

Chapter 3

Molly Gibson's Process of Maturation

In this chapter, the thesis writer tries to analyze the process of maturation of the main female character as seen in Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*. First, the thesis writer does her analysis on the description of Molly Gibson's immaturity before her father's remarriage. Then, the thesis writer discusses the crisis that she experiences which triggers her process to be mature. Next, she will discuss the reasons that make Molly Gibson reach her maturation and how the process of her maturation takes place in her life. The writer applies the theories of characterization and conflict in order to analyze the main female character's process to maturation. Finally, the thesis writer discusses Molly Gibson as a mature person. Accordingly, the thesis writer divides this chapter into 4 sub-chapters that is, Molly Gibson's immaturity, Molly Gibson's crisis in her life, the process of Molly Gibson's maturation and Molly Gibson's maturation.

3.1. Molly Gibson's Immaturity

In this subchapter, the discussion focuses on the immature character of Molly Gibson as the main female character before her father's remarriage. Molly Gibson is a daughter of a widowed doctor. As Mr. Gibson's only daughter, the thesis writer learns that Molly Gibson is immature because she is very protected by her father. When one of Mr. Gibson pupils, Mr. Coxe, falls in love with Molly, Mr. Gibson tries to protect Molly from Mr. Coxe's love chase by sending her to the Hall, the Hamley's house. Mr. Gibson does not tell his reason behind his decision to send Molly to stay at the Hamley's,

Mr. Gibson thought that he had settled everything about Molly's going to Hamley before he spoke to her about it, which he did not do, until the morning of the day on which Mrs. Hamley expected her. Then he said, -

' By the way, Molly! you are to go to Hamley this afternoon; Mrs. Hamley wants you to go to her for a week or two, and it suits me capitally that you should accept her invitation just now. (p.67)

The quotation above proves that Mr. Gibson sends Molly away from her own home to prevent one of his students to have the chance of having any romantic relationship with her. Molly's father's protective attitude toward her results in deep influences in Molly's traits. She has to follow and obey her father which means she becomes a dependant person who does not have a will of her own.

Molly's immaturity can be seen when she is sent by her father to go to the Hamleys for a short time. Although Molly goes to the Hamleys only for a week or two, Molly feels very sad, "Oh, papa," said Molly, catching at his hand, "I do so wish I was not going, now that the time is come" (p.71). And she cries a little too, expressing her sadness, "Molly cried a little, but checked her tears as soon as she remembered how annoyed her father would have been at the sight of them" (p.72). This event depicts Molly as a very sensitive and emotional young girl who accounts for her father greatly in her feelings until she never wants to be separated from her father even only for two weeks and that shows how immature she is.

Even at the Hamleys, Molly shows her immaturity by wanting to go home, "Papa! – Mrs. Hamley! - I know you' ll both understand me but mayn' t I go home? I am very very happy here; but - oh papa! I think I should like to be at home with you best" (p.86). She feels that she cannot be separated from her father so that being away from him is unbearable.

Her being immature can also be seen especially at the time she hears about the news of her father's remarriage,

She did not answer. She could not tell what words to use. She was afraid of saying anything, lest the passion of anger, dislike, indignation - whatever it was that was boiling up in her breast - should find vent in cries and screams, or worse, in raging words that could never be forgotten. It was as if the piece of solid ground on which she stood had broken from the shore, and she was drifting out to the infinite sea alone. (p.118)

The quotation above shows that Molly feels incredibly upset because she sees that in order to be with his new wife, her father is willing to leave her alone. This narrow-minded point of view shows her immaturity. She cannot see her father's point of view that he only marries again to provide Molly with a mother's love.

She feels so upset that she cannot say anything because she thinks that her father has betrayed her and she is so angry. To express her anger she can only say, 'Oh, papa, papa - I'm not myself I don't know what to say about this hateful - detestable -' (p.119). She feels so unhappy about the news that she even accuses her father for sending her to the Hamleys in order that he can arrange his marriage with Mrs. Kirkpatrick, 'So I was sent out of the house that all this might be quietly arranged in my absence?' (p.119).

It is very apparent that Molly cannot take the news of her father's remarriage very well, she even goes to the forest to hide and to express her sorrow, 'When she had once got to the seat she broke out with a suppressed passion of grief' (p.120). The reason for Molly becomes so very upset is because her immature feeling prevents her from understanding about her father's true good intention to provide her with a mother,

She did not care to analyze the sources of her tears and sobs - her father was going to be married again - her father was angry with her; she had done very wrong - he had gone away displeased; she had lost his love, he was going to be married - away from her - away from his child - his little daughter - forgetting her own dear, dear mother. (p.120)

Molly's immature thinking makes her unable to understand about the reason behind her father's remarriage. Instead, she thinks that she has done something very wrong so that her father does not love her anymore and punishes her by forgetting her and her mother.

Since she cannot comprehend the reason behind her father's remarriage, she suffers from an inner conflict. She has to struggle with herself to survive the emotional turmoil she feels at the time,

She had cast herself on the ground - that natural throne for violent sorrow - and leant up against the old moss-grown seat; sometimes burying her face in her hands; sometimes clasping them together, as if by the tight painful grasp of her fingers she could deaden mental suffering. (p.120)

This quotation shows the misery she suffers when she has to struggle with her inner conflict to deal with the news that her father may have a remarriage. Molly indeed experiences severe mental pain hearing about her father's remarriage. This incident brings Molly to have a serious crisis in her life. Thus, Molly Gibson reveals that she has a narrow-point of view that prevents her to see things differently like a child does. This again proves that she has an immature attitude. This in result may bring her to great difficulties in life when she does not change her attitude.

3.2. Molly Gibson's Crisis in Life

The remarriage of Molly Gibson's father gives a big impact toward Molly Gibson's life. In this part, the thesis writer discusses the crisis which Molly experiences during the process of maturation. In the beginning of the novel, Molly is still immature and along the story as the novel progresses, she undergoes the process of maturation that finally makes her a mature person.

The crisis in Molly Gibson's life begins when she has a conflict whether to accept or reject her father's remarriage. The conflict emerges because Molly has a very close bond with her father that she cannot accept her father to be with another person but herself. The bond between Molly and her father is very tight and she takes care of her father as much as her mother takes care of her husband. However, her father seems to think that she still needs the affection of a mother. Therefore, her father decides to marry again in order to provide Molly with the love of a mother. So, Mr. Gibson's main reason for his remarriage is because he thinks only about the importance of his daughter.

The evidence of this can be seen from what he says to his future wife, 'I should like you to love my poor little Molly, - to love her as your own -' (p.113). This statement shows that Mr. Gibson does everything for the best of his beloved

daughter, he does not think only for his own interest. Unfortunately Molly cannot see her father's true intention that she has to experience an inner conflict.

Because of having trouble in controlling her emotion as the result of her immaturity, Molly becomes easily irritable and annoyed whenever something provokes her to feel displeased. As the result, when Molly's father decides to marry again, she feels very upset although she does not know about the purpose of the marriage.

What happens during she has her crisis is the reason that leads Molly Gibson to her maturation and it begins after she meets Roger in the garden. After she hears the news of her father's remarriage, she feels very angry and to express her anger, Molly goes away from the Hamleys' house and cries alone in the garden near the Hamleys' house and there she meets Roger Hamley. Roger Hamley has an important role in Molly's maturation because his advice has a profound effect on Molly. Roger advises Molly to think about others' importance, "one has always to try to think more of others than of oneself, and it is best not to prejudge people on the bad side" (p.124).

In the crisis which Molly faces when she cannot accept his father's remarriage, Roger gives her a different perspective from his point of view besides her own immature perspective. After Roger understands her situation, he tries his best to comfort and advise her to understand more about the reason behind her father's remarriage which is for everyone's best interest. He especially convinces Molly, "that this step may be greatly for your father's happiness it may relieve him from many cares, and may give him a pleasant companion" (p.122). At first, Molly's excuse for her anger toward her father's remarriage is that, "He had me. You don't know what we were to each other at least, what he was to me" (p.122). This statement shows that she is immature. She argues like a child does. A child is sometimes very selfish and does not want to share what he or she has with other people. Here Molly shows how childish selfishness by unwilling to share her father with his new wife.

As she has become extremely discouraged by her father's engagement, Roger tries to comfort her by suggesting to "give things a chance to work out well" (p.123). Finally, Roger's words can convince Molly for the better. She can

overcome her conflict and seems to agree with her father's remarriage 'If it were for papa' s happiness"(p.123). So, after all the commotion inside her heart in deciding whether to continue rejecting her father' remarriage or to accept it, she finally decides to accept it for her father's happiness. This marks the beginning of the process of her maturation. Nobody has said anything like that to her that she feels impressed by everything Roger says to her. She follows and takes this advice earnestly.

3.3. Molly Gibson's Process of Maturity

After hearing Roger's advice, Molly's point of view starts to change. She is very impressed by Roger's advice and she thinks of it thoughtfully. She finally makes peace with herself and goes home. She knows that she faces a conflict especially within herself, so she decides that 'I will be like Harriet. I will think of others. I won' t think of myself"(p.131). This is all inspired by Roger's story about a girl named Harriet who is like her as an example of her case. Like Molly, Harriet has only her widowed father to live with and like Mr. Gibson, her father decides to marry again, however 'Harriet thought of her father' s happiness before she thought of her own"(p.123).

Molly Gibson's process to be mature begins when she tries to make a friend with her new stepmother. Molly tries her best to struggle with her inner conflict that occurs from her meeting with her new stepmother. On the day she meets her new stepmother, to avoid a lot of conflicts that might happen, she already determines to herself that 'I will be like Harriet. I will think of others. I won' t think of myself"(p.131).

Everything seems to go well at the beginning, but eventually when her new stepmother tells her how much her father loves her she begins to feel upset, 'She did not want an assurance of her own father' s love from this strange woman"(p.32). Molly has an inner conflict with herself whether to be angry at her new stepmother or to tell her not to say things like that, but ultimately her decision shows that she has "tried to be good"(p.132). She keeps her anger and annoyance buried deeply within her heart so that no one notices. The solution of this conflict shows that now Molly has been able to control her emotion and does not follow

her feelings. Instead, she thinks of her stepmother's feeling. This shows a sign of maturation in Molly's character.

Another effort by Molly that shows Molly's process to be mature is when she continues to make a friend with her new stepmother even after she is very offended by her new stepmother. In order to get her goal, she asks her new stepmother to tell about Cynthia,

Molly was silent; it did not do, she found, to be too minute in telling about her father's likes or dislikes. She had better leave them for Mrs Kirkpatrick to find out for herself. It was an awkward pause; each was trying to find something agreeable to say. Molly spoke at length. 'Please! I should so like to know something about Cynthia - your daughter.' (p.133)

Her question about Cynthia is her way to make a friend with her new stepmother. This is a sign of Molly's process to be a mature character because instead of speaking improper words to her new stepmother for offending her feeling, she asks about Cynthia, now her stepsister.

In spite of her conflicts with her new stepmother, she keeps her effort to make a friend with her new mother. Molly almost 'felt as if she could make a friend of the stiff old countess, for her clearness of sight as to the plan proposed being a trial; but she was afraid, in her new-born desire of thinking for others, of Mrs Kirkpatrick being hurt' (p.136). So, as it can be seen from the quotation that Molly becomes more concerned of others than of herself, she is even afraid of hurting her new stepmother's feeling by her attitude.

Molly experiences another conflict with Mrs. Kirkpatrick when they meet before the wedding is prepared. They begin talking without any irritation until Mrs. Kirkpatrick knows that Molly never goes to school, instead a governess teaches her. Because of Mrs. Kirkpatrick's offending words about her father's policy of her home education by a governess instead of school, the meeting becomes very inconvenient for Molly. This is what Mrs. Kirkpatrick says,

Umph! Miss Eyre was your governess, I suppose? I should not have thought your father could have afforded to keep a governess. But of course he must know his own affairs best. For Molly, this is quite irritating, still ‘Certainly, my lady,” replied Molly, a little touchy as to any reflections on her father’ s wisdom (p.137)

Obviously Molly is not happy when anyone says anything that offends her father’s policy. That is exactly what Mrs. Kirkpatrick does when they talk and this becomes the reason why Molly has a conflict with her. However, her new stepmother continues to offend her by insulting her.

“You say ‘certainly!’ as if it was a matter of course that every one should know their own affairs best. You are very young, Miss Gibson - very. You’ ll know better before you come to my age. And I suppose you’ ve been taught music, and the use of the globes, and French, and all the usual accomplishments, since you have had a governess? I never heard of such nonsense!” she went on, lashing herself up. “An only daughter! If there had been half-a-dozen girls, there might have been some sense in it.” (p.137)

Molly is really trying very hard to take the words her new stepmother says although they really offend her, “Molly did not speak but it was by a strong effort that she kept silence “(p.137). This event shows that Molly tries hard to become a mature person and that she tries to behave properly by not speaking improper words to her new stepmother although she really wants to express what she really thinks about her.

Molly had held up all the day bravely; she had not shown anger, or repugnance, or annoyance, or regret; but when once more by herself in the Hamley carriage, she burst into a passion of tears, and cried her fill till she reached the village of Hamley. (p.139)

From the quotation above, it can be seen that Molly has no intention of continuing the conflict with her new stepmother by keeping her silence and accepting whatever her new stepmother says no matter how annoying it is for her.

This is the sign that she tries to be as mature as possible because she has controlled her emotion and does not blatantly express her ‘anger, or repugnance, or annoyance, or regret’ (p.139). Roger’s advice is the utmost substantial constituent that becomes very meaningful for her to change her selfish behavior. This is proved since she tells him, ‘I did try to remember what you said, and to think more of others, but it is so difficult sometimes; you know it is, don’ t you?’ (p.140). Obviously Roger is one of the most important people in Molly’s life, the one that leads Molly Gibson to undergo a process to be mature.

Molly’s another struggle with her inner conflict is shown by her effort to really like her new stepmother, ‘I mean to try and like her’ (p.161). Molly knows that she has to accept her father’s remarriage and her new stepmother for the sake of her father even at her expense. Moreover, when she is asked by Lady Harriet to stay at the tower, she replies, ‘I’d better go home at once; I shall only say wrong things – and there’s Lord Cumnor waiting all this time’ (p.166). Molly rejects Lady Harriet’s offer to stay at the tower because she knows that if she stays, she may make other people unhappy. This shows how she tries her best to make other people happy. This is a sign that Molly slowly changes into maturity.

One of the evidences of Molly’s process to maturation is shown at the time the squire fetches Molly at her house to bring her to the Hamley’s house because Mrs. Hamley is badly ill and she wants to meet Molly. However, her new stepmother does not allow her to go to the Hamley’s house because Molly is supposed to accompany her to a party. Molly with her torn heart experiences a great inner conflict due to the two dilemmas. She is so confused between whether to accompany Mrs. Hamley or her new stepmother until she cries her heart out. Finally, Molly decides to go with her new stepmother to the party and then in the following morning she goes to visit Mrs. Hamley in the Hamley’s house.

At the Hamleys’, Molly has to struggle in dealing with her own feeling whether to tell Mrs. Hamley about her problem or not. Eventually, Molly chooses not to tell about her sorrow to Mrs. Hamley, ‘Ah! I see, Molly,’ said Mrs.

Hamley; “you won’t tell me your sorrows, and yet perhaps, I could have done you some good” (p.191). Molly does not want to make Mrs. Hamley become more restless with her problem besides her own illness. Molly decides not to share her problem with Mrs. Hamley because she worries that it may make Mrs. Hamley’s health worse. This act of consideration that Molly performs indicates that she really undergoes a process to become a mature person.

Thus, the conclusion of this part is that the main female character undergoes the process of maturity in which she experiences many conflicts. But she is able to deal with them and the result is a successful process of maturity. The process of maturity itself begins when Molly hears about her father remarriage that makes her upset and the reason she succeeds in the process of maturity is Roger Hamley and his advice. The process is completed when she finally concerns about other’s happiness instead of her own.

3.4. Molly Gibson’s Maturity

Molly Gibson’s maturity is shown when she meets Cynthia happily without experiencing any inner conflict, even “Molly had allowed her fancy to dwell much on the idea of Cynthia’s coming” (p.215). This sign of maturity is also revealed by the fact that Molly seems mature at the time Cynthia admires Molly. Molly’s maturity is also supported by the fact that she willingly defends and sacrifices for Cynthia’s sake. Also, the way she listens to Cynthia’s sad complaint about the problem that Cynthia has with Mr. Preston. “She did not wish to make herself into a hard judge, and yet she did so dislike Mr. Preston” (p.452). By not judging Cynthia for what happens to her, Molly shows to have more maturity in her thinking than Cynthia and she even says to Cynthia,

Pray, please, Cynthia, don’ t go off into such wild talking. I don’ t believe you’ ve done so very wrong. You say you have not, and I believe you. That horrid man has managed to get you involved in some way; but I’ m sure papa could set it to rights, if you would only make a friend of him and tell him all – .(p.448)

The fact that Molly even gives advice to Cynthia and becomes such a compassionate listener to Cynthia's sad complaint shows that she has become a mature character.

The ultimate proof of Molly's maturity is that Molly sacrifices her feeling of love for Roger in order that Cynthia can have a relationship with him and in order to guarantee the happiness of Roger and Cynthia. As a mature person, Molly does not tell Roger about her feeling or try to win him over because she knows about Cynthia's desire for a relationship with Roger. She does not tell them the truth knowing it will hurt them and she thinks that she only hurts her own feeling and nobody else by keeping it as a secret for herself. The only reason for this is because she has become a mature character. She puts somebody's happiness before her own, in this case she sacrifices her own feeling for Roger and Cynthia's happiness.

From the quotation stated here, it is clear that she would sacrifice herself to ensure that the relationship between Roger and Cynthia will go smoothly. "She would have been willing to cut off her right hand, if need were, to forward his attachment to Cynthia; and the self-sacrifice would have added a strange zest to a happy crisis" (p.336). She thinks more of others than herself and she tries anything sincerely to help especially Cynthia and Roger. This proves the process of the main female character's maturation is complete.

Molly's maturity is shown when she decides to sacrifice her love for Roger so that Cynthia can have a romantic relationship with him. This in result also becomes a problem solving for Cynthia's problem with Mr. Preston. The problem that Cynthia has with Mr. Preston happens because she borrows some money from him to buy decent clothes to go to a party, but she cannot return it. Cynthia's problem occurs when Mr. Preston falls in love with Cynthia and thinks of the money that Cynthia borrows like some kind of dowry for their marriage. This act of Cynthia shows her immaturity in opposition to Molly's maturity at the time Molly realizes about Cynthia's problem. Molly with her new mature character decides to solve Cynthia's problem with Mr. Preston and this decision reflects Molly's maturity because she concerns with Cynthia's problem although it is not her problem.

As a mature person, she decides to solve Cynthia's problem by returning the money that Cynthia borrows to Preston in an envelope that looks very much like a love letter. When someone sees Molly give the envelope to Mr. Preston, rumor spreads that Molly has a crush for Mr. Preston. However, as a mature person, Molly keeps quiet about the rumor because she knows that if she says anything, it only reflects badly on Cynthia.

Eventually, everyone knows that Cynthia is engaged to Mr. Preston over the money she borrows from him and that Molly returns the money to break off the engagement between Cynthia and Mr. Preston whom Cynthia never loves. This event shows more about Cynthia's immaturity and reflects more about Molly's maturity because she is the one who helps Cynthia solve her problems that Cynthia cannot handle by herself. This in result has the effect of making the people surrounding Molly Gibson realize that she has become a mature individual.

Molly's maturity is shown more after the business that Cynthia has with Mr. Preston is over and Cynthia wants to have a relationship with Roger. Even though Molly has feeling for Roger, as a mature character, she puts the importance of others before herself. Therefore, she keeps it a secret for herself. However, everyone in Hollingford already knows that Cynthia is engaged to Mr. Preston and not to Roger. To avoid the issue, Cynthia goes to London and this reflects her immaturity because of her running away from her own problem in comparison with Molly who deals with her problem in life.

Roger does not know about the issue in Hollingford because he is at the time in Africa. Only at the time of Osborne's death that Roger goes home to Hollingford and at that moment he knows that Cynthia leaves for London and she already has a new boyfriend named Mr. Henderson whom she will marry. With her immaturity, Cynthia has rejected Roger because she feels that she does not love him and Molly is upset with all of this, 'Molly knew that Cynthia did not love him. Molly grew angry with her many and many a time as the conviction of this fact was forced upon her' (p.344). However, although Molly is very upset with the fact that Cynthia does not love Roger, she with her mature character decides to keep it in secrecy knowing Roger's feelings will be hurt by this fact.

Molly did not know her own feelings; Roger had no overwhelming interest in what they might be; while his very life-breath seemed to depend on what Cynthia felt and thought. Therefore Molly had keen insight into her 'sister's' heart; and she knew that Cynthia did not love Roger (p.344)

Molly also decides to keep her love for Roger hidden because she knows that it will only complicate the situation. Since Roger only thinks about Cynthia and cares for no one else, he does not think about Molly's feeling for him. The reality that Roger does not love her because he is so much in love with Cynthia has made Molly in the verge of despair. However, she still does not want to do anything that can prevent Roger from loving Cynthia like revealing all about the feelings and problems that Cynthia has. Molly does not do that because as a mature character, Molly believes other people's feelings are more important than her own. Besides, she does not want to hurt the feelings of both Cynthia and Roger. Therefore, by deciding not to reveal the feelings and problems that Cynthia has in order to prevent the heartache that may happen to Cynthia and Roger, Molly proves to be truly a mature character.

Molly and her mature decision in this event influences Roger's point of view when he knows about it and finally Roger realizes about Molly's love for him. Roger decides to propose Molly because Roger begins to recognize Molly's worth.

He felt as if he should not know what to do without Molly; he had never known her value, he thought, till now. But he kept silence on this view of the case; which was a praiseworthy effort on the part of one who usually let by-standers see and hear as much of his passing feelings as if he had had a window in his breast. (p.555)

From the quotation above, it can be seen Roger understands Molly's value after Molly completes the process to be a mature character.

That is the reason why Roger says to Mr. Gibson that his love for Molly is different from the puppy love that he feels for Cynthia, but real love, "I only wish you could know what a different feeling this is to my boyish love for Cynthia"

(p.612). Thus, Molly's maturity also affects Roger's character that used to think that Cynthia is the love of his life. After realizing how mature Molly's love is, Roger admits that the love he has for Cynthia is only boyish love, or puppy love, or immature love. Roger realizes that the love from Molly is the true love, or real love, or mature love. Because Roger finally sees that Molly has become a mature person after she undergoes the process to be mature. By the end of the novel Molly has become a symbol of a mature individual.

The thesis writer concludes that at first the main female character is immature, then she undergoes the process of maturity that makes her gradually develop into a mature person. In the beginning of the novel, Molly has immature attitudes that make her suffer from conflicts and problems in her life. In the course of the novel, she has Roger Hamley to give her advice that makes her understand about her problems and eventually able to succeed in developing her maturity. Finally, in the end of the novel, she has completed the process of maturity and become a mature person.