed that poetry should use everyday words that people speak. This shows his dedication to being genuine. Similarly, Keats argued that real poetry comes from having deep experiences, not just from trying to be artistic on purpose. These ideas were the basis of literary earnestness, which preferred honest emotions to complicated writing.

The Sincerity Movement impacted Romanticism by encouraging more personal honesty and self-reflection. This was especially clear in Romantic writing, where writers and essayists often mixed fiction with their own life stories. Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Confessions, a seminal work of self-revelatory literature, set a precedent for Romantic sincerity by arguing for total transparency in personal storytelling (Rousseau, 1782/1996, p. 74). This style of writing connected with later Romantic writers like Mary Shelley and Lord Byron, who often included personal thoughts and genuine feelings in their work. Byron's Childe Harold's Pilgrimage is both an adventure story and a personal reflection on being away from home and exploring one's identity.

Another important link between Romanticism and earnestness is how nature is shown as a place for direct emotional expression. Many Romantic writers saw nature as a pure and true place, free from social rules. This view matches the sincerity movement's idea that literature should show real human experiences instead of meeting outside demands. Percy Bysshe Shelley's Ode to the West Wind shows this view, as the artist looks to natu-

re for inspiration and a way to express his strongest feelings. The sincerity movement supported this Romantic belief, highlighting nature as a key source of genuine feelings and poetry.

Romanticism's dislike for teaching lessons in literature matched the ideas of the earnestness movement. While older literature often tried to teach moral lessons, Romantic and sincere literature focused more on feelings and how each person understood the story. Samuel Taylor Coleridge's poem, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, doesn't give a clear lesson but encourages readers to feel a complex mix of emotions (Coleridge, 1798/1983, p. 152). This technique supports the sincerity movement, which prefers natural and emotionally honest storytelling instead of forced plots.

This relationship has had a lasting impact beyond the Romantic age, affecting later literary movements that valued honesty and personal expression. 20th-century confessional poetry, seen in writers like Sylvia Plath and Robert Lowell, focuses on revealing personal experiences and feelings. This style connects back to the Romantic period, which also valued honesty and self-expression. Modernist and postmodernist interest in the mixed lines between fiction and autobiography is influenced by the Romantic idea that literature can express personal truth.

In summary, Romanticism and the earnestness movement were closely linked because they both aimed for genuine emotions, self-expression, and a rejection of fake writing styles. Romantic writers wanted to show deep human feelings, and the sincerity movement made sure their art was honest and real. They changed the literary world by questioning old ideas about poetry and storytelling, helping people appreciate honesty in art more.

Plot Summary of the Novel The Essex Serpent

Sarah Perry, an outstanding contemporary British author, has obtained critical acclaim for her rich narrative and her intricate development of the character. Born in 1979 in Chelmsford, Essex, Perry was molded by his years of training in rural England, an environment that would later inform his writing. These first experiences instilled in them a deep appreciation for the natural world, as well as an awareness of historical underground currents that influence contemporary society. Perry's educational history also reported his literary ambitions; He attended the University of Essex, where she studied English literature, and then obtained his mastery in creative writing at the University of East Anglia. This academic base not only provided a solid understanding of literary techniques but also exposed it to an amplitude of perspectives that would influence their creative voice.

Perry's writing is immersed in a rich tapestry of influences, both historical and personal. As a writer, she is inspired by the social and scientific disorders of the Victorian era, particularly the tension between faith and reason, which is a significant issue in her acclaimed novel *The Essex Serpent*. The historical context of the late nineteenth century, marked by rapid industrialization and the notions of science and belief, serves as a backdrop for its exploration of human experience and conflicting ideologies. In addition to the history, Perry's personal experiences, including her education in Essex and his reflections on faith and feminism, resonate deeply within her narratives. Her relationship with nature, particularly Essex's swamps, becomes a character in her right, underlining her connection with the environment and its influence on human emotion.

The exploration of complex female characters in particular has been an element consisting of Perry's narratives, echoing the strengths and vulnerabilities of women represented by her literary predecessors. Such influences have helped her develop a narrative style that balances exuberant and evocative prose with philosophical depth, which allows her to interrogate the human condition through the lens of the experiences of her characters.

Through its background and influences, Perry creates narratives that focus on issues of beliefs, doubt, and the nature of human connections. Her work often explores how individuals deal with their existence within a world full of competitive ideologies, balancing the tangible and the supernatural. This duality is observed in her novel *The Essex Serpent* (Perry, 2016), where the exploration of the serpent is symbolic both of fear and fascination, the incarnation of how the unknown, and imagination of the characters are captivated. The combination of its rich literary heritage and personal history culminates in a narrative style that is attractive and reflective, attracting readers to a world that deals with the complexities of faith, mythology, and personal agency.

Perry emerges as a reflexive writer whose background informs her thematic concerns and narrative approach. Her early life experiences, academic activities, and the literary influences that have impacted them are intricately interwoven in her work, culminating in a deeply rich narrative that resonates with contemporary concerns. The examination of these elements not only improves the understanding of the reader of Perry's literary contributions but also invites a deeper contemplation of the issues that she depicted skillfully in her novel in the late Victorian era, predominantly established in the fictional coastal villa of Aldwinter, Essex. The narrative focuses on Cora Seaborne, a recent widower in London who becomes obsessed with the local legend of a mythical snake that is said to inhabit the waters. Cora's trip begins while moving to Aldwinter, looking for both independence and a scientific explanation for the appearance of the snake.

The character serves as a conduit to examine the intersections of belief and reason, as well as the complexities of human relations in a society that changes rapidly.

Throughout the novel, the key events boost the forward plot, including the interactions of Cora with prominent figures such as the cleric Will Ransome, whose faith contrasts with the empirical worldview of Cora, and the local community, which fought with their superstitions and fears. The plot proceeds as a series of mysterious events, attributed to the supposedly mythical snake, incites panic and fear among villagers. Cora's scientific curiosity leads her to challenge social norms, especially concerning gender roles, while discovering deeply deep connections with people within Aldwinter. This interaction of the characters' dynamics emphasizes the broader themes of the novel.

Thematically, the novel addresses the dichotomy of nature versus civilization. The fascination of Cora with the snake symbolizes the charm of the natural world and its mysteries, contrasting sharply with the limitations imposed by social expectations, represented through interactions with conservative premises. It also illustrates how the invasion of industrialization interrupts traditional ways of life, which leads to conflicts between the wild and the cultivated. Perry explores how the characters navigate these tensions; For example, Cora embodies the spirit of research and resilience, while dealing with its faith in the face of emerging scientific ideas.

In addition, the conflict between science and superstition arises as another central theme. Cora's commitment to rationality and empirical evidence challenges not only their psychological battles but also the adhesion of the community to folklore and superstition. The snake becomes a metaphor for the unknown, representing both the fear of the anger of nature and the human desire to rationalize the inexplicable. Throughout the narrative, Perry illustrates how the different characters reconcile these opposite forces. For example, Will's initial adhesion to religious doctrine is proven by Cora's scientific logic, which leads him to reassess his beliefs.

The search for meaning is another predominant topic within the Essex snake. Characters like Cora and Will seek a purpose in personal pain, social expectations, and existential questions that resonate deeply within human experience. Perry incorporates this theme in its character's arches; The intellectual activities of CORA catalyze their self-discovery trip, while Will's conflict between faith and reason pushes him towards a broader understanding of truth. The novel does not provide simple resolutions; Rather, it covers the complexities of human motivations and the ambiguity of the search for meaning.

These central themes are inextricably linked to the background and influences of Sarah Perry. Based on her academic experience in history and literature, as well as her commitment to Victorian culture, Perry merges the novel with a rich historical context tapestry that informs both the development of the plot and the character. In addition, her struggle with issues of faith, identity, and the natural world resonates through the exploration of the novel of the relationship of humanity with the enigmatic forces of nature. Therefore, through the novel, Perry offers a nuanced reflection on the struggles between belief and reason, tradition and progress, all framed within a vividly imagined environment that captivates both the characters and readers.

Cora Seaborne, the protagonist, emerges as a figure of modernity and independence, distinguished by her voracious curiosity and interest in paleontology, a novel field for women in the Victorian era. Her trip begins after the death of her controller husband, promoting her to a search for self-discovery that echoes the broader social changes of the time. The arc of the character of Cora is marked by her transition from a woman limited by social expectations to someone who seeks liberation through intellectual search and emotional autonomy. This evolution also positions it as a sheet of spiritual and traditional beliefs that prevail in the rural environment of the novel, particularly as it is attracted to the legend of the Essex snake, which serves as a metaphor for the phenomena of the unknown and inexplicable life.

Will Ransome represents the incarnation of the spiritual life of the community. His character is based on faith and morals, which reflects the tension of the period between empirical understanding and religious belief. Initially, Will appears as a man dedicated to his congregation, embodying the expected care and empathy of the clergy. However, as he interacts with Cora, Will's character begins to change while dealing with his emotions evolving and the disruptive influence of Cora's rationality, which finally leads him to question his own beliefs and the nature of his role within the community. Therefore, Will's arc illustrates the conflict between progressive ideas and entrenched traditions, encapsulating the struggles of a society on the cusp of modernity.

Luke Garrett, an expert surgeon and a man of science, represents the rational and empirical paradigm of Victorian society. His character serves as a counterpoint to emotional activities and is promoted by the wonders of Cora, showing the promise of the time of progress through medical advances. Luke, however, is also deeply affected by his feelings by Cora, introducing a nuanced exploration of how personal desires can conflict with professional ambitions and ideals. His development of a separate bright

figure deeply tied to emotional complexities highlights the interaction of personal and social pressures within the narrative.

This duality within Lucas not only improves the issue of scientific research versus emotional understanding but also allows readers to consider the human dimensions that challenge sterile rationality. The relationship between Cora, Will, and Luke is fundamental by illustration. Perry's exploration of the central themes of the novel. The influence of Cora in Will reflects not only a personal awakening but also a broader comment on change towards modernity and the questioning of traditional values. On the contrary, Luke's scientific aspirations are attenuated by the emotional truths that he finds through his interactions with Cora and Will, which underline the complexities of human desire and the search for knowledge. Through these characters, Perry skillfully embodies the central conflicts and ideas of the novel. Each character is a reflection of the author's influences: to turn in their background immersed in Gothic literature, as well as the socio-historical context of the Victorian era that informs its narrative. Therefore, Cora, Will, and Luke together illustrate the broader themes of the novel, revealing Perry's narrative intentions to cause a critical reflection on the nature of belief and understanding in an increasingly complex world.

Analyzing the Novel within the Framework of the Sincerity Movement

Sarah Perry's (2016) *The Essex Serpent* maintains a cultural capital that emphasizes sincerity as the characters in the book grapple with issues related to societal norms, self-identity, and their understanding of religion and logic. The movement of sincerity began with Romanticism which intended to emphasize individual feeling and inner organic truth as opposed to external influences. What Perry seems to do is to continue with this tradition but in the current setting with the following key features:

Emotional truths: She sets emotions free and in his depiction of feelings chaos unfolds which again supports the values held by the sincerity movement of self-expression.

Inductive Thinking: The faith versus reason component is also reflective of the movement's bent on a philosophy where for the self to be honest, one has to undertake a thesis and anti-thesis practice.

Disconnection from Positioning: The self-exploratory and the non-conformist stories of the characters are in line with the Romantic vision of the self as being free from customs.

It is clear from the quotations given below that characters reflect the features of emotional truth, inductive thinking, and disconnection from positioning.

"I've thought over and over that there was never a greater difference between what I ought to be, and what I am. Absurd to talk so freely to almost a stranger... 'I am in a state of disgrace, I know it: I always have been, but it was never as visible'" (Perry, 2016, p. 134).

Cora's statement reflects a refusal to conform to societal norms and a truthful expression about oneself, which underlies the sincerity concept. This is a key concept of the sincerity concept and is core to the struggles she has gone through. Their characters often walk through societal expectations in search of their true selves, this is the struggle that Cora had gone through as well. Cora's claim that her 'state of disgrace' appears to be hopeless offers a shame that simplicity requires, which seems to emphasize the necessity of emotions as well as individuality.

"I had faith, the sort I think you might be born with, but I've seen what it does and I traded it in. It's a sort of blindness, or a choice to be mad – to turn your back on everything new and wonderful – not to see that there are no fewer miracles in the microscope than in the gospels!" (Perry, 2016, p. 183).

This passage embodies the existential conflicts at the heart of sincerity as a literary and philosophical concept. By questioning faith and embracing scientific wonder, the speaker reflects the shift from traditional dogmas to personal, empirically grounded truths. This aligns with the sincerity movement's valorization of intellectual honesty and the exploration of belief systems that accommodate modern understandings of the world.

"I've learned how to stand [punishment]... There is more – there is more besides the counting of atoms, the calculating of the planet's orbit, counting down the years until Halley's Comet makes its return – something beats in us beside the pulse" (Perry, 2016, p. 200).

From this perspective, the speaker connects the measurable and the beyond estimate, indicating that man is more than what can be measured. This assertion as a sincere moment points to a fundamental desire for engagement and significance that is central to the movement. It goes beyond the limits of rationality where logical understanding of existence is only one of the avenues alongside feeling to know.

"The Essex Serpent never existed, and even if it did, it was nothing but a fossil – a living creature whose time had come and gone, with no malice in it, no intent to haunt the marshes and drive men to madness!" (Perry, 2016, p. 225).

This statement critiques the engaged social fiction which is colluded with folklore and mob frenzy. The content of this rational confrontation brims over with sincerity's call to honesty unvarnished. To continue, the words this narrative seeks to restore reflect the Enlightenment sentiments that inspired the first attempts at digging into sincerity, where the absence of fear and mysteries was more cherished than authenticity and intellectuality.

"It seemed to her now as though her entire life had been spent underground, her body bound and tethered by rules she'd never agreed to, and that at last, she'd surfaced, gasping for air" (Perry, 2016, p. 97).

This metaphor strikes a chord with the ideals of sincerity which stress stamp independence and telling no lie. Cora's feeling of coming out, and her being liberated turns towards self-fulfillment that Romantics and Victorians encouraged. This depicts the movement of sincerity that searched into the inner core of a person's being and defied social expectations.

The beginning of the 19th century marked a fundamental change in literature, characterized by an emphasis pronounced on personal emotion and the ideals of sincerity. The ideal of sincerity was articulated as well as a central principle of romantic literature, which distinguishes it as a movement that sought to capture the "truth" of human emotion instead of complying with the strict dictates of traditional literary forms.

The exploration of sincerity, particularly through the lens of emotional truth, is clarified by the historian Lionel Trilling, who states that sincerity is a complex layer of emotional authenticity that resonates through the ages. This conceptualization of sincerity as a multifaceted construction invites a nuanced understanding of how the romantics negotiated their internal landscapes and projected them in their literary creations. For Wordsworth, sincerity was based on the conviction that genuine expression could cause deep connections between the individual and collective human experience. Byron, on the other hand, embodied a sincerity that oscillated between melancholic introspection and ecstatic extroversion, revealing a tension within the romantic vision of self-management. This duality allowed Byron's work to communicate a broader spectrum of human emotion, aligning with Trilling's notion of sincerity as in layers and dependent on the context (Trilling, 2009).

The implications of romantic sincerity extend far beyond the limits of the nineteenth century since subsequent literary movements have dealt with their legacy. The royalists, for example, emerged in the second half of the nineteenth century as a reaction to the subjective introspection of the romantics. The realistic authors sought to represent life as it was, but they were often based on the romantic emphasis on the authenticity of the

experience to validate their representations of reality. Similarly, the modernist movement, although characterized by fragmentation and ambiguity, was also deeply rooted in a search for a genuine expression in a world that changes rapidly.

Therefore, the ideals of sincerity in romantic literature not only influenced the formal elements of subsequent movements but also played an instrumental role in the configuration of the very essence of literary authenticity. When establishing a model that celebrated the personal emotion and complexities of genuine expression, romantic authors such as Wordsworth and Byron effectively laid the foundations for a literary continuum where sincerity issues echoed persistently. This analysis of romantic sincerity not only underlines its importance within the specific context of its time but also prepares the scenario for a broader exploration of how these principles evolved and adapted through genres, becoming a perennial concern in The landscape of literary history., text, The ideals of sincerity adopted in romantic literature profoundly influenced subsequent artistic movements, especially modernism and new sincerity, which reinterpreted the emphasis on personal emotions and central authenticity for the works of poets such as William Wordsworth and Lord Byron. The focus of the romantics on unlimited emotional expression required removal from traditional poetic forms and encouraged a more introspective and personal perspective on human experiences, a legacy with which later movements dealt, embraced, and sometimes contested.

Modernism, characterized by its rupture of conventional narrative structures and exploitation of fragmented realities, was negotiating the profound emotional truths that romanticism had placed at the forefront of literary creation. The modernist search for authenticity, although often veiled in irony and ambiguity, reflects a response to the vast emotional landscapes initially drawn by romantic poets. Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot, for example, sought to capture individual consciousness in ways that resonated with the emphasis of Wordsworth (2006, p.265) on the "*spontaneous overflow of powerful feeli*ngs." However, instead of directly mirroring the romantic ideal of sincerity, modernist writers often engaged in a complex interaction of irony, distancing themselves from open emotional expression to reflect the disappointment made by the First World War and the rise of industrial society. As Collins (2012) argues, this time saw the emergence of eclectic irony, particularly in the 1990s, where writers mixed sincerity with postmodern techniques to create an ironic distance that, however, maintained the emotional depth derived from romanticism. Irony has become a tool - one that paradoxically allowed modern authors to explore genuine human experience within a skeptic landscape.

On the other hand, the new movement of sincerity emerged as a reaction against the perceived cynicism of postmodernism, defending a return to sincere expression that resembles the first romantic ideals.While new sincerity maintains a critical lens on contemporary culture, it defends the idea that genuine vulnerability and emotional connection are essential for literary realization, thus affirming the continuous relevance of the romantic notions of authenticity.

Moreover, the concept of sincerity persists in literary discourse as a structure to understand emotional depth, a feature that manifests itself through varied stylistic approaches. Howard (1999) observes the resurgence of sentimentality in contemporary literature, suggesting that the emotional authenticity defended by romantic writers not only remained an attractive force but also evolved into new forms that are deeply involved with the reader's experience. This resurgence can be observed in the works of authors such as Marilynne Robinson and Ocean Vuong, whose narratives intertwine personal stories and emotional truths with accurate but artistic - attributes resonant with the romantic spirit.

Thus, the legacy of romantic sincerity continues to shape literary tendencies, while writers sail the tensions between authentic emotional expression and the complexities of the modern context. Throughout these movements, the influences of Wordsworth and Byron persist in an evolutionary dialogue on sincerity, authenticity, and emotional depth in the literature.

Conclusion

The sincerity movement is a continuous appreciation of literature that began from Romanticism's claim of emotional sincerity to modern literature's appreciation of subjectivity. Sarah Perry's The Essex Serpent is said to showcase this evolution as a bridge from history to a contemporary perspective. Cora Seaborne, Will Ransome, and Luke Garrett are characters of Perry's and through them, she explores faith, reason, self, others, and society, as Perry emulates the sincerity movement's concepts of emotionalism, enlightenment, and freedom.

Perry seeks to explore the Romantic notion of soul searching over conformity which forms the other layer of her emotionalism. And like all masterpieces, this one also questions the overall idea of modernism still managing to intertwine a peculiar thought while trying to acknowledge the diversity of situations humans face. The novel's characters take on epitomes of cultural metamorphosis where they battle invented concepts of literature and any self-conscious authenticity.

In the final analysis, Perry I attained Kyle's view in the sense that informational reading of The Essex Serpent does serve to underscore an aspect of serenity: interpersonal contradictions. The novel serves to maintain the debate as to what is sincerity now: at a time of swift and dramatic changes, Perry Jordan's directness reaffirms itself as being the quintessence of, perhaps, everything.

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CHAPTER 2

REPRESENTING THE TRAGEDY OF SYRIA IN ENGLISH LITERATURE: AN ANALYSIS OF THE BEEKEEPER OF ALEPPO BY CHRISTY LEFTERI

Duygu KORONCU ÖZBİLEN[12]

1   Yıldız Technical University, School of Foreign Languages, Department of Basic English, Istanbul-Turkey

2   Corresponding Author: dozbilen@yildiz.edu.tr

Abstract

Christy Lefteri's The Beekeeper of Aleppo provides a powerful depiction of the tragedy in Syria, focusing on the feelings and struggles caused by war, displacement, and loss. This article closely examines how Lefteri shows Syrians' fear, pain, and suffering through the main characters, Nuri and his wife, Afra. The book shows war not only as a destructive event but also as a personal experience that damages a person's identity, memories, and hopes. Lefteri shows how trauma is complicated by mixing stories from the past and present. She explains that survivors still carry the effects of war with them, even after they escape. Syria is shown through memories of Aleppo's busy streets, its destroyed places, and the bloodshed, highlighting a strong feeling of loss and yearning. The book uses descriptive language to show broken homes, dusty air, and quiet streets, highlighting the harsh facts of war and being forced to leave one's home. This study shows that The Beekeeper of Aleppo is not only about the story of the tragedy in Syria but it also makes the victims feel real. It explores themes of strength, loss, and the longing for a place to call home. The study will closely examine important sections of the novel to show how it portrays grief, strength, and survival. It will explain how the novel provides a deep reflection on the quest for home and healing.

Keywords: English Literature, Syrian War, Trauma, Displacement, Representation

Introduction

The trauma experienced by Syrian citizens is deep and complex, which affects people of all ages and origins. As the country has suffered years of conflict, many people have faced violence, displacement, and loss, which leads to various mental health problems. Research shows that the traumatic stress of war can lead to long-standing psychological problems, especially in vulnerable groups, children being an excellent example. A study by Hazer and Gredäck (2023) highlights that children in Syria have experienced extreme stress due to bombings, loss of family members, and fear for their safety. These experiences can damage their emotional and social development, leaving lasting scars that can affect them until adulthood. Syrian women face unique challenges during the ongoing conflict. Many have been victims of violence and sexual abuse, which adds to their trauma. Rizkalla et al. (2020) found that these experiences create significant psychological anguish among Syrian women. The roles of Syrian women in their families and communities have changed dramatically since the start of the war They have become the main caregivers, keeping families together despite limi-

ted resources and safe living conditions. This additional pressure has also led to feelings of isolation and impotence, aggravating the trauma.

On a broader scale, the trauma experienced by Syrian citizens not only affects people but also shakes the foundations of the communities. Abuday-ya et al. (2023) discussed how war has resulted in a breakdown of social ties, which makes it a challenge for people to trust each other. The community support systems that once existed have weakened, leaving many without the shared support necessary for healing. Social meetings and communal activities that generally help face pain and stress have decreased due to fear and displacement. The different forms of trauma, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety, have become common among those affected by war. A significant number of displaced people face barriers to accessing mental health services, which complicates recovery (Pearlman, 2016). Many facilities are damaged or non-existent in conflict or displacement areas. Those who are often traumatized find it difficult to seek help, and the stigma around mental health problems further exacerbates the problem, preventing people from receiving the attention they need. In addition, the impact of trauma extends beyond the battlefield. It influences social norms and cultural practices, shaping a generation that has lived through extreme violence and uncertainty. The way individuals express their trauma experiences is often reflected in creative forms such as art, poetry, and literature. Many Syrian writers have begun to document their feelings and experiences in response to war, capturing their trauma in the role. This representation allows a look at the mentality of those affected and serves as a coping mechanism for creators and a tool to create awareness among broader audiences (Hassan et al., 2016).

The trauma experienced by Syrian citizens is multidimensional, which affects their psychological well-being and social cohesion. The need for healing and community recovery is evident, as is the deep impact of these experiences on individual life. Understanding this trauma is crucial to addressing the crisis in progress and helping recovery efforts inside and outside Syria., The current situation in Syria remains deeply worrying and continues to reflect the lasting effects of the war that started in 2011. The humanitarian crisis is serious, with millions of Syrians fighting to meet their basic needs. Exception is one of the most critical problems since many people have been forced to leave their homes and communities. It is estimated that about 6.8 million Syrians are currently refugees, while about 6.7 million are internally displaced (Azmeh et al., 2021). This movement of people creates new challenges, such as inadequate accommodation, lack of food, and insufficient access to clean water.

One of the main consequences of war is the lack of access to education for children and young adults. The schools have been destroyed, re-pro-

posed for military use, or remain unsafe due to the ongoing violence. As a result, over 2.45 million children are out of school (Altawil et al., 2023). The lost years of education will have long-term effects on the future of a generation. The absence of education not only limits job opportunities but also affects mental health since young people feel disconnected and anxious for their future.

The current conflict also left deep scars on the mental health of the population. Chronic exposure to violence, the loss of loved ones, and a general sense of insecurity contribute to widespread psychological trauma. Studies show that post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), depression, and anxiety are alarming among Syrians. A significant number of individuals suffer from serious mental health problems, which are amplified by the difficult conditions they face every day (Alhaffar & Janos, 2021). Trauma affects not only individuals but also families and communities, perpetuating a cycle of emotional and psychological pain.

Public health remains a fundamental concern in Syria, where medical structures have been seriously damaged or destroyed. In the areas controlled by different factions, access to health care is often inconsistent, and many health workers have fled the country or have been killed. The limited remaining health services and the lack of essential supplies make it difficult to treat both physical and mental health problems. This situation does not affect only patients, but also places have added stress to healthcare professionals, who are often traumatized by the violence and losses in progress. The training and well-being of healthcare professionals are essential to understand the wider impact of prolonged conflict. Many medical operators had to adapt to their new reality in an environment of instability and fear. Medical programs and institutions that once prospered suffered greatly because of the war, leading to a profound loss of competence and ability. The trauma cycle within health care is evident; Healthcare professionals experience trauma while witnessing the suffering of their patients, which in turn affects the quality of the treatments provided to the population. This multifaceted humanitarian crisis, marked by the lack of education, the deterioration of mental health, and the challenges faced by the health workers, illustrates the profound and in-progress effects of the Syrian war on its citizens. Tackling these problems requires urgent international attention and support to repair damage and help in the healing process of a nation deeply influenced by conflicts and traumas. (Bdaiwi et al., 2023).

Literature plays an important role in showing the trauma caused by the war in Syria. Syrian authors and international writers have worked to express the suffering and challenges faced by individuals due to conflict. These literary works provide a way to share personal stories and collective memories, helping readers understand what people have gone through

after the war. According to Matos et al. (2021), literature acts as a mirror, reflecting the complicated realities of life in areas devastated by war. Through stories, poems, and novels, the authors can convey deep feelings of loss, fear, and hope that arise from traumatic experiences. For example, a significant work Death is Hard Work by Syrian author Khaled Khalifa (2019) analyzes how war separates families and communities, illustrating the emotional struggles that characterize life during chaos. Khalifa's writing combines personal narratives with broader social issues, showing how individual traumas are connected to the larger context of conflict. Their descriptions help readers feel the weight of despair, as well as highlight moments of resilience, where hope breaks even in the darker moments.

Another important piece of literature about war and its effects on society is The Smile of the Lamb by Grossman (2014). The novel explores themes of occupation, morality, and human conflict in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian situation. It is set in the West Bank during Israel's military occupation and follows multiple characters from different backgrounds, each struggling with questions of power, guilt, and resistance.

In addition, literature serves as a means of documenting experiences for future generations. It captures not only the pain of trauma but also the resilience of individuals who continue to sail in life despite their difficulties. As discussed by Barkil-Oteo et al. (2018), these narratives not only increase awareness of the effects of war but also contribute to a broader speech on healing and recovery. Literary expressions of trauma, either by fiction or poetry, allow readers to sympathize with the struggles of others and understand the lasting impacts of the conflict. Literature is deeply involved with the trauma resulting from the Syrian War, offering valuable perspectives on the psychological and emotional realities of its citizens. Through the voices of Syrian authors and international writers, this shapes memories of pain, loss, and resilience, contributing substantially to our understanding of this complex humanitarian crisis., Following the Syrian war, many survivors face significant trauma but also show remarkable resistance. This resilience allows people to confront their painful experiences and seek meaning in them. Research shows that some Syrian refugees interpret their suffering as a path to growth and personal transformation. For example, Matos et al. (2021) found that through difficulties, refugees often find strength that they did not know they had. This perspective illustrates that, although trauma can deeply affect lives, it can also lead to a new understanding of oneself and the world.

The concept of resilience in the context of the Syrian war is deeply connected to the cultural narratives and community values. Many Syrian survivors are based on their cultural identity and collective stories to help make sense of their experiences. Ahmad and Bukhari (2023) emphasize

that for these individuals, understanding trauma is not only a psychological challenge but also a sociocultural one. They suggest that how survivors interpret their suffering can be influenced by the collective memory and traditions of their community. In many cases, resilience is shown through acts of reconstruction and supporting each other. Within the refugee fields and scattered communities, people often form support networks. These networks become vital for emotional support, since people share their stories, helping each other to process their pain. This shared experience creates a sense of belonging and encourages collective resistance which can be crucial to deal with trauma.

When reflecting on their experiences, some survivors also focus on the future. They imagine a new life and a different Syria. This approach with the vision of the future can play an important role in your resilience. Instead of thinking only of the past, they channel their trauma in hopes and aspirations, to build a better future for themselves and their families. This ability to rethink the narrative creates a path to healing. In addition, the role of education and personal development can improve resilience among survivors. Many Syrian refugees participate in various educational programs, development of community skills and initiatives. By empowering themselves with knowledge and skills, they recover a sense of agency over their lives. This empowerment can significantly reduce the feelings of impotence that often accompany trauma (Almoshmosh, 2016).

Therefore, understanding resilience in the context of the Syrian war is multifaceted. It implies not only individual recovery but also the intertwining of cultural narratives, community support, education, and the power of story narration. Through these roads, survivors work to face their trauma and discover the meaning in their lives in the middle of chaos., The Syrian war has left deep scars on its citizens, affecting not only their daily lives but also their mental health and social fabric. Trauma experienced during years of conflict has led to significant challenges for individuals and communities. Many Syrians have lost loved ones, houses, and their sense of security. These experiences of violence and loss profoundly affect their emotional well-being and can lead to lasting psychological effects, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), anxiety, and depression (Al Azmeh et al., 2021). The collective trauma experienced in Syria reformulated family dynamics and community structures, creating a sense of helplessness among the population.

The current situation in Syria remains is still challenging. Although some regions have seen a return to relative stability, many areas are still prone to violence, displacement, and economic difficulties. Access to basic needs, such as food, health, and education, is usually limited, exacerbating the difficulties faced by the population. Children, in particular, have

a heavy burden, as many have lost years of education due to conflict in progress. The interruption of his education represents long-term risks, affecting his future opportunities and general development (Abbara et al., 2023). As these young people grow in an environment devastated by war, their formative experiences continue to be harmed by trauma, shaping their opinions and interactions with the world.

Faced with such challenges, literature emerged as a powerful tool for expressing and processing trauma. Syrian writers and poets used their art to describe the horrors of war and the resilience of the human spirit. His stories serve not only as a witness to the past but also as a means of healing for writers and their readers. By articulating the pain and struggles of everyday life in conflict, these literary works promote empathy and understanding among the broader audience, clarifying the realities faced by those in war zones (Al Azmeh et al., 2021). In addition, the literature provides a platform for discussing issues around identity, belonging, and survival - key themes that deeply resonate with conflict victims.

Understanding these traumatic lessons from Syria is essential to meeting the needs of affected populations. Recovery efforts should focus on support for mental health, educational opportunities, and community reconstruction. Approaching trauma holistically can help people recover a sense of agency and hope as they sail their new realities. International communities must remain involved in supporting recovery initiatives, recognizing the meaning of cultural expressions, such as literature, in promoting healing and resilience. By reflecting on the experience of Syrian citizens, it is clear that their journeys through trauma are not only personal but also collective and cultural. The powerful representation of the literature on these experiences highlights the importance of ensuring that the voices of people affected by war are heard and recognized.

The Representation of the Tragedy in Syria: *The Beekeeper of Aleppo*

The Beekeeper of Aleppo tells the story of Nuri Ibrahim, a beekeeper, and his wife Afra, an artist, as they escape the war in Syria to find safety in the United Kingdom. They used to live a quiet life in Aleppo, but everything changed when war broke out. The conflict took the life of their young son, Sami, and Afra lost her sight because of a terrible explosion. As Syria becomes more chaotic, Nuri's cousin and business partner, Mustafa, escapes to the UK and encourages Nuri and Afra to accompany him. The novel switches between the past and present, showing their dangerous journey through Turkey and Greece, where they experience exploitation, violence, and great loss. They meet other refugees, each with their sadness

and struggles. Nuri's past, where bees represented peace and strength, is very different from his present, filled with doubt and fear. This shows his inner conflict. The book closely examines war, trauma, displacement, and survival themes, showing how conflict affects people's minds. Lefteri's powerful writing expresses the deep feelings of being exiled, the fear of what lies ahead, and the desire to return home. The Beekeeper of Aleppo is a story about loss, strength, and hope, giving an important view of what refugees go through.

It is important to point out the effects of war-related stress and anxiety on mental health. A traumatic event is an experience that makes a person feel helpless, scared, or seriously hurt, or that involves the fear of serious injury or death. Such events can cause harm to a person's body, emotions, spirit, or mind. Traumatic events include major illnesses, seeing someone die, domestic violence, sexual assault, imprisonment, terrorism, and war. Trauma is the reaction to a distressing event and can include feelings of worry, being overly alert, and experiencing flashbacks ("War trauma, anxiety, and mental health solutions," 2022)

In the novel war-related themes such as difficulties, trauma, hopelessness, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), and escape are prominent.

"There is a possibility that the force of the explosion or the bright light damaged the retina in some way, but it is also possible that the blindness you are experiencing is the result of severe trauma – sometimes our bodies can find ways to cope when we are faced with things that are too much for us to bear. You saw your son die, Mrs Ibrahim, and maybe something in you had to shut down." (Lefteri, 2019, p. 98).

The doctor thinks that Afra's blindness may be due to the intense mental shock from seeing her son Sami die, rather than from any physical injury. This disease, called conversion disorder or psychogenic blindness, happens when severe emotional stress shows up as physical problems. Afra's blindness acts as a way for her to protect herself—her mind makes her unable to see because what she has seen is too painful to handle. This shows how the human body can respond to severe stress in ways that affect more than just feelings. The phrase means that our bodies have a way of handling difficult situations, showing that trauma can impact us both mentally and physically. In Afra's situation, her blindness represents her unwillingness or failure to face her sadness. By not looking at her surroundings, she prevents herself from seeing memories of the son she lost. This shows how she is pulling away from life; she starts to rely on Nuri and feels disconnected from what is happening around her. Afra is blind in a physical way and also in a symbolic way. She can't see in a physical sense, but she is also unable to recognize the chance to move on and heal mentally. Nuri

can see physically but has trouble facing his feelings. He ignores his pain and often hides his emotions. The difference between Afra's actual blindness and Nuri's symbolic blindness adds to the book's themes of loss, pain, and survival. Afra's blindness can symbolize her feelings of guilt. She may unknowingly feel that she doesn't deserve to see the world anymore since her son can't see it. Her situation shows that stress impacts not just the mind, but changes a person's whole life. This text shows how war causes harm not just through physical damage, but in many other serious ways too. Afra's condition comes from the mental damage that war causes people. Afra "shuts down," showing that some losses are too painful to deal with. Her blindness protects her from fully dealing with Sami's death. Afra is bodily safe, but she is still stuck in her trauma. Her blindness shows that she cannot move on and reconnect with the world.

"Then Mustafa moved away from the table, put on his glasses and carefully sharpened the   small pencil with a knife, and, sitting down at his desk, he opened the black book and wrote: Name – My beautiful boy. Cause of death – This broken world." (Lefteri, 2019, p. 160).

This quote shows a very sad moment in The Beekeeper of Aleppo, showing the deep pain and loss caused by war. Mustafa, Nuri's cousin and best friend, has just lost his teenage son, Firas, to the harsh violence in Syria. Instead of writing down the death in a formal way, he notes it in his black book with deep sadness and a sense of ending. The word "my beautiful boy" shows the love and care he has for his son, emphasizing how special and unique this loss is. Mustafa avoids writing a typical cause of death like "gunshot wound" or "killed in conflict"; instead, he says "this broken world." This choice blames the overall destruction and harshness of war rather than on any single person or event. It shows his deep sadness and realization that his son's death is not just a single event, but part of a bigger problem in the world. Sharpening the small pencil with a knife before writing adds to the feeling of the moment, showing both carefulness and some hurt. This means that Mustafa is not only noting down something that happened but is also expressing his deep sadness in a meaningful way. This text highlights the pointless nature of war, where innocent people die not because of their own decisions but because the world has turned into a place of harm and suffering. It shows a heartbroken father who, despite being smart and strong, feels helpless against such cruelty.

"I didn't want to think about Sami. I never want to think about Sami. I looked up at the vast sky and stars and they morphed into images that I could not dispel from my mind." (Lefteri, 2019, p. 146).

Nuri's feelings of sadness and pain are clear in this part, as he tries to push away thoughts of his son, Sami. The phrase "I didn't want to think

about Sami" is repeated. "I don't want to think about Sami," shows how much he is trying to escape the pain of losing him. Even though he tries hard, his mind fails him, and memories come back without him wanting them to. Looking up at the wide sky and stars is meant to provide a break from his pain. However, instead of feeling comforted, the emptiness makes him more aware of his sadness. The stars changing into images show how stress alters how we see things, making even the most beautiful and calm parts of nature remind him of his pain and loss. This moment shows that Nuri can't control his thoughts. His sadness is so strong that it affects even the simple act of looking at the night sky. The word "morphed" indicates a change that he can't control, highlighting that his pain is not something he can just ignore. He always remembers Sami, which influences his life and makes him feel a strong sense of loss. This passage shows that sadness is unavoidable. No matter how hard he tries to stop thinking about it, he can't escape the feeling of his son's absence.

"Elpida?" I nodded. "Zitas Elpida?" The man lowered his face and mumbled something in Greek. Then he said, "Are you asking for hope? Elpida mean hope. No hope here." (Lefteri, 2019, p. 123).

Nuri meets a man in Greece and asks him about Elpida, thinking it is a place or a shelter. The man's reply shows a harsh irony. Elpida means "hope" in Greek, but instead of helping, he simply says, "There's no hope here." This conversation is important because it shows how the refugees in Greece feel. They came looking for safety but found sadness and a lack of progress instead. The man's reaction shows that many people who have risked a difficult trip have lost their hope. This supports the book's themes of being lost and uncertain. He lowers his face and speaks quietly, which shows that he feels tired, disappointed, and maybe even ashamed, like he once had hoped but no longer believes in it. His words reveal a harsh reality—refugees escaping war aim to create new lives, but often find themselves stuck in a complicated system, dealing with red tape, being turned away, and experiencing more pain. This moment highlights the theme of hopelessness in the book, showing how language serves as a painful reminder of broken dreams. For Nuri, who is already dealing with loss and pain, hearing that there is "no hope here" is heartbreaking. It adds to his fear that he may never find a better life. This scene shows the tough truth of being displaced, where hope is not certain and can quickly disappear.

"Athens was a place of stagnant resignation, and Angeliki's words played on my mind: 'This is the place where people die slowly, inside. One by one, people die'" (Lefteri, 2019, p. 82).

Athens, a city meant to be a safe place and a fresh start, instead feels like a place of sadness and dread for refugees like Nuri and Afra. The word

"stagnant resignation" means feeling stuck, as if time has stopped, with no way to move ahead. Unlike the quick damage of war, Athens is described as a place where people "die slowly, inside." This means they slowly lose their sense of identity, purpose, and hope. Angeliki's words show the emotional impact of being forced to leave home. Many people flee from war but end up trapped in confusing paperwork, unable to work, fit in, or make progress in their lives. The phrase "one by one, people die" highlights the emotional and mental struggles of those who have escaped. It shows that surviving isn't just about getting away from war; it's also about having the strength to continue living. The word "inside" shows that this isn't a physical death, but a slow wearing away of the spirit. Refugees deal with sadness, fear, and feeling like they have no control over their futures. This section shows the novel's theme of hopelessness, showing that being in exile and waiting can be as harmful as war.

"Have you experienced any flashbacks, Mr Ibrahim?" "How do you mean?" "Any repetitive or distressing images?" "Not at all." "Trembling, nausea or sweating?" "No." "How is your concentration?" "Fine." "Do you feel numb, as if you have lost your ability to experience emotions such as pain or joy?" (Lefteri, 2019, p. 100).

Nuri is assessed by an official or medical professional, who is evaluating him for signs of trauma, likely in connection with his asylum application. The questions being asked are classic indicators of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which Nuri suffers from, yet he denies every symptom. His immediate response, "How do you mean?" suggests either genuine confusion or an attempt to deflect, as if he is unwilling or unable to acknowledge his trauma. His repeated denials—claiming he does not experience distressing images, physical symptoms like trembling or nausea, or emotional numbness—demonstrate his deep-seated suppression of his suffering. This exchange highlights how trauma often manifests in ways that victims do not immediately recognize or admit, especially when they are focused on survival.

Nuri's insistence that his concentration is "fine" and his avoidance of acknowledging his emotional numbness suggests that he is either in denial about his condition or fears that admitting to his psychological struggles could jeopardize his asylum claim. His responses also reflect a common trait in trauma survivors: the reluctance to confront their pain directly. Instead of acknowledging his suffering, Nuri buries it, believing that keeping his emotions locked away is the only way to move forward. However, throughout the novel, it becomes clear that this repression only deepens his internal suffering, as he continues to be haunted by memories of war, loss, and his journey as a refugee.

"But I woke up in the middle of the night to the sound of screaming, and a whistling in the sky, a bomb tearing through the darkness. I sat upright, my body wet, my head pounding, the darkness around me pulsating." (Lefteri, 2019, p. 135).

This text clearly shows Nuri's struggle with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) as he remembers the terrible events of war while he sleeps. The phrase "I woke up in the middle of the night" shows that there is a feeling of distress. It suggests that his past suffering still affects him now, even in what should be a safe place. The "sound of screaming" and the "whistling in the sky" remind him of Syria, where bombs would fly through the air before landing. The word "whistling" gives a creepy, almost robotic feeling to the damage, highlighting how deeply these memories are stuck in his mind. The image of a "bomb tearing through the darkness" shows a strong difference between the quiet of the night and the sudden chaos of war, representing how trauma disrupts the peace. His reaction—sitting up straight, sweating, and with a pounding head—shows a panic response. This is a typical symptom of PTSD, where the body reacts as if there is still danger. The last part, "the darkness around me pulsating," shows confusion and a mix of real life and memories, as if the fear he felt before is still felt now. This passage shows how much war has impacted Nuri. Even though he has left Syria, he still carries the pain in his mind and cannot feel completely safe or relaxed.

"When I looked up from the ground, I saw that I'd reached a checkpoint. Two soldiers stood in my path. They both held machine guns. One of them wore a checked keffiyeh. The other one took a gun from the back of a truck and pushed it against my chest." (Lefteri, 2019, p. 205).

This passage shows a frightening moment in Nuri's trip, highlighting the ongoing danger and fear refugees experience while fleeing from war. The scene starts with him looking up from the ground, showing signs of tiredness, giving up, or feeling hopeless. But then he realizes he has reached a stop. Checkpoints in war zones often represent control, inequality, and the uncertainty of life, since soldiers decide who can go through and who cannot. The sight of two soldiers with machine guns creates a scary feeling, making it clear that violence could happen at any time. One soldier is wearing a checked keffiyeh, which is a traditional Middle Eastern scarf. This scarf has cultural and political meanings and is often linked to different groups involved in the war. The most shocking moment occurs when another man grabs a gun from the back of a truck and presses it against Nuri's chest, showing just how quickly his life could be in danger. Pressing the gun to his chest shows power and fear, making him feel helpless in front of armed men. This moment shows how helpless civilians are in war, where their life depends not on their own decisions but on the choices

of those in power. It shows the harsh truth that Nuri and many others face, where every move they make could be deadly. His escape from Syria is not just a trip; it's a continuous struggle to stay alive.

"I was stopped by the army. They held a gun to my chest." (Lefteri, 2019, p. 207).

This short but strong line shows Nuri's fear, feeling helpless, and loss of control as a civilian in a war. The straightforwardness of the sentence reflects the sudden and frightening experience. "Being 'stopped by the army' means soldiers are randomly using their power, deciding what happens to the people they stop without any consequences." The phrase "held a gun to [his] chest" shows how serious and personal the threat to his life was. Putting the gun at his heart represents both physical danger and mental harm. This moment shows how war can make people feel less human, seeing them as just barriers or threats instead of individuals with families, fears, and dreams. For Nuri, this meeting is not only about the threat to his safety but also about how war affects his mind. He understands that his life relies on things he cannot control. The simple wording removes the extra feeling, making the threat even more frightening because it's so direct. This moment emphasizes the main idea in the book that war takes away safety, stability, and dignity, leaving fear and uncertainty behind.

"We found ourselves enclosed in barbed wire, and before us was a grim village with immaculate concrete walkways, wire mesh fences and white gravel. There were rows and rows of square boxes for people to stay in until they got their papers. An empire of identification." (Lefteri, 2019, p. 220).

This quote is about a refugee camp. It is supposed to provide a safe place to live, but it often feels more like a prison. The word "enclosed in barbed wire" clearly shows a feeling of being trapped. It highlights that even though Nuri and Afra have escaped war, they are still not truly free. The description of the "grim village" contrasts with the "clean concrete walkways," showing a forced neatness that doesn't hide the camp's dark and lifeless feel. The "wire mesh fences" show that this place limits movement and is meant to control people, not make them feel comfortable. The repeated phrase "rows and rows of square boxes" shows how dull and uniform everything is, making the refugees lose their personality and be seen just as people in numbered spots. These "boxes" represent how displaced people are seen as numbers rather than individuals with their own stories, goals, and identities. The term "an empire of identification" stands out. It implies that the whole system is focused on bureaucracy, where a person's identity depends on having the correct documents. Instead of finding safety, the refugees are stuck in a situation where they are just papers waiting

for approval. This line points out an important theme in the novel: the irony that escaping war does not always lead to freedom. Many refugees end up in a new situation that takes away their dignity and control over their lives.

All in all, Afra's blindness is a reaction to the deep mental pain of seeing her son die, showing how strong feelings can affect the body in real ways. Instead of confronting the painful truth, she shuts down her mind, representing her deep sadness, guilt, and disconnect from reality. Mustafa wrote about his son's death in his black book, showing his deep sadness. He doesn't blame a specific reason for the loss but rather says it is due to "this broken world," showing his feeling of powerlessness and the meaninglessness of war. Nuri is dealing with sadness and tries to push away the thoughts of Sami, but he can't escape them. Even the night sky brings back painful memories. The refugees' hope is crushed in Greece, where the word "Elpida," which means hope, ironically highlights their sadness and supports the book's theme of lost dreams. Instead of giving refugees a new beginning, Athens makes them feel stuck and causes them to slowly lose their sense of who they are and why they matter.

When questioned about PTSD, Nuri denies all symptoms, either unwilling or unable to acknowledge his trauma, revealing his deep repression and the survival instincts that prevent him from confronting his pain. He is hurting. He has night terrors that bring back past horrors, making him feel scared all the time. War takes away people's safety, dignity, and control. This is shown when Nuri is threatened with a gun, highlighting his lack of power and the unpredictable nature of life. After fleeing Syria, refugees often end up in places that feel like jails, like refugee camps surrounded by barbed wire, where they are treated as just numbers waiting to be identified. The Beekeeper of Aleppo shows that war doesn't just take lives; it also leaves deep emotional wounds, making life a constant struggle.

Conclusion

Christy Lefteri's The Beekeeper of Aleppo deeply examines the experiences of refugees, focusing on the mental and emotional struggles of people escaping war. The book gives a detailed look at trauma, strength, and the search for belonging. Lefteri's story shows the lasting emotional damage that war and being forced to flee can cause. Nuri and Afra, the main characters, struggle with deep personal losses and painful memories from their past. Their trip shows that many refugees experience trauma. Studies support this by showing high rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) among them. A study on Syrian refugees in Turkey showed that about one-third of the people surveyed had PTSD. Women and those who experienced repeated traumatic events were more likely to have this

condition (Alpak et al., 2015). This matches Afra's character, where her psychosomatic blindness represents the strong effect of her traumatic events. The book also points out how media and public discussions often disrespectfully treat refugees. Lefteri highlights Nuri and Afra's human stories to show that refugees are more than just numbers. He emphasizes their feelings, backgrounds, and dreams. This method matches the views of experts who argue that refugees should be seen as individuals with their own unique experiences, not as one large group (Khazne, 2024). These images help people feel empathy and understand the struggles of refugees better. They encourage readers to look past stereotypes and see our common humanity. Lefteri's work shows how personal suffering connects with larger social and political issues. The characters face problems not just within themselves, but also with outside processes that make it hard for them to find safety and stability. This complexity shows the various problems refugees deal with, including mental health issues and obstacles in the system. Studies of the novel show that stories like this can effectively express the complexities of the refugee experience, providing insights that add to factual study (Daukšaitė-Kolpakovienė, 2022). The novel reminds us of the strong human spirit in tough times. The book tells the story of Nuri and Afra, showing the difficult experiences of being displaced. It encourages readers to see both the struggles they face and the strength and hope that can still exist even in tough times. Lefteri's work helps people understand the refugee experience better, creating a kinder and more knowledgeable conversation about migration and seeking protection.

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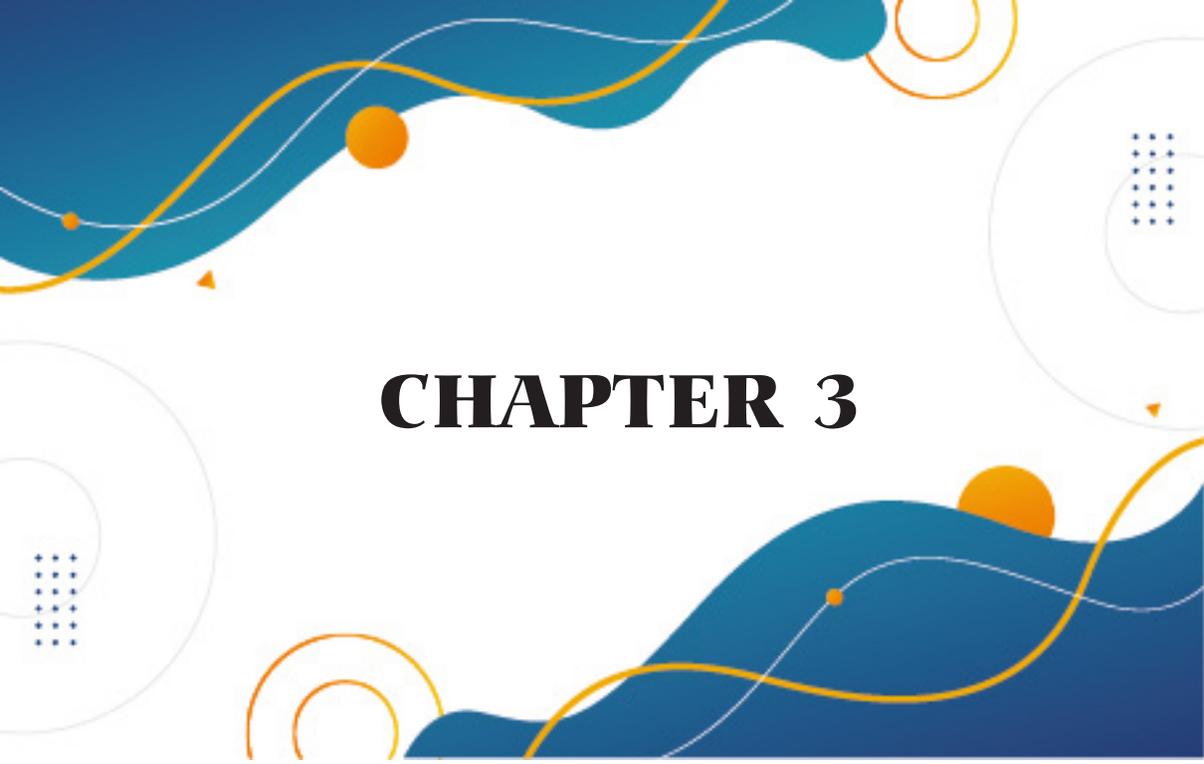
CHAPTER 3

RULING BODIES, RUINED LIVES: COLONIALISM AND PATRIARCHAL CONTROL IN THE GRASS IS SINGING[1]

Mustafa KARA[2]

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2   Dr., Çukurova University, School of Foreign Languages, Department of Foreign Languages, Adana, Turkey, ORCID: 0000-0001-7464-4536, mustafakara@live.com.

Third World Feminism is a movement that promotes the rights of women in Third World countries who are subjected to the sexual discrimination and repercussions of colonial powers. This is due to the fact that these societies are patriarchal and colonially structured. Unlike Western feminist movements, which primarily concentrate on gender-based oppression, Third World Feminism emphasises the intersectionality of race, class, and imperialism, thereby emphasising how colonial rule exacerbates the subjugation of women. The consequences of colonial domination in Third World countries are multifaceted, including the establishment of rigid social hierarchies that prioritise European values, the erasure of indigenous traditions through the imposition of the colonizer's culture, and systemic racism. The colonised are frequently alienated from their cultural heritage as a result of formal education and language policies that reinforce these consequences. Additionally, colonialism intensifies gendered oppression by imposing Western patriarchal norms that frequently diminish women's agency more severely than traditional pre-colonial structures, in addition to further entrenching racial divisions. Women are subjected to a double level of marginalisation in these societies: the patriarchal order within their own communities and the colonial system that perpetuates their subordination.

As a considerably influential author, Doris May Lessing, born in Persia and then moved to Southern Rhodesia as a teenager, endeavours to blend her anti-capitalist and feminist thoughts in *The Grass is Singing*. Experiencing the privilege of a white woman in the Dark Continent as well as acknowledging certain problems of living in a colonial country, Lessing posits that the concepts of race and nation are intricately interconnected with matters of gender and class (Watkins, 2007, p. 98) since "the British colonial state established a particular form of rule through the bureaucratization of gender and race specifically in terms of the institution of colonial service" (Mohanty, 2003, p. 59) .

The Grass is Singing provides a captivating examination of the themes mentioned above. The tragic life of its protagonist, Mary Turner, serves as a nuanced critique of patriarchal and colonial oppression. Lessing's novel, which is a realist work and is set in colonial Rhodesia, reveals the deeply ingrained social hierarchies that govern the lives of both the indigenous population and white settlers. The novel exposes the interconnected systems of domination that colonialism and patriarchy operate in, placing women in a precarious position where they are both victims of male authority and complicit in the racial structures that maintain colonial rule. In contrast to their privileged middle-class Western counterparts, women in colonised societies endure a form of oppression that is inextricably linked to the broader forces of imperialism, rendering their challenges distinctively intricate.

The central character, Mary Turner, embodies the paradox of colonial femininity. She is both a victim of the patriarchal expectations imposed upon her and a beneficiary of white privilege. She is an introverted Caucasian woman who lives in colonial Rhodesia. She is unable to fully integrate into the indigenous world that surrounds her and is not fully accepted within the rigid structures of settler society. Her worldview has been influenced by her upbringing in a white colonial environment, which has simultaneously deprived her of personal freedoms and instilled in her a sense of superiority over the Black population. Mary is still constrained by the expectations of her gender, despite her racial privilege. She is socialised to the notion that a woman's value is determined by domesticity and marriage. Ultimately, she is compelled to enter into a marriage that she perceives as obligatory rather than desirable when she fails to comply with these social norms during her youth. This is a necessary step in order to achieve value within the patriarchal colonial order.

Mary's pursuit of autonomy within this oppressive framework is articulated in intricate and frequently contradictory manifestations. She endeavours to establish control over her life by adhering to strict personal standards and attempting to establish authority over those she considers inferior, particularly the Black farmworkers. Nevertheless, her psychological decline culminates in her tragic demise, as she becomes increasingly estranged from her husband, her social circle, and the broader colonial community. Not only is her violent death at the hands of Moses, a Black servant, a personal tragedy, but it also serves as a symbolic confrontation with the power dynamics that govern colonial society. Lessing critiques the dehumanising effects of colonialism through Mary's character, demonstrating how both white women and indigenous people are entrapped within a system that is designed to maintain racial and gendered hierarchies.

This chapter will analyse the ways in which Mary's subjugation under the colonial-patriarchal order is influenced by the issues of race, class, objectification, assimilation, and alienation in *The Grass is Singing*, as seen through the lens of Third World Feminism. This study will elucidate the broader implications of Mary's struggle, particularly in relation to the role of women in colonised societies, by examining the methods she employs to navigate and resist these oppressive structures. Ultimately, Lessing's novel functions as a potent commentary on the interconnectedness of imperialism and gender, exposing the catastrophic repercussions of a system that denies women agency while simultaneously exploiting racial divisions to maintain power.

Colonialism as a Means of Patriarchal Torture

It is plausible to assert that culture, which is encoded and shaped by the patriarchal system, significantly impacts the formation of gender roles and the process of objectification. The system mandates certain responsibilities for women, including wifehood, motherhood (with mothers of sons enjoying greater privilege than those of daughters), widowhood, sisterhood, sexual partnership, single womanhood, and married womanhood. Analysing the novel through the lens of roles dictated by the indigenous society reveals that Mary is harmed due to her defiance of these standards, as she perceives herself as an outsider to the culture and its associated challenges. In her pursuit of autonomy over her body, with the issues that challenge her uniqueness and subjectivity, Mary endures a challenging process of societal and cultural affirmations, which exacerbates her increasing loneliness and estrangement from others. While her success in achieving her objective is debatable, it is certain that she endures significant hardship due to her steadfast refusal to relinquish her own independence. This clearly emphasizes that women cannot advocate for the necessity of action for freedom; instead, they are permitted to negotiate within the parameters established by patriarchy. Katrak (2006) asserts that female protagonists, regardless of their negotiation—whether opposing, conforming to, or rejecting tradition—experience self-exile and a disconnection from their identities, particularly in relation to their feminine bodies (p. 158). Mary's imprisonment in physical and spiritual loneliness, along with her neurosis, is consequently attributed to her disconnection from the prevailing practices and culture of her environment following her marriage. Moreover, her misjudgements and difficulties in adaption before to marriage significantly contribute to her objectification by conventional representations.

Mary, a single lady embodying "the comfortable carefree existence" (Lessing, 2007, p. 35), is self-sufficient and independent, employed as a secretary in an office and residing in a girls' club populated by numerous young women who pursue their individual lifestyles. The societal pressure is something young girls do not perceive until they reach an age where they are compelled to marry a spouse, enabling them to live securely under their partner's protection, free from potential threats from others around them. Regrettably for her, although Mary "seemed indifferent to the men" (Lessing, 2007, p. 38), she was compelled to marry due to the chatter among the girls over her youthful appearance, which suggested that men were reluctant to wed her. Nonetheless,

[i]f she had been left alone she would have gone on, in her own way, enjoying herself thoroughly, until people found one day that she had turned imperceptibly into one of those women who have become old without ever having been middle-aged: a little withered, a little acid, hard as nails, sen-

timentally kindhearted, and addicted to religion or small dogs. (Lessing, 2007, pp. 38-39)

The conventional society prohibits her from pursuing her intended life or living freely, as she cannot remain unmarried according to implicit norms. The club's girls see that "she just isn't like that, isn't like that at all" (Lessing, 2007, p. 40); her autonomy is compelled to fracture by societal conventions, as she must fulfil her obligations as a wife and mother. Her reluctance towards marriage is compromised by prevailing conventions that impair her autonomy. Her initial troubled contemplation arises when she reflects on her friends' statements, "she took the ribbon out of her hair, though with regret, … and bought herself tailor-made clothes, in which she felt ill at ease, because she felt truly herself in pinafore frocks and childish skirts" (Lessing, 2007, p. 41). Her hesitancy suggests that she sheds her persona upon discarding her dresses and youthful skirts, which have highlighted her individuality and lifestyle. By abandoning them, Mary initiates her journey into a life replete with societal constraints and mandates, ultimately culminating in an unwelcome conclusion that she must confront at the novel's end. Certain traditionally accepted female roles, shown by the expectations placed on solitary women like Mary Turner, lead to significant psychological distress, undeniably stemming from their physical disconnection from their bodies (Katrak, 2006, p. 159). Consequently, Mary is in search of a spouse; yet, "it might have been anybody. Or rather, it would have been the first man she met" (Lessing, 2007, p. 44).

This shift undoubtedly stems from societal conventions that render Mary helpless, dependent, and inadequate.

The woman who was once admired and loved by the society is disqualified because of her sloppy appearance and unpolished manners. She comes back and ultimately resigns herself to the traditional role of a woman, that is, of looking after her home and husband. (Ahmed, January, 2013, p. 15)

Dick Turner, Mary's husband, has already predetermined the role she should fulfil within the farmhouse, as she "was a practical, adaptable, serene person, who would need only a few weeks on the farm to become what he wanted her to be" (Lessing, 2007, pp. 49-50). This serves as a reflection of the patriarchal society. The term *adaptable* is essential, as it encompasses the patriarchy's ability to mould women in a manner that serves and sustains their system, thereby maintaining women's subservience and dependence on men. Additionally, the community's self-durability is enhanced by the extent to which the women are isolated from their own bodies, individualities, subjectivities, and freedom. This is due to the fact that "tradition is problematically ahistoricized, so that cultural traditions

are presented in dominant ideologies as timeless and totalizing" (Katrak, 2006, p. 159). As long as the processes of objectification and otherization are in practice within the society, the patriarchy can remain renewable and continue to define the roles of women within the society. Although Mary is inexperienced, she believes that it would be possible for her to be "her own mistress: that was marriage, what her friends married for – to have homes of their own and no one to tell them what to do. She felt vaguely that she had been right to marry – everyone had been right" (Lessing, 2007, p. 51). Mary continues to be influenced by the collectives, which believe that it is virtuous for a woman to remain chaste and marry. She perceives her companions as the normative references within the society, unaware that they are also the victims of the traditional norms, which are causing them increasing burdens. This sustainability is the reason why Mary felt as though she was in her father's house upon her arrival at the farmhouse, rather than her husband's. This is due to the parallel nature of men, who are assigned similar roles by the patriarchal society, which subordinates and undervalues women, as well as renders them more inferior to the privileged gender. Consequently, the male gains a greater sense of respect and authority within society as a result of his marriage, while the female is compelled to relinquish control over her body and is compelled into a state of self-exile, becoming increasingly reliant on her husband.

In reality, Mary is not only responsible for the household chores, which she is assigned regardless of her previous opinions, but also for the store that Dick intends to establish in order to generate a substantial increase in revenue. Dick assigns Mary to another obligation by doing so, as he is the master of the house. Mary now perceives the authority as yet another instrument employed by Dick. Mary consents to work at the store, despite her aversion to the concept of a store due to her painful memories of her drunken father, who purchased alcohol despite their poverty. She rationalizes that "it would have been like arguing with destiny itself […] [and] there was nothing else she could do" (Lessing, 2007, p. 94). In this context, destiny may be assessed in two distinct manners: the prevailing fate, which pursues her despite her efforts to escape, and the patriarchal enforcements, which she is unable to breach despite her numerous attempts. Regrettably, this is not Dick's sole intention for Mary to continue; he also envisions her as the mother of his children, despite her aversion to giving birth and nursing a child. In summary, Mary sees motherhood as an additional obligation, "[f]or Dick a wife is a machine he can buy to produce offspring and provide companionship " (Yahya & Lalbakhsh, 2010, p. 8). Rather than her prescribed role as a mother, when Mary "thought of children, she saw her mother's face at her children's funeral. […] She liked other people's children but shuddered at the thought of having any of her own (Lessing, 2007,

p. 39). This, however, does not imply that Dick should harbour any type of sympathy for Mary, as he is the patronizing voice in the household, and as a result, the individuals in his vicinity are obligated to accommodate his needs and desires. Mary is required to fulfil her husband's sexual desires, regardless of their repulsiveness, in addition to bearing children, as per the impositions. Mary is taken aback when she sees the indigenous women feeding their infants in the vicinity of the store for which she is responsible: " the idea of a child's lips on her breasts made her feel quite sick; at the thought of it she would involuntarily clasp her hands over her breasts, as if protecting them from a violation" (Lessing, 2007, p. 95). Nevertheless, the violation is not of her breasts, but of her sexuality and her autonomy regarding her body. Mary's aversion to sexual intercourse is a result of the lack of privacy in their home, which necessitated her attendance at her mother and father's intercourses. Her mother endured significant emotional distress as a result of her father's masochistic and lustful behaviour. Nevertheless, Mary's mental health is so severely impacted by her loneliness and the roles that have been assigned to her that she surprisingly yearns for a baby to alleviate her loneliness and provide her with a focus for her energy and time, despite her initial aversion to the concept of a baby due to its helplessness, dependence, mess, and worry (Lessing, 2007, p. 135). Consequently, she is once again rendered a victim by the assimilative property of the indigenous culture, which operates in a synchronized manner. Nevertheless, Dick remains the decision-maker in this situation, despite Mary's aversion to having a child. He declines to have the infant, claiming that they are unable to afford one, thereby asserting his authority over Mary's body for the second time. Dick is permitted to utilize Mary's body as his own recreation, regardless of the consent of the owner of the body, thereby treating her "like a superior to a subordinate" (Lessing, 2007, p. 147). He does not initiate a reciprocal affair with his wife in accordance with the official law; rather, he officially acquires a body to objectify according to his own preferences through the capitalist property of patriarchy.

The society that Lessing depicts for us has the same characteristics and implements the same patriarchal ideology. Mary's father, Dick, Charlie Slatter, and even the native men are decision makers and dominators of individuals who take their superiority as natural and biological. […] In Turner's family Dick is the patriarch who makes decisions and designs the plans. It is Dick that decides what should be cultivated and raised. Although his plans are all on an impulse and never come to a happy end, he never lets Mary make any decisions. That is why Mary has to follow all Dick's miscalculations and suffer from knowing the bitter reality behind them and witnessing the upcoming failures. It is Dick who decides when they can have sex, when they may have children and when they cannot afford it.

It is Dick who decides to borrow money or not. And it is him that defines Mary's life and death by his indifference to her needs and his ignorance to the heat she has to tolerate. He applies his power to all things related to his wife and determines everything without any attention to her will or her urgent needs. (Yahya & Lalbakhsh, 2010, pp. 8-9)

While it is not a humane approach to discriminate against individuals based on their skin colour, it is evident that Mary is hierarchically inferior to the native males due to her disadvantageous gender, as per the novel's scope. Mary is repeatedly defeated by her subordinate, Moses, as their relationship develops, despite the fact that she senses her inherited animosity toward the indigenous people from the outset of the novel. The roles shift; initially, Mary exerted control over Moses due to his undervalued race; however, Moses ultimately assumes the role of the show's director due to his prerogative gender following Mary's neurotic condition. "Blackness and femininity are therefore conflated in the novel. In their relations to patriarchy and whiteness, they are shifting signifiers of power and impotence" (Grogan, 2011, p. 39). With this concept in mind, it is clear that Mary is in a state of flux between the two worlds: the external, imposing culture and her internal world, which is characterized by a yearning for individuality. In the same way that the country was colonized by white people, her sexual identity is also colonized by patriarchal normative norms. The relationship between Mary and Moses, the native servant, is also noteworthy due to the fact that the former experiences intense fear at the outset and throughout the novel as a result of the latter's presence. Consequently, Moses' existence is reminiscent of a form of apprehension regarding the strength and vitality of the patriarchal system. Mary acknowledges the source of her dread, which is the native presence, when she applies the whip to Moses' face.

He was a great hulk of a man, taller than any of the others, magnificently built, with nothing on but an old sack tied round his waist. As he stood there, frightened, he seemed to tower over her. On his big chest another red drop fell and trickled down to his waist. (Lessing, 2007, p. 119)

The narrator's depiction of Moses' physical appearance signifies his robust vitality, instilling in Mary a fear of potential retribution that she anticipates he may enact one day. This outcome, while anticipated given Mary's actions towards Moses, also illustrates the impact that Moses has had on Mary. Upon Moses's arrival to aid his mistress following a nightmare by providing her with a glass of water, Mary is once more engulfed by fear: "it was like a nightmare where one is powerless against horror: the touch of this black man's hand on her shoulder filled her with nausea; she had never, not once in her whole life, touched the flesh of a native" (Lessing, 2007, p. 151). She is unwilling to consume the water, as she is inevitably powerless; however, she is compelled to accept the offer since "'drink' [Moses] said

simply, as if he were speaking to one of his own women" (Lessing, 2007, p. 151). She is unable to dominate the black man due to her fear of his dark physique and the imposing masculine presence before her, reminiscent of a phallic symbol. As is argued by Frampton (2009), the contact of the African man jeopardizes Mary's social integrity. Both Mary's identity and that of the entire colonial society in which she resides are subtly altered with each occurrence of racial interaction (p. 20). Mary is apprehensive not only of the dark figure but also of his commanding presence. When Moses states, "Madame lie down, […] his voice [being] gentle, almost fatherly" (Lessing, 2007, p. 151), he assumes the role of a paternal figure, evoking in Mary the memory of the authoritative patriarchal figure prevalent in indigenous culture. Her escalating obsession and reliance on Moses are vividly illustrated when he, of his own volition, chooses to depart from the farm, prompting Mary to implore him to remain in tears. It contradicts the prevailing norm for a white woman to implore a black man to remain. Nevertheless, as previously stated, the roles have shifted. Moses represents the patriarchy, whereas Mary symbolizes women enduring indigenous patriarchal oppression in the region. Amidst the same subjugation,

[f]earfully, she did her work in the house, trying to keep out of his way; if he was in one room, she went to another. […] She dreaded hearing him speak, because now there was a new tone in his voice: familiar, half-insolent, domineering. (Lessing, 2007, p. 167)

She appears to be unconcerned with Moses, but rather with his vital and domineering presence, which serves as a reminder of her inferior status in comparison to men, regardless of their race. From that point on, "only [Moses] was powerful and sure of himself, and [Mary] was undermined with fear, by her terrible dream-filled nights, her obsession" (Lessing, 2007, p. 167). Moses serves as the patriarchal adversary to Mary's racial identity, evident when Mary capitulates to him following the turmoil of her nightmare.

There was a new relation between them. For she felt helplessly in his power. […] Her feeling was one of a strong and irrational fear, a deep uneasiness, and even – though this she did not know, would have died rather than acknowledge – of some dark attraction. It was as though the act of weeping before him had been an act of resignation - resignation of her authority; and he had refused to hand it back. (Lessing, 2007, p. 154)

Upon recognizing that Moses' authority undermines her racial privilege, Mary ceases to behave as though she is superior to him and that her whiteness grants her the power to dominate him. As Grogan Grogan (2011) also puts forth, once the concept of shared humanity across races is acknowledged, her white identity, which is based on her hierarchical superi-

ority to the black man, is unable to endure (p. 39). The narrator elucidates the inception of their relationship, which diverges from the colonizer group and is proscribed by unwritten laws imposed by that group, as it transcends the boundaries and limitations established by the colonizers. In doing so, both Mary and Moses discover that humanity emerges prominently when they liberate themselves from racist prejudices.

Another problematic issue that is inferred from the aforementioned incident is that Mary is unawares of the truth that she is drawn to having the sight of Moses, which is entirely inconsistent with societal and cultural norms. Charlie Slatter emphasizes, "[t]hou shalt not let your fellow whites sink lower than a certain point; because if you do, the nigger will see he is as good as you are" (Lessing, 2007, p. 178). In contrast, Mary violates this directive to the fullest; her intimate relationship with Moses serves as a catalyst for her suppressed sexuality. "She used to sit quite still, watching him work. The powerful, broad-built body fascinated her. […] [H]is muscles bulged and filled out the thin material of the sleeves until it seemed they would split" (Lessing, 2007, p. 142). The inherited and culturally necessary animosity toward the indigenous peoples that Mary has harboured since the inception of the novel decreases as time advances. Instead of harbouring animosity toward the black man, she develops a sense of compassionate intimacy with him. Consequently, "[w]hat had happened was that the formal pattern of black-and-white, mistress-and-servant, had been broken by the personal relation" (Lessing, 2007, p. 144). This, of course, results in additional severe repercussions within the spheres of both patriarchy and society. The novel commences with the murder of Mary, and it is evident that her punishment is satisfied by the avenger, Moses, who is dismissed from the farmhouse, thereby breaking the patriarchal enforcement on Mary, for "Moses is the one that imposes his own version of patriarchy and its related laws and rules on Mary" (Yahya & Lalbakhsh, 2011, p. 33). Moreover, the retribution is enacted by society through Moses, as Mary perpetrates a grave offense by violating racial boundaries, disregarding the esteemed norms of the patriarchal society and its conventional laws. Furthermore, when assessing her murder by Moses through a patriarchal lens, it becomes evident that Moses seeks retribution not only for the racial discrimination he endures but also for the patriarchal privileges he possesses, irrespective of his skin colour.

In order to support the indigenous male-dominated system, assimilation and alienation collaborate with other elements of Third World feminist thought. Consequently, racism and class, gender stereotypes and objectification, as well as tradition and resistance, are also subcomponents of Mary's assimilation and alienation, as they all contribute to her sense of isolation and the outsider effect. She becomes increasingly aware of these

emotions as she progresses in her quest to claim her identity as somebody, as a result of the societal norms that govern her existence. It is an undisputed fact that Mary is opposed to the process of assimilation by means of traditional and male-dominated encumbrances. This explains her status as an outsider within her community. Though the patriarchal system endeavours to achieve seamless integration via the prescribed standards set for a woman, which condition her for death, Mary never gets assimilated entirely.

As previously stated, "Mary felt ashamed of the poverty of her house, and yet superior because of her experience in the social life of the town" (Brewster, 1965, p. 35). Her acquaintances, financial independence, and lifestyle are profoundly alien to those in her farming community. Consequently, she becomes estranged from society; she is unable to discover anything or anyone that aligns with her lifestyle, resulting in increasing alienation from her husband and her surroundings. During the initial times following settling in at the farmhouse as Dick's spouse, she encounters difficulties in occupying her leisure time, as there are no activities aligned with her personal desires. Consequently, she is predisposed to decorative and embroidery tasks, although she is less enthusiastic about household chores. Nonetheless, even these innocuous activities are sufficient to cause concern for her husband regarding the potential undermining of his power and autonomy within the household. "What was she [Mary] going to do with all this energy and efficiency? It undermined his [Dick's] own self-assurance even further, seeing her like this, for he knew, deep down, that this quality was one he lacked" (Lessing, 2007, p. 62). Consequently, Dick, apprehensive about equating his gender with that of his wife, devises a solution by establishing a store, which will be advantageous for his prosperity and provide his wife with an outlet for her energy. Nevertheless, this fails to help Mary in discovering a personal significance relevant to her new lifestyle, enabling her integration into the new society. Conversely, she gets increasingly internalised, distancing herself from both her identity and the community, ultimately ensnared in a form of depression, which is an unavoidable consequence for a woman, as dictated by societal norms. "While the men are active, creative, immersed in and energized by their value-giving work, women are reduced to seeking definition through their husbands' work, slowly deteriorating into silent 'adjustment' or madness" (Markow, 1974, pp. 89-90). Mary is compelled to inhabit her own realm, disenchanted with agricultural concerns, sharing little in company with her husband aside from the mutual necessity for companionship, albeit for divergent reasons. Her creativity and productivity are rendered ineffective, unbeneficial to her husband, and jeopardising his autonomy. This drives her to the brink of insanity, which, as frequently noted in the literary works

of Doris Lessing, results from women's failings stemming from their inability to exist as autonomous individuals (Markow, 1974, p. 88).

Mary's physical and spiritual loneliness stems from her distinctiveness compared to other women, as she operates within the confines of societal roles prescribed for them. In the context of the Slatter family's farmhouse, Mary feels no attraction and is additionally taken aback by Dick's views on companionship. In response to Dick's attempts to convince Mary to increase her interactions with their neighbours to alleviate her loneliness, Mary believes she is not lonely; however, "she did not know that loneliness can be an unnoticed cramping of the spirit for the lack of companionship" (Lessing, 2007, p. 77). Mary yearns for physical solitude, as it shields her from the emotional isolation that compromises her autonomy due to the intrusions of those surrounding her. As Schlueter (1973) also argues, "[t]hroughout her life Mary had been isolated, both in fact and in feeling, and this isolation had created in her a feeling of non-involvement in the lives and feelings of others that she calls 'freedom'" (p. 14). Despite Mary's insistence on her physical solitude to evade spiritual isolation, she remains oblivious to the reality that she is, in truth, facilitating her own estrangement. Her seclusion increasingly exacerbates her solitary status within society. "If only she had something to fill her time – that was the trouble" (Lessing, 2007, p. 82). Regrettably, her activities are confined solely to tasks associated with the farmhouse or the care of the animals. With the passage of time, only one individual emerges who genuinely empathises with her, comprehending her true status as an outcast, an unwelcome presence within the household. Tony Marston depicts her condition with remarkable realism, articulating it from his own perspective:

She doesn't behave as if she were. She behaves simply as if she lives in a world of her own, where other people's standards don't count. She has forgotten what her own people are like. But then, what is madness, but a refuge, a retreating from the world? (Lessing, 2007, p. 187)

Her neurotic disorder stems from her refusal to conform to the patriarchal definitions of femininity, compounded by her isolation, which reinforces her identity as a woman distinct from her oblivious peers within the colonially constructed the patriarchal system The assimilation process, consequently, is ineffective for Mary, as her sole assimilative roles pertain to pastimes conducted at home, such as wall painting and needlework. Moreover, she is compelled to labour in the store recently established by her husband, which she initially resists and declines to engage in. Therefore, it is inappropriate to assert that Mary is integrated into the traditional way of life. As is proposed by Grogan (2011), "her community does not acknowledge her characteristics as part of its definition of itself: most damningly, she does not perform her colonial femininity 'correctly' because she does

not adequately adhere to the rules of racial engagement" (p. 32). She consistently endeavours to maintain her pre-marital existence; frequently, she seeks solace in her own reflections or, more accurately, succumbs to her habitual condition characterised by a vague mental disengagement (Lessing, 2007, p. 85). As time progresses, she becomes increasingly self-reliant and introverted, isolating herself from her surroundings and succumbing to a profound silence, which is undoubtedly a consequence of her ingrained culture; her state, resulting from external pressures and constraints, becomes an obligatory one. Her neurotic decline originates from her estranged body and spirit.

As there is no limit to the amount of sleep to which the human body can be made to accustom itself, she slept hours every day, so as to hasten time, so as to swallow great gulps of it, walking always with the satisfactory knowledge that she was another few hours nearer deliverance. Indeed, she was hardly awake at all, moving about what she did in a dream of hope, a hope that grew so strong as the weeks passed that she would wake in the morning with a sensation of release and excitement, as if something wonderful was going to happen that very day. (Lessing, 2007, p. 128)

Dreaming, as Marston the neighbour suggests, is a means of escape from the torment for Mary. Lessing puts forward how madness turns out to be a form of resistance in an interview with Jonah Raskin as follows:

[m]ental illness is part of mainstream. […] People who are called mentally ill are often those who say to the society, "I'm not going to live according to your rules. I'm not going to conform." Madness can be a form of rebellion. (Raskin & Lessing, 1970, p. 69)

Her neurosis serves as a defence mechanism to emphasise her resistance to patriarchy, oppression, and assimilation. She is so engrossed in her environment that fantasising is her sole aspiration for a slight alteration in her life. The terms *deliverance* and *release* are thus significant in deducing Mary's sentiments regarding her life on the farm with individuals who markedly differ from her former companions. Consequently, Mary undergoes significant retrospection and depression over time, as her recollections of the idyllic days in the girls' club and at the office enable her to endure her tedious, monotonous, alienating, and subjugated existence. She perceives herself as confined within a cage, anticipating her liberation or, more accurately, her demise, which ultimately is executed by Moses.

Despite Mary's efforts to withstand the prevailing circumstances and the constraints of the established order, she is unable to bear them for an extended period. She once argued with her husband regarding her standards for the household, exclaiming, "I won't let go my standards. I won't! Why should I? It's bad enough" (Lessing, 2007, p. 68). Nonetheless, it rep-

resents merely one of the countless insurrections she exhibits, as following such a defiant tone, she restrains herself and concedes that it is sufficiently unpleasant residing in a pigsty like their farmhouse (Lessing, 2007, p. 68). She is compelled to relinquish her standards. Nonetheless, her death demonstrates that she is not among those who are oppressed for an extended duration; rather, she acknowledges the inevitability of her demise at the hands of Moses and embraces this notion in lieu of persisting in her miserable and unremarkable existence. As a fully aware woman, she ultimately recognises that she "will come across [*Moses*], and it will all be over. […] He [will] save her! Somewhere in the trees *he* [is] waiting; somewhere in the vlei [is] the young man who [will] come before the night to rescue her" (Lessing, 2007, pp. 197-198). According to Lalbakhsh and Yahya (2011), "Lessing's engendered female character in *The Grass is Singing* proves herself a dynamic character who moves from some kind of naivety to the missionary status of a revolutionary New Woman who, resists, fights and subverts" (p. 33).

Thus, the male-dominated society and its subordinate elements fail to render Mary akin to the other women who are subservient to all that is thrust upon them. Mary's experience, while not a deliberate act of defiance, illustrates her isolation within a voiceless existence, neglected as she descends gradually under the oppressive forces of the system; nonetheless, her ultimate self-awareness prior to her demise is striking. However, her final patriarchal retribution is recognised by the community only posthumously following her execution by Moses, as the narrator states, "the crises of individuals, like the crises of nations, are not realized until they are over" (Lessing, 2007, p. 131).

Conclusion

Mary's journey in *The Grass is Singing* is a prime example of the devastating repercussions of colonial patriarchy on women, particularly in Third World contexts where oppression is exacerbated by both racial and gendered hierarchies. Mary's position as a white woman in a colonised land is contradictory; she is both a beneficiary of colonial privilege and a victim of the rigid patriarchal structures that define life on the farm. In addition to her personal struggles with gender roles, her alienation is rooted in the deeply ingrained systems of power that enforce strict boundaries between race, class, and femininity. The colonial order enforces social constraints that marginalise women even within their own communities, thereby reducing their autonomy more severely than Western patriarchal structures. Mary's inability to assimilate into her new life on the farm serves as a reminder of the collaborative efforts of colonialism and patriarchy

to eliminate women's agency, thereby depriving them of any viable means of self-determination.

The oppressive forces that govern the lives of women in colonised societies are underscored by her descent into psychological turmoil and ultimate demise. Mary is compelled to fulfil roles that are inconsistent with her identity, as she is expected to adhere to the domestic ideal and maintain the racial hierarchies that are required by colonial rule. However, her rejection of conventional femininity and her inability to negotiate the racial dynamics of colonial society ultimately establish her as an outsider. Her suffering is a testament to the way in which colonial patriarchy deprives women of power, thereby requiring them to navigate an existence that does not provide them with the opportunity for autonomy or fulfilment. The increasing isolation and psychological unravelling of Mary serve as an illustration of the ways in which women in these structures are either coerced into submission or relegated to the margins of society, where they are disregarded and ultimately destroyed.

Additionally, her madness serves as a rebellious act against the systems that endeavour to regulate her. Lessing depicts mental illness as a form of resistance to the oppressive limitations that Mary is subjected to, rather than merely as a symptom of her suffering. In the context of Third World Feminism, this breakdown can be interpreted as a response to the compounded oppression of colonial rule and patriarchal dominance, which deprives women of agency and recognition. Mary's yearning for escape, whether through dreams, detachment, or ultimately death, is indicative of the bleak reality that many women encounter when they are unable to conform to the expectations of their society.

The ultimate repercussion of a system that neglects to recognise the challenges faced by women until it is too late is her murder at the hands of Moses. Nevertheless, her death is not merely an act of violence; it is the result of years of internalised despair, alienation, and oppression. As such, Lessing underscores the fact that the structures of power that shape colonial societies remain unchallenged until their victims reach breaking points. Through Mary's tragic fate, Lessing exposes the manner in which women are silenced and erased by forces beyond their control, thereby criticising the intersection of race, class, and gender within colonial systems.

In conclusion, *The Grass is Singing* is a potent representation of Third World Feminist issues, emphasising the distinctive challenges that women encounter in patriarchal societies that are colonially structured. The inescapable constraints imposed on women who do not conform to the roles assigned to them are exemplified by Mary's life and death, which illustrate how colonialism and patriarchy collaborate to intensify female subjuga-

tion. The broader struggles of women who exist within these oppressive systems are underscored by Mary's experience. Women who, like Mary, are denied agency, forced into submission, and ultimately forgotten until their suffering reaches an irreversible breaking point. Lessing's portrayal of Mary's decline reveals the brutal realities of colonial rule and patriarchal domination, rendering *The Grass is Singing* a critical text for comprehending the intersectional oppression experienced by women in Third World contexts.

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