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MARTHA QUEST'S SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL QUEST IN
DORIS LESSING'S *CHILDREN OF VIOLENCE*

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Tutkielman tarkoituksena on selvittää Martha Questin sosiaalista ja henkistä kehitystä Doris Lessingin *Children of Violence*-sarjassa. *Children of Violence* koostuu Lessingin vuosina 1952-1969 kirjoittamista viidestä romaanista, jotka ovat *Martha Quest*, *A Proper Marriage*, *A Ripple from the Storm*, *Landlocked* ja *The Four-Gated City*. Tutkielman pääalueina ovat sarjan päähenkilön, Martha Questin, identiteetin sosiaalinen ja henkinen muovautuminen. Tutkimusote pohjautuu temaattiseen kirjallisuusanalyysiin.

Martha Questin sosiaalisen identiteetin muovautumista tutkitaan hänen ihmissuhteidensa sekä ympäristön vaikutuksia analysoiden. Näihin sisältyvät sekä Marthan perhetausta että häntä ympäröivä kulttuuri, joka ilmentää brittiläisten toisen maailmansodan aikaista siirtomaaelämää Afrikassa. Tämän lisäksi Marthaan vaikuttaa kylmän sodan aikaansaama ilmapiiri, jonka hän kohtaa muutettuaan Afrikasta Lontooseen. Marthan sosiaalista kehitystä selvitetään hänen vaimon ja äidin roolinsa kautta, ja tämän lisäksi politiikka sekä ympäröivä kulttuuri otetaan huomioon. Erityisesti kiinnitetään huomiota Marthan suhteeseen omaan äitiinsä, Mrs. Questiin. Marthan oma äitiusuhde on keskeisellä sijalla myös Marthan henkisen identiteetin kehitystä tarkasteltaessa. Sen lisäksi henkisen kehityksen kuvauksessa tärkeitä tekijöitä ovat Marthan henkinen minäkuva, joka sisältää kaksi erilaista aspektia, Marthan ja Mattyn. Olennaisia ovat myös Marthan suhde Afrikassa pakolaisena olevaan puolalaiseen Thomas Sterniin, sekä Marthan Lontoossa kohtaamat ihmiset, joista keskeisiä ovat Coldridget, joiden taloudenhoitajana Martha toimii. Teoriataustassa sekä analyysissä keskeisiä ovat Eriksonin teoria identiteettikriisistä, sekä kehitysromaanin eli *bildungsromanin* käsite. Myös eri tutkijoiden näkemykset äiti-tytär-suhteesta sekä naisen identiteetin kehityksestä kirjallisuudessa ovat oleellisia.

Martha Questin ja hänen äitinsä suhde kuvastaa jatkuvaa konfliktia ja kilpailua siitä, kumpi on vallassa. Pyrkieessään muodostamaan omaa minäkuvaansa ja eriytymään äidistään Martha tekee päätöksiä, jotka pohjautuvat hänen haluunsa vastustaa äitiään. Nämä päätökset vaikuttavat pitkälti Marthan koko elämään. Konfliktit ja identiteettikriisit ovat tunnusomaisia myös Marthan avioliitoissa sekä hänen suhteessaan omaan tyttärensä. Kommunismi aatteille omistautuminen tarjoaa Marthalle hetkellisen turvapaikan muuten niin hämmentävän elämän keskellä. Ratkaisua sekä sisäistä koherenssia Martha hakee myös lähtiessään Afrikasta Lontooseen, ja erilaiset ihmissuhteet auttavat häntä rakentamaan vähitellen kokonaisen minäkuvan.

Asiasanat: bildungsroman, daughterhood, Erikson's theory of identity crisis, female identity, female development, motherhood

CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION.....	4
2 THE CONCEPT OF A BILDUNGSROMAN AND ASPECTS OF FEMALE DEVELOPMENT	8
2.1 THE CONCEPT OF A BILDUNGSROMAN	8
2.2 ASPECTS OF FEMALE IDENTITY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF IN LITERATURE.....	11
2.3 ASPECTS OF MOTHERING	17
2.4 MOTHERHOOD AND DAUGHTERHOOD AS AN ASPECT OF FEMALE DEVELOPMENT.....	20
3 THE SOCIAL QUEST OF MARTHA QUEST	25
3.1 THE PRIMARY SURROUNDINGS FOR MARTHA'S SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: THE QUEST FAMILY	25
3.1.1 <i>The Father: Mr. Quest</i>	26
3.1.2 <i>The Mother: Mrs. Quest</i>	27
3.1.3 <i>Martha's Relationship to her Mother</i>	29
3.2 MARTHA'S LIFE IN TOWN	34
3.2.1 <i>Martha's Relationship to Donovan and Adolph</i>	34
3.3 MARTHA AS A WIFE.....	38
3.3.1 <i>Martha's Marriage to Douglas</i>	38
3.3.2 <i>Martha's Marriage to Anton</i>	44
3.4 MARTHA AS A MOTHER: RELATIONSHIP TO CAROLINE	46
3.5 THE ROLE OF POLITICS IN MARTHA'S LIFE.....	51
3.6 MARTHA AS A PRODUCT OF SOCIETY.....	56
4 THE SPIRITUAL QUEST OF MARTHA QUEST	60
4.1 MARTHA'S SPLIT IDENTITY: "MATTY" AND "MARTHA"	60
4.1.1 <i>The Ideal Friend: Thomas Stern</i>	66
4.2 MARTHA'S LIFE IN LONDON	70
4.2.1 <i>The Coldridge Family</i>	70
4.2.2 <i>Mrs. Quest's Visit</i>	73
4.2.3 <i>Jack and Lynda</i>	78
5 CONCLUSION.....	84
BIBLIOGRAPHY	88

1 INTRODUCTION

Doris Lessing's *Children of Violence* depicts the life of Martha Quest. The series consists of five books, and the first four ones take place during the 1930s and 1940s in a colonial African society. In the first volume, *Martha Quest*, Martha is a rebellious teenager whose ideals are totally at odds with the life she observes around her. She first lives with her parents on a small farm, and later she moves into a nearby town where she works as a secretary in a firm of lawyers. At the same time she becomes a part of the town's young women and men, and leads a life full of parties and dating. In this period of her life, she also meets Donovan, a young civil servant to whom she is married. In *A Proper Marriage* Martha is a dissatisfied young woman for whom the first passionate flush of marriage begins to fade. Marriage becomes motherhood as her daughter, Caroline, is born. Along with the clouds of war which gather over Europe Martha's political consciousness begins to dawn, and in the end of the second volume she divorces her husband and leaves Caroline with him. The third volume, *A Ripple from the Storm*, concentrates on Martha's involvement with revolutionary politics, and also depicts her marriage to Anton Hesse, the leader of the local communist group. Once more she becomes disappointed in marriage. In *Landlocked* Martha lives in the post-war blues in the aftermath of World War II and becomes disillusioned with the Communist faith. She prepares herself for taking leave of her life in Africa to Britain, and has a love affair with a political refugee, Thomas Stern.

The final volume, *The Four-Gated City*, takes place in post-war London where Martha has arrived from Africa. She has left her life in Africa behind, and has taken the role of a general help-mate in an English upper class family, the Coldridges. Martha tries to find her place as a free woman in a world full of change and challenge. She becomes more and more interested in inner solutions to social and cultural problems, and the most important guide for her in this quest is Lynda Coldridge. The novel is a mixture of realism and vision, and it ends with a vision of the demise of the Western world some time in the 1980s.

Doris Lessing wrote *Children of Violence* over a long period of time: *Martha Quest* was published in 1952 and *The Four-Gated City* in 1969. The novels

have many parallels to Lessing's own life who was born in Persia in 1919 to British parents, and who later moved to Rhodesia where her family supported themselves by farming. Like Martha Quest, Doris Lessing grew up in the countryside and later earned her living through various jobs in an African town until she moved to England in 1949. Lessing is still alive, and has been married twice. She has always been interested in politics, and in England she established herself as a writer. She has written several other novels, for example, *The Golden Notebook* and *The Grass is Singing*, collections of short stories, plays, a book on cats and a book of poems.

In my study I attempt to analyse the development of the heroine, Martha Quest, by showing the different aspects of her social and spiritual quest. The social and spiritual quests can be referred to also as quests for outer and inner self. The social/outer side of the development process includes understanding of the background of Martha, that means, her family and upbringing. I will examine Martha's role as a wife and mother, and also the society she grows up and lives in. Also the role of politics will be studied in this chapter. A picture of Martha as a product of her background and society will be gradually formed. The spiritual/inner side of the development process, in turn, will be studied through an examination of the different aspects of Martha's identity. Martha has a split identity; two different kinds of Marthas inhabit her, namely Matty the clown and Martha the observer, and these aspects will be introduced. The spiritual quest is mostly emphasized in *The Four-Gated City*, and it is in London with Lynda Coldridge that Martha finally reaches her goal. However, also other aspects and relationships contribute to the spiritual quest, and they will also be written of in this study. In all, both social and spiritual quests are shaped by relationships to other people, and thus Martha's relationships to her husbands and men in general, to her daughter Caroline, to the Coldridge family in London, and to congenial spirits like Thomas and Jack bear a clear importance.

Most of all, Martha's personal development will be examined in the light of the relationship she has with her mother. In my opinion, Mrs. Quest is an essential figure in Martha's maturation process. Most fundamentally Martha is influenced by her in her adolescence when she still lives at home, but the influence

continues to be strong throughout Martha's life. The fact that Mrs. Quest has a central role in the various decisions Martha makes in her life will be shown in this study; for example, Martha's decision not to go to a university and study as well as her decision to leave her daughter Caroline are partly results of her entanglements with her mother.

Martha's view of the role of women is strongly shaped by her view of her mother. There is a constant struggle for power between Martha and her mother, and Martha fears she will begin to resemble her mother. That is her main fear in life, and it affects the direction that her life eventually takes. She resents everything her mother stands for, and rebels by despising her mother's ideals which include such Victorian values as regarding women as mainly wives and mothers, and sexuality as a taboo. Thus the personality of Mrs. Quest and the relationship of Mrs. Quest and Martha as well as Mrs. Quest's role in Martha's marriages and in Martha's motherhood to Caroline will be examined. Mrs. Quest always stays at the back of Martha's mind even when she is not an active participant in her life. Not until her mother's death is Martha able to find balance in her life; that is the final culmination of their relationship, and after that Martha completes her quest for a balanced inner and outer identity.

My basic method is thematic literary analysis; I will introduce the different relationships and phenomena in Martha's life as they emerge in the novels, and try to find the core of each. As a theoretical background I use the views of such feminist writers as Annis Pratt, Joanne Frye and Judith Gardiner. Both Frye and Gardiner bear importance when I will introduce aspects relating to Martha's sexuality and body as well as to the splitting of Martha's self into the body and mind. It is Gardiner who offers Erikson's theory as an example of examining female identity, and Erikson's idea of the identity crisis will be the major one in my own study: Martha moves toward a coherent picture of her self, and on her way she goes through different identity crisis which by Erikson are shown to be crucial in the development of a person. From Pratt I will get support especially in my discussion of Martha's spiritual quest. I will also explain the concept of the *Bildungsroman* and introduce the female genre of it: the fact that *Children of*

Violence is a *Bildungsroman*, a novel of development that is, will be given support to, and aspects of female identity and development will be given attention to. I will examine the feminist writers' views on motherhood and daughterhood as well. Chodorow's views, for example, will be useful in my examination of the mother-daughter relationship between Mrs. Quest and Martha.

Finally, I want to make clear what I do not intend to study in this paper. There are, of course, several interesting issues in *Children of Violence*; for example inequality between different races and genders, but because of the limited scope of this paper I intend to concentrate only on the aspects of spiritual and social quests mainly from the point of view concentrated on Martha's relationship to her mother. Some psychological aspects will be touched on because they inevitably occur in the sources used in this study but this will not be a psychological study of the development of Martha Quest.

I will refer to different novels of *Children of Violence* by using the following abbreviations: MQ *Martha Quest*, PM *A Proper Marriage*, RS *A Ripple from the Storm*, LL *Landlocked* and FGC *The Four-Gated City*.

2 THE CONCEPT OF A BILDUNGSROMAN AND ASPECTS OF FEMALE DEVELOPMENT

2.1 The Concept of a Bildungsroman

To begin with, the concept of a *Bildungsroman* is very essential for this study because Lessing's *Children of Violence* clearly belongs to this genre. This view can be supported by the fact that the heroine, Martha Quest, is shown to grow and develop both internally and externally by Lessing: Martha goes through different phases in her life, and as the result of this she achieves a balance in her own identity.

According to *The Oxford Comparison to English Language* (1998, 98-99), the term *Bildungsroman* applies to novels of education of which many of the best examples are German; the first example of this genre is thought to be Wieland's *Agathon* (1765-6), and in English criticism the German term *Bildungsroman* has been adopted as a result of the fame during the nineteenth century of *Wilhelm Meister* and Carlyle's semi-fictional *Sartor Resartus*.

Especially in the nineteenth century *Bildungsroman* depicted the life of a male hero: it described the process of development and education of a male protagonist from childhood through adolescence. Along with the unfolding of the whole character, the inner life of the protagonist and his self-realization became important elements. The hero often left home at an early age because he wanted to make his way independently, and in order to accomplish this he set out to search for a vocation or career preparatory to serving society. The family was an institution which could appear as hostile to the protagonist's ambitions and new ideas. (Labovitz 1998, 3-4.)

The twentieth century concept of the female *Bildungsroman* was made possible only when *Bildung* became a reality for women, in general, and for the fictional heroine, in particular. The heroine in fiction began to reflect the changes in society when cultural and social structures appeared to support women's struggle for independence: only then was it possible for the fictional heroine to go

out into the world, engage in careers, in self-discovery and fulfillment. Until this, fictional heroines acted as mothers and wives only. (Labovitz 1998, 7.) A similar view is expressed by DuPlessis (1985, 15) who argues that by the latter half of the nineteenth century the plot of courtship as social and gender reconciliation began to break. By this DuPlessis (1985, 15) refers to the fact that the heroines in literature were not necessarily shown to be mere objects of men's admiration any more: the contradiction between love and vocation in plots centering around women was accentuated, and romance was less able to be depicted as satisfying the urgencies of self-development, desire for ambition, useful work, and public striving.

In the work of twentieth-century women writers, the marriage plot is removed from the center of the novel. Instead of marriage or, for example, death, community and social connectedness have become the end of the female quest for self. (DuPlessis 1985, 16.) It is noteworthy that by giving their protagonists the right to speak in their own voices, the twentieth-century women writers have not only given them the capacity to tell their own stories, but also the interpretive power over their own reality and self-definition. It is the speaking "I" who claims her identity in process; as she interprets her own experiences, she also claims both her autonomous self-definition and her femaleness, and her narrative voice becomes her capacity for human wholeness in complexity and change. (Frye 1986, 76.) As examples of such twentieth-century female protagonists, Frye (1986, 74) gives Anna Wulf in *The Golden Notebook* and Jane Gray in *The Waterfall*.

White (1982, 13) describes the *Bildungsroman* as a kind of fiction in which the quest for life's meaning shapes its content. In the genre of the novel of development social realism is apt to become mixed with elements of romance, and the mixture of real life and fantasy, or genuine social events and imaginary adventures, is appropriate for this genre which delineates a turning point in the hero's life. This turning point refers both to personal, psychological import and social significance. In the *Bildungsroman* the hero/heroine becomes eventually an adult, and by "adult" the genre refers to an independent person. Further, White argues also that the patterns of pain are present in the female *Bildungsroman*: they are embedded in image and larger narrative patterns, and their antitheses are images

of desire for authentic selfhood. (White 1982, 13-16.)

The assumptions made in a *Bildungsroman* are assumptions of realism: a character can represent human possibility and be understood through the interaction of individual choices and goals with the material realities of a social context. Such assumptions are crucial to a novelistic representation of women's lives. It is a fact that "representation" easily assumes a congruence with present cultural values, and since women writers seek a new narrative for understanding of the process of growing up, they must also resist the premises of *Bildungsroman* representation. In order to resist the fact that a protagonist is likely to succumb to the cultural norms about adult womanhood, a *Bildungsroman* must also subvert the cultural assumptions about growing up female. Because of this a *Bildungsroman* seeks new definitions of female identity in a social context. (Frye 1986, 78.)

Frye's view also gives support to the fact that the novels of the series *Children of Violence* are *Bildungsromane*: Lessing places Martha Quest into a position where she daily faces the cultural assumptions about being and growing up female, and the idea of subversion is a central one in my analysis on Martha's development: for example, the clashes between Martha and her mother are greatly due to the fact that Martha resists her mother's views of the position of females in their society, and thus she subverts her mother's as well as her culture's assumptions by rebelling against them.

According to Frye (1986, 78) Lessing's protagonist, Martha Quest, in the series of *Children of Violence*, is an apt example of the problems of a female *Bildungsroman* and its relationship to sexual ideology. Frye explains, that it is problematic because the traditional *Bildungsroman* is a male form, and the fate of Martha Quest indicate why this is so: there are few appropriate adult roles for women to grow into. Nevertheless, *Children of Violence* is a strong example of a female *Bildungsroman*, and Lessing shows brilliantly how Martha Quest matures socially and spiritually as a person. (Frye 1986, 78-79.) A *Bildungsroman* is a highly suggestive genre for studying formation of Martha's character precisely because the genre has been identified with the development of character from early adolescence to young adulthood, the period when the person works out questions of

identity, career, and marriage. (Labovitz 1988, 2.)

2.2 Aspects of Female Identity and Development of the Self in Literature

As already discussed in the context of a *Bildungsroman*, when studying the development of the female protagonist it is essential to keep in mind the different aspects of female identity and development of the self. The concepts of identity and self have been widely discussed in literary analyses, and their terminological examination has turned out to be somewhat controversial. Gardiner's (1982, 177) observation on this is that the 'self' is a vague "terminological twin" of the word 'identity', and 'self' has become "a cliché without becoming clear". However, one way of defining these terms and showing the difference between them is to say that 'identity' refers to a person as a whole – that means, for instance, that the identity of a person is influenced by the general gender attitudes of society, and 'self' concerns more the spiritual aspect of a person. Both female identity and the development of the female protagonist's self has been widely studied in feminist literary analyses, and in this chapter I intend to gain insight into the aspects these analyses suggest. The names of Annis Pratt, Judith Gardiner and Adrienne Rich are often mentioned in contexts where there is discussion about female protagonists and their development, and I am going to concentrate on their views.

In her writing on female identity and writing by women, Gardiner (1982, 177) points out that identity is a central concept of much contemporary cultural and literary criticism. According to her, feminist literary criticism is interested in finding out the answer for the question, Who is there when a woman says "I am". She provides feminist psychology as a means which can offer a key to understanding the special qualities of contemporary writing by women. But first, before a theory of female identity can be reached, we must adapt identity theory constituted by male theorists because there is no separate female identity theory. Gardiner offers Erik Erikson as an example of male theorists: his idea of the identity crisis is a central one in most analysis made on identity development.

According to Erikson, a youth passes through several identity crises, and the resolution leads to final self-definition. When a person has achieved a sense of individual identity, s/he feels unique, coherent and whole. In some cases identity formation may fail and then a person suffers from identity diffusion. In Erikson's view identity is formed and manifested through personal relationships. He also sees differences between the two sexes; a male achieves a mature identity whereas the female has a role as childbearer. According to Erikson females are more eager to protect their inner space rather than forge into outward accomplishments and because of this they spend their adolescence looking for the man through whom they can fulfill themselves. (Gardiner 1982, 178-180.)

Gardiner's own preliminary metaphor is that female identity is a process: she pictures female identity as less fixed, less unitary, and more flexible than male individuality. Female infantile identifications are less predictable than male ones, and their social roles are more rigid and less varied than men's. The female identity crisis may occur diffusely, at a different stage, or not at all. Thus, according to Gardiner, it is not surprising that the area of self-concept is especially troubled for women. (Gardiner 1982, 183-184.)

Gardiner says that the formation of female identity is dependent on the mother-daughter bond. Because of the primacy of this relationship, she posits her second metaphor, "the hero is her author's daughter" (1982, 179). By this she refers to the author's relationship to her character: the woman writer uses her text, which centers on a female hero, as a part of a continuing process involving her own self-definition and her emphatic identification with her character. This can be a therapeutic relationship, like learning to be a mother, and simultaneously learning to experience one's creation as other, as separate from the self. (Gardiner 1982, 187.)

I agree with Gardiner's views when she says that the social roles of females are more rigid than men's; it has been evident even in literature that women are more often seen in the positions of wives, daughters and mothers than anything else, whereas men are offered more varying roles. When it comes to Gardiner's metaphor, "the hero is her author's daughter", Scott (1996, 2) gives

support to it when she points out that "Lessing is able to exert power and command over the text while at the same time allowing her own silent past to be re-created" and therefore her "autobiographical writing resembles a therapeutic session" through which she herself learns to understand more her own relationship to her mother and being a mother herself. The fact that the formation of female identity is dependent on the mother-daughter bond will also be central in this study because it is through her relationship to her mother that Martha advances toward a more coherent picture of herself.

Gardiner (1982, 189) continues by saying that the problems of female identity are rarely presented in women's prose as difficulties in knowing one's gender. Women experience the deepest difficulties when they try to learn how to respond to social rules which determine what being female means in their culture. Many women sense that there is an imbalance between how their gender is seen in contrast to the other aspects of their personality, and that often causes confusion and anxiety in them. However, the twentieth-century woman protagonists have become more independent in the sense that they do not necessarily have to define themselves through males: their main fear is not directed towards losing the lover, and they do not see male infidelity as serious either. The protagonist may actually feel relieved when her husband goes off with another woman. Women in the twentieth-century literature are sexually active, and they do not feel guilty because of it. At best sex offers them temporary warmth and sensual exhilaration, but it can also confuse the protagonist and alienate her from herself. (Gardiner 1982, 189-190.)

According to Gardiner (1982, 190) the conception of female self is shaped by gender, sexuality and body. Women are encouraged to judge their inner selves through their external physical appearance and to equate the two. By manipulating their dress, speech and behavior they are taught to create socially approved images of themselves. Also Frye (1986, 2) emphasizes that sexuality is a central theme in the development of the female self: the conflict for women seems inescapable because they have to balance between their roles in work and love, sexuality and autonomy, and body and mind. There is often an internal dilemma

which forces a woman to choose between being either an acceptable female or a nonfemale adult. Frye analyses the conclusions available for the female protagonists, and her view is that many of them are drawn by currents beyond their control to the only possible conclusion of their plotted experiences: for example, Maggie in *The Mill on the Floss* is drawn to her death by drowning, and Martha in *Martha Quest* ends up in a doomed marriage. Both death and marriage seem to be the two main conclusions for the female protagonists. (Frye 1986, 1-2.)

In my view, sexuality, body and gender all shape females' concept of their self because women are often evaluated according to those features, and thus they are a part of women's identity. In the case of *Martha Quest* it is clearly shown by Lessing that Martha tries to balance between the different roles which are a part of her life: on the one hand, Martha is a mother and a wife, but on the other hand she strives to be a sexual, independent woman who earns her own living. It can also be said that it is due to forces of Martha's surroundings that she gets married in *Martha Quest*; this fact will be discussed more closely in the data below (see pp. 39-43). In the same context it will once more be emphasized that Martha's own view of herself as well as social surroundings affect her quest for inner and outer self.

Frye does also see conclusions where the plot offers change for the heroine instead of marriage or death. Here Frye confirms with DuPlessis's notion which was discussed above (p.9) in connection with *Bildungsroman*: in the work of twentieth-century women writers female protagonists are offered more alternatives than just marriage or death. Thus, the heroine is not introduced as being passively entrapped in romance, and such heroines become conscious individuals rather than actors of destiny. (Frye 1986, 40-42.) At the same time the heroines experience tension between subject and object in their female identity, and the threat of mutilation is implicit in all female characterization. This points to the same phenomenon Gardiner talks about: a splitting of the heroine's self into mind and body, thinker and actor and perceived femaleness. It is important to keep in mind that a female character's reassessment of her previous experience is a basis for present growth. (Frye 1986, 144-145.) All this is also relevant in the examination of

Martha's development because first of all, marriage is not the final conclusion for Martha: it will be shown that she is offered a change, and she does continue her quest past marriage. Throughout her quest, Martha experiences tension between subject and object in her identity, and her split self will be examined in connection with her spiritual quest (see pp. 60-66). It will also be shown that not before Martha is able to reassess her previous experiences than she is able to complete her quest.

In order to succeed in forming a clear picture of her self, Martha needs to go through both social and spiritual aspects of her life. Pratt (1982, 135-136) refers to theologian Carol Christ whose distinction between the social and spiritual quest is as follows: the social quest represents "a search for self in which the protagonist begins in alienation and seeks integration into human community where he or she can develop more fully" and the spiritual quest includes "the self's journey in relation to cosmic power or powers". Pratt points out that social quests are usually found in the *bildungsroman*, and spiritual ones in novels whose heroines are over thirty or most often in middle age or old age. In contrast to young heroines, the older woman hero's goal is to integrate her self with herself and not with a society she has found inimical to her desires. Thus, the quests differ so that the young heroine seeks for social integration, and the older heroine seeks for selfhood. The differences can be best seen in novels which contain both types, and as an example Pratt mentions Lessing's *Children of Violence*: she sees the first four volumes as examples of social quest, and in the final volume, *The Four-Gated City*, the heroine becomes a master of her self through spiritual quest. (Pratt 1982, 136.) These two facts will also be shown in this study: Martha's quest is concentrated in social aspects in the four first volumes which will be discussed in accordance with Martha's social quest (see pp.25-59) and the last one, *The Four-Gated City*, has a major role in Martha's spiritual quest (see pp. 60-83).

In the same context Pratt discusses Carl Jung's description of the transformation, or individuation process. Jung's description is helpful in coming to terms with women's rebirth fiction: it applies to the individual life span, and Jung defines it as being based on a renovation or transformation of an individual so that all of his or her faculties are brought into conscious play. It may be a question of a

renewal, but it does not necessarily mean that the person's being or personality changes in its essential nature: only its functions or parts of the personality change. It may, however, also refer to a total rebirth where the characteristics of a suprahuman figure emerge. (Pratt 1982, 136-137.)

Pratt herself identifies individuality with authenticity and totality of self, and such individuality goes beyond personhood as a merely social function. On a rebirth journey the heroine goes beyond social boundaries and back again, and the goal of the journey is the renewal of society. A rebirth journey is made possible when the ego leaves the narrow bounds of its persona, or social mask, and plunges into the unconscious. In Jungian terms the ego extends only as far as the conscious mind, whereas the self covers the whole of the personality and includes both unconscious and conscious components. (Pratt 1982, 137.) These descriptions offered by Jung will be relevant when I discuss Martha's spiritual quest because the position Martha reaches in the end of her quest fits the description of rebirth fiction.

When it comes to subjective experience and fragmented selves as well as to selves at change, Griffiths (1995, 79) points out that the self is more than its core. Women have questions like "Who or what am I? What can I do about it?", and the answer lies in understanding the path that leads to the self, and in reconstructing it accordingly, within the constraints that surround women. Griffiths sees self-identity as a kind of web, and the self guides it, but does not control it. The creation of identity is a collective affair in which each person has a valuable contribution to make. Each individual creates her own identity, but the circumstances constrain the process. Griffiths also states that the individual can only exist through the various communities in which she belongs to, and is continually in a process of construction by those communities. The concept of community includes both those which are possible to know personally and also wider society and its political categories. The experience of acceptance and rejection as well as the reaction to them cannot be understood without reference to the structures of power in the society in which the self finds itself. The individual is constrained by various overlapping communities, and each of these communities are changing. (Griffiths 1995, pp. 79, 93.) Griffith's views should be kept in mind

because society will be an important factor when I discuss Martha's social quest in more detail.

2.3 Aspects of Mothering

Since one of the main aspects examined in this study will include Martha's relationship to her mother as well as Martha's relationship to her daughter, Caroline, I intend to represent the view that Nancy Chodorow has of mothering. Her theory of the reproduction of mothering is mentioned in many works of the literary analysts, and therefore the theory has importance when we examine the development of Martha Quest: through this theory we gain insight into Martha's character, and are able to better understand the concept of a female *Bildungsroman*. Just like other female characters, Martha is a product of her social surroundings, and represents the values of her society. She is also a daughter of her mother, and the relationship they have with each other affect her social and spiritual development.

Chodorow posits an oscillating triangular relationship between the little girl, her mother and her father. Girl's infantile identification as well as primary and gender identity are all components of adult identity that form early in the childhood. The process of identity formation also continues later. According to Chodorow (1979, 133), the asymmetrical structure of parenting generates a feminine Oedipus complex with particular characteristics: for both girls and boys it is the mother who is the primary love object and object of identification, and since fathers come into the relational picture rather later and differently, the Oedipus complex in girls is directed towards their mothers.

Before a girl can fully develop extrafamilial commitments, she must confront her entanglement in familial relationships themselves. The transition from childhood to adolescence is more complicated for girls because issues during this period concern a girl's relationship to her mother; at this point Chodorow (1979, 135) quotes Blos, another analyst: "--- the prolonged and painful severance from the mother constitutes the major task of this period". The processual nature of female personality arises specifically from the mother-daughter relationship and

this is due to the fact that mothers feel ambivalent toward their daughters, and react to their daughters' ambivalence toward them. The mother often wants to keep her daughter close, but at the same time she also pushes her into adulthood. This ambivalence creates anxiety in the daughter and provokes attempts by her to break away from the mother. (Chodorow 1979, 135.) This anxiety leads also Martha in her path towards a coherent self; for example, Martha's decision to leave home is greatly affected by her urge to get away from her mother.

In order to break away from the mother, a daughter takes what steps she can toward internal feelings of individuation as well as relational stability and external independence. A struggle for psychological liberation from the mother is often the central issue for the girl during her prepubertal period. The father is often emotionally in the background, whereas the mother-daughter relationship includes often issues of weight, clothes and body. On the one hand, a girl tries to retain elements of her preoedipal primary love and identification toward her mother, but on the other hand she is not in ease with this identification any more, and the feeling of continuity with her mother conflicts with her need to separate from her mother. The girl wants to overcome her ambivalence and dependent relationship with her mother. (Chodorow 1979, 136.)

Pubertal girls use various ways in their individuation and independence. A girl often becomes critical of her family, especially of her mother, and she tries to become independent by splitting the good and bad aspects of objects; for the girl her mother and home represent bad, and the outside world represents good. A girl often strives in every way to be different from her mother, and in this case the daughter's "solution again involves defensive splitting, along with projection, introjection, and the creation of arbitrary boundaries by negative identification (I am what she is not)" (Chodorow 1979, 137). According to Chodorow (1979, 137) it is essential for the girl to try and identify with anyone other than her mother. Once more, I agree with Chodorow's view, and the features of negative identification are clearly present both when Martha is an adolescent girl and when she is a mature woman.

According to Chodorow (1979, 195) Fathers and men are often

idealized because they serve in part to break a daughter's primary unity with and dependence on her mother. Because a father provides a last ditch escape from maternal omnipotence, a girl cannot risk driving him away. On the other hand, a father is often a remote figure who has a position of distance and ideological authority in the family. His role may be best understood through the interpretation the family's mother makes, and due to this it can be difficult for the daughter to develop her relationship with him: she is often bent to repudiate her mother's views and that "blinds" her when she tries to construct her own view of the world and relationships. (Chodorow 1979, 195.) In Martha's case, the father will be shown to be a remote figure, and Martha experiences confusion because she feels that the mother stands between her and her father: Mrs. Quest has the power in the family, and the clashes between her and Martha push the father more and more in the background. Struggling against her mother acquires so much energy that Martha does not concentrate much on her relationship to her father.

In her theory Chodorow emphasizes the other side of the development process: mothers tend to experience their daughters as more like, and continuous with, themselves. Girls correspond to this by remaining part of the dyadic primary mother-child relationship; a girl continues to experience herself as involved in issues of merging and separation. In contrast to their daughters, mothers regard their sons to be likely to stay outside the oedipal relationship, and they often consider their relation to their sons to be easier than to their daughters. (Chodorow 1979, 166-167.) This is also the case in Mrs. Quest's relationship to Martha: Mrs. Quest continually reminds Martha that her brother is the kind of child that pleases her, and it will be shown that the fact that Mrs. Quest would prefer Martha to be a boy fundamentally affects their whole relationship as well as Martha's own development (see pp. 61-62).

Another important issue in Chodorow's theory is the fact that women's mothering is a product of feminine role training and role identification. Feminist literature shows that throughout times girls have been seen as wives and mothers; girls have been taught to be mothers, trained for nurturance, and they have been told that they should mother. (Chodorow 1979, 30-31.) The implication that

women should first of all mother is present in Martha's society as well, and it is also this implication that Martha struggles against: she does not want to be identified as merely a mother, and eventually this leads to her separation from her daughter.

2.4 Motherhood and Daughterhood as an Aspect of Female Development

To continue the views examined in previous chapters, that is, to examine the analyses made about development of the female character, I attempt to study more closely what has been said about mother-daughter relationships in literature. This is necessary because the aspect of motherhood and daughterhood will have a central role in my analysis of Martha's development. Chodorow's theory, which is psychoanalytic in nature, is one aspect which can be kept in mind, but there are several more writers who have debated upon the subject, and their ideas help us to expand our understanding of female development.

Marianne Hirsch (1989, 9), the writer of *The Mother/Daughter Plot: Narrative, Psychoanalysis, Feminism*, treats both motherhood and daughterhood as a story which is a narrative representation of social and subjective reality and of literary convention. The heroines acting as daughters refuse to obey the conventional heterosexual romance and marriage plots, and they do not identify with the conventional constructions of femininity. (Hirsch 1989, 10-11.) Hirsch (1989, 168) also points out, that because a continued allegiance to the mother appears as regressive and potentially lethal it must be transcended; a daughter can reach maturity only through an angry and hostile break from the mother. First of all, Hirsch's view applies to my study because Martha eventually does reject the conventional constructions of femininity; for example, she separates from her daughter, and refuses to choose motherhood when she opposes her husband by not getting pregnant again. Secondly, the fact that Martha reaches maturity after she has been able to break away from her mother will be shown in the analysis in various ways – the culmination being her mother's death when Martha herself is a

middle-aged woman (see p. 77).

Separation is introduced also in Abramson's (1987, 5) study of mother-daughter conflict: according to her, physical separation from the mother precedes psychological awareness of the separation. Separatedness is a fact that we are all born unconscious of, and we all must come to terms with it if we are to live independent lives. Individuation itself refers to the process of gradual development of a unified, integrated personality, and the separation-individuation task involves the young child's initial awareness of the difference between itself and everything else that is not itself. The degree to which autonomy and sense of self are achieved at a very early stage of development is believed to have profound implications for later life. (Abramson 1987, 5-6.)

Rich (1991, 235) introduces the idea of "matrophobia" when she discusses motherhood and daughterhood. By matrophobia she means not the fear of one's mother or motherhood, but of becoming one's mother. When a daughter hates her mother to the point of matrophobia she may feel a deep underlying pull toward her, and she dreads that if she relaxes her guard she will identify with her mother completely. For example, the daughter's style of housekeeping when she leaves home may be a negative image of her mother's. She may leave the dishes unwashed, for instance, because her unconscious wish is to differentiate from her mother who has always been tidy. Matrophobia can be seen as a womanly splitting of the self, and the daughter desires to become purged once and for all from her mother's bondage. In order to become individuated and free she must separate herself from her mother. (Rich 1991, 236-237.) Rich has several points in common with my analysis of Martha's development; for example, the main fear of Martha is that she will become like her mother, and that is the idea she rebels against when she rebels her mother.

The mother represents an unfree woman and a martyr for the daughter. The daughter sees her own personality as dangerously overlapping and blurring with her mother's, and in a desperate attempt to know where her mother ends and she herself begins, she performs a radical surgery. Here Rich uses Lessing's *Martha Quest* as an example; Martha has felt devoured by her mother,

and she tries to split herself when she is pregnant and realizes that she herself is to become a mother. Martha regards herself to be inhabited by two different Marthas; the one is a free spirit, who protects the foetus, and the other is the maternal force, who tries to destroy the foetus. (Rich 1991, 236.) She associates the maternal force with her own mother because her own relation to her mother has been such that she has felt to have been under a pressure. Thus, she assumes that there will be a similar aspect in her own personality once she has a child of her own, and she tries to struggle against the "maternal force" in her.

Also Pratt (1982, 53) notes that women novelists have often made use of two or even three generations of mothers and daughters to show how heroes are punished by their closest role models. In such novels the hero's difficulties are due to the mother's neurotic behavior. As an example of the novels of this kind Pratt mentions Lessing's *Children of Violence* and Blanche Boyd's *Nerves*. The heroine in *Nerves* has three role models who all contribute to the fact that the heroine herself has feelings of neurosis: her mother has had a breakdown because of her marriage, her mother's friend commits suicide after leaving her husband and her aunt is a pathologically lonely widow. (Pratt 1982, 53.)

Consequently, mother and daughter are often shown to become caught in a classic bind in which they cannot act, because they both depend on each other in a way that neither can define. The mother approaches in this double bind the daughter, or the daughter may approach her mother: in both cases, the approach becomes misunderstood, and neither the mother nor the daughter can resolve the situation. This leads to conflicts, and the daughter's development is affected by these events. (Kuykendall 1984, 266.)

A similar observation is made by Chodorow and Contratto (1982, 55) in their discussion of the all-powerful mother: according to them, feminist writing assumes an all-powerful mother because the mother is totally responsible for how her children turn out, and she is blamed, for example, for her daughter's limitations. Chodorow and Contratto refer to Dinnerstein's views that the mother is an object of children's fury and desperation, and the children want to escape her evil influence. They also make reference to Friday's *My Mother/My Self* when they indicate that

mothers are noxious to their daughters, and the daughter's unhappiness and failings stem from this initial relationship. In her book *Friday* shows how mothers forcefully and intentionally constrain and control daughters by keeping them from individuating. Mothers also deny their daughters' sexuality, and keep them from men. Mothers tend to make daughters in their image: since they have denied their own sexuality when they themselves have become mothers, they must deny sexuality to their daughters. (Chodorow and Contratto 1982, 55-56.)

Cosslett (1994, 125), in turn, concentrates on women writing about childbirth, and she sees daughters as the ones who in particular bring out the concepts of repetition and identification across the generations. The mother feels that she is a vehicle for the foetus, and there can often be seen that breast-feeding implicates inequality and exploitation to the mother: the mother gives and the baby grows, and that is the cycle of give and take in their relationship. It is consequently implied that the baby devours the mother; in literature there are scenes in which the mother has the image of being eaten by the baby because their bodies, selves and lives are given up to the growth of the baby. (Cosslett 1994, 125.) Also Martha's relationship to her daughter includes such experiences; feeding Caroline resembles a struggle for Martha, and while the child eats and grows, Martha loses weight. She feels that the motherly role is like a prison where the child makes demands and the mother obeys.

Cosslett addresses the question of the splitting of the body and mind. She points out that fiction writers often dramatise an internal split between the body and the mind: the mind is the watchful observer which is bent to remain in conscious control of the uncontrollable body. During pregnancy the distance between the body and the mind is often increased by the way the medical institution treats the woman: the woman is seen merely as a body. Cosslett discusses different scenes of childbirth in female literature, and Martha Quest is one of her examples. She refers to the unnatural methods of childbirth in Martha's society: the woman is a machine who produces children in labour. During labour, there are two aspects of Martha in contest with each other, and during the state of pain she is delivered over to bodily processes which link her to her mother and

destroy her separate individuality. Martha groans out for her mother, and she feels herself to be a total failure because of this. (Cosslett 1994, 137-139.)

In summary, this theoretical discussion will guide my analysis of Martha's social and spiritual development. All this discussion which has been presented here, bears importance for my study, but part of it remains as background information only. However, the major issues will be the concept of a *Bildungsroman* as well as Erikson's theory of the identity crisis. As was mentioned above (p.10), the formation of Martha's character can well be studied through the genre of a *Bildungsroman* because it gives the tools for analysing the development of a character from early adolescence to young adulthood, but it also assists the analysis even further when the character is more mature. When it comes to Erikson's theory, it will be shown that Martha passes through several crises in her life and these crises lead her to a final self-definition. However, before Martha is able to reach that final stage in her development, she also suffers from identity diffusion, and this will be examined through the two different aspects which her identity includes: Matty the clown and Martha the observer. In addition to Erikson's theory I will use the views presented by Gardiner, Frye and Pratt. Both Gardiner's and Frye's views will be essential when I examine gender, sexuality and body, and the splitting of the heroine's self into the body and mind. Pratt will give support throughout my analysis of Martha's social and spiritual quest, and she will be especially important when I discuss Martha's spiritual quest.

Martha's relationship to her mother will also be an integral part of my analysis, and in that analysis I will refer to Chodorow's views of mothering. Also Hirsch's and Abramson's observations will be referred to because they both support the idea of mother-daughter conflict which is central in Martha's life and development.

3 THE SOCIAL QUEST OF MARTHA QUEST

In this chapter I attempt to examine the social aspect of the development of Martha Quest's identity. Martha's development can be referred to as a quest because she goes through different phases in her journey as she moves toward a coherent perception of her self. This journey includes constant searching: Martha faces crises in her life, and looks for answers through which she could solve the crises. Martha's social quest includes the person herself as well as society around her: the surroundings has a strong influence on a person's identity, and Martha is no exception. She is born in a certain family in a certain era, and her identity is shaped by numerous factors which affect her. She is a child of Mr. And Mrs. Quest as well as a child of the 1920s.

3.1 The Primary Surroundings for Martha's Social Development: the Quest Family

One of the most important factors which affect Martha is her own family and upbringing. As Holmquist (1980, 28) points out, it is Martha's family who brings her in touch both with bourgeois demands on women and with conflict-ridden relationships between parents and children and men and women. The institution of family upholds all these social structures, and through her parents Martha learns the rules of society.

The background of the Quest family is important when we consider the basis of Martha's life. The parents are representatives of the white British middle class, and they have come to the British colony in the Central Africa with great expectations that they would soon become rich on maize-growing. They live on a small farm, and their house is built as a temporary affair, because after they have become rich they would go back to England or move into town. Even though this has not happened the parents still continue to dream about a richer future. This irritates Martha; in her opinion her parents are only deluding themselves, but at the same time she is confused because she senses how in point of fact she is influenced

by her parents' way of thinking:

--- this cold, exasperated thought had never been worked out, and she still shared her parents' unconscious attitude, although she repudiated their daydreaming and foolishness, that this was not really her home. (MQ 1970, 15).

The conflict between Martha and her parents is evident from the beginning of the series of *Children of Violence*. Both parents have an important role in Martha's life, but most strongly she is influenced by her mother.

3.1.1 The Father: Mr. Quest

Although "the mere existence of her parents was like a reminder that she (Martha) must be wary, ready to resist" (1979, 50), Martha's relationship with her father can be described as being somewhat different from the one she has with her mother. With her father Martha is able to feel easy every now and then – at least when her mother is not around. However, the moments when Martha and her father really connect diminish, especially after Martha moves away from home.

Mr. Quest's personality is strongly shaped by his experiences in World War I. As Holmquist (1980, 41) points out, his personality can be divided into a pre-war and a post-war self, because after the war he does not consider him to be "himself": most of the time he is locked in his thoughts about the war. In World War I he served as an ordinary soldier, and saw the battle fields, and flying shells which killed his friends. He was injured himself, and met his future wife in a hospital where he was taken. Beginning from these experiences he gradually becomes more and more introverted, and does not have a very active role within the family. He suffers from diabetes and is "completely absorbed in being ill, he talked of nothing else – his illness and the war, the war and illness" (MQ 1970, 24). Holmquist (1980, 43) states that because of his war experiences, Mr. Quest has adopted a passive attitude and gained a liking for suffering and the role of a victim. She indicates that these attitudes are also present in Martha. In my opinion it is

clear that his attitude as well as the stories he keeps repeating about the war must have an impact on Martha, but it is hard to say how deeply she is influenced by him: as Holmquist (1980, 43) notes, it is unclear to what extent Martha's attraction to the role of sufferer should be seen as an adoption of her father's attitude to his past. However, it is evident that Martha does see herself as a victim: whenever there is an adversity in her life, she regards herself to be under some kind of a spell, which automatically causes misfortune. She does not consider herself to be responsible for what happens to her; it is more a question of outer forces which affect her, no matter what she does or desires. As Labovitz (1988, 183) points out, Martha remains passive through various stages of her development, and she watches her life from outside, and it takes a long time before she learns to take an active role in what happens to her. "Her only saving grace is that she is aware something must be done about it (her own life). Only what?" (Labovitz 1988, 183). This question is the primary one Martha has in her mind, and she tries to seek for an answer. At least unconsciously she nurtures the values she has gained from her father.

3.1.2 The Mother: Mrs. Quest

Mrs. Quest is largely conditioned by her middle class family background and its social conventions. We are told that by acquiring a profession as a nurse she tried to rebel against her family. The rebellion, however, fails and she is now a frustrated middle-aged woman living in a dead-end marriage, "attempting to compensate for her disappointment by domineering her family and especially her daughter Martha" (Holmquist 1980, 30). She would like Martha to be a nice middle class girl who does not have any silly ideas about politics or other serious matters.

According to Holmquist (1980, 32) Mrs. Quest is somewhat ambivalent in regarding Martha's role as a woman: in her opinion Martha should get properly married and have children, but on the other hand she would enjoy if Martha had a "career" (MQ 1970, 4). However, Mrs. Quest uses the word 'career' "not in terms of something that Martha might actually do, such as doctoring, or the

law, but as a kind of stick to beat the world with ---"“(MQ 1970, 4). Both aspirations spring from Mrs. Quest’s ambition of social success and respectability, and for her Martha is merely a tool she is eager to use in striving towards them.

It is easy to agree with Holmquist’s notions regarding Mrs. Quest’s attitude toward Martha’s role. It is clear, that Mrs. Quest is bound by the conventions of her generation: even though she would be satisfied if Martha achieved a valued position in work life, she still considers matrimony and motherhood to be more desirable institutions. Because she herself ended up in marriage instead of succeeding in her rebellion toward her own parents, she expects Martha to do the same in the end. That is why she does not really even want Martha to break the rules and become a lawyer, for instance: it would be a slap across Mrs. Quest’s face because it would offer Martha a chance to be ”better” than her. All this also indicates to the same facts that were discussed above (see pp.17-18) in connection with aspects of mothering: a mother tends to feel ambivalent toward her daughter, and she wants to keep the daughter close to her but at the same time she pushes the daughter into adulthood. Mrs. Quest’s attitude toward Martha is such that by emphasizing the aspects of motherhood and marriage she strives to keep Martha within the same pattern she herself has been through in her life: Martha would be closer to her own life if she got married and had children. At the same time Martha would also be more likely to stay dependent on Mrs. Quest. However, if Martha ended up having a real career she would become more independent as an adult, and by dreaming of Martha’s career Mrs. Quest theoretically pushes her into adulthood.

It is a fact that Mrs. Quest has a prejudiced attitude towards different races: she considers blacks, Greeks and Jews to be very much inferior to herself. This can be seen, for example, in one of her discussions with Martha. Martha has walked home from the station alone in the daytime, and Mrs. Quest is shocked because in her opinion a native might have attacked Martha. ”My dear,” says Mrs. Quest to Martha, ”read the newspapers, white girls are always being ra- attacked” (MQ 1970, 39). Martha does not conform to her mothers ideas, she is deeply irritated by the way her mother reacts toward different races. Mrs. Quest’s opinion

is that the blacks will "drive us into the sea, and then the country will be ruined, what would these ignorant blacks do without us. --- They have no sense of gratitude at all for what we do for them" (MQ 1970, 39). In this same discussion it becomes also evident that Mrs. Quest stands for a double standard of morality; instead of the word 'rape' she says attack because it calls for a less "dangerous" image. It is as if by not talking about things in their real names Mrs. Quest wants to keep her world safe and nice. For her Victorian sense of morals sexuality is a taboo. As was pointed out above (see p.23), mothers often deny their daughters' sexuality. They want to make daughters in their image and because they have denied their own sexuality by becoming mothers themselves, they must deny sexuality to their own daughters. By refusing to talk about sexuality Mrs. Quest denies the existence of the whole issue and the fact that Martha is a sexual being.

Mrs. Quest has a strong opinion of how women should act and behave. In her view men have the power, and women are more in the background. She does not like the fact that Martha matures and wants to wear clothes which no longer resemble child's clothes. This attitude of Mrs. Quest reflects, once again, her aim to deny sexuality in general. Mrs. Quest's prejudice is deeply rooted even though she is fully aware that she herself has made mistakes in her life; for example, when she arrived in the colony she for many years "had been describing women who used cosmetics as fast; then she saw that everyone else did, and bought herself lipstick and nail varnish" (MQ 1970, 15). While living in the colony, Mrs. Quest has had to adjust herself in the customs that prevail there, but she cannot see why Martha's generation should be any different from the one she belongs to; Mrs. Quest does not give much space for new things and phenomena.

3.1.3 Martha's Relationship to her Mother

Mrs. Quest plays a vital part in Martha's search for identity. According to Knapp (1984, 39), the very existence of May Quest is an insult to all Martha's ideals. The realization of this can be seen in the fact that Martha is in a constant struggle against her mother. She considers the community around her as hypocritical and

intolerant, and the same features apply to her mother. Holmquist (1980, 29) emphasizes that the primary socializing agent within Martha's family is the mother. By this she refers to the fact that Mrs. Quest has reached a position of power in the family: Mr. Quest stays in the background and lets his wife control their everyday life, and thus it is Mrs. Quest who makes the decisions of who they should meet, for example. In my opinion Holmquist's notion is accurate since Mrs. Quest is a character who appears as a very active member of the family and she introduces the values of society to Martha and expects Martha to obey her and the common values.

There is an imbalance between how the generation of Martha's mother see women's role in general, and how Martha perceives herself and the world. Besides,

The experts themselves seemed to be in doubt as to how she should see herself. There was the group which stated that her life was already determined when she still crouched sightless in the womb of Mrs. Quest. --- Then there were those who said it was the birth itself which set Martha on the fated road. --- For the feeling of fate, doom, was the one message they all had in common. Martha, in violent opposition to her parents, was continually being informed that their influence on her was unalterable, and that it was much too late to change herself. (MQ 1970, 9.)

Martha carries the feeling of fate and doom with her, and her actions are directed against her mother. As was discussed above (see pp.18), the anxiety experienced by the daughter in her relationship to her mother provokes the daughter's attempts to break away from the mother and the daughter takes what steps she can in order to break away; this is clearly the case in Martha's relationship to her mother. For example, Martha provokes her mother with her relationships; being friends and borrowing literature from the Jewish Cohen boys represents resistance toward Mrs. Quest, and her critical views on the race issue are strengthened by Mrs. Quest's disapproval. Through various kind of rebellion Martha tries to fight her way out, and to find her real self.

Also Labovitz (1988, 147) points out that the crucial place for the

female heroine is the family, and it is within the family where Martha meets her initial failure; “her difficult family relationships are never satisfactorily resolved, especially that with her mother“. As already noted above (see p.29), sexuality is one of the major issues between Martha and Mrs. Quest: in the beginning of the series *Children of Violence* their relationship is strongly affected by “the battle of clothes“ which actually has nothing to do with clothes. It is almost impossible for Mrs. Quest to see her daughter as a young woman: she prefers treating her more like a child: “she would smooth the childish dresses down over Martha’s body, so that the girl stood hunched with resentment, and say with an embarrassed coyness, “Dear me, you are getting a pouter pigeon, are you?“ (MQ 1970, 17). Finally, the battle of clothes culminates when Martha starts to make changes on a dress she wants to wear in a dancing party. Mrs. Quest happens to burst in, and is shocked to see Martha naked, the dress in her hands, then she “came quickly across the room, and laid her hands on either side of the girl’s waist, as if trying to press her back into childhood“ (MQ 1970, 17). Martha lifts her hand and shudders with disgust at the touch of her mother - she almost slaps her mother across the face. At her mother’s remark about what kind of clothes nice girls wear Martha replies that she is not a nice girl.

Martha uses sexuality as a weapon against her mother; she knows that her mother sees her as a child just because it makes the boys around Martha seem less dangerous. If Mrs. Quest admitted that Martha actually is a young woman, she would accept Martha as a sexual being, and that is against Mrs. Quest’s Victorian sense of morals. It is as if Mrs. Quest does not have any kind of relation to her own sexuality; sexuality is such a taboo, that even the mere word appears to be a threat to her. She avoids the whole issue, and is shocked when she sees that Martha intends not to do so. Thus, the battle between Martha and her mother can be seen as a battle between the Victorian values and modern values; in this battlefield Mrs. Quest represents the Victorian world, and Martha is the representative of the modern world.

From this scene about the dance dress the real battle between Martha and her mother starts. Martha knows she is facing a long fight with her mother, but

she assures herself that she will not give in. As Labovitz (1988, 148) remarks, in order to become a totally realized human being Martha needs to liberate herself from the inhibiting hold of the unsatisfactory mother-daughter relationship. The same fact was pointed out above (see p.20) by Hirsch: a daughter regards her allegiance to her mother as lethal, and therefore it must be transcended. It is possible for the daughter to reach maturity only through an angry and hostile break from the mother. The battle of clothes is not the only way through which Martha seeks for liberation: for example education becomes an issue. At the age of sixteen she is expected to pass the matriculation exam quite brilliantly, and after that she would go to the university. For months she listens to her mother's talk about university and scholarships, and she herself is sometimes eager, but more often embarrassed because of the way her mother acts. Finally, a week before the vital day, Martha is afflicted with a pink eye infection. It is not a serious infection, but Martha decides that it gives her a good excuse not to take the examination at all. After her decision Martha secretly wonders "why she was condemning herself to live on this farm, which more than anything in the world she wanted to leave? The matric was a simple passport to the outside world" (MQ 1970, 23). Martha feels again as if a spell has been put on her even though it seems clear that Martha herself is behind her decision. This clearly shows the ambiguity that prevails in the actions Martha takes: while determined to stand against her mother, Martha ends up making decisions which seem actually opposite to her own plans. Thus, the role of Martha's mother cannot be overlooked when examining the decisions Martha makes in her life: without the conflicts between Martha and her mother she might not, for example, ever even have hesitated about taking the matriculation exam. Now, instead of going to the university she stays for two more years at the farm with her parents, and this is in glaring contrast with what Martha had dreamt of.

The relationship between Martha and her mother is a relentless struggle for power, and Martha sees her mother as "a baneful figure in the nightmare in which she herself was caught" (MQ 1970, 24). As Holmquist (1980, 36) indicates, both the battle of clothes and the pink eye episode are questions of who is in power and who has control. In the battle of clothes Martha gains a

triumph by sewing a new dress for the dance - a dress which Mrs. Quest does not approve of - and at the same time the dress symbolizes the first step which Martha takes towards establishing her sexual identity.

Jouve's (1982, 104) observation on how the mother is never chosen is, in my opinion, very true: even when Mrs. Quest is actually closest to Martha, she is still always avoided and rebelled against. As was pointed out above (see p.17), even though a daughter hates her mother she may simultaneously feel an underlying pull toward her, and she fears that if she relaxes her guard she will identify with her mother completely. With the help of this phenomenon it is possible to explain why Martha feels, on the one hand, close to her mother but, on the other hand, she dreads her mother and rebels against her.

Knapp (1984, 39) continues Jouve's view by pointing out that Martha seeks a counterconcept to Mrs. Quest; she hopes to find a counterconcept which could save her from her parents' mistakes. However, the quest for such a counterconcept makes Martha realize the paucity of models which she could follow. The same observation is made by Labovitz (1988, 181) who points out that one of the characteristics in a female *Bildungsroman* like this novel is that the heroine all too often suffers from the lack of role models which she could follow. This phenomenon can also be seen in a mother-daughter relationship, where the daughter often rejects the mother as a role model. Since Martha rebels strongly against her mother, she tries to seek for other alternatives, but the result is an unsatisfactory one:

She (Martha) would *not* be like Mrs. Van Rensberg, a fat and earthy housekeeping woman; she would *not* be bitter and nagging and dissatisfied, like her mother. But then, who was she to be like? Her mind turned towards the heroines she had been offered, and discarded them. (MQ 1970, 10.)

Here Martha's rejection of using her own mother as a role model is evident. As was discussed above (see p. 18), a daughter's aspiration to be different from her mother is often seen in the way she uses rejection and negative identification when she examines her relationship to her mother; she strives to be something that her

mother is not. In the same occasion it was noted by Chodorow (see p.18) that a girl tries to identify with anyone else than her mother.

In order to succeed in her own attempts of individuation, Martha finally flees her mother. Her decision to leave home and go to nearby town to work as a secretary is again an act of rebellion towards her mother: Martha hears about the job from her friend Joss who Mrs. Quest does not approve of. Mrs. Quest tries to protest that Martha could have got a job through her parents' friends, but this makes Martha even more eager to take the job from Joss' relatives. At the age of eighteen she closes the home door, and "behind it was the farm, and the girl who had been created by it. It no longer concerned her. Finished. She could forget it. She was a new person, and --- an altogether *new* life was beginning" (MQ 1970, 80).

These thoughts of Martha show that her quest is only in the beginning: actually she does not even herself realize yet that she is seeking for something that concerns her growth as a person. Her only motivation seems to be getting away from the life she has experienced, and at this point she is a very immature eighteen-year-old girl, who assumes that the closing of a home door separates her from everything she has been so far. She is yet to be shown that such is not the case. It is impossible for anyone to get rid of one's past, and suddenly start from the start. As was pointed out above (p.15), the social quest of a heroine starts in alienation and she looks for integration into human community where she can develop more fully; in Martha's case it is evident that she strives to alienate herself from her home and especially from her mother, and her unconscious wish is to encounter new surroundings where she could learn more about her self.

3.2 Martha's Life in Town

3.2.1 Martha's Relationship to Donovan and Adolph

As Martha moves into town by herself, she is consciously bidding farewell to her

mother's ideals as well as to her childhood. She starts working in the office of a firm of lawyers and rents a room. Martha regards herself to be a new person, one who is able to be quite different from her mother. However, as Martha's life in town begins, her needs are extremely conventional: Knapp describes this phase of Martha's life as an "integration into mindless social life and the dubious thrills of dating" (1984, 38).

In the town Martha is a rare white-female newcomer, and she is soon assimilated in a way which leaves her the individuality of a mannequin: she is merely a new, young face, which can be studied and presented by a boyfriend. This role of a mannequin is dependent on her role as a young woman, prized in the male-dominated and closed society. (Knapp 1984, 40.) Martha's role as a female mannequin is emphasized by her first boyfriend, Donovan Anderson, who is mostly interested in the way Martha dresses and behaves. Martha meets him soon after her arrival, and it is actually due to her mother that Donovan and Martha get to know each other: Donovan shows up in the office where Martha works, and tells her that his mother got a letter from Mrs. Quest, who writes about Martha being in town. "I'm doing this because I've been told to," (MQ 1970, 97) says Donovan to Martha, and that marks the beginning of their short relationship.

In this way, Mrs. Quest continues to affect Martha's life just as she did when Martha still lived at home. Martha is annoyed when her mother comes to town and wants to meet Donovan's mother, "as usual, she was feeling the impotent resentment that as soon as she made a friend, created anything of her own, her mother followed her, assuming first place" (MQ 1970, 122). Because of the discussion with Mrs. Quest, Donovan's mother gets the impression that the young couple is planning to get married. The whole idea is absurd to both Martha and Donovan, and the result of Mrs. Quest's visit is that Donovan remarks to Martha: "Well, it seems that we're supposed to make love" (MQ 1970, 127). It is in this manner that Martha has her first sexual experience. It does not satisfy Martha by any means, but at some points she thinks that she is "prepared to accept him, in short as her man, since he had laid laid that claim on her" (MQ 1970, 107).

The relationship between Martha and Donovan is far from being a

romantic one. Martha as a woman is the object, and Donovan is the one who holds the strings; the same pattern is present throughout the relationship. Donovan, for example, tells Martha how she should have her hair and what kind of clothes she should wear. Soon Martha starts to have feelings of dislike towards Donovan, and they drift apart. The fact that there are similar features in Martha's relationship to Donovan as there is in her relationship to her mother probably has a lot to do with Martha's decision to break away from Donovan. Ever since her childhood Martha has experienced manoeuvring from her mother's side, and when the same pattern recurs with Donovan, her self defenses react strongly against it. Just like leaving her home and her mother, Martha leaves Donovan, and is willing to see only the future: she does not consider herself to gain anything by looking at her past. Breaking away from people becomes a pattern she uses throughout her life, and at the same time she runs away from her problems.

According to Holmquist (1980, 58) it is Donovan who prepares Martha for her role as sexual object. He teaches Martha how to please and how to be attractive. This has a similarity to Gardiner's notion (p.13) on how a female protagonist is taught to create a socially approved image of herself; the process includes manipulation of dress, speech and behavior. Donovan also introduces Martha to the Sports Club, which is presented as the normative for the sex role behaviour of white middle class men and women of Martha's society. Social interaction in the Sports Club is based on strongly stereotyped behaviour; the boys are referred to as wolves and girls as virgins. The girls are wolves' prey, and their primary function is to please men. If they want to receive men's admiration, they need to, first of all, look good. Thus, here we see again how Martha becomes dominated: she regards herself to be an autonomous person who fulfills her own desires when in the matter of fact she is merely following the expectations imposed on her by her surroundings. She is at times very critical about the Sports Club, but she is so strongly affected by the conventions and expectations, that she does not realize her criticism to be ineffective. She acts in the way which is typical to any other young woman in the Club, and there is nothing different about her. Her quest is not even close to being an autonomous one; this phase of Martha's life is guided

by outer forces, which she blindly follows.

In the festive atmosphere of the Sports Club Martha plunges into short relationships with young men she is not actually at all interested in. One of these men is Adolph King, a Jewish musician who is bitterly conscious of his pariah status, and who sees Martha as a means to improve his status. The image of Mrs. Quest follows Martha also in this relationship: Martha is very much aware of the stigmatization of Jews because it is the favorite object of her mother's invectives. Martha is motivated by the need to show both the Sports Club people and her mother, that she is not bound by their conventions. (Knapp 1984, 40-41.) By having a sexual relationship with a Jewish man Martha finds new way altogether of opposing her mother, and it is also a way for Martha to make herself feel different and unique, "the act of love had claimed her from them (the Sports Club people), and she now belonged to this man" (MQ 1970, 185).

Martha's need to rebel against the conventions of her mother and the Sports Club people overrides the resentment at "having her first love affair with a man she was not the slightest in love with" (MQ 1970, 185). Martha tries to persuade herself that she loves Adolph and that he is in every way superior to the Sports Club men, and she succeeds to assure herself of this for some time. She even asks Adolph at one point why they shouldn't get married. However, their relationship ends when Martha's friends from the Sports Club intervene: they tell Martha that Adolph has been boasting everywhere about having a girlfriend like Martha, and they end the relationship for Martha. Martha is embarrassed because of this but "at the back of her mind was a profound thankfulness that it was all over" (MQ 1970, 195).

This phase shows again how immature and reactionary Martha is. She thinks that a relationship with a Jewish man would make her rebellious and independent, but in reality it only leaves her in the mercy of her friends, who have to rescue her from the "big bad wolf". She is embarrassed when her friends end her relationship with Adolph, but she is also relieved that they have made the decision for her. Martha is clearly not ready to carry the consequences of her behavior herself; on the contrary, she is very dependent on other peoples' opinions, and

unable to analyze her motives. At this point she is only looking for a man through whom she could fulfill herself, and this is a kind of phenomenon Gardiner (p.13) mentions in her writing on female identity: for a female protagonist it is often an aspiration to concentrate on her inner life and feelings, and through a relationship to a man she seeks an inner balance.

3.3 *Martha as a Wife*

3.3.1 Martha's Marriage to Douglas

According to Holmquist (1980, 56), love constitutes Martha's first attempt to transcend what is socially given. She falls in love with Douglas Knowell, a young civil servant, because he seems to be different from the men Martha has met before: he is "a man, at least, and not a silly little boy. And so intelligent too!" (MQ 1970, 218). Very soon Martha discovers that she does not fully understand him, but again she is "bound to love him, that claim had been laid on her" (MQ 1970, 221). This thought of Martha also shows her own attitude toward her relationship to Douglas: she herself is the object on which a simple claim can be made by a male. The contradiction between Martha's dreams and her actions is clear from the beginning of her relationship to Douglas: as Sage (1983, 33) points out, Martha uses self-deception when she makes Douglas over into a soul-mate in order to marry him. In reality their view of life and dreams do not coincide with each other.

According to Knapp (1984, 41), Martha's convictions and actions are again strikingly discordant: a conventional marriage is precisely what she had intended to avoid, and still she decides to get married with Douglas. It seems clear that Martha does not know what she wishes from Douglas, or men in general. It is also obvious that she does not know what she wishes from herself. In a sudden whim she decides to marry Douglas, and the next moment she regards herself to be mad. The fluctuation between the feelings of desperation and exhilaration are very characteristic of Martha at this phase of her life. In one of the moments she regards herself as rational again, and she decides that she does not want to marry Douglas:

She was thinking of that unimportant wedding ceremony rather as her mother might have done. Naturally this comparison wouldn't have dared to enter her head. She thought of the marriage as a door closing firmly against her life in town, which she was already regarding with puzzled loathing. She was longing for the moment when it would no longer have anything to do with her. (MQ 1970, 228.)

Once again, a concept of a door emerges in Martha's thoughts: when she left her home at the age of eighteen, she saw her departure as a closing of a door, and now she sees that a door is closed in her life as she is just about to enter marriage. Whatever changes occur in Martha's life, she considers them simply to be 'closings'; this is a rather interesting idea which gives support to the fact that Martha wants to only look into the future. To her, past is something to be overlooked, and the answer for what she actually is hides somewhere in the future.

Here we can see how Martha tries to build up her identity, and how she examines the phenomena around her as well as her own actions. Her picture of her self and her actions are not in balance with each other, and she is aware of this. This is in compliance with Holmquist's (1980, 57) notion that Martha tries to form an identity in a society where women are mainly wives and mothers, and marriage is a white middle class woman's way of realizing her social potential. Further, Holmquist argues (1980, 56) that even though Martha does not search for marriage, she accepts it as the social form in which love can be realized. This notion can be argued since it seems that Martha is not very much in love with Douglas after all: at times she is clearly aware that her feelings have nothing to do with the desire to marry, "she did not want to marry Douglas, she did not want to marry at all" (MQ 1970, 224). However, it is the overall social attitude which affects her decisions because as soon as the word gets out that she and Douglas are planning a wedding, people who Martha hardly even knows congratulate her and they "shook her hand, smiling in altogether new emphasis, like those welcoming a new member. (But of what?) She understood, however, that she had done well for herself" (MQ 1970, 225).

Martha is shown to be very incredulous of getting married to Douglas.

In the end, her decision to go ahead with the wedding plans is strongly affected by Mrs. Quest as well: one morning Martha wakes up "with the feeling of a prisoner before execution" (MQ 1970, 227) and she is determined to ring Douglas up and to tell him she cannot marry him. However, when Martha gets up she finds a letter from her mother, "ten pages of every sort of abuse, --- and words like 'immoral' were repeated in every sentence" (MQ 1970, 229). This makes Martha fly to the telephone and implore Douglas to come home to her at once. Martha is in a state of locked hysteria: "How dare she? --- it's not as if they cared a damn *really* one way or the other, and..." (MQ 1970, 229). Douglas calms her down by saying that her mother would be all right once they had got married.

This scene is yet another example of how Mrs. Quest influences Martha's actions. It is as if Mrs. Quest's involvement causes Martha to act in a totally opposite way she herself has intended. The image of her mother underlines the negative aspirations for Martha: Martha does not want to marry Douglas but when her mother attacks her with her letter, she suddenly decides that marrying Douglas is what she shall do. This shows clearly that Martha's defiance of everything her mother approves of leads her to decisions she might not otherwise make. This phenomenon was referred to by Rich (p.21) when she discussed the fact that a daughter may underline the negative image of her mother by acting in a totally opposite way than what would be characteristic of her mother: in order to become individuated and free the daughter must separate from her mother, and as she strives to differentiate from her mother, she may actually end up making decisions that are discordant with her original intentions.

Sexuality rises to surface again. Martha and Douglas go to visit Martha's parents, and when they make love in Martha's parents' house, Martha thinks of the common attitude and sees Douglas and herself as

heirs, whether they liked it or not, of the English puritan tradition, where sex is either something to be undergone --- or something to be shut out, or something to be faced and overcome. --- for both Martha and Douglas, making love when and how they pleased was positively a flag of independence in itself, a red and defiant flag, waving in the faces of the older generation. (MQ 1970, 237.)

Martha is not sexually satisfied with Douglas, but making love to him makes her often more tender towards him. Martha sees sex as a means of rebellion: by being sexually free - that is, by acting as if she were sexually free, she despises her mother's views on sex, but at the same time she does not realize that sex is only something obligatory for her. She does not get physical or psychological satisfaction in her relationship with Douglas.

This is something that also Labovitz (1988, 177) pays attention to when she argues that in a female *Bildungsroman* sexuality is one of the crucial themes in female development: the way Lessing treats sexual freedom makes it seem more like a burden than freedom. In Labovitz' opinion actual freedom can be gained only if other elements of growth are also present, and through these elements Martha must pass. Such an element is, for example, being satisfied with oneself and one's achievements in life. Martha is not satisfied in her relationship with Douglas, and thus she is not able to fully develop as a person. Her hesitation of getting married with him could be said to spring from this subconscious knowledge. At this point of her development, however, Martha finds her triumph in sexuality: her triumph is knowing that her mother has never been good in bed (Labovitz 1988, 177). This emphasizes the fact that Martha sees sexuality merely as a performance, and the mental side of sexuality is not something she tries to invest on.

To Martha both sexuality and marriage are flags of independence, which she can wave in the faces of her parents. She seems to become even more determined when her parents assume that the reason for her to get married is that she is pregnant. Martha wants to show her independence by boasting that getting married is her own will, not an act of necessity. Still, at the same time, Martha knows that she does not actually want to marry Douglas; "she could not help it; she was being dragged towards it, whether she liked it or not" (MQ 1970, 243). This attitude of a victim is a bit surprising, since Martha's goal is to become different from her parents. By acting the way she does, she actually comes closer to her mother and general attitudes in society. This is, once more, in compliance with

Rich's notion (see p.21) that daughters hate their mothers because the daughters' main fear is that they are being pulled towards their mothers. However, at the same time daughters actually may act in a way that conforms to their mothers' attitudes as well as to general attitudes in society. All this indicates that Martha's self is in imbalance: one part of her tries to do everything possible to release her from her parents' world, and the other obeys.

Martha is afraid of repetition: she does not want to become a part in a scheme which concerns the life of her mother and father. She considers herself to be doomed – because she is the daughter of her parents, she is forced to become like them. In Knapp's view (1984, 42) repetition is present in Martha's marriage to Douglas because Martha duplicates her mother's mistake in entering an unhappy marriage. Labovitz (1988, 179) goes on to say that since the female *Bildungsroman* is unable to achieve total development prior to marriage, it takes Martha past marriage, and the curtain does not come down upon a happy ending.

Martha is nineteen when she marries Douglas and their marriage lasts for four years. Martha carefully examines her identity, and it seems to her that

there was always a point when men seemed to press a button, as it were, and one was expected to turn into something else for their amusement. This 'turning into something else' had landed her where she (Martha) was now: married, signed and sealed away from what she was convinced she was. (PM 1984, 14.)

Martha has expected that marriage would introduce her to something new and exciting, and she feels disappointed when she realizes that this is not the case. However, when their daughter, Caroline, is born, they move into a house of their own, and Martha is able to give her mind fully to the new task of managing a large house, four servants, Caroline and a husband. Martha finds herself troubled because she has adapted herself so well to this life, "she was not even bored. It was as if three parts of herself stood on one side, idle, waiting to be called into action" (PM 1984, 277). Some action is caused, again, by Mrs. Quest, who visits Martha regularly, and clearly brings out her opinion that "Martha ruined her servants, squandered money, and neglected Caroline" (PM 1984, 283). These encounters

ineluctably lead to conflicts between Martha and her mother, and Martha always ends up feeling she is imperfect as a person. One example of this is when Douglas would like to have another child, and Martha finds out that he has talked about it with Mrs. Quest. Martha herself does not want to have more children and she feels cheated because Douglas has talked about her behind her back. Finally she agrees to go and see a doctor who would talk to her for her "own good" (PM 1984, 292). The episode shows again how Martha tries to balance between her own will and the expectations of other people around her:

She immediately began chiding herself for her utter dishonesty. The instinct to comply, to please, seemed to her more and more unpleasant and false. Yet she had to reassure Douglas and kiss him before he left if she was not to feel guilty and lacking as a woman. (PM 1984, 292.)

After this episode Martha starts to feel that some kind of crisis has been precipitated. When Douglas travels to another town to work for some time, Martha becomes involved in a local Communist Party, and falls for a young Air Force corporal, William. Finally Martha wants to get a divorce from Douglas. That is something Douglas cannot cope with: they have a quarrel, and Douglas becomes so furious that Martha is sure he will attack her. Here a very crucial scene emerges because Martha suddenly decides that she will go to her mother, and stay there until morning when she would come back and get her things. This decision seems to be a sudden, natural reaction which expresses Martha's need for self protection. She is almost like a cub going to its mother for protection. But the scene is not over: Douglas follows Martha, and is just about to physically attack her when she reaches the veranda of her mother's house. Mrs. Quest stands calmly behind the window as Martha urges her to let her in: "Mother, you aren't going to let him bully me?"--- "Well, you deserve it," said Mrs. Quest --- "Go back to him," she (Mrs. Quest) was saying, "it serves you right." The door shut in Martha's face" (PM 1984, 376-377).

In my opinion this is a crucial scene because for this one time the adult Martha seeks for her mother's help and comfort, and it does not occur to her that her mother might not meet her halfway. I think it is crucial for Martha's individuation process to find out that in a time of need it is not her mother who she

can rely on. Even though their relationship has never been a close one, until this episode Martha has had a vague picture of her mother as a person who would stand by her if she urged her to do so. This not being the case, Martha turns away from her mother and decides to rely only on herself. Her mother's unwillingness to help strengthen Martha's belief that she must resist her in every possible way. The scene on the veranda is a kick of reality for Martha, and I think it is one of the first ones which really sets Martha on the path of independence.

3.3.2 Martha's Marriage to Anton

Martha's relationship to William, a British Air Force pilot who Martha met just before she divorced Douglas, does not last for long – William is sent away to another airforce camp. Martha sees herself as an independent woman, but at the same time she "mourns for the temporarily extinct person she can only be with a man she loves; she mourns him who brought her 'self' to life --- But who, next, would walk into the empty space?" (RS 1977, 46-47). As Sage (1983, 36-37) points out, Martha is again deceiving herself when she claims she is not leaving Douglas for anyone: almost immediately after William she drifts into marriage with Anton Hesse, a German refugee who acts as a leader in the Communist group Martha is involved in. This shows Martha's dependence on men: she cannot feel herself to be 'whole' without a man she could be with.

Martha regards her marriage to Anton to be a totally different institution from the one she had with Douglas: she marries Anton only to legitimize his status as a foreigner and to save him from internment. According to DuPlessis (1985, 189), after her experience with Douglas, Martha discredits marriage for social acceptability, propriety, and property. However, in reality not a whole lot has changed, and I cannot but to agree with Sage's (1983, 37) notion that the same thing happens with Anton as did with Douglas: Martha marries a vision of wholeness and community in a man who has already repelled and disappointed her. Adapting Knapp's (1984, 44) words one could argue that, like Douglas, who first appears as a likable man and sex partner but then turns under Martha's scrutiny into

an oversized baby, Anton also undergoes a steady degeneration. From the beginning of their marriage Martha thinks they are unsuitable for each other both intellectually and physically. She tries to reassure herself not to bother by thinking that the marriage is simply a formality for both of them but she does not succeed. She starts to feel estranged from Anton when she notices that he is becoming more and more dependent on her. Her image of a strong, masculine political figure turns out to be full of pitfalls, and she feels she has been cheated by life again.

Mrs. Quest does not play a vital role in the marriage of Martha and Anton. After Martha divorces Douglas, Mrs. Quest announces to her by a registered letter that she is no longer her daughter, and Martha lets it be. Very soon Mrs. Quest comes back to Martha's life as if nothing had happened. This again shows how dramatic incidents can occur in Martha's and Mrs. Quest's relationship, but in the long run the setting stays the same: both the daughter and the mother return to each other so that they can start the battle of power all over again.

Mrs. Quest does not approve much of the fact that Martha gets married to an "enemy alien" (RS 1977, 195), but she does not experience it as a big threat to herself either: this probably is due to the fact that Mrs. Quest now has the advantage over Martha, namely her relationship to Caroline. Martha has given up all her rights as a mother, whereas Mrs. Quest is closely involved in Caroline's life in the role of a grandmother. 'The battle field' of Martha and her mother is basically concentrated around Caroline, not Anton.

Marriage to Anton is a way for Martha to personify her ideology about equality, and it is also a slap against her mother's face who has strong prejudiced opinions about people who do not conform to her middle class values. Finally, Martha comes to realize that her marriage to Anton illustrates the pervasiveness of patriarchal and bourgeois family patterns (Holmquist 1980, 88); exactly those same features she has loathed in her parents' marriage and repudiated in her marriage with Douglas. DuPlessis (1985, 189) puts it short and pithy: Martha's marriage to both Douglas and Anton distance her from herself. Most researchers (e.g. Sage 1983, 38; DuPlessis 1985, 189; Knapp 1984, 44) see this phase of Martha's life as the one when Martha first starts to experience a severe

fragmentation of her personality, "she applies the then fashionable term 'neurotic' to describe herself and the difficulties she is experiencing" (Labovitz 1988, 173). The fragmentation of personality was discussed above (p.12) in connection with Erikson's identity theory: Martha's situation at this point refers to one where identity formation has failed and the person suffers from identity diffusion. Also Frye's view (p.14) has similarities with Martha's state because Martha inevitably experiences tension between subject and object in her identity, and is under threat of mutilation. Martha seems to be in the beginning of her quest and she thinks: "Why is it I listen for the echoes of other people in my voice and what I do all the time? The fact is, I'm not a person at all, I'm nothing yet – perhaps I never will be" (RS 1977, 279). This is also a crucial point for self-realization in Martha's life; she partly realizes that she has been too dependent on other people and their expectations, and she needs to get more perspective on her self on her own.

3.4 Martha as a Mother: Relationship to Caroline

Martha's premarital life is dominated by her role as a lover, but in married life the roles as wife and mother become central. These roles also require a psychological attitude which is totally new for Martha; it is strongly maternal. In Mrs. Quest's generation most of the women are dominated by their motherly function, and this is also the case in Martha's generation. (Holmquist 1980, 60-61.)

However, Martha does not want to enter the stereotyped role where a woman is first and foremost a mother. It is her intention not to have any children. This intention backfires because she is already pregnant when she marries Douglas. She herself does not realize it for quite some time, and when she finally allows herself to suspect that she is pregnant, her first reaction is close to a feeling of disgust: she drinks a bottle of neat gin, baths in a burning hot water and climbs repeatedly on to a table and jumps off. In other words, she does everything to get rid of the fetus. When she does not succeed, she decides to get an abortion – which is, of course, illegal, and this shocks Martha who flies "into an angry tirade against governments who presumed to tell women what they should do with their bodies; it

was the final insult to personal liberty””(PM 1984, 106). She is just about to make preparations for the trip to get an abortion in Johannesburg, when Mrs. Quest comes to visit her, and against all her intentions Martha blurts out that she is going to have a baby. Mrs. Quest is delighted, ”it was the best thing that could possible happen, it would settle Martha down” (PM 1984, 118). Martha is confounded; it seems to her that her mother is out of her mind; ”above all she was thinking of the triumph she (Mrs. Quest) had shown” (PM 1984, 118). Here we can see how the concept of power emerges again in Martha’s and Mrs. Quest’s relationship: not even the state of pregnancy can be welcomed by them without the battle of who has the control over the situation.

As Holmquist (1980, 62) argues, in Martha’s opinion children are obstacles to her own freedom, and she sees them as the ultimate link in the cycle of repetition which binds her to her family history. The nightmare of repetition is exactly what Martha is thinking when she realizes she is pregnant. She examines her own relationship to her mother, and is afraid that her own child shall become a prisoner of his/her parents – just like she herself has been and still is.

Soon Martha starts to have second thoughts about having the abortion, and she actually has moments when she finds herself excited at the idea of having a baby. During her pregnancy Martha’s relationship to her own mother is – again - a complicated one, but there are moments when Martha clearly tries to connect with her mother, or at least to understand her. Martha sees similarities between her and her mother: she knows that Mrs. Quest did not want to have Martha in the first place. She tries once to make her mother tell her how she experienced it all, ”How, then, had she (Mrs. Quest) come to accept her?” (PM 1984, 110). Mrs. Quest does not want to discuss the subject, and Martha is irritated and comes to the conclusion that ”this is the nightmare, this the nightmare of a class and generation: repetition.” She sees in front of her ”a series of doomed individuals, carrying their doom *inside* them, like the seeds of fatal disease. Nothing could alter the pattern” (PM 1984, 109).

The fatal pattern is embodied by Mrs. Quest, who starts a cheerful planning of the child’s future before it has even born: ”he would be, in fact, the

child Mrs. Quest had always longed for, the person her own two children had obstinately refused to become" (PM 1984, 123). Martha faces her mother like "an animal defending her cubs" (PM 1984, 126), and exclaims that the baby is going to be *her* baby, not Mrs. Quest's. So, here the daughter and the mother are again struggling for power: who is going to affect the child's life most. To her mother's attacks Martha reacts by murmuring to the foetus that nothing would be allowed to harm it, "she, Martha, the free spirit, would protect the creature from her, Martha, the maternal force; the maternal Martha, that enemy, would not be allowed to enter the picture" (PM 1984, 127). As was pointed out above (pp.21-22), Martha is afraid that she will become to resemble her own mother in her motherly role toward her child. In the same occasion above, it was discussed that according to Rich, Martha tries to split herself when she is pregnant: she is examining her identity with very mixed feelings and she considers even her future role as a mother to include "two Marthas"; one tries to destroy the child, and the other is there to protect the child.

Before the child is born, Martha already makes clear to herself what kind of things she and Douglas must avoid in his/her upbringing: they are not allowed to suggest that the child might be one sex rather than another, and they must never try to form its mind in any way whatsoever. The child would also be sent to a progressive school at an early age because Martha thinks that "a child without any parents at all clearly had a greater chance of survival as a whole personality" (PM 1984, 128). She does not believe in her mother's view that she should sacrifice herself to her children just as her mother has done.

To Martha the labour seems to be a complete failure because she is not able to stay strong enough and resist the pain. She cries out for God and her mother, and it makes her feel helpless with rage. As was pointed out above (see p. 23), Martha feels that her own separate individuality is destroyed because she moans after her mother while giving birth to Caroline: she feels she cannot forgive herself because she has not been strong enough to resist the existence of her mother. This feeling of guilt colours Martha's relationship to Caroline because in a way Caroline is a constant reminder to Martha that she has not been able to totally resist her mother's influence.

Martha has some very tender feelings towards the child, Caroline, but most of the time she does not enjoy motherhood. DuPlessis (1985, 190) describes the early childhood of Caroline as a period during which the battles of Martha and the infant begin to make Martha over into her own demanding and angry mother. For example, feeding Caroline seems to Martha as a tiresome struggle during which the child refuses to play by the rules, and Martha herself ends up feeling deeply frustrated. As Knapp (1984, 43) puts it, the natural fulfillment of pregnancy is quickly broken by the realities of caring for the child, which Martha resents.

In this context it is easy to understand that Martha does not resist much when Mrs. Quest takes a more and more central role for herself in Caroline's life. Mrs. Quest fusses about everything: in her opinion Caroline needs to be fed up a little, and gives the impression to Martha that she does not take proper care of her. Martha feels helpless, "silenced by the knowledge that she was certainly a failure, she could no more manage Caroline than Mrs. Quest had managed *her*" (PM 1984, 197). Mrs. Quest often takes Caroline for a few days, and Martha is uncomfortably surprised that as soon as Caroline is away from her it is as if she never had a child at all.

Douglas is away at war, and at the age of twenty-one Martha starts to feel her life is slipping away from her, "two years ago I was free as air, I could have done anything, been anything" (PM 1984, 228). She finds new meaning into her life when she joins the local communist group, and she slowly grows away from Douglas and Caroline. When the second baby becomes an issue between Douglas and Martha, she begins to break repetition by the choice of nonpregnancy at the end of *A Proper Marriage* (DuPlessis 1985, 190). Finally she separates from Douglas, leaving Caroline to Douglas who a little bit later marries again.

Martha is glad to be relieved of the motherly role. By the end of the second volume of the *Children of Violence*, Martha has eliminated both motherhood and bourgeois marriage as viable collective identifications. Martha's fear of repeating her mother's mistakes is also a central factor which influences her decision to take final departing from Caroline. (Knapp 1984, 43-46.) Just before she actually leaves Caroline and Douglas, she meets Mrs. Quest, who is shocked

because of Martha's intentions. According to Mrs. Quest a woman's role is to "sacrifice herself, as she had done for the sake of her children" (PM 1984, 373), and her main concern is what people will say of Martha. After this meeting, "Martha went home with the feeling that she had accomplished another stage in that curious process which would set her free" (PM 1984, 373), and it is at this point that the thought of parting with Caroline becomes real to Martha. She takes Caroline into the garden, and she plays with her toys when Martha talks to her. Caroline is only two years old, so she does not understand Martha, but it feels to Martha as if the child understands her perfectly. For her Caroline actually represents the only person who can really understand her, and Martha feels a deep bond between her and the child. Martha takes Caroline on her lap for a moment, and then she gives the child to Douglas's mother, and goes indoors. That is the last time Martha actually touches the child, or talks to her as her mother. By leaving Caroline and by keeping the distance between herself and the child she wants to set Caroline free from her oppression.

However, Caroline continues to stay a part of Martha's life, and this is due to Mrs. Quest: Mrs. Quest is actively involved in Caroline's life. Caroline often stays with her grandmother, and Mrs. Quest always remembers to tell Martha about her. Knapp (1984, 46) sees a certain motive in this pattern: Mrs. Quest continually brings Martha and Caroline together, and this seems to be a way of confronting Martha with the living proof of her role-betrayal. In my opinion, this is very true because in Mrs. Quest's eyes Martha has betrayed her role as a woman, wife and mother, and by forcing Martha to face Caroline, Mrs. Quest reminds her of this. It is partly accidentally that Martha meets Caroline several times at her mother's house, but it is also due to Mrs. Quest and the fact that she "forgets" to mention Martha that Caroline is staying with her when Martha comes to the house. However, Martha is careful not to admit to the child that she is her mother. Caroline suspects something, but Martha insists that she is only her aunt. According to Knapp (1984, 46), this in Martha's opinion reduces the danger that Caroline would come to hate her as Martha hates her own mother. Knapp continues by saying that despite her efforts, Martha has made little progress in her methods of

avoiding 'the nightmare repetition': Martha still defines her female role negatively, and she shows this by not entering the mother-role embodied by Mrs. Quest.

Much later, after Martha has moved to London, she admits to herself that she might have made a mistake when she thought that by leaving Caroline she would set Caroline and herself free. There are moments when she misses Caroline, and imagines what their relationship could have been like. However, these thoughts and feelings are results of a long quest which Martha goes through, and not before experiencing all the necessary stages of outer and inner search for identity Martha is able to fully examine her actions.

3.5 The Role of Politics in Martha's Life

The painful process leading Martha out of a traumatic childhood into an attempted reconciliation with herself and society relates to self-education and personal education rather than formal education. It is necessary for Martha to seek her education outside her family where she only experiences discouragement. First, Martha seeks the companionship of the two intellectual Jewish boys, Joss and Solly Cohen, and through them she comes into contact with socialist thought as well as the outside world. (Labovitz 1988, 155.)

From Joss and Solly Martha borrows books about politics, races and other subjects. At the same time Martha is able to shake her relationship with her mother: being a friend with Jewish boys shocks Mrs. Quest who does not know "what to do with Martha, who seemed bent on behaving so as to make her mother as unhappy as possible" (MQ 1970, 10). Here we see again that most of the actions Martha takes are strongly affected by Mrs. Quest – perhaps Martha's attitude would never have formed to be as socialist as it does if reading 'revolutionary' literature had not made Mrs. Quest so furious? She wants her mother to notice the books she is reading; for example, once she is reading Havelock Ellis on sex, "or rather, she was not actually reading it: (it) lay, like an irritant, on the top step, with its title well in view" (MQ 1970, 2). Reading these kinds of books is for Martha a way of rebelling against her parents whose bookshelves are filled with fairy stories, poetry

and classics. "There were also, lying everywhere, books on 'politics' in her parents' sense of the word, such as the memoirs of Lloyd George, or histories of the Great War" (MQ 1970, 27). To Martha, who has just read *Mein Kampf*, none of these seems to have any connection to their life on the farm or in society generally.

At the age of fifteen Martha realizes that she is a pacifist when her father calls her one, "she played this part against her father's need, just as, for him, she was that group of people in the 'Twenties who refused to honour the war'" (MQ 1970, 25). It is with her parents that Martha has her first 'discussions' on politics – or rather, she argues against everything they say.

When both parents said that Hitler was no gentleman, an upstart without principles, Martha found herself defending Hitler too; it was this which made her think a little and question her feeling of being used, her conviction that when her parents raised their voices and argued at her, on a complaining and irritable note, insisting that there was going to be another war with Germany and Russia soon --- this new war was in some way necessary to punish her, Martha, who talked of the last one so critically. (MQ 1970, 26.)

Martha continues to read different kinds of books when she is married; she tries to find answers to the questions she has of herself and life in general, and at the same time she continues her social quest.

According to Labovitz (1988, 162), Lessing turns Martha's education into a political one, beginning with Martha's marriage to Douglas and continuing until the final volume of *Children of Violence*. This is shown by the fact that at the cost of her family Martha throws herself into politics in *A Proper Marriage*, and *A Ripple from the Storm* is almost fully concentrated on Martha's life as a Communist reactionary. Still, it cannot be ignored that the motifs behind Martha's actions are not purely political: later Martha realizes that without her love for William – the Air Force pilot she had an affair with right after she had divorced Douglas - she might not have become active in the communist group in the first place, and her marriage to Anton is mostly a reminder that Martha must resist what is socially given by her society and her parents.

Politics offer Martha something which she has been yearning for a

long time; through her left-wing activities she is able to find new mentors in her life. The first is a magistrate, Mr. Maynard, who in Labovitz' (1988, 163) words is used by Lessing to underscore Martha's high-mindedness at this particular period; Martha is very idealistic and self-righteous both politically and in her development as a person.

In the beginning of her marriage with Douglas Martha almost fully forgets politics. After Caroline is born, Martha suddenly wakes up to notice that the world and society around her are really changing. This is, of course, due to the World War II. Martha's attention is especially caught by the overall attention given to the change in post-war attitudes to the Soviet Union. Eagerly she starts to read books about different political events, and

the emotion that gripped her was mostly rage: she was twenty-two; she had been born during that revolution, which, to say the least, had been important in the world's development, and yet this was the first time she had been told anything about it. Her rage was even greater because she had been such a willing accomplice in this process of not thinking. For there had been plenty of moments when she might have fitted a few facts together to make a truth. She had not. Her upbringing, her education, her associates, the newspapers, had all conspired to bring her to the age of twenty-two, an adult, that is, without feeling more about what was going on in the socialist sixth of the world --- than a profound reluctance to think about it at all. (PM 1984, 315.)

It is evident that Martha blames both her surroundings as well as herself for not 'seeing' what is going on in the world. Together with William and Jasmine Cohen she goes to the meeting of Help for Our Allies committee, and "it was like a rebirth. For the first time in her life she had been offered an ideal to live for" (PM 1984, 315). From this moment on Martha drifts more and more away from Caroline and her secure life as a housewife, and she is eager to join a Communist Party – but for her disappointment there seems not to exist one. Finally, the Group is formed with Anton Hesse as the head of it, and after her divorce from Douglas Martha dedicates all her strength for working for the Group. For Martha, communism has a profound meaning: it replaces all other aspects which have been central in Martha's life so far. Instead of being first and foremost a wife and a mother, Martha is now a

servant of politics, struggling to serve people in wider circles of society.

To Martha the Group signifies a new way of life and it seems to be the answer for a life style she is searching for; a life style characterized by equality and intellectual and emotional communication. The Group also represents a new philosophy: communism. To Martha it stands for a belief in the future which replaces her sense of being bound by the past, a faith in change instead of the "nightmare of repetition" which Martha most of all fears. (Holmquist 1980, 82-83.) In a similar vein, Labovitz (1988, 186) argues that to Martha the Group represents a 'brotherhood' in which she can be accepted as an equal, and where she may define herself once she has been fully incorporated. All this can be seen in the way Martha sees her relationship to the Group: "she lived in 'the group' and did not care about the judgements of anyone else. She felt as if she were invisible to anyone but the group" (RS 1977, 26). Belonging to the Group is Martha's bulwark against the outside world and people who disapprove her divorce from Douglas and the fact that she no longer acts as Caroline's mother.

According to Holmquist (1980, 84), Martha wants to most of all disconnect herself from her past and her family by joining the Group. Her attempts to become a servant of humanity stand for her eagerness to politicize her individual life; by serving humanity Martha wants to get away from keeping up close personal relationships. She fears society, "she could see her mother-in-law, her own mother, Mrs. Talbot, the Maynards, massed behind him (Douglas)" (PM 1984, 340). Martha's terror is based on the feeling that Douglas and everybody else are much stronger than she is. However, the Group gives her comfort, because "as soon as she felt herself surrounded by people to whom 'personal problems' were the unimportant background to their real responsibilities, her fear vanished" (PM 1984, 340). However, things are not that simple. As Holmquist (1980, 84) continues, Martha's "political identity contains a deep split" in which "the pain is related to her past, to those 'personal matters' that she tries to repress, mainly her relationship to her daughter". This shows that politics does not offer such comfort that Martha could fully forget her relationships and past. Martha's quest for self-discovery is still in the very beginning, and the testing of various ideologies is one fact which

further or hinder her path toward self-realization. Martha's quest has, again, similarities with Erikson's theory (p.12) according to which a person goes through a sequence of crises which, in turn, shape his/her individuality.

Knapp (1984, 44) makes an important point about the lesson Martha must learn. This is that all institutionalized groupings tend to level and cripple individuality. As long as Martha is a part of the communist movement, she pushes away the thoughts of her real identity: she is one part of the 'whole' and it is not necessary for her to 'be alone'. She associates even her personal relationships with politics, and dedicates her energy toward collectivity. In the long run, this does not satisfy Martha. She begins to realize her dissatisfaction when the Group fails politically: there are only two people left beside Martha. She continues, however, to be involved in the leftist movements. Her involvement is based on a need to find alternatives to the oppressive family patterns she has experienced (Holmquist 1980, 88). In the end of *Landlocked* Martha finally comes to think that perhaps her role in society still has not been fulfilled, and she decides to leave South Africa for England.

In London Martha is finally able to scrutinize her relationship to Communism and the fact that she used Communism as a weapon against the ideal of family:

But for us (Communists) it went without saying that the family was a dreadful tyranny, a doomed institution, a kind of mechanism for destroying everyone. --- And so we abolished the family. --- We were all corrupted and ruined, we knew that, but the children would be saved. --- We were not right. Isn't it funny? Do you know how many people have become Communists simply because of that; because Communism would do away with the family? But Communism has done no such thing, it's done the opposite. (FG 1976, 68.)

This is the first time Martha allows herself to admit what her motifs were when she was actively involved in the Group. Communism was a scapegoat for her because it gave her an alternative for the ideals her own society and parents offered her. She could dedicate her life for an ideology, which not only allowed but demanded that one should blindly work for its good and abolish his/her ties to the family; for

Martha Communism gave the excuse to abandon her role as a middle-class wife and a mother. It also offered her a status where she could look down to her mother and show that she does not care for her mothers ideals.

In *The Four-Gated City* Martha is not herself actively involved in politics, but she becomes affected when she lives with the Coldridge family: one member of the family, Colin, is a scientist who is publicly accused of being a Communist. This happens in the cold war era, and Martha regards the atmosphere as oppressive. She realizes that she can support neither America nor Communism; "she would have to support one or the other --- because there would be no middle place. Well then, she would be a patriot and a coward, rather than a traitor and a coward" (FG 1976, 190-191). This disturbs Martha deeply, and at this point she begins to think of suicide. It seems that politics still has a strong impact on Martha, and mixed with personal problems they have a big role in Martha's life. In all, she learns a lot from politics: in Knapp's (1984, 45) words, Martha learns through her initiation into communism to put her own importance in proper perspective – her consciousness broadens from primarily egoistic perceptions toward an awareness of her surroundings.

3.6 Martha as a Product of Society

As pointed in the beginning of this analysis (p.25), Martha is also formed by society around her. As a teenager she claims that she has gained a clear picture of herself by books lent to her by the Cohen boys; from Joss she learns an interest towards economics and sociology, and through Solly she becomes interested in psychology. Martha regards herself as an

adolescent, and therefore bound to be unhappy; British, and therefore uneasy and defensive; in the fourth decade of the twentieth century, and therefore inescapably beset with problems of race and class; female, and obliged to repudiate the shackled women of the past. She was tormented with guilt and responsibility and self-consciousness. (MQ 1970, 8.)

According to Knapp (1984, 45), Martha sees herself as a product of a deficient and

violent social order: she was born during World War I, and Caroline was born on the eve of World War II. In Knapp's view, the individual's development is determined strongly by the armed conflicts which mark the century, and this is the meaning of the title *Children of Violence*. One cannot but to agree with her notion. Violence has an important impact on Martha: she gains a consciousness of violence already through her father, who repeats his stories of World War I. Martha's life in town is also marked by the existence of violence: it is the year of 1938, and the youth dances nights away in the Sports Club, and the overall feelings consist of tension because of the lurking war. It is in this atmosphere that Martha decides to get married with Douglas in March 1939. Mr. Maynard, who weds Martha and Douglas, notes: "I cannot understand what is coming over our gilded youth, I've never known such a year for weddings" (MQ 1970, 246). Martha's motifs to actually get married are linked to this atmosphere of near ecstasy which has taken control of the youth of the 20's.

Martha's self-discovery is closely linked with her quest for knowledge of her place in society. As Labovitz (1988, 150) points out, Martha's development follows a circular movement, and this movement is symbolized by her compulsion to break the wheel of repetition she finds both in society patterns and in her own life pattern. As Rose (1986, 150) points out, Martha is shown to grow painfully towards maturity "by resisting imperatives to surrender her individuality to various collectively imposed identities – dutiful daughter, good time party girl, suburban wife and mother, dedicated communist". Only when she knows who she is and which of her different roles are meaningful, can she fully grow as a person.

The further Martha goes in the world, the less she seems to possess herself, and the more she reflects the disintegration around her: the culture in *Children of Violence* is based on a gigantic cover-up, and in a such culture it is impossible for a person to achieve a whole identity (Sage 1983, 38). In my opinion the gigantic cover-up can be seen in Martha's relations to both her mother and other people: for example, Martha's mother does not talk about, for example, sexuality in the actual words related to it. Instead, she notes to Martha: "You are getting a pouter pigeon" (MQ 1970:17) when she actually talks about Martha's maturation.

In society the double standard of morality prevails as well as old-fashioned views on gender, race and class.

The overall attitude in Martha's society is that women are most of all wives and mothers, and men have the authority. Martha seems to follow this pattern even though she repudiates it. As was pointed out above (p.10), it is problematic for a female protagonist in a *Bildungsroman* to try to learn how to respond to social rules which determine what being female means in her culture. This problemacy can also be seen in Martha's life: she, for example, detests the fact that women are primarily wives and childbearers, but she also carries out this pattern herself. However, by not choosing to become pregnant again after Caroline she finally starts to realize that in order to become satisfied in life, she needs to take concrete actions for herself. In DuPlessis' (1985, 190) view the nonchoice of pregnancy in *A Proper Marriage* marks the start for Martha's real quest for her inner and social self: she strives to break the chain of social replication by not choosing the role of a mother.

At the age of fifteen Martha constructs a fantasy of a just society which is freed from oppressive racial and sexual codes. In practice, she keeps searching for this ideal society. Most of the people who Martha knows do not have the access to Martha's ideal city:

Outside one of the gates stood her parents, the Van Rensbergs, in fact most of the people of the district, forever excluded from the golden city because of their pettiness of vision and small understanding; they stood grieving, longing to enter, but barred by a stern and remorseless Martha. (MQ 1970, 11.)

According to Rose (1986, 142-145), the ideal city is an architectural metaphor which in Jungian psychology represents psychic wholeness. Rose continues by saying that to Martha the city's order and hierarchy seem tempting because they allow for change and flexibility: for someone like Martha, who has felt divided and compartmentalized, such a city would be a desirable place to achieve.

It is partly this ideal city that Martha wants to find when she leaves Africa for London. Just like when she was eighteen and fled her mother by moving into town by herself, she tries to flee her life in Africa for once and for all by going

to London and leaving everything behind. In compliance with Rose's (1986, 142) view, Martha's aimless wandering through London on her arrival from Africa symbolizes her yearning to explore what it might mean not to be a woman or a self-in-society:

For a few weeks she had been anonymous, unnoticed – free. Never before in her life had she known this freedom. Living in a small town anywhere means preserving one's self behind a mask. Coming to a big city those who have never known one means first of all, before anything else, and the more surprising if one has not expected it, that freedom: all the pressures are off, no one cares, no need for the mask. (FG 1976, 4.)

Here it seems that Martha has finally accomplished her goal: there are no strings to the past, and she feels herself to be totally free. However, her feeling of freedom vanishes as she ends up living in the household of the Coldridge family in London where her role is near to a housekeeper. At the same time, she becomes into close contact with the overall atmosphere of British society: it is the period of 1960s, time of the spreading despair of the cold war. A family member, Colin Coldridge, is accused of being a Communist and a traitor to Britain, and he flees Britain just before his trial. Colin's wife, Stella, commits suicide, and their child is left to be taken care of mainly by Martha.

Society as well as all these events keep shaping Martha's identity. Her first reactions with the Coldridges reminds of her eagerness to flee tough situations: "I don't want to be involved in all this...She (Martha) meant, this atmosphere of threat, insecurity, and illness. --- Something new, surely, not what she had lived through already, was what she ought to be doing? Why was she here at all?" (FG 1976, 106). However, Martha does stay with the Coldridges, and as Knapp (1984, 47) summarizes, just like other heroes of the century's *Bildungsromane*, Martha strives for a higher form of consciousness and an absolute perception of the macrocosm by observing society from a distance. She observes her past in Africa, and her self and life with the Coldridges she observes partly from a distance; in this phase of her life Martha develops her split identity even further, and the "observer" in her makes continuous remarks of her actions.

4 THE SPIRITUAL QUEST OF MARTHA QUEST

In this chapter my intention is to study how Martha Quest develops spiritually. It is useful to discuss the spiritual quest as separate from the social one because these two aspects of the quest are somewhat different from each other: the social aspect includes the outer self of the protagonist, and the spiritual quest refers to the inner self. The aspects differ from each other but they also complement each other.

With the spiritual quest I mean Martha's inner search for an identity; to borrow Holmquist's (1980, 89) words, in *Landlocked* and *The Four-Gated City* Martha's search is more and more helped by an inner self, "whose function is to guide her to mystical experience of wholeness by putting her in touch with certain elemental unconscious powers." Martha develops different ways of thinking, and is increasingly aware of the fact that she is inhabited by different kinds of "Marthas" – firstly, there is the basic concept of Martha who at the same time is a "detached observer", and secondly, there is "Matty", the clown. Just like the social side of Martha's identity, also both these spiritual aspects of Martha's identity, are influenced by Mrs. Quest. Thomas Stern, a congenial spirit to Martha, and people she meets in London also have a strong impact on her, and these aspects will also be examined in this chapter.

4.1 Martha's Split Identity: "Matty" and "Martha"

In for example Barnouw's view (1986, 117), the first four volumes of the *Children of Violence* are not *Bildungsromane* in the strict sense of the concept. Barnouw justifies his view by claiming that Martha is not shown to move toward a choice in the first four volumes. In my opinion, Martha does move in some extent toward a choice, but she is not able to make a determining decision before she is herself fully aware of what aspects her identity consists of. It seems to me that Martha's decision to leave Africa for England is a determining one in her quest for her true self. In London Martha strongly experiences a spiritual quest, and as noted by

Labovitz (1988, 158), through this quest Martha learns to listen to her inner voice. She also does make clear that it is her conscious wish of wanting experience even in the face of limited choices and her own life. This is a clear step toward *Bildung*. (Labovitz 1988, 183.)

On the everyday level, Martha passes through a succession of roles before she discovers her true self. As described by Labovitz (1988, 188) "Martha" is the suburban wife and mother as well as "comrade Matty" with her political friends. "Martha" is also the figure who observes what "Matty" does. "Matty", on the other hand, is the clown who does things badly and laughs at herself.

As Sage (1983, 31) points out, Martha plays the roles of both rebellious and dutiful daughter, mother, wife and communist. It is in London that Martha scrutinizes her own self most closely, and she sees the part of her which she has given the flippant nickname Matty as someone who "somewhere early in her childhood, on that farm on the highveld, --- had been created by her as an act of survival. But why? In order to prevent herself from being -- what?" (FG 1976, 5). It is, for example, Matty who claims to her mother with biting sarcasm that she is not a nice girl, when there is the battle of the clothes between Martha and her mother. Knapp's (1984, 40) description of Matty fits in this pattern very well: according to her Matty "acts out banal roles". By this she refers to the aspect of Martha's personality which is, for example, exposed when Martha has just moved into town at the age of eighteen: Matty is the wild young woman who parties throughout the nights and has relationships with men.

The answer for Martha's question of what she wanted to prevent herself to be from when she created Matty is, that in childhood and teenage Matty was the boundary against Mrs. Quest. This view is also supported by Labovitz (1988, 188) who points out that in London Martha tells to her psychiatrist, Dr. Lamb, how Matty the clown was born as a way of fighting her mother. In Martha's consideration Matty was born as a response to the fact that Mrs. Quest hated both her own as well as Martha's sexuality, and wanted Martha to be a boy:

She (Mrs. Quest) was always making fun of me because I wasn't good at the boy's things. My brother was always beating me. But I

never once said, which is what I should have said: I'm a girl, why should I be good at boy's things? No, I did them, but I did them badly and laughed at myself. I clowned, and she laughed at me. It was a way of protecting myself. (FG 1976, 230.)

This discovery Martha is able to make of herself only many years after she has left Africa and her home. Now she realizes that when she finally matured and became a woman, she was able to defy her mother at last by making herself beautiful clothes, and by having relationships with different men; every man Martha had "was a weapon against mother" (FG 1976, 230). Also Labovitz (1988, 148) points out that it is in therapy with Dr. Lamb that Martha is able to unlock her knowledge of the relationship with her mother, and only then does she recognize for the first time all the weapons she had used as a teenager against her mother. This shows clear maturation from Martha's side: *Bildung* includes the ability of analysing one's motifs and actions, and in therapy Martha begins to realize this.

Matty continues to be Martha's survival role when she begins her life in town, away from home. With the Sports Club crowd Matty is the "hip-swinging sexually gallant girl" (FG 1976, 15), and it is her first boyfriend, Donovan, who reinforces the role of Matty. Donovan makes her wear certain kinds of dresses and he even does her make-up. Despite her pleasure, Martha is uneasy because she does not feel that the person created by Donovan is herself; "she was instinctively forming herself to match the young woman in the mirror, who was cold, unapproachable, and challenging" (MQ 1970, 147).

According to Labovitz (1988, 188), it is not until in the final volume of *Children of Violence* when Martha is able to achieve wholeness; in *The Four-Gated City* and especially in the sessions with Dr. Lamb Martha realizes the difference between what is essentially her true role, and that which is a reflection of others. As was discussed above (p.12), Martha has experienced a splitting of her self into two parts, Martha and Matty, and eventually she gains ability to examine these parts of her, and that, in turn, enables her to reinterpret and acknowledge the distance between her past and present self: her growth as an individual is based on her reassessment of her previous experience. Matty has been the reflection of her

surroundings – she was born so that Martha could fully rebel her mother and continued to exist throughout Martha's adulthood in some form or the other. In London Martha finds that Matty is actually reborn after many years of disuse, and Matty is now "rather amusing, outspoken, competently incompetent, free from convention, free to say what other people did not say" (FG 1976, 4). For Martha it is painful to give Matty a chance to emerge again, because she does not want to be Matty. Eventually, she learns to abandon her, and she finds the inner balance. One important factor which helps Martha to reach this balance is her mother's visit to England; it is a culmination of Martha's development in a way that there is no room left for roles played by Matty.

According to Knapp (1984, 40) Martha diagnoses her own divided self with the help of "Martha" who is an intellectual detached observer. Martha is very aware of this observer, and she considers her to be "the gift of the Cohen boys" (MQ 1970, 8) because it is through the books they lend her that she gains a clear picture of herself. It is at the time of the pink eye episode when Martha becomes first aware of the "several disconnected strands of her thinking" (MQ 1970, 26): Martha realizes how contradictory her goals and behavior are when she refuses to go to a "snob school" (MQ 1970, 26) even though going to a good school and getting away from home has been her aspiration. It is the criticism toward her mother's ideals which triggers these opposite ways of thinking and actions in Martha.

There is a certain kind of struggle between Matty and the observer. While still living at home she once becomes irritated because she analyzes herself so much, "she must *not* analyze, she must not be conscious; and there she was, watching the movements of her own mind as if she were observing a machine" (MQ 1970, 51). Martha's conclusion at this point of her life is that "she knew futility; that is, what was futile was her own idea of herself and her place in the chaos of matter. What was demanded of her was that she should accept something quite different: it was as if something new was demanding conception, with her flesh as host" (MQ 1970, 53). These are the first signs when Lessing's interest in schizophrenia rises to surface, and the symptoms grow more evident in *A Proper*

Marriage.

Even though I do not intend to discuss these schizophrenic tendencies in more detail, it is still important to bear in mind that they have a strong impact on Martha's character, and they occur differently in various phases of Martha's life. With the Sports Club crowd Martha regards herself to be "an isolated person, without origin or destination" (MQ 1970, 165), and since "the very condition of her revolt, her very existence, had been that driving individualism" (MQ 1970, 165), she is lost because she does not know how to fit the different pieces of her character together. She wonders how she could be Matty and Martha at the same time, and what actually her individualism is like.

In her marriage with Douglas Martha's feelings are mixed because even though she did not want to marry Douglas in the first place, she eventually did do so, and now she is not sure of how she should see herself. The question that troubles Martha is that if there is a certain type of a man, like Douglas, then there surely must be a certain type of a woman who marries him. Martha feels guilty because she does not consider herself to be the kind of a woman who should have married Douglas, and yet she has adapted so well to her life with Douglas.

Eventually, the different parts in Martha are called into action: politics become the center of her life. However, there is a certain kind of a trigger even in this change: a man. It is Martha's love for William that makes her active within the communist movement. For Martha William is, for a while, the man who makes her feel herself important and alive. With William she is able to be something she has never been before, but Martha is also aware that he is not the man she has actually been looking for. Their relationship resembles more of the relationship of a brother and sister.

After William and Martha are separated, Martha starts immediately to wait for someone who could fill the empty space left by William. Meanwhile, she decides she must become a good communist. This aspiration is strengthened by her relationship and marriage to Anton. She considers Anton to be the strong man, who Martha could be dependent on, but this does not turn out to be the case as Anton becomes to depend on Martha. She does not like this, and starts to drift away from

Anton. Simultaneously, she tries to fight against the final collapse of her conception about him,

She knew that the moment she put her arms about him, to coax him out of his silence that creature in herself she despised would be born again: she would be capricious, charming, filial: to this compliant little girl Anton would be kind – patronizing, as she repeated to herself over and over again, a fierce resentment. But this would be a mask for his being dependent on her: she would not be his child, but he hers. (RS 1977, 273-274.)

Here both Matty and the observer emerge again. Martha's conception of herself and others is in constant turbulence, and the observer looks on in every action she takes and in every thought she has. In the end of *A Ripple from the Storm* Martha realizes she is not a person at all, because all she does is to listen to other peoples' echoes in her own voice. This is an epoch-making moment for Martha, because from this moment on she allows herself to look for her true role. In this quest the observer is an important factor.

According to Pickering (1986, 96), the judging observer in Martha is the one constant factor in Martha's personality. The observer is critical both of Martha and others, and it provides some stability for Martha in her spiritual quest. In my view, Pickering's view is well-grounded, because even when life seems to be very complicated for Martha in London, and Dr. Lamb diagnoses her to be manic-depressive with schizoid tendencies, Martha remembers that ever since her adolescence there has been "that other person, the silent watcher, the witness. Nothing else was permanent" (FG 1976, 218). In her discussions with Dr. Lamb Martha regards the observer to be the best part of her, and the only part that is real and permanent.

Further, Pickering (1986, 96) claims that in her years in London, Martha learns to transform her talent for observation into a kind of egoless receptivity, "tuning like a radio to different attitudes and emotions". This learning is tutored by Lynda Coldridge, Mark's wife, who – when not in a mental hospital – lives in the Coldridge household. The capacity which Martha eventually learns is the capacity of "hearing" which in turn means that she can hear what people think

and can see what might occur. People like this can "function as antennae, picking up information that consciousness (possibly future consciousness) somehow sends through channels beyond what we now 'know'" (DuPlessis 1985, 195). Because this aspect of Martha's spiritual quest and growth is such a complicated one, I intend not to go into details of it in this chapter; it will be examined more thoroughly in the following chapters, which allow for more gradational study of the process. The central issues in Martha's journey toward inner wholeness are concentrated around her relationships with Thomas Stern, Jack and the Coldridge family – especially Lynda – as well as with Mrs. Quest.

4.1.1 The Ideal Friend: Thomas Stern

A number of scholars (Barnouw 1986, 118; DuPlessis 1985, 192; Labovitz 1988, 176-177) argue that Martha's relationship to Thomas Stern has a great importance in her process of consciousness. Thomas is a Jewish communist refugee from Poland who has settled in Africa and works for garden farming. He is married, and his wife and little daughter live outside Martha's town. He and Martha meet each other in the political activities; Thomas is very active within the group for some time. He actually seems to be a more encouraging political figure than Anton. Martha is still married to Anton when she has her relationship with Thomas.

Before Martha meets Thomas, she has decided that only a man "would unify her elements" (LL 1977, 37). She does not look for a man because of romantic love any more; her intention is to become whole as a person. However, the sexual component of her longing for a man is strongly emphasized, and it could be said that even though Martha and Thomas share common political beliefs, it is rather sexual attraction that brings them together. (Holmquist 1980, 92.) Their relationship is very sexual, and they mostly meet in a shed that Thomas has built in the garden of his brother's house. However, this shed symbolizes something much more than just a physical desire for Martha: since she has always complained that her life has consisted of a dozen rooms, and she has tried to carry herself from one 'room' to another, adding this new room, the shed, to her house "had ended the

division” (LL 1977, 103). This implicates that Martha has found integrity in her life. The shed is the centre from which she now lives, and only there she can feel herself to be whole.

The physical side of the relationship between Martha and Thomas is important to Martha in a different way it has ever been with other men. Thomas is the first man with whom Martha can experience physical satisfaction, and their sex does not seem to be an obligatory element of the relationship as it has been in Martha’s previous relationships. The overall feeling of satisfaction is probably due to the fact that Martha’s relationship to Thomas is very non-social: as Holmquist (1980, 93) points out, their interaction is not only non-social because it is connected with unconscious powers, but also because their relationship does not conform to general social norms. Martha and Thomas do not belong together as a man and a wife, and that makes their relationship a non-social one. They both can be sexually and emotionally open without being tied to each other through marriage. This is actually something quite new for Martha, who has been married since the age of nineteen,

Martha --- thought that she and Thomas, their feelings for each other, the relationship – whatever was the right word for it – was an altogether new dimension. They were in deep waters, both of them. And neither understood it, could not speak about it. --- Sometimes when they made love it was so powerful they felt afraid, as if enormous forces were waiting to invade them. But they did not know what this meant. (LL 1977, 161.)

Through Thomas Martha learns to listen to deeper voices in her self, and she becomes aware of the creative energies that run below the surface.

Dreams are part of the creative energies, and they emerge in Martha’s life at this phase. She, for example, dreams (LL 1977, 134) about being on a high, rocky place which is surrounded by a shoreless sea, and across this sea sails people she has known – even Thomas is there. Martha cannot reach them no matter how hard she tries, and it is a nightmare to her. This dream partly symbolizes the feeling Martha has about her relationship to Thomas: she knows it will not last forever. She is also afraid that she will be left out of something which other people will be able

to be part in: exactly the same fear she had when she was a teenager. The fact that the fear still haunts her indicates that she is not yet fully able to cope with her inner feelings.

The relationship between Thomas and Martha ends quite soon because Thomas first travels to Israel and then goes into voluntary exile in an African village. Even though Martha achieves a higher level of consciousness with Thomas, it is still incomplete. However, from Thomas she learns the fragility of relationships between individuals marred by violence: Thomas himself as a Jew has experienced a lot of violence in his life in Europe.

It could be said that the Thomas's death is actually a symbol for the hopelessness of finding individual fulfillment in a violent world. He dies of fever, and leaves behind his memoirs which Martha tries to edit. These chaotic memoirs express Thomas' own mental disintegration. From Thomas Martha learns that insanity is a rational answer in a violent society. This idea of insanity is actually one factor which helps Martha to achieve maturity in *The Four-Gated City*. (Knapp 1984, 46-47.)

It is noteworthy that Thomas's memoirs are the only document which Martha takes with her when she leaves Africa. As Knapp (1984, 89) points out, Martha wants to enter her new life in London a *tabula rasa*, and this means she sheds all her roles she has had so far. The only thing that gets permission to remind Martha of her past is Thomas' memoirs, and that proves the weight of importance Martha associates with Thomas' influence on her.

Martha's thoughts associated with her departure from Africa are somewhat similar to the ones she had when she moved away from home: "I'm going off to 'begin life' all over again" (LL 1977, 224). But unlike then, she is now aware that it may not be so easy to try and enter life a *tabula rasa*: "But how can one begin life, begin anything, when part of oneself is Thomas's prisoner saying, with him, that no one knows anything about anything?" (LL 1977, 224). Martha does not automatically assume anymore that she has the answers for everything: there is more to life than what she herself is able to know. She is eager to find out more about herself and life, and this is a clear step toward *Bildung*. However,

several more steps are required before the process is complete, and not even Martha herself is at this point aware of what those steps might be. Her only aspiration seems to be getting away from everything she has known and experienced so far, but there is also the implication in the background of her mind that she is on her way to something totally new.

Labovitz' (1988, 177) conclusion of what Martha has learned from her relationship with Thomas is that the experience with Thomas changes Martha in a way that it provides her a growth process which eventually enables her to bring all parts of her 'self' together. As I have pointed out before, London is the place where Martha is able to bring this process to its conclusion, and Thomas stays a part of her even there. In London Martha makes a discovery which frightens her: while she has a sexual relationship with a man called Jack, she still thinks of Thomas:

With Jack, you set up a simple communion of the flesh, and then your mind went off by itself – that was all right, what was wrong with it? If she couldn't have Thomas...Do you know what you've done, said Martha to herself in despair: I've become one of those women that used to frighten me! I've got a dead man. Like my mother. (FG 1976, 63.)

This shows that Martha still compares herself to her own mother, and everything which stands for Mrs. Quest, frightens her. Just like Mrs. Quest, Martha now 'has a dead man', Thomas. Mrs. Quest's dead man is a young soldier who died in the World War I, and whose picture she worships as a reminder of her youth and true love. To Martha her mother's longing for a dead man has always seemed to be something inconceivable: it is 'safe' for Mrs. Quest to set this young man on a pedestal because he is dead – death leaves room for her own fantasies since there is no possibility for the dreams to become true. Such dreaming Martha loaths, because she considers it to be a deception of oneself. When she examines her feelings towards Thomas she is terrified to find out that there might be something similar in her yearning for Thomas.

4.2 Martha's Life in London

As Martha arrives in London, she spends the first few weeks by mainly walking around, absorbed in her thoughts. She does not want to detach herself to anything,

since she had been in London, she had been alone, and had learned that she had never been anything else in her life. Far from being an enemy, it was her friend. This was the best thing she had known, to walk down streets interminably. --- It was always her heart that first fought off the pain of not belonging here, not belonging anywhere. --- Her body was a machine, reliable and safe for walking; her heart and daytime mind were quiet. (FG 1976, 35.)

As Martha starts to examine her own consciousness in more detail, the main issue in her mind is her own individuality. Is she Matty or Martha, what is her role in life? The division between her body and mind grows wider: it is not her feet or body that are tired because of endless walking, but "another part of herself" (FG 1976, 37). Martha understands that she is under a great strain, and her "daytime consciousness" (FG 1976, 37) demands her to stop and to look for work. There is a great struggle within Martha about what she should do, and she deludes herself by thinking that eventually she would settle down and earn money. In the meantime, she stays with Jack, and together they want to have a world of their own. However, partly accidentally Martha ends up living in the household of Mark Coldridge – a sister of a girl Martha used to know in Africa works in London and tells Martha about Mark who is a writer and needs help. Martha gets a job and place to live from Mark.

4.2.1 The Coldridge Family

It is far away from Martha's own desires to settle down to live with a bourgeois family. After she has met Mark for the first time, every nerve in her yells that she should not stay with his family. It is "Matty" in Martha who fervently describes the Coldridge house to Jack:

You'd be surprised, it's tailor-made for me. I tell you, it's been sitting there waiting for me for years – everything as sick and neurotic and

hopeless as you can imagine...and a dominating mama over all, and a wife in a mental hospital, and a man just sitting and waiting for some sucker like me to cope with everything. (FG 1976, 93.)

Mark's wife, Lynda, has been in a mental hospital for some time, and Mark lives in the house with their son, Francis. There is also Mark's mother, the 'dominating mama', who visits the household regularly. The Coldridge family includes also Mark's brother, Colin, who in the atmosphere of the cold war becomes accused of being too friendly with Russians. Eventually, he flees Britain, and leaves his wife, Sarah, and son, Paul, behind. Sarah commits suicide by gassing herself, and Paul comes to live with the Coldridges. Lynda gets out from the mental hospital, and she lives in the basement of the house with her friend, Dorothy who is also mentally ill. Dorothy later commits suicide.

As pointed out by Sage (1983, 60), Martha's role in the Coldridge family seems almost ludicrously remote from her ideal of herself. She is simultaneously Mark's secretary and a substitute wife – Lynda does not regard herself as Mark's wife even though they still are married and Lynda lives with the family. There is also a sexual relationship between Mark and Martha, but it is not always an active one. One of Martha's roles is to be a surrogate mother to both Francis and Colin as well as to Mark's sister's daughters, Gwen and Jill. In addition to all this, Martha acts as an housekeeper, taking care of the household in general.

According to DuPlessis (1985, 193), by performing these roles Martha pays her 'debts' back to the bourgeois house, to motherhood and to the family. This seems to be a very accurate analysis, since in the very beginning of *The Four-Gated City*, just before entering the Coldridge household, Martha's thoughts are filled with "responsibility --- she had debts to pay, that was it. One could not move on before all debts were paid, the accounts made up. Terror struck, thinking of the debts she did have to pay: Caroline invaded her mind, the two men she had married so absurdly – her mother. Debts. They had to be paid" (FG 1976, 38). Martha realizes that she was wrong when she thought that she would free Caroline simply by deserting her, and this realization is the main motif for her when she enters the role of a surrogate mother in the Coldridge family. She feels

almost hysterical terror when she does this, but at the same time it is also as if she is punishing herself for what she has done to Caroline.

Thus, Martha "loops back into motherhood in a very troubled household, repeating what she once evaded, in the great looping-back motion that we have seen elsewhere in the female quest" (DuPlessis 1985, 193). Just like DuPlessis (see 1985, 193), Knapp (1984, 47) points out that on the way toward wholeness of vision the individual must go *through* and not *around* the troubling anxiety. This is exactly what Martha inevitably does, and within the process she grows as a person; the culmination is when she notices that she no longer is "a character in that adolescent morality play where adults have to speak through masks chosen to represent 'Oppressor' or 'Exemplar' or 'Horrible Warning'" (FG 1976, 427). Martha regards that because 'the children', Paul, Francis, Jill and Gwen have grown up, it is therefore she herself is able to actually communicate with them as with friends and not as with "some anguished or raging usurper" (FG 1976, 427).

However, Martha also makes a decisive discovery of her inner self: "to have worked through, to have stood firm in, that storm which was the young one's adolescence was, after all, to have been made free of one's own" (FG 1976, 428). Here, Martha realizes how much her own adolescence and past in general have haunted her; her relationship to Paul and other children have enabled her to analyse her own identity, and she has also succeeded in maturing as a person. For the first time, Martha gives actually credit also to herself for succeeding in her personal relationships, and does not merely hold herself to be a prisoner of the circumstances. I think the episode with Paul and others where Martha realizes that both she and the children have gained something positive through their relationships with each other, is a good example of how Martha finally proceeds in her path toward individualism. She is able to look for both inner and outer causes for her actions, and has gained some inner balance. She has also been able – at least to some extent – to 'pay her debts' to Caroline.

It is also important to bear in mind that Martha's path toward inner balance is strongly affected by the fact that she does not consider herself to be

under such stress as she was in Africa: as Knapp (1984, 90) points out, Martha is able to function as the "guardian of a monstrous family because the monster is not of her own making". She regards herself to be an outsider in the Coldridge family, and her relationship to Paul, Francis, Gwen and Jill is not overshadowed by the fact that she would be their biological mother. Thus, it is easier for Martha to perform the motherly role and to actually find satisfaction in it.

4.2.2 Mrs. Quest's Visit

All the major and minor characters in *The Four-Gated City* attribute to Martha's development. She scrutinizes people around her, and becomes a person who watches other people in a turmoil of living. She seems to be in balance with herself because she is not afraid of being affected by people and things as strongly as she was in her life in Africa. However, there still *is* something that is able to shake Martha's equilibrium very badly: Mrs. Quest's visit to England. (Knapp 1984, 92.)

It is terrifying for Martha to discover that she has not succeeded in totally forgetting her past; she cannot remember exactly how old Caroline is now, or the rooms she has lived with Anton, or what Thomas' voice was like, but when it comes to her mother "- ah yes, here it was, and she knew it. She had been blocking off the pain, and had blocked off half her life with it. Her memory was gone. Well, almost" (FG 1976, 207). Mrs. Quest is still too powerful a figure in Martha's life, and her announcement that she will travel to London to visit Martha shakes Martha's internal and external identity. I agree with Knapp's (1984, 92) view that the reason why Martha is so horrified by her mother's visit is that it forces Martha back into the dreaded role of the dutiful daughter; it is something that she had considered herself to be free from. However, even at the age of thirty-seven Martha regards her struggle with her mother to be an unfinished one, and she fears everything her mother stands for.

As Mrs. Quest's visit slowly approaches, Martha goes through various stages of internal storms: she feels that her sanity is in danger. To Lynda she notes: "I think I'm having a breakdown" (FG 1976, 209) because Mrs. Quest is

coming. So powerful is still Mrs. Quest's influence on Martha! Martha is flooded by panic; "if she didn't get herself out of this, inside a month, she would be one of the group of people who floated in and out of the basement" (FG 1976, 210), and by this she means Lynda and Dorothy and their friends who all are mentally disturbed. Martha realizes that her own mental state is close to the mental illness Lynda and the others are experiencing. She feels, for example, neurotic when she forces herself to read Mrs. Quest's letters – her emotions are divided in pity as well as in a wild need to run. Her way of running is to stay in bed for days, and to agitate herself in a state of pure inner hysteria.

In this atmosphere of internal chaos Martha seeks for resolution by making an appointment with Lynda's psychiatrist, Dr. Lamb. Then something cruel happens: Dr. Lamb's secretary calls Martha to say that the doctor is ill and therefore unable to see Martha. Martha collapses, "her mother was going to arrive before she could grab hold of that baulk of floating timber in an angry sea, Dr. Lamb" (FG 1976, 219). This shows that Martha considers Dr. Lamb to be the only saving grace for her, and she is desperate to fight herself out of her mother's influence. She admits to herself that she is unable to face her feelings toward her mother alone: too many violent feelings have gathered inside her, "What Dr. Lamb must do for her was to give her back pity, the strength to hold it, and not be destroyed by it. She must be able, when her mother came, to pity her, to love her, to cherish her, and not to be destroyed" (FG 1976, 222). Martha knows that it is almost impossible for her to feel pity or at least to cherish her mother, but she sees Dr. Lamb as a person who could make her feel this way toward her mother. The fact that she even assumes that a person other than she herself could alter her feelings indicates that she is not ready to see reality, and she does realize this. Martha thinks that she is not "ready to work on her past. Indeed, the person who had been able seemed further away" (FG 1976, 225).

The roller-coaster of feelings goes sharply up as Mrs. Quest writes in a letter that she shall postpone her sailing date from Africa for a couple of months. It also gives Martha a chance to examine her identity in the appointments with Dr. Lamb. With Dr. Lamb Martha is able to put into words what she is going through:

the fact that she is having a sexual relationship with Mark is due to Mrs. Quest's approaching visit because it is a way of showing to her mother that she is "a big girl now" (FG 1976, 229), and besides sexuality, Martha's intelligence is a weapon toward Mrs. Quest. Martha has fervently read books throughout her life because all the information she could gain provides a means for fighting her mother who she considers to be rather ignorant.

As Martha struggles with her feelings and tries to find an inner balance before her mother's visit, Mrs. Quest also goes through her own feelings. As noted by Knapp (1984, 92-93), Mrs. Quest is now an old, unwanted and embittered person, who will never overcome her neurotic resentment of Martha and who is still obsessed with Martha's faults, "real or imaginary". Knapp's view is justified since Mrs. Quest is shown to be "engaged in a fight with a cold rejecting hating demon to which she gave the name Martha" (FG 1976, 232). Mrs. Quest also struggles with her own view of herself: she realizes she has never actually pleased herself because all she has done in her life has been sacrificing herself for others, for example, for her children and husband. She tries to imagine what her life could have been like if she had not married Mr. Quest. Her bitterness and envy for Martha is clearly seen when she thinks of her own possibilities for making different choices in her life:

Had she had a choice, ever? --- Of course it was different for all these flighty girls now, they did as they liked, look at Martha, it was certain she was pleasing herself, as she always had, selfish, inconsiderate, immoral...Mrs. Quest's head ached, she felt sick. These days, girls *did* choose, they were free. (FG 1976, 241.)

Finally, the day comes when Mrs. Quest arrives in London. Martha has been able to pull herself together, and goes to meet her mother in the harbour. Mrs. Quest comes to stay in the Coldridge house, and right after Mrs. Quest's arrival Martha tries to connect with her mother by saying: "What I don't want to happen is that we should go through this – pretending – no, I don't mean that. I mean, you never did like what I am, how I am. But what's the use of...we could either put a good face on things, and be polite, all that kind of thing – but wouldn't it be better if we could

try...” (FG 1976, 260). Martha’s unable to find the words she wants to express herself with, but it seems as if she is ready to ‘bury the hatchet’, and wants to prevent something she knows will inevitably occur. She is right when she suspects that her mother will not approve of the Coldridge household because everything there is so unorthodox: the first thing Mrs. Quest enquires is whether Martha is going to marry Mark. When Martha asks her mother to accept her the way she is, Mrs. Quest’s reaction is:”What frightful sins are you concealing, then?”(FG 1976, 261) and even though she attempts to say this with humour, she is left ”with the feeling that the household concealed some monstrousness, or a hidden vice, which she might find out about if she tried” (FG 1976, 261-262).

From this moment the struggle for power between Martha and her mother starts again. Mrs. Quest feels triumph when she senses uncertainty in Martha’s actions towards her. In Mrs. Quest’s opinion the Coldridge household is badly run, and she starts to clean and scrub and act as a charwoman. When Martha tries to assure that Mark can afford to hire help, Mrs. Quest takes it as a ”declaration of war” (FG 1976, 269) from Martha’s side, and bursts out with tears to Martha that ”she just wanted to help, she wanted to be of use, what else was there for her in her life?” (FG 1976, 269). Just some moments before, Mrs. Quest has thought with self pity that she is – as usual – forced to be a servant again, and to sacrifice herself for others. Mixed emotions as well as victories and losses keep circling between the two women, and Martha tries to escape all this by avoiding her mother.

In the meantime, Martha keeps seeing Dr. Lamb, and he repeats time after time that Martha should tell her mother to go; there is no other way out of the oppressing situation. Martha knows Dr. Lamb is in the right, but she insists that she cannot tell Mrs. Quest to leave. Even though Dr. Lamb thinks that it would be good for Martha to let her feelings out, she does not see the point: she has never actually shouted and screamed at her mother. If she did that, ”it would be healthy, I would be saved!” (FG 1976, 269), but according to Martha it would also be as if she were ”hitting a child” (FG 1976, 269). Martha remarks to Dr.Lamb:

You fight your parents – everyone does – you have to do that. If you don't then you're sunk. So I didn't fight, not the right way. But that isn't the point. What is the fight? Who's fighting what? Why is it that we all of us have to get out from under awful parents who damage us? (FG 1976, 270.)

Martha is sure that if she kicks her mother out, she signs her mother's death warrant. However, she does not consider herself to feel guilty of her mother's actions: "If it were my fault that would be easy. Or if it were her fault. But I wish I didn't always know what's going to happen" (FG 1976, 270). This quotation shows that Martha is fighting against something she cannot even herself to put into words, and this results in the fact that she expects someone else like Dr. Lamb to take over and tell her mother to go.

Martha suggests that Mrs. Quest would go and see Dr. Lamb, and that is what Mrs. Quest does. It is just before she is leaving back to Africa. She is first very sceptical of going to Dr. Lamb, and does not see the point in doing so. However, when she gets to Dr. Lamb's office, all she does is to introduce herself by saying that she is Martha's mother, and then out of her floods "years and years and years of resentment, all focused on Martha" (FG 1976, 273). Knapp (1984, 93) sees this torrent of abuse words as a symbol of the proximity of Martha and Mrs. Quest: they have both been driven into a state of desperation, and for Mrs. Quest the appointment with Dr. Lamb is a "near-existential release when --- she is finally able to speak her mind".

Mrs. Quest's visit to Dr. Lamb is a culmination in Martha's and Mrs. Quest's relationship; from that visit on their paths separate for good. Mrs. Quest returns to Africa, and a year later she dies. It is the death which finally releases Martha from the role of dutiful daughter. She does not think much of her mother's death, but the experiences when Mrs. Quest stayed with her in London has taught her something very important: Mrs. Quest's visit forced Martha face her old fears and resentment and work herself through them. As Scott (1996, 4) remarks, the events of Mrs. Quest's visit demonstrates the fact that Martha must travel in her past in order to be able to live in her present and future.

4.2.3 Jack and Lynda

As DuPlessis (1985, 192) points out, right after her arrival in London Martha is an alien, outside of the rules, accents, and class codes that structure postwar English society. She enjoys the feeling she experiences as she roams aimlessly the streets of London, and suddenly she understands that there is only one person in the city, who could allow her to go on living as she was now, "rootless, untied, free" (FG 1976, 38); that person is Jack, who Martha has known in Africa for a brief time.

Jack lives a bohemian life in an old house he has bought for himself; he is in the slow process of renovating the building, and rents rooms for people. Jack's room is a place where he and Martha can have a world of their own. Their relationship is centred mainly on sex, and Martha continually examines her actions and feelings: "sex, heart, the currents of the automatic body were one now, together: and above all these, her brain, cool and alert, watching and marking" (FG 1976, 59). The relationship has several similarities to the one Martha had with Thomas, but with Jack it is more a question of physical contact. The sexual contacts between Martha and Jack carry an important weight in that they are a prologue to Martha's later experiments with inner life together with Lynda (Holmquist 1980, 97). With Jack Martha considers to reach a "special place; nothing to do with Jack the person, he's the instrument that knows how to reach it" (FG 1976, 59).

Lessing describes Jack as an outsider who has had a painful childhood and war experiences and who because of these has withdrawn from all social responsibility. He resembles Thomas in that he also is marred by war and violence. His way of surviving the painful experiences is concentration on sexual experiences; besides Martha he is seeing several other women. To Jack sexual intercourse is a way for building up energy whose aim is to break through the ordinary frame of mind; through sexuality he learns to master his enemy which is the hatred which his childhood and other experiences in life have created in him. He says to Martha: "I suddenly understood; Martha – I was *mad*. I'd been mad all my life, ever since I could remember being a little kicker. I had spent every

moment of my life hating my father” (FG 1976, 56). He is mad at her father because he raped him and his brother and mother. To Jack both love and hatred are forces which can be controlled by human beings. Martha learns more about the concept of energy from Jack, and this is a continuum for what she learned from Thomas. The sexual union between Jack and Martha is described as a means for experiencing inner wholeness. (Holmquist 1980, 98-99.) Also the fact that Martha, too, has had feelings of hate towards her mother, must influence the deepness of her connection with Jack: they share the same kind of feelings, and are able to understand each other because of this.

With Jack Martha discusses her neurotic feelings. She tells him that she sees pictures and hears voices, and it is comforting for her to know that Jack goes through something similar. However, she still has debts to pay, and as Holmquist (1980, 99) remarks, she is still bound to ordinary social life. That is why she eventually leaves Jack and goes to live with the Coldridge family. Her decision to leave Jack is also based on the uncomfortable feeling which is created when Jack asks Martha to have his baby: he does not suggest a traditional marriage, but he would like to have descendants. Martha refuses to go back to what she had with Douglas and Caroline. I think this decision Martha makes indicates that she is ready to oppose things which are presented to her by people who in her eyes have power over her: even though she cares for Jack, she is not willing to sacrifice herself for him. This is in clear contrast to her relationship with Douglas, Anton and other men before Jack.

Later on, Martha thinks of what she has learned through leaving Jack. She sits with Lynda in the basement of the Coldridge house, and she ”sway[s] like Lynda, back and forth, and around and around, instead of spilling, or using, this energy in any way whatsoever, she let it accumulate – yes, that was it, of course, she had learned that too, and had forgotten it – you must let it build up...” (FG 1976, 472). The concept of inner energy keeps repeating in Martha’s thoughts, and that is the heritage she has gained from her relationship with Jack: Jack represents a congenial spirit in Martha’s quest, and he is a mentor from who she gets tools for examining her inner world.

Also Lynda represents an ideal friend for Martha. Martha considers her to be actually the only person who truly understands her: it is Lynda to whom Martha goes when she feels agitated and lost. They have deep discussions which carry on a totally different level than what Martha is able to have with other people:

"Lynda, do you know who you are?" "Me," said Lynda. "Do you see that when you look in the mirror?" "No. Not often. Sometimes." "When?" "Oh, I don't know. There are times, you know." "Are you always someone who watches yourself?" "Sometimes more, sometimes less." (FG 1976, 216.)

Through her relationship with Lynda mental illness becomes more and more familiar to Martha. DuPlessis (1985, 195) depicts that Lessing describes female bonding as one of the essential conditions for learning and for change, and I think this is true in Martha's and Lynda's relationship: it seems almost as if Martha is not fully able to change without her attachment to Lynda. She seeks for the final congenial spirit who could show her the way to other worlds, and in Lynda she finds this person. Thomas and Jack have been influential mentors for Martha, and they have prepared Martha for the future, but it is with Lynda that she reaches her goal.

It may also have some significance that Martha's 'awakening' occurs after her mother's death. Since she has liberated herself from the ties which existed between her and her mother, Martha is now open to confront with full speed her inner energy which she got to taste with Thomas and Jack. In a culminating discussion with Lynda Martha finally realizes what Lynda has actually been saying to her all the time, in many different ways: Lynda has seen from the beginning of their acquaintance that Martha belongs to the same group of people as she does. This means that also Martha overhears what people are thinking, and is able to see what will happen. Before this moment Martha "had not heard. She had not been *able* to hear. She had not had anything to hear with – there being no substitute for experience" (FG 1976, 354).

Martha experiences that she no longer is under pressure, "it would not be necessary for the invisible mentor to talk, explain, exhort, develop, through

dreams, because she would have time and energy for other methods. What methods? But she did not know" (FG 1976, 439). This is a moment when Martha stands in an important crossroad of life: which road should she choose, and where would it lead her? Martha is restless, longing for movement. Lynda is going through one of her psychotic phases at the time, which means that she has blocked the outside world from her senses and wanders in her room, examining the walls, mumbling to herself. Martha watches Lynda and "with part of her she wanted to join Lynda in her journey around the walls" (FG 1976, 466). Martha makes a discovery about Lynda's actions:

Now she (Martha) understood very well what it was Lynda was doing. When she pressed, assessed, gauged those walls, it was the walls of her own mind that she was exploring. She was asking: Why can't I get out? What is this thing that holds me in? Why is it so strong *when I can imagine, and indeed half remember, what is outside?* Why is it that inside this room I am half asleep, doped, poisoned, and like a person in a nightmare screaming for help but no sounds come out of a straining throat? (FG 1976, 469.)

Martha experiences a psychotic phase of her own: she stops eating, sleeps very little and keeps alert all the time. She has experienced similar states before in her life, but this time is different, because the phase is so intense. As Labovitz (1988, 198) points out, at its most extreme Martha descends into her interior, bordering on madness, "into a Hell, to confront the self hater in every woman". The interior of Martha's thoughts when she is sunk into the 'Hell' can be seen in the next quotation:

She was completely in the grip of this self-hating person, or aspect of herself. No, it was more that her whole life was being turned inside out, so that she looked at it in reverse, and there was nothing anywhere in it that was good; it was all dark, all cruel, all callous, all 'bad.' Oh she was bad, oh she was wicked, oh how very evil and bad and wicked she was. (FG 1976, 507-508.)

After Martha finally returns from Hell, she is first scared that she is not able to send the self-hater away. However, Lynda helps Martha to evaluate herself, and through her evaluation she learns that the best part of herself is the observer. Martha writes

down her feelings and fears, and becomes to accept her hatred, and with the help of writing and analyzing she also becomes to realize that the observer is her best and prominent part. According to Holmquist (1980, 105) by experiencing hatred and by admitting its existence Martha is able to complete her inner spiritual quest; she is free from her unconscious, collective self as well as her personal ego. She can now let Matty go for good, and keep on living as the observer.

The climax in Martha's spiritual quest occurs when Martha realizes that she is free to do as she will; she no longer has to look after the Coldridges or other people, and she does not have to engage in being Matty or some other aspect of her personality which she cannot regard to be her true self. As she leaves the Coldridge house, she thinks that this time she really is on her way out and away. It is the moment of reality, and Martha has no plans for what she might do: this time she is not leaving in order to forget her past, but in order to work for her future.

She had learned that one thing, that most important thing, which was that one simply had to go on, take one step after another: this process in itself held the keys (FG 1976, 556).

The final volume, *The Four-Gated City*, ends in a vision of the future Western World some time in 1980s: some kind of catastrophe caused by radioactivity or chemical warfare has occurred. Martha has survived it and lives on an island off the coast of Scotland, and there are also children there "who have been born with the sort of consciousness that she and Lynda struggled for" (Holmquist 1980, 8). Lessing presents these children as a promise for mankind's ability to develop and survive. Martha acts as their surrogate mother. Thus, for once more, her role is to mother children, but this time it is something totally different: she acts as one part of the whole human consciousness, and helps the mankind to survive. This position is a gift she gets as a result of her completed quest for outer and inner self.

The process Martha goes through has similarities to the concept of the rebirth journey introduced by Pratt (see p.16), and discussed in the theoretical background of this study. As mentioned there, the rebirth journey assimilates with renewal, and alludes to a rebirth where the characteristics of a suprahuman figure

emerge; such is the case with Martha who possesses almost supernatural characteristics in the end. She uses these characteristics in order to help society to survive, and that refers again to Pratt's view of the rebirth journey whose goal is the renewal of society. As Pratt indicated, such a journey is possible only when the ego leaves the narrow bounds of its persona, and becomes a part of the unconscious. That is exactly what happens to Martha.

5 CONCLUSION

In this study I have examined Martha Quest's search for outer and inner balance. I have shown this, first, by examining the social side of her development. The analysis showed that Martha's background influence her identity formation: her family gives her the basis from which she forms her conception of her self. The relations within her family influence her in a way that her mother becomes the dominant figure whom Martha resists, and the father remains in the background.

Firstly, this study showed that Martha's identity formation is greatly influenced by the relationship she has with her mother. The development of Martha's identity and self has similar features with studies that concern motherhood and daughterhood as an aspect of female development. For example, the idea of matrophobia which was introduced by Rich turns out to be an essential characteristic of Martha's development: her main fear is that she will eventually become to resemble her mother's ideas, and in order to avoid this she opposes her mother in every way. Thus the struggle for power between Martha and Mrs. Quest is a constant force which influences Martha's decisions in life. In order to establish an identity which she could be satisfied with she tries to break away from her mother. Because of this Martha makes decisions which have profound effects on her future: for example, instead of passing the matriculation exam and going to the university, Martha ends up moving into town to work as a secretary.

Sexuality becomes also an issue in Martha's search for her self. The battle of clothes marks the starting point for the struggle for power with her mother, and Martha is shown to use her sexuality as a weapon against her mother, and her relationships with men are also declarations for her independence. Martha's decision to marry Douglas is partly a result of Mrs. Quest's interference, and the marriage presents, once again, Martha's eagerness to separate herself from her mother. This confirms with the aspects which were discussed by Chodorow: as a daughter Martha needs to separate from her mother, and she takes what steps she can in order to psychologically liberate herself from her mother. As a result Martha eventually learns to analyse her feelings of individuation and gains stability and

external independence.

When it comes to Martha's surroundings, Martha feels a constant tension between how she sees herself and how she is expected to behave by people in general. In her society women are mainly wives and mothers, and this view affects strongly her social quest. She does not want to enter the role of a wife and mother, but eventually this happens. Her main fear is that she will make the same mistakes as her parents, and her relationship to her daughter is coloured by this fear. Martha sees African society around her as hypocritical, and she has clear problems in fitting herself in, and finding a proper role. Not even politics offer her tranquility in the end, and finally she strives to solve her inner entanglements by leaving Africa for England. Running away from problems seems to be the resolution for Martha at this point of her social quest. Thus Martha is not able to find balance in her personality; instead, she struggles with the conception she has of herself, and the conception given to her by her surroundings. The social side of Martha's development is shown to be shaped by her relationships to her family, Douglas, Anton, communist group and Caroline.

The spiritual side, in turn, is strongly shaped by the mutilation of Martha's character. There are two aspects Martha finds in her self: Matty the clown and Martha the observer. Matty is the free-minded aspect who makes jokes of herself and acts out banal roles, whereas the observer follows Martha's actions from the distance and continuously makes remarks. Martha feels more relaxed with the observer, and eventually it does turn out that the observer is the constant and good aspect of her. Martha is able to realize this in therapy she has with Dr. Lamb.

Also such ideal friends as Lynda, Jack and Thomas are important in Martha's spiritual quest. Thomas is shown to be the first one to really touch Martha's inner life, and he teaches her to experience the powers which run under the surface. As a result Martha starts to see dreams, and her thoughts grow deeper: she no longer is a young woman who mainly concentrates on partying. With Thomas she also is, for the first time in her life, able to enjoy sexuality, and to find physical fulfillment. Sexuality is also emphasized in Martha's relationship to Jack, and to Jack Martha admits for the first time that she sees pictures and hears voices.

Jack is an important stopping place for Martha in her journey towards her inner self.

The most important of Martha's congenial spirits is Lynda Coldridge. Lynda's mental illness affects their relationship, and Lynda guides Martha into the world of her psychotic phases. Finally, Martha experiences a psychotic phase of her own, and in this journey she meets the self-hater in every woman, and is close to being in Hell. She is able to defy the self-hater, and through this she finally finds balance in her life. The main thing she realizes is, that in order to be able to work for her future she must accept her past as part of her. Before this, her goal has been fleeing her past without looking back. Now she finally examines her life as an entity, and can continue her life without strains. As she leaves the Coldridges her motive is to please only herself, and not run after something that is socially acceptable and/or a means of rebelling against society's expectations and her mother's ideals. In the end of *The Four-Gated City* Martha is shown to be an old woman living on an island with children. The world has faced a catastrophe, and the children are the ones to save the world's future. Thus Martha has reached a central role in utopian society, which resembles the beginning of the new world. This culmination of her identity development has characteristics of a rebirth: Martha possesses features of a suprahuman figure who is above ordinary human being. She is able to predict what will happen in the future and she telepathically keeps contact with other people of this kind.

In this study Mrs. Quest is shown to be influential even in Martha's spiritual quest, and she continues to affect Martha's thoughts and actions even when she is not physically present in Martha's life. The power of Mrs. Quest for Martha's mental balance becomes evident when she is about to visit Martha in England. Martha collapses mentally and physically, and because of this she seeks Dr. Lamb's help. With Dr. Lamb Martha starts to fully examine her actions and life, and to work out her entanglements with her mother. But not until Mrs. Quest dies, is Martha totally free from her role as dutiful daughter.

Erikson's theory of identity crisis was appropriate for this study because Martha was shown to experience various crises in her life. Before she was

able to achieve inner coherence, she went through the phase of life where she suffered from identity diffusion; this was referred to in Martha's spiritual quest where she felt to be inhabited by two different kinds of aspects, Martha and Matty.

Through various stages and relationships in her life Martha completes her social and spiritual search, and thus *Children of Violence* fulfills the characteristics of a female *Bildungsroman*. Lessing shows how Martha's character develops from adolescence to adulthood, and how Martha looks for answers concerning her identity, marriage and career. She eventually becomes an adult in the sense that she achieves independence and inner balance. She manages to do this by subverting the assumptions of her mother and culture in general, and she manifests the subversion by rebelling against these assumptions. Thus, Martha matures both socially and spiritually, and she is able to feel herself coherent and independent.

Martha's development could be studied also from the point of view of violence which seems to be a central theme in the novels, and also a more psychological examination of Martha's character could be an interesting one. Both of these aspects could give more perspective through which to look at Martha's character and *Children of Violence* in general.

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