

Good example of women and gender studies literature review

[Sociology](#), [Gender Studies](#)



Question One

One the major epigraphs used by Edna in the *Down by the River* is ‘ Darkness is our souls, do you not think? Flutier. Our souls, shame-wounded by our sins.’ This is a wise quote from *Ulysses*. It is figurative and useful in helping the author to deliver her message to the audience. In deed, it provides a different source of voice which directly influences me as a reader. As she explains, the sins of the society have placed people like Mary in a very desperate situation. As a vulnerable lady, every thing seems unfair to her. At one time, she says, “ I nearly died when you gave me that jumper. You shouldn't have. Turquoise is my favorite color. There are two kinds of alone, there's the kind which you are and the kind which I am” (p1140). This epigraph influences me to deeply understand the tribulations of Mary. As a young girl, we expect her to be cared for and protected by her parents. However, it is quite ironical for her to be sexually abused by her biological father. Worse still, even after getting impregnated, she lacks anybody to help her. Her efforts to flee to England to conduct abortion become futile. This shows how the sinful nature of this society has made everyone be bitter and unforgiving.

Question Two

The story of Mary indicates how the conservative social structures inhibit the freedom of women. Her sad experiences enable me to understand the relationship between religion and sexuality. As an agent of socialization, religion should be accommodative to all. In fact, it should be so much concerned about the oppressed. However, it is very unfortunate that it does

not care about the discriminated people like Mary. After suffering in the hands of her brutal father, neither her mother, her teachers nor priests bother to assist her. Instead, they decide to remain silent about her sufferings. Later, after collaborating with Betty to carry out abortion, she is frustrated by the church. Her actions are so disastrous. At one time, she is asked, “ You are not from Ireland. Are you? You talk funny” (p 62).

The actions of the church in failing to take action against Mary’s father demonstrate how irresponsible it is. In fact, it is unfair for the church to impose stringent legislations condemning abortion just to punish the innocent girl. Instead, of condemning the raping of young girls, it deliberately opts to defend rapists and victimizes its victims. It is not necessary for the church to advance such conservative practices because they have no place in the contemporary society.