

**SOCIO-CULTURAL AND POLITICAL ACTIVISM IN DORIS
LESSING'S SELECT NOVELS**

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Abstract

*During the last few decades, the structural development leads to the interaction with cultural shifts that tends to reshape political values. The long term route of value transformation is generally predictable and coherent, although the speed of realignment is higher in most of the countries. Doris Lessing could not be denied as one of the most influential English feminist and novelists in the 1960s. Doris Lessing is a writer who is concerned with the representation of women identity and social and political realism in the West and East. In her renowned novels, *The Grass is singing*, *The Golden Notebook*, Lessing aims at portraying women's identity in England, Africa and their psychology, political lives, relation to male and brood, their dominated society of male and their continuous attempts to run off from the political and social oppression. The paper aims present a truthful account of Gender realignment, Socio-cultural and Political activism from a feminist point of view.*

Key words: *Realignment, Oppression, Identity, Realism, Psychology, Activism.*

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Doris Lessing's adoption of the feminist movement is due to the tackling in politics of gender. Moreover, she focuses on the role of the family and the individual in society, the struggle inside one's self and the conflict between the individual consciousness and the collective good. It is Doris's life experience that leads her to gather all these issues in her novels, Doris Lessing's writings are described as follows and deeply her autobiographical fiction emerges from her early experiences in Africa, her years of engagement with social and political issues, her concern for moral and psychological attitudes, and the role of women in modern society. Her complex writing is not easily categorized, but always evident is her concern about the madness and self-destructive tendencies of modern society. Although not intended as such, *The Grass is Singing* and *The Golden Notebook* have been regarded as a feminist landmark.

The social and political realism in the post colonial world is clearly narrated in *The Grass is singing*. Doris Lessing's pioneer novel is regarded as a land mark in the twentieth century literature in English. A masterpiece of social and political realism in post colonial world , the action of the novel is set in Rhodesia in South Africa in the late 1940s.The novel is set in colonized landscape and concerned with the issues of colour bar and its terrible effect on the marginal whites and the native Africans

Few years later Lessing stamped her career through her second novel *The Golden Notebook* to reflect the consequences of the Hiroshima Bomb and the fall of the British Empire exemplified in violence, terror, chaos, as well as the break up in every aspect. She further, transcends the Marxist idea that society consists of two main groups, the exploiting class and the working class. However, she thinks that the society is much more complicated as it consists not only of the capitalist group and the working class group, but also of men and women and that women are oppressed by men. By this, she moves from Marxism to feminism and thus, few of her novels are examples to the feminist landmarks.

The novel begins with the life of two divorced women, Anna Wulf and Molly Jacobs, each with a child. Each of them is disillusioned by communism and are, therefore, no longer the members of the communist party. However, the main focus is on Anna

Wulf who has a personal, artistic and social breakdown. Lessing holds a place of singular distinction in the history of post war British literature. The complete scope, number and varieties of her works have given her a unique position among twentieth century women writers.

It is understood that social and political realism is revealed in Lessing's novels through post colonialism. Doris Lessing aims at the novel to portray the contemporary issues of colonized people's psychology, and their inhuman treatment to their coloured brothers and sisters. *The Grass is Singing* is now read as a strong anticolonial text projecting contemporary post colonial themes and issues. Ronald Inglehart and Pippa Norris attempted to explain the underlying causes of the social movements and new politics fermenting in the younger generation, however, there has been much speculation, with only minute evidence, that women were changing to the left throughout post industrial societies, a situation, that we will term the Modern gender gap, reproduce the pattern that first emerged in the United states.

Lessing's novels are directly or indirectly related with culture and civilization of the colonized people. Here, literary texts function as efficient tools to represent the different cultures in a colonial context. Post colonialism is the period in which native people of the state, country find themselves exploited, and trapped socially, politically, economically and moreover mentally. Individual identity and collective cultural problems begin at this stage and people living in this situation feel isolated, alienated, and unhomeliness, and so on.

The novel *The Grass is Singing* opens with a report relating to the murder of the protagonist Mary Turner, wife of Richard Turner, who has been running a farm for several months at the district of Ngesi in Rhodesia [now in Zimbabwe]. The opening paragraph of the novel acts as a good indication of the context in which the story is written. The study as follows:

"Marry Turner, wife of Richard Turner, a farmer at Ngesi, was found murdered on the front verandah of their homestead yesterday morning. The houseboy, who has been arrested, has confessed to the crime. No motive has been discovered. It is thought he was in search of valuables."

The notion of supremacy and the discriminatory attitude displayed by white characters are the two main themes in *The Grass is Singing*. Here the reader understands the idea of how prejudice and racism are present in the Rhodesian racist society. Furthermore, the news in the paper suggests the colonial attitude of the colonizer. Throughout the novel, Doris Lessing presents how the white people use their political power to steel all the belonging of the black native people in Rhodesia. Here, the reader

understands that the social and political conditions of the colonized people are worst and disastrous. They are treated as slaves, who work to fulfil the lust, and desire of the whites.

In fact, in *The Golden Notebook*, there are no scenes of violence. Instead, men oppress women emotionally. Thus, Doris Lessing describes every minute detail concerning her heroines. She analyzes their feelings when they are in love, and when they are betrayed or deserted, but she does not mention anything about the feelings of men.

The Political Theory clearly delve the family, there has been significant difference among liberal politics theorists concerning the nature of the family and its relation to civil society, certain general features of liberal theories understanding of proper family relationships and of the relation between the family and the state infused works of political and lawyers from the seventeenth century through the nineteenth.

Lessing puts critically about social race theory in practice in her novel, through her characters. Mary Turner and Anna Wulf, are the two such characters who are not afraid to turn to violence and abuse in disciplining the opposite gender. The superior gender or superior class obey all their instructions without dispute. Although, the novelist desires that all men and women should get equality, for instance end to discrimination in society, work and education.

The novel of the 1960s, particularly Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*, *The Golden Notebook*, began to point out in a variety of notes of disillusionment and betrayal, that the Free Women were not so free after all. Lessing's free women are Marxists who think they understand how the oppression of women is connected to the class struggle, who have professions and children, and who lead independent lives.

This is certainly what we would expect from other major cultural characters that traditions to secular rational and the transition from survival to self expression values. According to Lessing, the women characters always lack enlightenment to social, political and welfare rights.

Lessing's early accounts emphasized the importance of economic growth for promoting gender equality, and subsequent decades saw strong focus on establishing effective legal, and social, and political right for women. Lessing claims cultural accounts which have often claimed that values are equally important the novels are redeemed by the author's powerful artistic strength which is realized in her deployment of effective techniques as well as having at her disposal a post colonial ideological perspective that allows adequate perception of the realities of her characters. Doris Lessing suggests, through her novel, that the people of post colonial world of women need social, political, financial and psychological independence in

order to exercise their creative potentiality. They need the people who understand and recognize their social and political identity in the society.

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