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Real Worlds and Text Worlds in Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing and Martha Quest*

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Abstract: This paper aims to analyze Doris Lessing's narrative techniques to explore how she developed the discourse of her stories and depicted her contemporary realities in her story worlds. It seeks to address the question of whether there is a relationship between her real world and her storytelling, and whether her ideology and personal background influenced her narrative approach. To accomplish this goal, we will analyze the novels *The Grass is Singing* and *Martha Quest* using Gavin's Text World Theory, a cognitive approach that provides a framework encompassing three levels of analysis: Discourse World, Text World, and Sub-Worlds. Our analysis reveals that the discourse of her stories closely mirrors her real-life discourse, indicating a direct relationship between her real worlds and her storytelling. Lessing's intricate descriptions of world-building elements, such as time, locations, characters, objects, and actions within the story, serve to advance the narrative forward through both material and existential processes. Moreover, her use of sub-worlds to express her yearning for freedom and justice reflects her critical viewpoints on the oppressive systems prevalent in her time, particularly colonization and racial issues. Furthermore, it becomes apparent that from 1944 to 1956, her storytelling method was influenced by her communist ideology. In essence, the concepts and themes represented in her stories emerge as reflections of her real-world experiences, effectively conveyed through her narrative techniques.

Keywords: Narrative Techniques; Discourse-Worlds; Text-Worlds; Sub-Worlds; Real Worlds; Represented Worlds.

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1. Introduction

Doris Lessing (1919-2013), one of the significant female writers of English literature in the 20th century, created a diverse arrange of literary works in various genres that led her to win the Nobel Prize in 2008. Throughout her prolific career, she produced more than 50 literary works, primarily focusing on the social and political issues of her time. Lessing was greatly influenced by her context and surroundings, including her family, friends, and the social and political affairs of her time. She experienced three ideological phases - communism, psychology, and Sufism - each leaving a significant impact on all aspects of her life and writings. Various themes permeate her narratives, including racial issues, socialism, conflicts, injustice, and discrimination.

Lessing's life was profoundly influenced by the two World Wars. Born a year after World War I, she grew up with parents who experienced the war firsthand; her father lost his leg serving as a soldier, while her strict and bigoted mother worked as a nurse during the conflict. Undoubtedly, their harrowing experiences affected family relationships. Additionally, the tumultuous period of World War II and the post-war conditions coincided with her youth and middle age, drawing her into political activism and the Communist Party. Lessing has always struggled to escape from the imposed restrictions in her life, which is evident in the characterization of the female protagonists in her stories. She lived under the shadow of war and conflict, and her life and writings reflect the impact of post-war conditions and conflicts.

Furthermore, relocating her family to Zimbabwe, a British colonial area, in pursuit of wealth through farming shaped most of her early life. She lived in Africa from age three until her thirties. Consequently, many of the world-building elements in her stories, such as time, characters, objects, and locations, are rooted in the African context, making her works akin to autobiographical narratives. Lessing has consistently endeavored to depict the social and political situations of her time in her works, aiming to convey her critical views to the reader.

Doris Lessing has consistently aimed to reflect the contemporary situation of her time in her stories and convey her critical views through her writings. This study seeks to investigate Lessing's narrative strategies for developing the world of her stories to convey her real-world experiences to the reader and to assess the extent to which the represented world mirrors the reality of Lessing's era. The researcher's primary inquiry in this study is to uncover the influence of Lessing's ideology and experiences on her narrative method. Understanding how she effectively communicates her unique

perspective and concerns to readers motivates us to explore her narrative techniques using a cognitive approach such as Gavins' Text-World Theory. This theory analyzes literary works on three levels: the discourse world, the text world, and sub-worlds, facilitating the study of both the real world (the author's lived experiences) and the text world (the represented world of the story), thereby advancing our research aims.

Therefore, the focus of this study is to examine how Lessing employs world-building elements, arranges them to shape narrative worlds, and effectively conveys her intended messages. To achieve this, her first novel, which marked the beginning of her professional writing career, *The Grass is Singing*, and *Martha Quest*, the inaugural novel of the Children of Violence series, will be selected to study Lessing's narrative techniques, utilizing the framework of Text World Theory. These novels reflect world-building elements that parallel Lessing's real world, including location, time, objects, and the personalities of characters. Furthermore, the actions and events depicted in these novels primarily revolve around themes of transition from constraint to freedom, tradition to modernity, and slavery to liberty, which are Lessing's ideal concepts and sources of satisfaction. In *The Grass is Singing*, the protagonist Mary endeavors to liberate herself from the limitations imposed by her surroundings through an act of escape. Similarly, in *Martha Quest*, Martha rebels against her mother's rules in a quest to establish a new and independent identity. Both novels feature main characters who actively pursue freedom and independence by challenging the prevailing traditions of their society, reflecting Lessing's personality and aspirations during her youth and adolescence.

Numerous studies have explored the two novels, *The Grass is Singing* and *Martha Quest*, from various critical perspectives, with the majority concentrating on structuralist analysis. In contrast, this article takes a cognitive study approach to delve deeper into Lessing's method of representing her discourse world and advancing her narratives. By employing this cognitive approach, our study aims to provide a fresh and unique perspective on the subject matter, shedding new light on the understanding of Lessing's storytelling techniques.

2. Literature Review

Various studies have been conducted on *The Grass is Singing* and *Martha Quest* by different critics and scholars. One of them is *Rereading Doris Lessing: Narrative Patterns of Doubling and Repetition*, which Claire Sprague has undertaken. She explores the repeated narrative patterns used by Lessing to create the background and plot of her stories, such as similarities between the personalities of Martha and Mary, the main characters of *The*

Grass is Singing and *Martha Quest*, the repetitive locations like the farm in the African colony in Zimbabwe, and the relationship between family members. Sprague analyzes Lessing's life and her experiences as a political activist, a student of psychological issues, and a follower of Idris Shah and the Sufism school. She examines how these elements are reflected in her stories (90-93). Sprague suggests that the reason for repeating the same elements in both novels is Lessing's autobiographical narrative (81). However, she does not delve into the influence of Lessing's experiences on her narrative style and literary works; instead, she focuses more on Lessing's language and diction. In Lessing's narrative connections, doubling, repetition, and dialectics catch her attention, and she argues that "form and content are intricately intertwined" (109).

Kate Rowlands in her M.A. thesis, *The Autobiographical Narrator in Doris Lessing's Children of Violence*, examines the Children of Violence series from the lens of Lanser's Narrative Distance to explore the shifting of narrators throughout the series. She analyzes each novel's narrators and compares them to Lessing's point of view. By providing insight into Lessing's life, she defines Children of Violence as "an autobiography with an autobiographical narrator" (7). The second chapter of her thesis is devoted to *Martha Quest*, where she identifies an omniscient third-person narrator who sees everyone's mind and views Martha with the irony of hindsight. Rowlands identifies the narrator of this novel as an autobiographical narrator because of the focus on Martha and the degree of overlap between *Martha Quest* and Doris Lessing's experiences. However, she does not examine Lessing's narrative techniques in response to her thought tendencies, despite evaluating the overlap between Martha's and Lessing's life.

Azza Khalil, in her article *Silence as Storytelling in Doris Lessing's The Grass is Singing*, analyzes the concepts of storytelling and silence as narrative techniques to convey the theme of colonization from the viewpoint of Critical Race Theory. Khalil argues that *The Grass is Singing* uniquely represents the concepts of apartheid and colonization. She explores the communication divide between minority and majority groups in the novel through their use of storytelling and silence. Khalil asserts "storytelling and silence in Lessing's novels are powerful tools that reveal the cultural and social aspects of both groups in the same society" (706). Additionally, she suggests "the unutterable thoughts of the decentralized characters in *The Grass is Singing* reflect the oppressive norms governing Rhodesian society due to colonialism and racism" (709). While Khalil's study is significant, it does not comprehensively cover Lessing's narrative techniques. Other aspects of her narrative methods have been ignored.

Jing Xiong explores the narrative time of *The Grass is Singing* from the viewpoint of structuralist scholars Genette and Rimmon-Kenan to analyze the relationship between story time and discourse time in terms of duration and order in her article *Narrative Time in The Grass is Singing*. Xiong tries to reveal the method of the narrator to arrange events and advance the plot of the story. Additionally, she analyzes the characters' attitudes toward the future and past time in the story through Kenan's analepsis and prolepsis. Xiong's study is a considerable contribution to the understanding of Lessing's narrative time techniques, although it only covers one aspect of time in the novel. From a cognitive viewpoint, changing time is one of Lessing's narrative techniques to transform the world of the story and advance the discourse, and this aspect is not explored in Xiong's study.

In general, *The Grass is Singing* and *Martha Quest* have been examined from various perspectives by different critics and scholars. These studies mainly discuss Lessing's narrative techniques from a structural lens. The present study adopts a cognitive approach and analyzes the novels using Text World Theory, which will be discussed in the following section.

3. Theoretical Framework: Text-World Theory

Gavins, in her book *Text World Theory: An Introduction*, presents her approach based on Werth's Text World Theory (1999). She posits that a narrative work, such as a novel, can be analyzed at three levels of "Discourse-World, Text-World, and Sub-World" (8). According to her, discourse world refers to the "immediate situation and context in which interaction or communication occurs" (24). This context encompasses the physical and social situation of the interaction, the individuals involved in the interaction. In other words, it refers to the previous experiences and physical surroundings that comprise the world of the participant, which in turn contribute to the participant's knowledge that she shares with her co-participants.

Text-World refers to the mental representation created in the reader's mind by a narrative work (32). It encompasses the way in which the discourse world is presented to the co-participants. Gavins defines that the construction of Text World relies on two elements: World-Building Elements and Function-Advancing Propositions. World-Building Elements consist of the building blocks that form the "textual background including time, location, object, and enactor, as well as the narrative events that take place within them" (28), and Function-Advancing Propositions refer to the "processes that drive the narrative forward and advance the discourse of the story" (ibid).

She argues that the function-advancing propositions create the "possibility of any event, occurrence, action, and interaction between objects and individuals in a story that drive the story forward and demonstrate changes throughout the narrative" (58). According to her, there are four types of processes that function as function-advancing propositions: material, mental, existential, and relational. These processes advance the discourse of the story "by moving and identifying the world-building elements" (59). Material processes, which refer to an actor's actions and events, are defined as any type of action or event in a discourse "identified by an actor" (ibid). Gavins divides material processes into two types: material intention process and material supervention process. Material intention processes occur "as a result of an actor's will, the actor is responsible for the action performed" (60). On the other hand, material supervention processes have "no deliberate will behind them and can be seen as related actions that appear to take place by accident" (ibid).

Mental processes, according to her, are "cognitive activities in the mind rather than physical actions of the body" (62). When a perception is described in a process of cognition, such as thinking and remembering, the advancing process of discourse takes the form of psychology verbs. Therefore, the role of the participant in this type of process is not as an actor but as a sensor (ibid). Existential processes, on the other hand, describe the "existence of an element in a text world" (64). When the narrator wants to depict the physical world of her story in the mind of the reader, she advances the discourse through this advancing process. For example, describing the store, house, street, and garden to create the image of the background of the story in the mind of the reader. The relational process advances the discourse of the story by "describing supernatural elements in an unknown time and place" (68). This process usually is employed in poems and imaginary stories. To analyze the method of discourse advancement of the story, the researcher should analyze the processes and identify their types.

Sub-Worlds, consists of "unrealized worlds that are remote from their creation, they emerge from the main text world of the discourse" (94). They are achievable through linguistic functions to express and convey complex emotional states and abstract concepts. Gavins states that the aspects of language that represent the attitude of a speaker or writer are grouped "under the title of Modality" (91), and Boulomaic-Modal Worlds, Deontic-Modal Worlds, and Epistemic-Modal Worlds are three categories of the modal worlds described by her. Boulomaic-Modal World is an emerged world from the main text world which "conveys the attitudes or inner wishes of the enactor" (98). In Deontic-Modal Worlds, the narrator aims to "control the co-participant of the discourse"

(99). In Epistemic-Modal Worlds, the narrator aims to "manipulate the knowledge and belief of her co-participant through language" (100).

The present study aims to utilize the theoretical framework of Text-World to analyze the three levels present in Lessing's novels, *The Grass is Singing* and *Martha Quest*, both written during the early years of her fiction career. The researcher aims to identify the worlds and discourses portrayed by Lessing, as well as the narrative techniques she employs in these early stories. To achieve this, the initial step involves a thorough reading of both novels, followed by a comparison of the depicted worlds with Lessing's personal experiences. Subsequently, the analysis will concentrate on the World Building Elements and Function Advancing Propositions, which play crucial roles in constructing the text. By examining these elements, the aim is to uncover the processes of advancing the discourse and the specific methods of narration employed by Lessing. Finally, the study will explore the modal operators to examine the sub-worlds presented in the novels, thereby identifying the attitudes that Lessing intends to convey to the reader.

4. Analysis

The Grass is Singing narrates the story of Mary, a British girl who lives in a colony in South Africa. Growing up in a dysfunctional family with a drunken father and an aggressive mother who adheres to traditional cliché, Mary runs away from home and moves to the city. She lives in a girls' club and finds a job. Although she attains the happy and independent life she desires, social traditional rules criticize her unmarried status. Consequently, she decides to marry the first person who proposes to her. Dick Turner, an unlucky farmer, accidentally proposes to her, and she marries him, moving to the farm and starting a new life that is far from her happy and independent life in the girls' club.

Dick forces Mary to accept and respect Moses, the black servant, whose masculinity and strong body attract Mary. She falls into an unwanted relationship with her black servant, which is the result of emotional shortage and desperation. Capitulating a white woman to a black man subverts the relationship rule between the whites and the blacks in the African colony. The false relation leads to the killing of the white woman by the black man.

Martha Quest, the first novel of the Children of Violence series, was published in 1952. It is the story of an adolescent girl who lives with her British parents on a farm in Rhodesia, a British colony in South Africa. Martha is a rebel who seeks individual freedom by defying traditional principles imposed on her by her family, especially her

mother, and society. She is a socially educated and interested in current issues and connects with intellectual people. Her mother is a stern woman who interferes in all aspects of Martha's life, from her dress style to her reading material. Martha's first act of rebellion is removing the apron from her dress because she likes to display her body. She attends parties where girls and boys dance, drink, and make love together. Martha leaves her family and moves to the town, and a new discourse opens in the story. She learns new skills, finds new friends, and joins a youth club that holds Left thought tendencies. One of her friends, Douglas, a Scottish-educated man encourages Martha to write and read books. He plans to return to Britain, and Martha marries him to leave Africa and go to Britain.

4.1. Discourse World

According to Greene, Lessing has always been "a proponent of individual freedom, actively striving to challenge and break societal, cultural, and even legal and political restrictions that hindered her autonomy" (7). In quoting Lessing, Greene asserts that "limitations that constrain one's life should be shattered" (10). Schlueter highlights "Lessing's daring actions during her lifetime that few others would have dared to undertake, such as escaping from a convent school, leaving her family, and even separating from her husband and children" (45).

When we read Lessing's biography and know her life's experiences and events, we find that mostly the represented world of her stories affinity a lot to real world's Lessing. In other words, her works are clear representations of her life and worldview, and her discourse world is derived from her real-life experiences. For example, in *The Grass is Singing* and *Martha Quest*, the characters 'Mary' in *The Grass is Singing* and 'Martha' in the series *Children of Violence* are very similar to Lessing's personality. Both characters strive for individual freedom by challenging and surpassing rules and limitations, navigating a world that closely mirrors Lessing's own. This world is shaped by her personal experiences, including her parents and their relationships, her friends, the places she lived, and the social, economic, and political circumstances she encountered. Consequently, Lessing's writing is deeply influenced by her past experiences and the cultural context in which she passed, which permeates both novels. As a committed political activist, Lessing actively pursued her manifesto of effecting positive social change. She believed in resisting and protesting against inequalities and oppression through her involvement in the Left party and its activities. The worlds depicted in Lessing's novels are the very worlds she inhabited. Her concerns as a woman who challenged societal norms and her determination to dismantle obstacles are evident

throughout both works. In these novels, elements such as settings, characters, objects, and the passage of time serve as reminders of Lessing's own experiences, which will be further discussed in the subsequent section.

4.2. Text-World

Upon evaluating the World-Building Elements in both novels, *The Grass is Singing* and *Martha Quest*, striking similarities emerge between Lessing's real world and the worlds she constructs within the novels. These similarities encompass spatial, temporal, and ontological aspects of the narratives. For instance, both novels are set on a farm situated in South Africa during the British Colony of Rhodesia, which was Lessing's childhood and adolescence life place. Mary in *The Grass is Singing* and Martha in *Martha Quest* exhibit resemblances, including their fathers, mothers, friends, and even the protagonists themselves. Mary and Martha's fathers, both veterans of the First World War, mirror Lessing's own father. Mary's father neglects his family and contributes minimally to their financial well-being, while Martha's father, similar to Dick in *The Grass is Singing*, is unable and faces setbacks in his farm development plans. This parallel symbolism between Dick (Mary's husband) and Mr. Quest (Martha's father) aligns with Lessing's representation of her own father.

Moreover, the locations in both novels share commonalities, particularly the town that acts as a catalyst for transforming the story's world. In *The Grass is Singing*, Mary relocates to a town to start a new life apart from her family, fundamentally altering the narrative's trajectory. Similarly, in *Martha Quest*, the move from the farm to the town signifies a significant shift in the story. Both Mary and Martha are adolescents striving for freedom and independence, a recurring theme throughout the novels. Books and newspapers serve as objects that highlight the intellectual and educated taste of Mary and Martha. Marriage is another object that appears in both novels as a means of escaping their current unhappy circumstances. Mary agrees to marry Dick to avoid societal judgment, while Martha agrees to a loveless marriage to leave Africa. Consequently, the World-Building Elements in both novels bear a striking resemblance, reflecting Lessing's physical surroundings and past experiences.

Through an exploration of the narrative development in both stories, it becomes evident that the discourse primarily evolves through material and existential processes. As outlined in the theoretical framework of this paper, Gavins proposes four Function-Advancing Propositions that advance the story's discourse include "material, mental, existential, and relational processes" (58). *The Grass is Singing* commences with a

declarative paragraph, “Mary Turner, wife of Richard Turner, a farmer at Ngesi, was found murdered on the front verandah of their homestead yesterday morning. The houseboy, who has been arrested, has confessed to the crime. No motive has been discovered” (p. 5), in the form of a newspaper clipping, providing the reader with information about the death of Mary Turner, a white woman who was killed by her black servant. This opening sets the stage for the material and existential processes that unfold within the narrative.

The opening sentence of the narration presents the news of Mary's death in a passive voice, indicating that Mary's body was found in her home and her servant was arrested and confessed to the killing. By employing material processes, Lessing swiftly develops the discourse by engaging the reader in the story's actions, such as the murder of Mary, Moses' arrest, his confession, and the removal of Mary's body by the police. This technique prompts the reader to be invested in unraveling the reason behind Mary's killing, encouraging them to follow the story's continuity. Chapter one provides a detailed account of Mary's death, the reactions of people, and their judgments about her personality.

In the second chapter, the narrator shifts to Mary's past life, and begins by describing the location where Mary passed her childhood, vividly portraying her difficult upbringing. Through existential processes, the narrator describes world-building elements, transporting the reader back in time to Mary's past experiences and prompting a static state of mind in readers. The narrative describes a scene where young Mary witnesses her parents' quarrels, with her father's drunkenness and her mother's aggression. The portrayal of a dissatisfied child protesting against oppressive rules maintains the reader's static state until Mary's escape from home is revealed, transitioning the narrative back to a material process and reengaging the reader's mind in physical movement. After running away and settling in the town, Mary embarks on a new and independent life, finding happiness with a job and residing in a girl's club. The narrator describes Mary at the age of 30, judged by traditional standards for being unmarried. Feeling suffocated by societal judgment, Mary decides to free herself by marrying Dick Turner, a failed farmer. This marriage leads to a complete shift in her life as she moves to a farm, contrasting starkly with her previous existence in the girl's club. The narrator utilizes an existential process to depict Mary's status in society, prompting the reader's mind to remain static until the introduction of a new character, Dick, and the narrative continues through a material process, once again engaging the reader in physical movement.

The rest of the story delves into Mary's life on the farm and her unhappy marriage. The narrator employs the existential process to describe in detail the house, furniture, farm, nature, and animals, while also delving into Mary's childhood with her parents. From chapter five onwards, the focus shifts to Mary's life as a housewife on the farm. Throughout the novel, Lessing primarily develops the discourse through material and existential processes, constructing the world-building elements and advancing the narrative. Mary's life on the farm is plagued by hatred, depression, incompatibility with the environment, emotional failures, class conflicts, discrimination, racism, economic struggles, and successive failures. Lessing employs both material and existential processes to narrate these elements, driving the development of the story's discourse.

Martha Quest is narrated in 12 chapters and spans across 277 pages. The novel is divided into four parts, each delving into different phases of Martha's life. It starts by introducing two elderly women, and as the narrative progresses, additional characters such as two elderly men and a young girl are introduced. With each character description, the story unfolds and the discourse develops.

Two elderly women sat knitting on that part of the veranda which was screened from the sun by a golden shower creeper; the tough stems were so thick with flower it was as if the glaring afternoon was dammed against them in a surf of its own light made visible in the dripping, orange-coloured clusters..... (p.6)

In the represented image, Mrs. Quest and Mrs. Rendsburg are knitting and talking; on the other side of the scene, Mr. Quest and Mr. Rensburg are talking about weather and agricultural products, and Martha, a fifteen-year-old girl, has a book in her hand about sex while she plays there. They are sitting on the verandah of Mr. Quest's (Martha's father) house at noon in Southern Rhodesia while the shade of the ivy becomes a shadow that the golden sun does not touch them. So, the first world-build elements revealed by the narrator include two women, two men, and a girl at noon on the farm then, by describing more about them, the discourse gradually moves towards the development. Unlike *The Grass is Singing* which is started in an action line (Mary's killing), *Martha Quest* starts in a descriptive line. In fact, the primary image represented to the reader is a picture created in her mind which five people are sitting under the shadow of ivy on the verandah.

In the subsequent sections, the narrator shifts the focus to Martha's actions, specifically her rebellion against her mother's constraints. Examples of this rebellion include her change in clothing style and her association with disapproved friends. By

highlighting Martha's actions, the narrative develops through material processes. Part two shifts the story to a new location as Martha moves to a town, introducing new characters and relationships. She becomes involved with men who enjoy drinking, smoking, and are active in Left communism groups. Part three introduces a club formed by wealthy white women in the city, set in 1935. Part four introduces Douglas, a Scottish-educated man working in the municipality, with whom Martha enters a marriage of convenience to leave Africa. So, the discourse advances mainly through material and existential processes. While numerous characters are introduced and have their own moments, Martha remains the central character throughout the story. The narrator delves into Martha's inner world, exploring her emotions towards her parents and the external environment. Martha's rebellious nature is accentuated through her actions, which defy societal norms and established structures.

Martha's actions are primarily driven by her personal will, except for her decision to marry Douglas, which is motivated by her desire to leave Africa with him. Initially, the novel emphasizes descriptive processes, effectively holding the reader's mind in a static state. However, following Martha's rebel action, apron-cutting, there is a shift towards material processes, prompting a dynamic change in the reader's mindset. Martha's revolutionary actions and her central role as the primary agent propel the narrative forward. The detailed descriptions of elements such as Martha's friends, club, farm, city, and room contribute to the creation of vivid imagery. The development of discourse is achieved through a combination of descriptive and material processes.

4.3. Sub-Worlds

Lessing held critical views on the prevailing issues of her time and endeavored to convey her attitudes to the reader through various strategies. An analysis of the sub-worlds in her stories can help identify the attitudes she wished to impart to her readers. Gavins categorizes sub-worlds into "Boulomaic, Deontic, and Epistemic worlds" (91), each conveying specific attitudes through modal operators, as discussed in the theoretical framework section. Upon analyzing the sub-worlds in two of Lessing's novels, *The Grass is Singing* and *Martha Quest*, written during her early years of fiction phase, it was discovered that both novels have a high frequency of epistemic modal worlds, a medium frequency of deontic worlds, and a low frequency of boulomaic worlds.

Epistemic modal worlds represent the perspective of the responsible person for the thought currents in the discourse. Lessing aims to represent her ideas and thoughts through the enactors. In *The Grass is Singing*, the modal operators used to create this sub-

world mainly reveal the participants' attitudes towards the story's events. The narrator represents the enactors' inner thoughts through direct speech, highlighting their subjectivity. Consequently, the modal operators of 'think' and 'know' have a high frequency in this novel. In *Martha Quest*, epistemic modal worlds are frequently employed, with the verb 'think' having a high frequency in both its negative and positive forms. This verb represents the enactor's mental challenges in changing her life and to reflect the suffocating atmosphere in the novel through the use of this sub-world.

The data indicates that deontic modal worlds, which pertain to control and express duty and obligation through language, are moderately used in *The Grass is Singing*. The modal verbs 'might' and 'may' appear frequently, occurring 74 times, while 'must' is repeated 63 times. In *Martha Quest*, deontic modal worlds are also frequently used, with 'must' occurring 204 times, and 'might' and 'may' appearing 210 times. *Martha Quest* is a novel that revolves around Martha's quest for freedom and a different lifestyle, but she faces restrictions and control from her mother and societal norms. Consequently, the frequent repetition of deontic modal worlds in *Martha Quest* surpasses that of *The Grass is Singing*. In boulomaic modal worlds which convey participants' inner wishes, the verbs 'want', 'hope', 'desire', and 'wish' are utilized. Although all of these modal verbs appear in both novels, 'want' has a high frequency in both, with 92 occurrences in *The Grass is Singing*, and 150 in *Martha Quest*. It is used in both negative and positive versions. Overall, the frequency of boulomaic modal worlds is low in both novels.

5. Findings and Conclusions

In both novels, *The Grass is Singing* and *Martha Quest*, which are among her early works produced during 1950-1952, Doris Lessing depicts rural life on a farm in an African colony, drawing from her personal experiences. The world-building elements in both *The Grass is Singing* and *Martha Quest* primarily originate from Africa, showcasing aspects of African life from Lessing's childhood and adolescence

Mary and Martha, the central characters in the novels, were both rebellious individuals who refused to conform to tradition. They rejected their family, particularly their mother, in order to avoid being confined by traditional principles. Leaving their farms and families behind, they ventured into town to start anew. Throughout the novels, they criticized traditional principles and colonial systems. The similarities between the two characters are striking. Both were raised by controlling mothers who pressured them to adhere to traditions. Additionally, their fathers were veterans of the First World War. Both Mary and Martha believed in pursuing free relationships with different men and ultimately entered into unwanted marriages to achieve their respective goals. Martha

married Douglas to escape Africa and moved to England, while Mary married Dick to avoid societal judgment for remaining unmarried at an older age. The setting for both novels is Africa, alternating between life on a farm and in a town. The influence of Lessing's own life and her real-world experiences is unmistakable in both of these narratives.

Through analysis, it is evident that discourse progression in both novels primarily occurred through material and existential processes. The narrator utilized detailed descriptions of world-building elements to advance the discourse through existential processes. Conversely, the actions of the characters served as functional events that propelled the discourse forward by altering the story's world. Consequently, material processes emerged as the dominant strategy employed by the narrator to develop the discourse of the stories. In both novels, the narrator's attitude was reflected in the three types of sub-worlds. Epistemic worlds were utilized to influence the characters' current thoughts, particularly as they endeavored to dismantle traditional structures. Conversely, deontic modal worlds were employed to depict the controlling attitudes present within the discourse. Martha and Mary found themselves constrained by their mothers' expectations and societal obligations. The utilization of boulomaic worlds, which represent the characters' inner desires, was less frequent as their aspirations were often suppressed. Nevertheless, the characters persistently resisted the imposed constructs, striving to assert their agency and fulfill their desires.

In conclusion, Lessing utilized similar narrative techniques in both novels to convey themes of liberty and independence. She aimed to portray her real-world experiences in her stories, with a focus on communicating the social conditions of her time, particularly the lives of marginalized individuals. As a political activist and member of the left party from 1944 to 1956, Lessing openly criticized the political structure and its unjust systems, striving to convey her perspectives through both novels. By applying Text World Theory to analyze the two novels at three levels (Discourse World, Text World, and Discourse World), it has been demonstrated that Lessing's fictional worlds mirror her real-life experiences. The world-building elements in the novels align closely with her real life. Notably, key characteristics of Lessing's narrative approach in the two novels involve providing vivid descriptions of her world through existential processes and highlighting the protagonist's actions through material processes. The findings of this study suggest that Lessing's narrative approach was influenced by both her personal life and her ideological beliefs.

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