

## The Real Women Inside the Garden, a Study of John Steinbeck’s Women in “The Chrysanthemums” and “The White Quail”

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to examine the portrayal of Elisa and Mary in accordance to their role as modern society woman as it is portrayed in the story. We read closely about the story’s focus which is upon Elisa and her garden, Elisa and her husband; Mary and her garden, Mary and her husband, and lastly Elisa and Mary and their surroundings. At the end of this paper, how the two women portayed in accordance to their circumstances are described. Thus, we can say that Elisa and Mary regard garden as a privately sacred place for their truest self, their ideal life, and their dream. Elisa and Mary can reach their highest spiritual strength when they work in their garden. Seemingly garden refers to their identity. They are women as a representative of productive role regarding their gardens. However, circumstances share a reluctant response for their so-called productive existence. Finally, they fail escaping from unproductive, unacceptable, trivial role imposed on their being as a woman viewed by surrounding. Elisa fails getting approval for her existence as she sees her chrysanthemums is being discarded and tossed cruelly. Mary also fails getting approval for her idealism of her role as an artistic woman as Harry shoots the symbolic quail instead. His rebellious shoot of the white quail is to show his inmost value as a husband.

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### 1. Introduction

In “The Chrysanthemums” and “The White Quail”, the author concerns the problematic, complicated, and inharmonious relationships. “The Chrysanthemums” seems to be a story about a woman who is good at gardening, however, upon a deeper inspection, it can be understood the story has strong notion of sexual identity. Elisa’s action reflects her struggle as a woman who is trying and failing to emasculate herself in a “male-dominated” society. Meanwhile, “The White Quail” portrays the dream of a beautiful young woman, Mary Teller who struggles to implement a garden of her own. Mary is an individual who manipulates and controls the world around herself, imposes her own ideas of what is “right” on nature and changes her surrounding to fit her ideas. The two stories share common themes and characters’ traits.

Scholars have been debating over Steinbeck’s attitude toward the female characters for decades. Feminine portrayal of Steinbeck’s women are considered as the complex and intricate. Elisa Allen, Mary Teller, Emma, Jelka, Cathy Ames, and Rose of Sharon are the example of famous Steinbeck’s women portrayal. Steinbeck characterizes his women usually in a traditional role of a woman; they are showed in forms of wife and mother (Garcia, 2016).

Women always plays a role in literary works. The role is depicted through the way the author views their portrayal in a society since literature mirrors society and its values. In the 20th century, the society was patriarchal, dominated by men and women were deprived of all rights. The society was constructed and conducted in a way that women were completely dependent on men in all cultural domain; familial, religious, political, economic, social, legal and artistic. The tradition of male-dominated society had been quieted their inner rights and rendered them circumferentially.

Study on women in literary works was dealing with women's experience under patriarchal society. The circumstances around them had been ruled and controlled by men. In the mid-1980s some essential works of Hellen Cixous, Julia Kristeva, and Luce Irigaray have inspired some feminist scholars (Rivkin, J., & Ryan, 2017). Those women are praised to be the mothers of poststructuralist feminist theory. They have contributed in the turning of women's study into subject of interpretation.

This paper aims to examine the portrayal of Elisa and Mary in accordance to their role as modern society woman as it is portrayed by the society. We read closely about the story's focus which is upon Elisa and her husband, Mary and her husband, and their surroundings. At the end of this paper, how the two women portayed in accordance to their circumstances are described.

## 2.0 Elisa Allen in "The Chrysanthemums"

Since the story was published, it has been regarded as one of Steinbeck's finest pieces of fiction. Indeed, some critics have called it one of the best short stories ever written. More than sixty years later, it is still the author's most widely known anthologized story, and one of his most debated. One of Steinbeck's biographers, Susan Shillinglaw has suggested in her book that is reviewed by Fagan that the character of Elisa Allen resembles to his wife. In *Portrait of a Marriage*, Shillinglaw sets out to reveal the impact Carol Henning Steinbeck had on John Steinbeck's early works. She has so comprehensively researched the role of Carol Steinbeck played in the literary work of her husband. (Fagan, 2015)

In order to elaborate Elisa's portrayal, the analysis is parted into several sub-themes; Elisa and her garden, Elisa's inharmonious marriage life, and Elisa's pursuit of social approval.

### 2.1 Elisa and her garden

The *Chrysanthemums* debates over the conflict Elisa Allen (female protagonist) faces to enhance her role as a human being not as a woman in a modern society, "men's world, and her attempt to gain social approval for her feminine traits. She is a housewife whom her time and energy are demonstrated mostly in her wire-fenced garden. She regards the garden as the place where she can find her truly self as a woman. She works eagerly as well as enthusiastically even when she is alone in her garden. Subsequently, she grows the biggest chrysanthemums over the Salinas valley (ten inches across).

While working in the garden, she is described wearing heavy-block clothes. She is depicted as dressed in mannish work clothes; "a man's hat pulled low down over her eyes, clodhopper shoes, a figured print dress almost completely covered by a big corduroy apron with four big pockets... She wore heavy leather gloves...." (Steinbeck, 1995). Those gardening costumes render her in an unattractive image as a beautiful, young woman. The gardening routines that she faces seemingly become a camouflage of her inner self, her real identity, her actual being. She is a woman who is concealing her beauty, her sexuality, and her real self through that gardening stuff. Thomas emphasizes that Elisa's figure in blocked and heavy gardening costume is something that put her totally unsexed (Thomas, 2010).

The garden is a sacred place for Elisa for ritual fulfillment. She can be a figure of her own willing when she works in her garden, is that she is very passionate emanating from her inmost shape. We can see some details on Elisa's garden; it is circled by wire fence, her husband never enter the garden, she spends her productive time for her garden (same time as Henry work in the ranch for business role), the garden produces the biggest chrysanthemums over the valley. By that fruitful outcome, she is invited by Henry to raise some apples in the ranch for profit motive. Seemingly, Henry admits Elisa's productive role to be used in a broader scale of advantage, unfortunately, this is just a half-heartedly approval, he forgets to prospect his invitation.

In fact, Elisa has an interest of getting involved in man's affairs (business), she desires for getting through the physical border existing between garden's sublime value and Henry's money value. For Henry never enters the garden but leans his body over the fence. At this point the fence becomes a physical border between them; separation between Elisa' sublimed world and Henry's competitive world. She is a representative woman in general who dramatizes how women and femininity are being limited and restrained by society. Elisa is trapped between society's definition of the masculine and the feminine and is struggling against the

limitation of her femininity. Tebbetts argues that *The Chrysanthemums* examines the plight of women in a society that limits them to confined domestic spaces designed to protect them and their work. Indeed, the story suggests woman should have access to more challenging public spaces (Tebbetts, 2014).

For Elisa, raising flowers is never for money at all because they are her gift, her pride, her actual sense. She deals with nature and reproduction. In contrary, Henry values flowers by their size “ten inches across.” He runs the ranch for getting money, for profit-orientation. He also suggests Elisa to give money profit with her blessed-hand. We can say he is a representative of capitalistic oriented society. The difference of valuing things between Elisa and Henry renders their inmost sense to be awkward which is debated later.

## 2.2 *Elisa’s inharmonious marriage life*

When the story opened, the reader is viewed by the scene of Elisa is working at her garden, cutting away old chrysanthemum stems. Her husband, Henry is doing business talk with two other men. From the fenced garden, Elisa is studying them while finishing her gardening labors over chrysanthemums’ stems. Henry arrives at the garden after the success of selling thirty steers. He didn’t come across the garden, but resting over the garden’s fence then. He praises his wife’s chrysanthemums for they are the most impressive chrysanthemums around. At the same time, Elisa compliments his business as well, “‘Good,’ she said, ‘Good for you’” (Steinbeck, 1995). We can see that there is a sense of awkwardness for the lack of intimacy in this couple talks, they are too serious and formal to each other.

Some critics deliver sympathy for Elisa as they find that the limitation in her marriage life is the source of her frustration. There is evidence that something went wrong in their marriage. Indeed, they have separate rooms. The nature of the border or conflict is something which Steinbeck hints at but never makes it obvious. The rift between Elisa and Henry could be caused by their childless condition, sexual frustration that Elisa suffers, Elisa’s oppression by practical minded society, or Elisa’s repression for aesthetic companionship which Henry does not aware. Another explanation about the relationship between the two, we look at Elisa’s gesture; in confronting Henry she seems to be rigid, straighten, stiffen, and tighten. These words elucidate Elisa’s feeling about Henry. Every time Henry approaches her, she turns to be “cold.” When Henry comes near to the garden and compliments her, “Elisa straightened her back and pulled on the gardening gloves again.” And before leaving for dinner Henry approaches her while shoving his tie, “Elisa stiffen and her face grew tight”(Steinbeck, 1995).

Moreover, the rift in their marriage can be found through the scene of Elisa’s encounter with the tinker. The tinker approaches her garden, asks about direction, and tries to grasp her attention, “He drew a big finger down the chicken wire and made it sing” (Steinbeck, 1995). A stranger has already stood on the entrance of her private, sacred world. Soon the tinker leans farther over the garden fence and finally Elisa invites him into the garden after his praise for her treasure flower as he says, “A kind of a long stemmed flower? Looks like a quick puff of colored smoke” (Steinbeck, 1995). The words clearly and certainly reach her truest self which Henry is unable to reach, when he says “strong new crop coming.” Only in this way Henry describes and flatters her treasure flowers. Thus, the tinker can go through the border which exists between Elisa and Henry.

The isolation of marriage life between Elisa and Henry becomes clearer as Elisa feels that Henry fails to fulfill her romantic needs. Elisa hopes for a romantic marriage life. Soon we can see the gap between them clearer. In the night they go out of town for dinner, Elisa shows herself in the newest stocking and the best dress. Some critics express sympathy for Elisa, and see the source of her frustration as related to sex and gender, and to the limitations in her marriage life. This interpretation can be seen clearly in communication between the couple. When Henry makes a suggestion for dinner in town, he also suggests Elisa to go to the fight in the terms of joking but Elisa responds it seriously as if either she cannot digest her husband’s sense of humor or she does not like the way he makes fun of her. It might be said that the couple does not match in the sense of humor. But we can see how Elisa finally let herself accept the tinker to get into her fenced garden due to his choice of words which could be melted into Elisa’s rigidity.

In the night they go for a town evening, Henry is amazed by her lovely appearance. She takes time for making up and selecting the best dress that is representation of her prettiness, and she looks very lovely. The truth here is that Henry notices it well, and that he is aware of Elisa’s beauty. Apparently, he puzzles why her wife dresses differently that night. Unmistakably, he fails again to compliment her with his words. The word he chose is “nice” which means prettiness for him. Miserably, she wants for more romantic words from him about her attempt to reveal her inner, beautiful sexuality. When Elisa urges him to explain what he means by “nice,” he strives to flatter her effort to enhance her femininity but then he continues saying “I don’t know, I mean you look different, strong and happy” (Steinbeck, 1995). Henry’s inability to understand Elisa’s

romantic scene leaves her vulnerable in her encounter with the tinker, which renews Elisa's feeling of her inner self and sexuality.

### *2.3 Elisa's pursuit of social approval*

Elisa searches for approval of her talented skill. She is invited to work on the ranch raising some apples with her planter's hand but it is half-hearted asking. Henry does not follow up on his utterance rather switches the conversation back to the flower instead. Then, she finally invites the tinker, a stranger into her yard, takes off her protective gloves, and with bare hands prepares the sprout and the damp sand for him, "The gloves were forgotten now. She knelt on the ground by the starting bed and dug up the sandy soil with her fingers and scooped it into the bright new flower pot" ... "She was kneeling on the ground looking up at him. Her breast swelled passionately" (Steinbeck, 1995). These sentences are considered to be the details of Elisa's revelation of her new femininity and sexuality. Palmerino emphasizes that Elisa is a typical, loser-type Steinbeck character, Elisa's encounter with the tinker in the story reveals her to be sexually frustrated woman who must gain stimulation from caring for chrysanthemums (Palmerino, 2004).

After the tinker leaves, Elisa runs into the house and vigorously bathes, scrubbing her entire body, including her loins with a block of pumice. This bathing is a representation her attempt to cleanse her interference in a masculine, profit-orientation affair off. She recognizes her sexual arousal as stain in her marriage life, so she has to pure herself out of the stain. This action symbolizes that she is feeling guilty for her slightly unfaithfulness to her marriage due to the grateful respond to him.

The brief encounter of her with the tinker has aroused Elisa's passion for he can reach her aesthetic feeling. The tinker describes chrysanthemums by their beauty instead of their size. His aesthetic appreciation brings out a response in Elisa that her husband is unable to evoke. Her eyes shine. She shakes out her hair, runs excitedly and talks rapidly. Her breast swelled passionately, her voice grows husky, and she talks about passion in language that Henry would never understand: "When the night is dark—why, the stars are sharp-pointed, and there's quite. Why, you rise up and up! Every pointed star gets driven into your body. It's like that. Hot and sharp and—lovely" (Steinbeck, 1995).

The tinker perceives and realizes how the flowers represent truest-self of Elisa. Therefore, he manipulates Elisa's passion to earn some job. He manages to awake something in Elisa through flattering the chrysanthemums (like quick puff of colored smoke flower) and pursuing Elisa's care and is handed some shoots from her treasure plants and even her advices about the care of them to be brought to the lady down the road. Indeed, the tinker is calculating this praise for his own- motives.

Timmerman suggests the tinker who minds pots that has opened Elisa's mind to an outsider life, even also slams the lid upon her domestic life of the ranch (Timmerman, 2012). At the end, Elisa cries weakly like an old woman for she finds her chrysanthemums tossed on the road while the pot is kept since it has money value. She is filled with the feeling of being defeated for outer approval. She has to admit her weak existence in her surrounding. Like Henry, the tinker values only what is practical and makes some profit. He keeps the flower pot because it has money value and tosses the flower to the road since it gives no money value but sublime one. As beauty is important for Elisa the tossed flowers tell her that her actual value is never important at all in the tinker. Eventually, she learns about and admits her "weak" traits. The feeling of being defeated fills her with tears and renders her to cry weakly like an old woman; "She turned up her coat collar so he could not see that she was crying weakly like an old woman" (Steinbeck, 1995). Elisa is merely a weak existence perceived by outer world, her inner self is something never been regarded.

### **3.0 Mary Teller in "The White Quail"**

"The White Quail" first appeared in print in North American Review in 1935 and was subsequently reprinted in a collection entitled *The Long Valley* in 1938. It is told in six episodes and revolves around Steinbeck's typical theme, identification with the land and nature as a living entity. Unfortunately, this admirable trait is wrapped by the central character of the story, Mary Teller, a woman who manipulates and controls the world around her, imposing her personal ideas of what is "right" on nature and changing her surrounding to fit that conception.

The purpose is to analyze the female protagonist portrayal. Mary's portrayal is analyzed through several sub-themes; Mary and her garden, Mary and white quail, and Mary and Harry.

#### *3.1 Mary and her Garden*

Mary, the female protagonist of the story is a beautiful young woman who manipulates her surrounding to accomplish her dream garden that she has been craving for a long time. The idea of garden has been a vision in her life which even seriously implemented for selecting a spouse:

Hadn't she seen the house and the garden a thousand times while the place was still a dry flat against the shoulder of a hill? For that matter, hadn't she, during five years, looked at every attentive man and wondered whether he and that garden would go together? She didn't think so much, "would this man like such a garden?" but, "Would the garden like such a man?" For the garden was herself, and after all she had to marry someone she liked (Steinbeck, 1995).

Eventually, Harry comes to be her choice suited to the garden criteria. Harry is the economic value behind Mary's garden implementation. It should be realized that her garden exist not by her own value but it is accomplished by Harry's economic power, by his money.

The garden symbolizes her perfect, nature-against illusion that she can keep out all that is wild and dangerous from the garden and life of her own. With the strictly lined up trees and plants like fuchsias that stand as guards, she rigidly banishes any intruders who could get into her garden. Lined up trees and fuchsias as well as the locked bedroom stand as a border; a separation between Mary's life-denying world and Harry's economical-controller world. Any natural disorder, like an albino and the wilderness for Mary is an enemy, therefore she tries to keep the garden neatly, perfectly and maintains the garden's ornaments never to be changed, as she says to Harry, "We won't ever changed it, will we Harry? If a bush dies, we'll put another one just like it in the same place" (Steinbeck, 1995). Mary's garden is never of nature, harmonious, and healthy.

The Garden resembles the castration, the sterility which urges Mary to maintain her beauty unchangingly. She envisions her life as a stable ornamentation, as fixed and unspoiled, and perished as her garden. She implements delusion and fantasy to her real life. As Elisa's garden is fenced by wire, Mary's garden is fenced by fuchsias as the guard to banish all intruders, the unkempt, and roughed; "But it can't get in because the fuchsias won't let it. That's what the fuchsias are there for, and they know it. The bird can get in. They live out in the wild, but they come to my garden for peace and for water" (Steinbeck, 1995). Mary fights for animal that will scar the unchanging beauty of her garden as she withdraws her inmost self, not to known by her husband. The all-night locked door is made to repulse her of Harry's sexual feeling. She never made Harry to have dog that he wants as it will scar her garden. Harry's existence is an intruder threatening Mary's narcissistic self-figure as the cat threatens the white quail in the garden.

### 3.2 *Mary and the white quail*

The white quail is the resemblance of Mary's perfection, "She's like the essence of me, an essence boiled down to utter purity. She must be the queen of the quail. She makes every lovely thing that ever happened to me one thing" (Steinbeck, 1995). She even calls the bird the queen of the quail. She sees the quail as a "beautiful center" of herself. Psychologically, Mary highly overwhelmed by delusion of her garden and its ornamentation is that rigidly controlled. Thus, white quail is the embodiment of the perfection of the garden.

Regarding her envision of the white quail, she utters a cry telling it is coming to her pool garden for drinking to her husband but resulting in failure. Harry first suggests her precious bird is a pigeon, and then tells her that it is an albino. In fact, Mary cannot accept his explanation that the quail is a weird bird. She presumes the quail as a special, beautiful creature as well as herself and her garden. The white quail regard as a queen in her garden. Mary urges her husband to protect the white quail from any predator,

"That's the enemy," Mary said one time. "That's the world that wants to get in, all rough and tangled and unkempt. But it can't get in because the fuchsias won't let it. That's what the fuchsias are there for, and they know it. The bird can get in. They live out in the wild, but they come to my garden for peace and for water" (Steinbeck, 1995).

Subsequently, the cat is one of the wild creatures from the hillside that threatens the perfection of Mary's garden. She regards the cat as an ultimate threat since she sees the white quail as herself. The cat is stalking the white quail, which means it can stalk her and brings her hysterical feeling. She wants to perish it after Harry assures her that the intruder, the cat, will be vanquished.

Moreover, Mary's neurotic condition can be carefully examined by her connection to her husband that it is described in the following theme.

### 3.3 *Mary and Harry Teller*

Harry loves Mary so intensely since her beauty grasps him at all. He is very proud of her beauty, too. When the house and the garden are built, they held a party for the garden. He is very glad as his business colleagues admire her; “He was proud of her when people came to dinner. She was so pretty, so cool, and perfect. Her bowls of flowers were exquisite, and she talked about the garden modestly ...” (Steinbeck, 1995). Some scholars suggest an opinion that Harry likes Mary for her beauty which can be an “asset,” for his business.

Once, the home and the garden are finished, Mary offers Harry to plant some flowers in her garden. When he refuses to interrupt her garden, she is relieved indeed. Harry allows her dream to be fulfilled beyond his own desire. Unfortunately, he does not realize that his gentle and kindness will exclude him. It seems that the gap and separateness have already begun in their marital relationship. In the meantime, Mary allows him to kiss her in time he is able to make her mission accomplished, “Mary was pleased. “Dear,” she said. “You let me do it. You made it my garden. Yes you are dear.” And she let him kiss her” (Steinbeck, 1995).

For she lets Harry kiss her, let is a word chosen by Steinbeck to underpin this couple romance. In terms of kissing the word let represents unshared connection in such a way she seems not to have any romantic desire upon her spouse. Consequently, the word let is not a representation of reciprocal feelings as she didn't engage upon this romantic occasion. We can say that she is half-heartedly invites Harry to her romantic domain. Once, she gets what she has planned to be fulfilled by Harry's economic value, she lets him kiss her and it is happened four times in the story.

However, Harry always results in spoiling his wife's wishes and yields to her demands while sacrificing his own. When Mary does not allow him to have a dog, he tries to humor her. She does not consider about his wish to have a pet because she realizes what harms this wild creature could do to her garden. As a matter of fact, he is craving for a pup, “Harry had shouted, ‘Joe Adams-his Irish Terrier bitch had puppies. He's going to give me one! Thoroughbred stock, red as strawberries!’ He had really wanted one of the pups” (Steinbeck, 1995). Mary presumes any dog as a threat to her garden as well as a cat and other creatures such as snail, slug, and so on. Any living things which can give the slightest damage to her garden are enemies for her.

It is important to note that Mary considers him as same as the wild hill and animal. Thus, as ironically, the only involvement that Harry has with the garden besides the financing of it is his involvement with the elimination of creatures that threaten it. Whenever Mary finds snails, slugs or cats that threaten her picture-perfect garden, she asks Harry to kill them. She does not want to do the actual killing, and what she can do is holding the flashlight and seeing Harry destroying the slug and snail cruelly and completely. She does not show any disgusting feeling, “but the light never wavered. ‘A brave girl,’ he thought. ‘She has a sturdiness in back of that fragile beauty.’ She made the hunts exciting too. ‘There's a big one, creeping and creeping,’ ... Kill him! Kill him quickly!’ They come into the house after the hunts laughing happily” (Steinbeck, 1995). Harry admires her gardening skill, her energy, but never realizes that such energy and such beautiful garden symbolize the decaying of his marriage.

Mary's repulsion of her domestic role in marriage has situated their relationship in the intense rift. Harry is characterized as a gentle, sweet, and uncomplaining husband till Mary asks him to kill the cat who stalks the white quail. Later, he finds that he has been presumed as a threat to Mary's perfection, for she locks her bedroom from his sexual desire, which renders him to feel like an intruder who wants to get into her inner essence as well as the cat stalking the white quail.

When Mary forces him to poison the cat, a rebellious feeling is protruded through his eyes. It is only once in their marriage that he shows disapproval feeling on his wife's plea,

“Dear,” he apologized, “some dog might get it. Animals suffer terribly when they get poison.” “I don't care,” she said. “I don't want any animals in my garden, any kind.” “No,” he said. “I won't do that. No I can't do that. But I'll get up early in the morning. I'll take the new air gun and I'll shoot that cat so he'll never come back. The air gun shoots hard. It'll make a hurt the cat won't forget.” It was the first thing he had ever refused. (Steinbeck, 1995).

Mary possesses an artistic gift but it becomes an obsession, which excludes her “natural” life. She appreciates her devotion to her garden and sacrifices her own life as a natural, human being for the sake of her idealism. Harry is an ideal mate, one who will not stand in the way of her plans for perfection. Her husband seems not a spouse for her but a puppet of her. This feeling suffers Harry deeply, for he says “Oh, Lord, I'm so lonely!” (Steinbeck, 1995) In *The White Quail*, Steinbeck steeped in an evident aura of irony or sentiment (Pugh, 2007).

Harry's breaking down at the end of the story signifies his isolated feeling caused by his emotionally detached wife who is simply using him as an instrument, a tool to accomplish her own narcissism, her own

idealism. Galdstein emphasizes that Steinbeck's perspective on female is calculated over presenting them as difficult, problematic barriers to an idyllic homo-social existence. (Gladstein, 2004). Finally, Mary appears as a threat for Harry. At the end of the story he says, "What a skunk I am. What a dirty skunk, to kill a thing she loved so much" (Steinbeck, 1995).

The White Quail attacks on Mary's vision about her portrayal in society. De La Meter assures that Steinbeck's women are reflections of society rather than a reflection of his beliefs and those women in his works are feminist figures that take control of their sexuality and use it to their advantage to gain power over men, although society has tried to subjugate and delegate them into powerless and lesser gender roles (De la Mater, 2019). At the end, Harry, the cat, and the unkempt-roughed bordering of the garden stands for the life constraint that fight the sterility of the garden. Mary has self-centeredly indulged a fantasy that is sterile and reality-denying by placing image above reality, she has been the cause of loneliness and fear in her husband. She urges Harry to shoot the cat that threatens the quail, but out of loneliness, frustration, and rebellion, he shoots the symbolic quail instead. His rebellious shooting the white quail is to show his inmost feelings as a husband.

## 5. Conclusion

1. After analyzing the women in these two short stories, we can say that these women are excluded or somehow isolate themselves from what would seem to be men's world or competitive society. Elisa and Mary are housewives whose lives are certainly dependent upon their husbands' financial power. Elisa seemingly offered by Henry to raise some apples with her planter's hand in the orchard to make some money, but his invitation is half-hearted hence she does not show any strong interest in the offer. Mary considers her husband's business is something unfair for he runs and owns a loan company and she seems to think that money should never be in her concerns due to its dirtiness and unfairness. But, at any rate she relies upon her husband's money to build her garden. In fact, these Steinbeck's women have something in common; for Elisa the fence becomes a physical border in their relationship; a separation between Elisa's sublimed world and Henry's competitive world. And for Mary lined up trees, fuchsias as well as the locked bedroom stand as a border; a separation between Mary's sterile world and Harry's controller world.

2. Thus, we can say that Elisa and Mary regard garden as a privately sacred place for their truest self, their ideal life, and their dream. Elisa and Mary can reach their highest spiritual strength when they work in their garden. Seemingly garden refers to their identity. These two women are representative of productive role regarding their garden. However, circumstances share a reluctant response for their so-called productive existence. Finally, they fail escaping from unproductive, unacceptable, trivial role imposed on their being as a woman viewed by surrounding. Elisa fails getting approval for her existence as she sees her chrysanthemums is being discarded and tossed cruelly. Mary also fails getting approval for her idealism of her role as an artistic woman as Harry shoots the symbolic quail instead. His rebellious shoot of the white quail is to show his inmost value as a husband.

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