

**READING DAISY AS THE OPPRESSED CHARACTER REFLECTED IN
FITZGERALD'S *THE GREAT GATSBY***

A GRADUATING PAPER

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English Literature



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A FINAL PROJECT STATEMENT

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READING DAISY AS THE OPPRESSED CHARACTER IN FITZGERALD'S

THE GREAT GATSBY

By: Zakiyah

ABSTRACT

Some critics writes about Daisy Fay in *The Great Gatsby* because the existence of Daisy is sometimes questionable. One of them critique Daisy in bad ways. It can be considered by her existence as the source of Gatsby's death. She has no responsibilities about Gatsby's death even she leaves and ignores about it. Yet, Daisy's existence may inseparable of her husband, Tom Buchanan. It may Daisy's existence is affected by her husband. The fact, Tom dominates and controls Daisy in many ways. The story encourages the writer to analyze Daisy who is portrayed as the oppressed character because of Tom's domination. This proves that Daisy as the oppressed character is important problem to be analyzed. Besides, the writer also analyzes about Daisy's responses to her oppression. This research aims to describe Daisy as the oppressed that explained in the novel and to get Daisy's responses as her struggle to get free from Tom's domination. This research is a qualitative research. Furthermore, to conduct the analysis, the research uses Radical-Cultural feminist theory to organize the appearance of Daisy as the oppressed character. The writer concludes that Daisy is an oppressed character in her household. Then, Daisy responds her oppression may not be directly physical act but she attacks Tom mentally.

Keys words: *The Great Gatsby*, Daisy's oppression, Daisy's responses, Radical – cultural

READING DAISY AS THE OPPRESSED CHARACTER IN FITZGERALD'S

THE GREAT GATSBY

By: Zakiyah

ABSTRAK

Beberapa kritikan mendeskripsikan Daisy Fay karena eksistensinya yang banyak dipertanyakan didalam *The Great Gatsby*. Salah satunya adalah Daisy dideskripsikan sebagai karakter yang tidak baik. Ini dapat dipertimbangkan didalam eksistensinya sebagai penyebab kematian Gatsby. Daisy tidak bertanggungjawab atas perilakunya bahkan dia cenderung meninggalkan dan mengacuhkan kematian Gatsby. Tetapi, eksistensinya Daisy mungkin tidak bisa dipisahkan dari suaminya, Tom Buchanan. Kemungkinan eksistensinya Daisy dipengaruhi oleh suaminya. Faktanya adalah Tom mendominasi dan mengontrol Daisy disegala bidang. Latar belakang tersebutlah mendorong penulis untuk menganalisis Daisy yang digambarkan sebagai karakter yang menderita karena terdominasi oleh Tom. Ini membuktikan bahwa Daisy sebagai karakter yang menderita penting untuk dianalisis. Disini, penulis bermaksud mendeskripsikan Daisy sebagai karakter yang menderita serta tanggapan daisy terhadap penderitaannya untuk bebas dari dominasi Tom. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode analisis kualitatif. Analisis dalam penelitian ini menggunakan teori Radical-Cultural Feminist. Penulis menyimpulkan bahwa Daisy adalah sebagai karakter yang menderita di dalam rumah tangganya. Selanjutnya, Daisy tidak menggunakan fisik untuk menanggapi penderitaannya, tetapi melawan mental suaminya sebagai cara untuk bebas dari dominasi suaminya.

Kata Kunci: *The Great Gatsby*, penderitaan Daisy, tanggapan Daisy, Radikal-cultural,

MOTTO

“WHAT’S LIFE WITHOUT A LITTLE RISK?”

(SIRIUS BLACK)

DEDICATION

*For she who always lets her sons and daughters
live in every word of her prayer*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Someone can never be free from society and makes self-limitation. Mullaly states “no one in society is free from social structures” (2002:28). If someone gets boundaries or limitations, usually he or she calls them as oppression. Furthermore, that statement becomes a weak argument that everyone in society is oppressed because his or her freedom is restricted. This restriction of freedom cannot be assumed as oppression. Thus, it is necessary to know what the oppression is. According to Frye, “if one wishes to distinguish between what oppression is and is not, one has a look at the social context of particular restriction, limit and injury” (as cited in Mullaly, 2002:28).

Some literary works such as novel can be a way to comprehend the oppression. Reading a novel may comprehend the oppression through the discourse and language. The concept of the discourse is “another important tool for understanding oppression” (Mullaly, 2002: 23). According to Foucault, knowledge is produced by discourse (as cited in Mullaly, 2002:23). Discourse and knowledge have an intimate context or an intimate relationship. Furthermore, language relates to the concept of discourse. A novel as a kind of literary works may reveal the concept of

discourse and language toward the oppression. The interesting point is when a novel can reveal the oppressed one.

The existence of the character in the novel that reveals the oppression is not viewed from one side. Although the character's role is single role but it has an essential meaning of its existence. Though Aristotle states that the character is secondary and not the first essential in literary works (as cited in Bennett and Royle, 2004:60). He argues that the first essential thing is the plot (Bennett and Royle, 2004:60). A plot is structural action in dramatic works. Then, Abrams states that the existence of both the plot and the character is inseparable (1971:127). It means that the character may not be the secondary essential in literary works. The character's role is important, so if the existence is absent the story will loosen.

By reading the novel, not only do the readers understand the novel from its language, but also other elements of the novel such as plot, characterization, theme, and so on. In this research, the writer analyzes *The Great Gatsby* as the subject of the research. Meanwhile, the writer is interested in analyzing *The Great Gatsby* since it presents the character that experiences the oppression. In addition, the writer focuses on the secondary character, Daisy Fay, since she is an object of Gatsby's dream and obsession. Yet, the existence of Daisy is dominated by her husband, Tom Buchanan. It is critical that this analysis illuminates how Daisy as the oppressed character is described and how she responds to the oppression. The oppression in this case grows

from the household. Tom Buchanan is the agent of the oppression and Daisy Fay is the victim of the oppression.

The Great Gatsby is a novel which takes the character's name as the same as the title. Some reviews sometimes typically focus on Gatsby as the major character rather than the secondary characters. Yet, the other attention should be paid to Daisy Buchanan, a woman who causes Gatsby dies tragically. He is representation of suffering and his death evokes pity. Some critics writes about Daisy's existence and judges her in a bad manner. Marius Bewley calls Daisy is "vicious emptiness" and "monstrous moral indifference" (as cited in Person, 1978:250). Then, Robert Ornstein writes that Daisy is "criminally amoral" (as cited in Person, 1978:250). In addition, Alfred Kazin describes Daisy about her "vulgar and inhuman". Furthermore, according to Leslie Fiedler, Daisy is as a "Dark Destroyer", a purveyor of "corruption and death" (as cited in Person, 1978:250). None of them writes about Daisy's importance in the novel. Those critics do not e even write about the Daisy's role in the novel. The absence of Daisy's role and Daisy's importance make unpleasant judgment of Daisy.

One review describes Daisy is the one who does not responsible about the Gatsby's death (Houck, 2008:1). It can be considered by her actions as the source of Gatsby's death. She is a careless woman. "... they were careless people, Tom and Daisy – they smashed up things and creatures and then recreated back into their money or their vast carelessness or whatever it was that kept them together, and let

other people clean up the mess they had made” (Fitzgerald, 2000:191). She leaves and ignores about it. For this case, Daisy can be seen as a selfish person. Then, Daisy’s existence is more concerned with money and material goods (Houck, 2008:2). It can be seen by Daisy’s voice “..her voice is full of money, he said. That was it. I’d never understood before. It was full of money - ” (Fitzgerald, 2000:128). The portrayal of her voice which is described as one who obsesses with material goods and money makes Daisy is seen more badly. All of them is the argument in some review about the portrayal Daisy’s characterization in the novel.

There are some bad judgment about Daisy, yet, Daisy’s existence may inseparable of her husband, Tom Buchanan. Tom, as her husband, should represent as a security who save Daisy in many ways (Houck, 2008: 3). The thing that Daisy gets is that Tom dominates and controls Daisy in many ways. The characterization of Daisy may describe as bad characterization if we see the Houck’s review. Yet, we consider about other side of Daisy’s characterization after she marries Tom. First, she is described as the source of Gatsby’s death. Daisy is not the one who is responsibility about Gatsby’s death.

Daisy and Tom were sitting opposite each other at the kitchen table with a plate of cold fried chicken between them and two bottles of ale. He was talking intently across the table at her and in his earnestness his hand had fallen upon and covered her own. Once in a while she looked up at him and nodded in agreement. They weren’t happy, and neither of them had touched the chicken or the ale – and yet they weren’t unhappy either. There was

unmistakable air of natural intimacy about the picture and anybody would have said that they were conspiring together (Fitzgerald, 2000:155)

The data above can be considered that not only is Daisy responsible about Gatsby's death but also Tom, her husband, reveals the core of Gatsby's death. Daisy is just controlled by Tom. According to the researcher, Daisy's personality is not always bad. In fact, Daisy conceals Tom's bad treatment toward her. It can be seen by closing all of Tom's treatment, such as Tom's violence and mistress. Those things must be considered in analyzing Daisy's personality.

In this research, the writer aims to analyze about Daisy in her household where she experiences oppression. Then from that background, the writer also intends to describe Daisy's oppression and struggle to overcome her oppression in her household. The writer intends to reveal the form of oppression and Daisy's response to the oppression.

1.2 Problem Statements

The research focuses on Daisy in *The Great Gatsby* novel. The writer formulates the problem statements based on the background as follow:

- 1.2.1 How is the oppression faced by Daisy?
- 1.2.2 What are Daisy's responses to her oppression?

1.3 Objectives of Study

The objectives of the research are:

1.3.1 To describe how the oppression faced by Daisy,

1.3.2 To reveal Daisy's responses to the oppression.

1.4 Significance of Study

This research has both practical and theoretical significances:

1.4.1 Theoretically, it is important to understand women's oppression represented in literary works because the readers can know the forms and the responses of women's oppression through representation of Daisy for women's development in the gender aspect. Furthermore, this research offers the other source of women's oppression study through a radical feminist thought.

1.4.2 Practically, this research aims to reveal the oppressed one. Then, this research aims to enlarge knowledge and understanding of the oppressed one especially in *The Great Gatsby* in which it is experienced by Daisy.

1.5 Literature Review

There are many people discussing *The Great Gatsby*. First is Maria Vincentia Ika Mulatsih's graduating paper (2006) entitled "Love and Death in *The Great Gatsby*: an Expressive Approach". She discusses how the author's philosophy concern love and death in the novel through the character. Maria focuses on love and death of the character that relates to the author's love and life. Maria discusses how the life and love from the author's point of view are. Then she concludes that the philosophy of Fitzgerald's love and death is the same as the philosophy of Gatsby's

love and death. Maria proves that Gatsby is the representation of Fitzgerald. It can be proved by many events that tell that Gatsby is the representative of Fitzgerald like becoming a lieutenant. Maria uses expressive approach to conduct her study.

Second, Faizah Hidayati's graduating paper (2006) "The Management of Ambition in Attaining dreams in F.S Fitzgerald *The Great Gatsby*" also discusses *The Great Gatsby* in another topic. She explains that in *The Great Gatsby*, there are five characters: Jay Gatsby, Nick Carraway, Jordan Baker, Daisy and Tom Buchanan. All of them have different management of ambition to attain their dreams. Then, she uses the dynamic structuralism approach in her analysis. This approach deals with the element of the work that connects to the social background. Then, she concludes that all of them do not use a good management and ignore the moral value. For them, the most important is their dream that can be realized although it breaks the rules or even will make other people suffer. As her suggestion, she adds that to achieve the dream someone must balance it and the moral value

Third, Dede (2008) discusses about "Analysis of Materialism Hegemony in America in 1920s based on Myrtle Wilson's Action from F.S Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*". Dede focuses on Myrtle Wilson's action in his work. He explains that Myrtle Wilson's action represents one of the American's dream which has high ambition to reach her dream.

Fourth, Brianna Randal discusses 'A "Jaunty Salute": Jordan Baker's Role as the Modern Woman of the 1920s in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*'. Randal

focuses on Jordan Baker who presents as a modern woman. Randal reveals that Jordan Baker as a flapper at the time represents the modern woman. Randal concludes the characteristic of the modern woman is the same as Jordan's character.

Based on literature reviews above, in this research the writer focuses on Daisy as the object of research. Hence, the research aims to discover another aspect of Fitzgerald's work. For this research, the writer deals with a radical cultural feminist theory especially to analyze Daisy as the object of this research.

1.6 Theoretical Approach

This research is aimed to analyze woman's oppression. Therefore, the main theory, which is applied in this research is the radical feminist theory. The theory lens on gender and sexuality as the root oppression. It can be proved by radical feminist about sex, reproduction, gender as the oppressive form (Tong, 2009:51). The theory offers that sexism is the fundamental root of women's oppression (Tong, 2009:49). According to Tuttle, sexism is "as the system and practice of discriminating against a person on the grounds of sex" (1986:292). In addition, radical feminism analyses to differentiate the relationship between social inequity and sexual difference (Madsen, 2000:152). It can be assumed that radical feminism focuses on gender and sexuality as their main thought.

Radical feminism believes that sexism with function -ism has another meaning (Tong, 2009:49). Because of it, Radical feminism is divided into two types; radical-libertarian and radical-cultural. The difference between them is how to fight

sexism as the fundamental root of women oppression (Tong, 2009: 51). For this research, the writer uses radical – cultural feminist theory as the focused theory. The theory argues some views for analyzing the issue that the writer found. Hence, the writer uses radical – cultural feminist theory based on *Tong's Feminist Thought: A More Comprehensive Introduction, Third Edition*. Tong classifies some views of radical-cultural feminism to fight sexism as the fundamental root of women's oppression.

The first view of radical-cultural feminism is the gender/sex system. The gender/sex system is the first thing which is thought by Gayle Rubin (as cited in Tuttle, 1986:291). She argues that a gender/sex system is “a set of arrangements by which a society transforms biological sexuality into products of human activity” (as cited in Tong, 2009: 51). From the word “biological”, the gender/ sex system appears as the differences between woman and man. Sex gives meaning as female to women and male to men. Then a gender gives meaning as feminine to woman and masculine to man. In other words, sex deals with nature and gender deals with nurture. Furthermore, the appearance of women and men is formulated by men as active and women as passive. According to Tong, its formula becomes a way to keep women passive (2009:51).

Radical cultural feminists views on gender. They argue feminine traits are better than masculine traits (Tong, 2009: 56). Women who bring the feminine traits are portrayed with passive qualities such as “gentleness, modesty, humility,

supportiveness, empathy, compassionateness, tenderness, nurturance, intuitiveness, sensitivity, unselfishness” (Tong, 2009:3). Although the traits are portrayed as passive qualities, they, women, have a close relationship with nature. It can be seen as advantages to live in harmony with the nature. According to French, women and nature are friends (as cited in Tong, 2009:57). That is why French argues that in the past, the first human society was matriarchy (ac cited in Tong, 2009: 57). Yet, in other side, men, who bring the masculine traits; aggressive, competitive, curious, ambitious and soon, try to search the potential of nature such as digging the ground to look for a diamond. They develop the supporting technology to support their activities. In this view, not only do men control the nature, but men also get the authoritative role in the existence of women.

A cultural feminist theory argues that the good characteristic of women is keeping the feminine traits (Tong, 2009:50). In contrast, a radical cultural declines an androgyny, a person who represents masculine traits as well as feminine traits in her or his personality (Tong, 2009:50). Cultural feminists said that women should reflect the nature as women’s reflection. Women have to apply the value of nature in their behavior without involving masculine traits because radical cultural feminists trust, if women were associated with an androgyny in herself, the oppression works continually (Tong, 2009:3).

In another way, radical cultural feminists view on sexuality as one of women’s oppression roots. According to Tuttle, “there is a confusion in our very

language between sex, meaning male or female, and sex, meaning sexual activity” (1986:297). In this case, radical cultural feminist view on sexuality as the “heterosexual, sexual relations generally are characterized by an ideology of sexual objectification (men as subjects/masters; women as objects/slaves) that supports male sexual violence against women” (Tong, 2009:66). For this viewing, radical cultural feminists argue that heterosexuality should be avoided as one way to get free oppression (Tong, 2009:3).

The second view of radical-cultural feminist thought is the reproduction aspect. Women deal with the role in reproduction (as cited in Tong 2009:57); meanwhile, men have no role in it. In this case, men try to control the reproduction of women by new technology (Tong, 2009:79). According to Rich’s *Of Woman Born*, “men realize that they (patriarchal value) cannot survive unless men are able to control women’s power” (as cited in Tong, 2009:79). Women’s power refer to women’s reproduction. Besides new technology to control women’s reproduction, men try to control women’s reproduction by overtaking the process of women’s reproduction; for example, man becomes a doctor who has absolute right to control women’s reproduction. Radical-cultural feminism believes and agrees that the role of women’s reproduction is one of men’s concern to overtake them (Tong, 2009:4). The condition of controlling men over the role of women’s reproduction is influenced by men’s inability to have the women’s reproductive ability. Firestone criticizes that, “women’s oppression was not caused by female biology in and of itself, but rather by

men's jealousy of women's reproductive abilities and subsequent desire to seize control of female biology through scientific and technological means" (as cited in Tong, 2009:78). Examining this view, Mary O'Brien notes that the women's reproduction is different from the men's reproduction.

The "reproductive consciousness" of a man differed from that of a woman in at least three ways. First, the woman experienced the process of procreation as one continuous movement taking place *within* her body, whereas the man experienced this same process as a discontinuous movement taking place outside his body. After the act of sexual intercourse, through which he impregnated the woman, the man had no other procreative function. Second, the woman, not the man, necessarily performed the fundamental *labor* of reproduction - pregnancy and birthing. At most the man could attend childbirth classes with the woman and try to imagine what being pregnant and giving birth feel like. Third, the woman's connection to her child was certain - she knew, at the moment of birth, the child was flesh of her flesh (as cited Tong, 2009: 78).

1.7 Method of Research

1.7.1 Type of Research

In this research, the writer uses a qualitative method. A qualitative method is a method which does not use numerical form in gathering and interpreting the data. To put simply, a qualitative research deals with words (Zacharias, 2012:9). It is related to the document: "a qualitative method is concerned with the qualitative phenomena" (Kothari, 2004:3). It means the aims of qualitative research are to understand some

phenomena. This research presents the form and the response of the character by describing the phenomena.

1.7.2 Data Source

The writer uses *The Great Gatsby* novel, the original novel itself as the main data source. Then, the writer uses some critical works about the theory books.

1.7.3 Data Collection Technique

This research is a library research. It means the writer does not go to field or conduct any interview in gathering the data. Instead the writer does documentation from some books which contain the data needed for the research. In this research, the writer uses the documentation method because the data lies on the text. The documentation method is conducted by reading the subject of the research. Comprehensively, the writer reads and rereads the book continuously. The purpose of the continuous reading is to comprehend and to find the main problem. Besides, the writer gets better understanding of the object of the research.

1.7.4 Data Analysis Technique

The writer uses an objective approach, in which the writer uses the data based on the intrinsic elements of *The Great Gatsby* novel. Abrams states objective approach is an approach which stands free from the extrinsic element (1971:37). Some parts of the intrinsic elements such as plot, setting and character support each other and influence the data analysis as the supporting to analyze Daisy's oppression.

The writer begins to find the data needed. Thus, the writer develops the data needed since not all the data is directly related to the writer's research questions. However, the writer attempts to categorize all the necessary data and to eliminate some of the unnecessary data. Then, the writer leaves out the data which do not relate to the research questions and the theory of this research. Then, the writer does interpretative analysis by categorizing the data which relate to the research questions and the theory.

1.8 Paper Organization

This paper consists of five chapters. In the first chapter, the writer describes the background of study, problem statements, objectives of study, significance of study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. In the second chapter, the writer describes the intrinsic elements of the novel. In the third chapter, the writer explains Daisy's character and characterization. In the fourth chapter, the writer explains the analysis of the data focusing on Daisy's oppression. The last chapter is conclusion.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

4.1 Conclusion

The objective of this research is to achieve the answers of the research questions. Related to the first question, the analysis offers the conclusion that Daisy is represented as the oppressed character. The writer discovers that Daisy's oppressions appear in the form of gender and sex systems which are applied by limiting Daisy's role. It happens in the aspects of religion, mothering, reproduction, choosing of sexual relationship and violence, including physical and psychological violence. The form of oppressions tends to tell that "woman experienced is not all in same way or to the same degree and that the end of feminist struggle cannot simply" (Tutle, 1986:232). Somehow, Daisy experiences the oppression in other ways.

Daisy is represented as the oppressed character through Tom's treatments of her. Tom dominates all ways to control and leads Daisy, including in mothering, reproduction, religion as Tom's reason, and violence. It can be proven by Daisy's life after her marriage. Thus, related to the second question, Daisy responds her oppression also in many ways. Her efforts to lessen her oppression are represented in ways depending on her problems. The explanation about each case is as follows.

Daisy experiences the oppression in the form of mothering. Related to radical cultural feminism which disagrees with a contracted mother, something that Daisy should do is that she must take care of her child, and it is not a contracted mother who takes care of her child. However, for this chance, Tom tries to lead and control this case then Daisy has no power to fight it. Fortunately, Daisy tries to introduce her child as Daisy's effort but this effort to end Tom's dominance is unsuccessful.

In another way, Daisy experiences the oppression in the form of reproduction. It is related to radical cultural feminism which agrees that the power source of women is reproduction. Reproduction in this case is ability to bear an infant. Daisy is able to bear an infant but she experiences the oppression. The oppression comes from alienation when she gives birth. Meanwhile, Daisy struggles to deliver her baby because she believes that the best one to do is to bear an infant in this world.

Furthermore, Daisy experiences the oppression in the aspect of violence. Her husband is the cause of her oppression. To lessen her oppression, Daisy is able to complain. Yet, it does not work and she fails in her attempt to escape from Tom's dominance. Thus, Daisy experiences the oppression in the form of choosing the sexual relationship. Both men in this case is the cause of her oppression, Tom and Gatsby. Tom is Daisy's husband and Gatsby is Daisy's past lover. In addition, Daisy is under Tom's control then she chooses Tom as her life partner rather than Gatsby although, she tries to escape form Tom's control by dating Gatsby. However, this attempt gives no success in being free from Tom's dominance. The last form of

oppressions that Daisy is experienced is religion as the reason for Tom to control her indirectly. Meanwhile, Tom has another woman in the other side. It can be a chance for Daisy to leave him by stating her with reason that he has another woman. Thus, Daisy asks for divorce but in another ways he always dominates Daisy. In this chance, he uses religion as the reason in which the religion never allows them to get divorced.

The result of the analysis depicts Daisy being more oppressed in condition after she gets married than in condition before she gets married. The analysis shows that after her marriage, Daisy experiences physical and psychological violence, and experiences other oppression related to mothering, reproduction and religion that becomes Tom's ways in oppressing Daisy. Meanwhile, before Daisy get married, she experiences choosing the sexual relationship which becomes continuing part for Daisy's marriage with Tom. Daisy is character who experiences the oppressions in her household. More intensively, Daisy as a marginal wife in her household. The existence another woman in Tom's life and Tom's treatment which oppresses Daisy in many ways proves that Daisy has no important role to Tom. Yet, the ending of the story tells that Daisy stays with Tom rather than Gatsby. It means that in ending of the story Daisy able to change Tom's treatment from bad to good way although the ways that Daisy takes by letting Gatsby died tragically.

4.2 Suggestion

From Islamic perspective, family is one form of responsibilities form to God. Meanwhile, the qualities for someone are needed to be considered.

Do not marry women because of their beauty; their beauty may spoil them. Do not marry them because of their money; their money may oppress them. But marry them because of their piety (din). And a slave girl, deaf, but pious is better. [Ibn Majah] (Yakan:10)

If a man marries a woman because of her (worldly) status, Allah will reward him only with degradation; and if a man marries her because of her wealth, this will bring him only poverty; and if a man marries because of her family, Allah will reward him only by humiliation; but if a man marries for the sake of Allah, Allah will bless him with her and bless her with him. [Tabrani] (Yakan:11)

Both hadiths inform that to build a family, someone needs to consider the qualities to choose the best life partner. It means that to build a family someone needs to have responsibilities which are delivered to their God. Therefore, the first factor in deciding marriage is that someone should consider his or her qualities to God. If Daisy considers Tom's qualities to his God, it may will avoid from some oppressions that Daisy experiences.

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