

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA  
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH  
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF LETTERS & ENGLISH LANGUAGE  
N°:.....

DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES  
STREAM: ENGLISH Language  
OPTION: Literature & Civilization



THE DECLINE OF MECHANIZED WESTERN CULTURE IN  
DORIS LESSING'S *MEMOIRS OF A SURVIVOR*

*Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial  
fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree*

*Submitted by*  
**Ms. Nesrine RAHMOUNI**

*Supervised by*  
**Mr. Bachir SAHED**

**2021-2022**

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**2021-2022**

## DEDICATION

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*To Allah, the Most Gracious, The most Merciful*

*To my dearest Mother Houria and my first and permanent support my Father Laifa,  
for their support and for their kindness*

*For my cutie princess El-Batool*

*For My sisters Warda, Dalal, Assia, Mouna for being lightening candles in the  
darkest moments*

*For My Brothers Hossam, Bilal, Hamza, Antar for giving me their continuous support  
My brothers' wives Ghania and Hadjer for their stand in distress*

*For my friends Chaima, Abla, Bochra, Nodjoud, Nesrine, Linda, Asma, Imane,  
Khaoula, Ahlam for sharing me happy memoires*

Nesrine

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## **ABSTRACT**

Doris Lessing has always used her bad background and reputation in writing her novels, and as a result of the cultural diversity she was exposed to during her life, she was able to use it in her writings, which often talked about problems and events in that period of time. Her novel *Memoirs of a Survivor* embodies the hunger and inadequacy of language, where Lessing resorts to metaphors to rationally fill this need so that it does not slip into unreality. So she tells about the future history of a city whose streets are terrorized by rats and gangs, as the ruling authority has abandoned its responsibilities. Through her heroine narrator she describes the events and crisis that befell a city that is fading with the passage of time, causing it to lose its identity in a way that provokes terror in a calm manner. Moreover, this study emphasizes the decline of identity and western civilization and the importance of the individual caring out its responsibilities. Thus the study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter presents the socio-historical context and theoretical framework. The second chapter, analyze the decline of the Western culture in the light of Doris Lessing's 'Memoirs of a survivor.'

**Keywords:** Western culture; civilization; decline; identity; individual; utopian; dystopian.

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## INTRODUCTION

Hundreds of novels and poetry collections are published annually, but they are forgotten after a few months of their publication and their luster fades and their impact fades. While some literary works transcend the barrier of time and place and sail from the heart of the writer to the heart of readers around the world and take their place in the conscience of everyone who lives its events and the details of its characters and renews its position with its readers from generation to generation. From this pulpit; Doris Lessing (winner of the 2007 Nobel Prize for Literature) climbs the rope of fiction to create a masterpiece called “Memoirs of a Survivor”.

Doris Lessing was born in Kermanshah, Persia, on 22, October 1919. Her novel ‘Memoirs of a Survivor’ published in 1974, it is a book to fall in love with, where the narration is produced in the form of a long rushing monologue that presents the emotions and actions of the characters and reveals imbalanced and confusion as if they were in a moment of terrible conflict with an exterior world that lacks logic and collapses in front of their eyes and another with their selves, as the British writer Lessing creates a world that is preyed upon by chaos that is on its way disappearing only to monitor the obsessions of the characters. The narrator does not stop reminding us that she writes her memoirs in which she records what happened, but she does not say anything about her personal life and her past. Perhaps the absence of the name and the disappearance of many of many of her features fit the compacted identity of the city in harmony with the linked relationships that develop among its remaining residents.

The memoirs is Lessing's revelation in our time (Future History) where it comes to the time before, during and after 'things fell apart'. It is narrated by a middle-aged woman who discovers a world outside walls of her apartment, and at the same time, civilization, slowly begins to dissolve little by little. Where people realize that they have to leave and that this happens at last, and it is not possible to name this phenomenon and give it a specific name. while the narrator is watching, the caravans line the sidewalk so that the old and the young begin their exodus from the city; The groups form; the machinery of the city collapses. And cattle, goats and horses begin to fill the upper floors of what were once luxury apartments. (Schaeffer, p.132)

The present study offers a post-war examination of the work as it focuses mainly on mechanized-decline encounters. The issue of decline becomes an essential focus that the narrator aims to describe. The study also highlights how writings and literary works are considered as a tool to tell, describe and transmit the collapse of Western Civilization due to the stagnation that resulted from previous wars.

The motive behind this study is to shed light on the Decline of Western Culture, and how the un-named narrator describes the retreat and emigration of people from the city in a frightening manner, and it depicts in the readers' imagination the poor social condition that the city has become after individuals abandoned their responsibilities and left in search of survival. The writer also indicates indirectly through her novel about the solution that will solve the problems of societies, especially as she tells about the history of the future and what events will lead to if each individual does not abide by his responsibility and that positive change for a dilapidated society begins with the individual himself, and 'Memoirs of a Survivor' as a literary work examines the social reality of western society, the society that always

seemed ideal. This study investigates the causes and manifestations of the decline, which took its way to spread little by little to erase all traces of life.

This study develops the sense of the individual carrying out his responsibilities and survival rather than leaving his identity, and that to make change in a place falling apart little by little, people must band together to save what's left to build a perfect life. The society, through what the narrator narrated, changes from utopian to dystopian, due to the people, the authority and security ignoring their responsibilities and abandoning their identity, which was obliterated under the slogan of migration in search of survival.

Since cultural decline dominate Lessing's novel, 'The Memoirs of a survivor' , the present study attempts to answer the following main question: How does Doris Lessing depict the decline of western culture among the novel? To answer this question, the study also tries to answer the following sub-questions: How does life change from being utopian to dystopian? And what are manifestations of social transformation and decline? And what was the situation in which the classes of society prevailed in the story and how the identity of the Western society was obliterated, the most ideal societies in the novel?

Recent studies have shown interests in this topic, and Lessing's works in general. Critics have praised Doris Lessing's reflective analysis the issue of decline and future history and social state in her fictional work 'Memoirs of a Survivor'. Indeed, numerous researches have shown interest in analyzing the social side of the novel.

In her review, 'When Walls Tumble Down', Susan Fromberg Schaeffer claims that the process of diverting and tilting Emily in simplifying human misery is what

has failed Memoirs. That her personal life and everything it includes is a mysterious matter that needs radical improvement, and that her directives to re-learn responsibility, love and bear the trauma through the freedom that she touched from behind the whole wall without a goal, since not everyone is saved , and there is no individual salvation that will upset everyone.

Besides, Aarons Rosenfeld's article entitled: "Remembering the future: Doris Lessing's experiment in Autobiography", Rosenfeld mentions that Lessing's book *Memoirs of a survivor* covers various genres that are typically shunted off into the category 'Science Fiction' or 'Speculative Fiction'. He also mentions that the novel is difficult to categorize, as it addresses the future " an in-depth analysis of future history", and Lessing uses the metaphors of science fiction to write what is not speculative science fiction at all, but rather an expansive tale of consciousness. The collapsed city of the future becomes a symbol of its hero's inner world and the novel's catastrophic future as the result of a subtle shift in perception rather than a shift in the raw materials of the fictional world.

During an interview between Torrents and Lessing; and in answer to one of the questions, Lessing mentioned that "Memoirs of a Survivor" is her mediation on the inadequacy of language, as the rational use of metaphors and analogies to satisfy the hunger of language. She also mentioned during another interview that 'Memoirs of a Survivor', where the future plays a role in London, which was destroyed and turned into a slum, began to occupy itself from our world to a strange world. She also mentioned that she does not believe in the generation gap.

This research employs a Marxist approach that examines the effect of capitalism on labour, economic development and productivity and argues for a

worker. In his book entitled 'Literature and History'; Terry Eagleton studies the relationship between ideas and values expressed in a literary work and the prevailing ideas and values in contemporary society, through which it attempts to study the relationship of literature to class conflicts and conflicts between social groups. This is what Doris Lessing addresses through her literary work 'Memoirs of a Survivor', where she tells the events of her story in a city that took on manifestations of the utopian life retreating and disappearing little by little.

In her suspenseful and horrifying novel; Lessing describes the dreadful decline her city has undergone and as a result of which people migrate in search of survival in better places. It also embodied the struggle between groups of people in order to obtain the necessities of life after the region collapsed economically and the most necessary materials were absent, and crime and outrageous acts intensified in a society that is fading over time.

The survivor recounted and described in details her world that was collapsing in front of her eyes and talked about what happened after the stagnation of the economy through Lessing's literary work, showing that England (Western Society) experienced harsh days in the post-war period, as it was described through her masterpiece the state of society at that time and what the layers of society meant, especially the middle class, which sought to struggle for survival.

This study is divided into two chapters. The first chapter entitled Socio-historical context and Theoretical Framework. It starts with putting the Memoirs into its socio-historical context. It clarifies how the Great War creates a trend and opened new doors for literature, where writers and thinkers used the idea of war to write and

depict their lived reality at that time. And to convey the clear picture of the Western society, which crumbled and disappeared little by little.

The first chapter also dealt with an overview of the life of the writer Doris Lessing (Her formative Years) as well as to talk about her literary influence and the amount of criticism and the beginning of her literary works, and that the “Memoirs of a Survivor” was a new trend and a mixture of realism and symbolism.

The second chapter is entitled: Future History and the Decline of Western Civilization. It sheds light on the manifestations of the civilized decline that England witnessed in the Post-War period and the economic stagnation that people suffered from and which forced them to leave as well as in light of the individuals abandoning their responsibilities and the division of society, the social conflict that emerged from successive events, murders, thefts and conflicts to survive.

The study talked about the transition from utopian (ideal) to dystopian and its manifestations through the novel. Also, it addresses the social and class situation in the society of the story, and a description of the condition of each class, starting with the ruling class, passing through the middle class, all the way to the working class.

# CHAPTER ONE: SOCIO HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 1. Doris Lessing: Formative Years

Doris Lessing is a British writer and novelist. Lessing was awarded the 2007 Nobel Prize in Literature, the eleventh and oldest woman ever to be awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature. In 2008, Lessing was ranked fifth on the list of the “50 best British writers since 1945” according to the British Newspaper ‘*The Times*’.

Doris Lessing was born on 22 October, 1919 in Kermanshah, Persia (Iran); her parents are Alfred Cook Tayler and Emily Maud McVeagh. She has one brother whose name is Harry who was born in 1921. In 1924, she moved with her family to a farm near the small town of Banket, southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), where her father grew tobacco and corn.

In 1933, Lessing, ended her formal education at a Roman Catholic high School in Salisbury. Then she married Frank Wisdom in 1939. And she gave birth to John and Jean who remained with their father when she was divorced in 1943. Later on, she worked as a secretary and stenographer in Salisbury, and she participated in a small political group with Marxist roots, but the communist Party was not sanctioned by the colonial government.

In 1945-49; Doris Lessing married to Gottfried Lessing who is a Marxist immigrant. Their son Peter; was born in 1947, he accompanied his mother to London when his parents’ marriage ended in divorce. (*Ingersoll, p.09*)

Her literary works are as follows:

- The Grass is Singing (1950)
- Martha Quest, the first volume of the Children of Violence (1952)
- Five: short novels (1953) ( Michael Joseph; Harmonds Worth: penguin, 1960)
- A Proper Marriage (1954); the second volume of Children of Violence
- Retreat Innocence (1956)
- The Habit of Loving (1957)
- A Ripple from the Storm (1958); the third volume of The Children of Violence.
- The Golden Notebook (1962)
- A man and Two Women (1963)
- African stories (1964)
- Landlocked (1965) the fourth volume of The Children of Violence
- The Black Madonna and Winter in July (1966)
- Particularly Cats (1967)
- The Four-Gated City (1969); the fifth volume of The Children of Violence
- Briefing For a Descent into Hell (1971)
- The Story of Non-Marrying Man and other stories (Jonathan Cape); American title The Temptation of Jack Orkney (1972)
- The Summer Before The Dark (1973)
- The Memoirs of a Survivor (1974)
- Re-colonized Planet , Shikasta, the first volume of Canopus in Argos: Archives (1979)
- The Marriages between Zones Three, Four, and Five. The second volume of Canopus of Argos: archives (1981)

- The Serian Experiments, The third volume of Canopus in Argos: archives (1981)
- The Making of the Representative for Planet 8, the fourth volume of Canopus in Argos. (received the Shakespeare Prize of The West German Hamburger Stiftung and The Austrian State Prize for European Literature (1982)
- The Diaries of Jane Somers (1984)
- The Good Terrorist (1985)
- The Fifth Child (1988)
- African Laughter (1992)

*(Ingersoll, p.09-10)*

## **2. The Zeitgeist of the Post-War Era**

The Great War radically accelerated the process of alienation within societies, a trend that started to emerge gradually in conjunction with the modernization of western societies during the nineteenth century. Industrialization, urbanization and the introduction of new technologies have improved everyday life but have also reduced the dependence of individuals on societies. This development and concomitant emerge of individualism as a basic philosophy of life in advanced capitalism led to a long-term erosion of personal relationships. As we have seen the consequences of these negative social tendencies have already found their reflection in the works of the realists, and it is no coincidence that one of the great realist themes is the conflict between individuals and the hostility or indifference of their immediate surroundings. The feelings of loneliness and isolation that arise from this conflict often leads the protagonists of realist novels to reject the shared values of their community or even withdraws from society altogether.

Modernists continued this theme by presenting individuals with a sense of existential loneliness, questioning ancient beliefs and searching for the meaning of human existence. The impact of the great war intensified this erosion of interpersonal relations, and marked the definitive end of the era of traditional values and the possibility of a 'common moral world' (Faulkner, 1977, p.02). Enlightenment ideas about the natural goodness of man and the power of reason were abandoned to ensure gradual progress toward a better society that dominated the intellectual climate of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and intellectuals instead began to focus on the crisis of humanity. Contemporary writers no longer see loneliness, alienation and isolation from the wider community as the tragic fate of a small number of unhappy individuals, but instead begin to perceive this as inevitable aspects of the human condition. This radical change in the intellectual atmosphere was not just an emotional reaction to the trauma caused by the Great War.

If the conflict made writers more emotionally sensitive to the tragic development of human history, it was contemporary scientific and philosophical knowledge that gave their pessimistic vision a rational basis. Even with the advent of the last decades of the nineteenth century, new developments in science, the arts, and philosophy began to challenge the hitherto prevailing understanding of man as a fundamentally social being whose bondage with other individuals depended not only on his natural need for fellowship, but also on a common humanistic view of the world in which it was understood it is widely believed that everyone has the same human values. Belief in the possibility of acquiring objective knowledge of the world as well as the belief in the ability of man to clearly distinguish between good and evil, beliefs that still from the basis of broader social consciousness in the nineteenth century, are beginning to be undermined by new intellectual discoveries. (*Šnircová, p.29*)

### **3. Doris Lessing and Literary Influence**

Literary works are not merely repositories of meaning, as a set of circumstances or influences usually contribute to the production of a literary work.

The writers, including modernists, realists, and others resort to narrating important events or facts that may affect the historical, socio-economic aspects of society, which the writer usually represents in general in the form of a novel or short stories or plays... to convey truth about a subject or to call for an activity, as was the case in Lessing's literary works; to participate certain types of activity, and various writings have been as well over the years and decades.

We find Dickens telling his reader fictional stories using real heroes in an attractive manner. He and others narrate their experiences indirectly, therefore, the novel may be a mirror reflecting the authors' life, and it may also narrate some harsh or happy experiences and details in the writers' life. Because, just as the painter resorts to drawing to embody pain or a feeling of schizophrenia or happiness; the writer resorts to his books and literary works to hide between his words a certain feeling or a story.

As Sir Charles Spencer Chaplin (known as Charles Chaplin) and Rowan Sebastian Atkinson (known as MR Bean); who come from the art of silent literature, they are the greatest examples that literature is not only what appears to the eye, but there is a fundamental message between the lines that tells of its suffering in a comic or funny way. Victor Hugo and Balzac also narrate between the folds of their books about the social situation, money and life in general. As well as Flaubert and Maupassant, who talked about war, the social and philosophical situation, and the world of work, using fictional characters to narrate real events and Zola about the marginalized classes,

Flaubert also criticized the lawlessness and the bourgeoisie classes using his poem entitled “*Madame Pauvary*” hoping for justice.

All the realistic works were a clear embodiment and the best witness about the awful and the stressful social situation that prevailed in the Realistic Era. As well as the modern writers whose works were based on a utopian vision of human life and society and their belief in progress and moving forward.

James Joyce’s *Ulysses* is considered as the classic example of modernity in the novel, and also Franz Kafka’s ‘*The Metamorphosis*’ (1915), in addition to Thomas Stearns Eliot’s poem entitled “*The Waste Land*”(1922).

Modernism (twentieth century) then emerged as a reaction to the socio-economic, cultural and intellectual changes. The era of modernism was associated with the rise of reason (thinking) in general progress of Western Societies, it undoubtedly had its darker aspects that produced major economic, social, and political conflicts which resulted in The First World War (Great War) which itself is seen as the historical event that shaped the character of modernist movement, and as a consequence; some of the most significant works of modernist literature appeared in the Post-war period. (Šnircová, p.28)

Like the rest of the writers; Doris Lessing, as her exiting writing shifts between realism and the world of crazy politics and individual inner worlds is nothing but a personification of her influence on certain events, because, her writings (even if it looks different) shares the same theme.

Lessing’s novel, which rejects simple binary opposites and insists on building a reality that rejects nothing and includes everything by saying: ‘and’ ‘and’ ‘and’ rather

than: 'either/or'; represents the difference that Jacque Derrida insists is neither a word nor a concept, but that it includes three elements:

- Differ: that are not similar or dissimilar in nature.
- Defer: to delay, postpone.
- Diferre (Latin): to scatter, disperse.

All of these indications are embodied in Lessing's works, and her philosophical pursuit of the great questions about the meaning of life and truth and reality is the recognition of the simple difference that people, cultures, events, places, and times are different, separate, and irreconcilable. (Kalban, Rose, p.09)

In Lessing's writings, there are fragmentary and scattered concepts, ideas and topic in each book, which requires adjustments in understanding on the part the readers. A topic or image may be repeated at any time after changing and reformulating it. For example; in the beginning of Martha Quest, (the first book in the Children of Violence series); Martha has a vision of the ideal city, geometric, hierarchical, multi-ethnic, full of gardens and nice people. This novel has importance and weight in the lives of both Martha and World of series Children of Violence as a whole, but Martha's original vision did not reach a comprehensive and ironic echo thus the reader balances the vision of the city with the reality of war-ravaged London and the bleak city of refugees for mark.

With the final reworking of the topic, the city continues to recur confusingly and as an implicit irony in both 'Briefing for a Descent into Hell' and 'Memoirs of Survivor', and perhaps, but not certainly finally, the city looms once more in Lessing's Canopus novels, geometrical, charmed, magnetic, magical, doomed.

Such scattered meaning, such difference, such rejection of definitions, demands delay and postponement. (*Kalban, Rose, p.09-10*)

Lessing's works can be seen as a whole or as a series of four interrelated whole (Children of Violence, the Canopus in Argos; archives books; the stories; the Jane Somers diaries). It is still in the process of becoming, still full of surprises, play, audacity, dogma, recantation and grouchy dismissal of critical appraisal.

The critic can hardly identify Lessing's identity, which changes from a self-proclaimed austere realist to an equally fanatical, fanatical fantasy, from communist to student of R. D. Laing to mystic, from small personal voice to cosmic spokesman, from teenager to old woman. The identity changes in a perplexing fashion, especially in *The Golden Notebook* where Lessing writes about Anna Wolf who writes about Ella who writes about an unidentified young suicide bomber (Framed Story: story within a story). Then it is vaguely clear that Lessing rejects certainty and the critic thus takes on quicksand. (*Kalban, Rose, p.10*)

Doris Lessing is more a chemical writer than any other major writer of the twentieth century, perhaps with the exception of D. H. Lawrence. She challenges her readers and changes them; alerts their consciousnesses; radicalizes their sexual, personal and global politics.

She writes about specific topics of consciousness in the late twentieth century. "Race; the conflict of generations; the man woman relationships; the problems of the creative artist; and politics".

Behind these considerations lies a deeper investigation into: What is reality? What is truth? What is Freedom? and What is the meaning of life as a whole.

The place of George Eliot, Tolstoy and Proust in her literary community is what made her distinguished because she alone explored philosophical questions through the experience of female which is seen as important enough to ask the big questions, for example in the *Golden Notebook* she is pushed back. As noted by the author Lisa Alther:

“I could never have started writing novels without having read Doris Lessing’s books. I learned from her to my enormous surprise, that a novel could be serious and philosophical even if the protagonist were ordinary women, neither a whore nor a Goddess, and even if the content were nothing more ambitious than the stuff of daily Lessing’s book were a revelation” ( *Kalban, Rose, p.10*)

Doris wrote the greatness of her work with the simplicity of events and characters, she more than any writer has saved and freed women from the dead endings of female protagonists. Lessing’s novels are often presented in the form of diaries, memoirs, personal archival records, letters notebooks, and rough drafts. Her subject matter is notoriously autobiographical, so the line between the author and subject is blurred and not clear.

Lessing claims that the realistic aesthetic principles of the nineteenth century are her own principles. ( *Fishburn, p.186*)

Although Doris Lessing is probably best known as the author of *The Golden Notebook*; it is safe to say that most critics would not describe the greater part of her novels as formally experimental or even modern except ‘Canopus in Argos’. Given the prevalence of this perception of Lessing; it had an unexpected result, which was to divert critical attention away from those characteristics of her literature that work to disrupt realistic texts. Lessing claims that the realist aesthetic principles of the nineteenth century are her own, which is what confirmed her readers’ discovery. She

was an old-school novelist who could give shapes and meaning to their lives (an old-fashioned novelist with a contemporary point of view) (*Fishburn, p.186*)

Unlike the bitches, witsches, vacuous virgins, and man-eating troglo/ dykes of far too much contemporary men's fiction, Lessing's created characters were easy to identify with and realistically portrayed. And readers loved this tense new novelist who allowed and give them chance to experience the privilege of seeing themselves in print through Martha Quest.

In view of these emotional rather than intellectual reasons, readers viewed her as realistic and remained blind from the imaginative subversive activities in which she was involved, as she created a fantasy about herself as a writer that directly contradicts the type of fiction she was writing.

Lessing's realistic novel was so compelling that most readers lost sight of *The Golden Notebook* when it was first published in 1962, although there were anecdotal hints that something unusual was going on; most critics considered the text to be something else entirely.

The portrait of contemporary women may be complex, but still makes space for new critical interpretations. An 'Introduction' in 1971 was supplemented to her famous novel in a state of desperation to be misunderstood without justification, in which she stated that her main goal was to form a book that would issue a commentary of its own. Nevertheless, readers refused to abandon their original perception of it as a realist writer par excellence, and critics tried to ignore 'A Briefing for Descent to Hell' (1969), and when she announced that 'Memoirs of a Survivor' (1974) was her attempt to write an autobiography; critics pretended that they had not heard of it, holding their view about Lessing. Later on, readers were

shocked to the bottom of their hearts when realism was announced with the publication of 'Re-Colonized Planet, Shikasta' (1979) that she embarked on what would become a whole series of science fiction, and readers wondered where she was? (*Fishburn, p.187*)

The answer to their question as Martha Quest discovered near the end of *The Four Gated City*; she was there "Here, where else, you fool, you poor fool, where else has [she] been, ever"

In reviewing Roberto Rubinstein's interdisciplinary and intriguing monograph of Doris Lessing, come to remark T.S Eliot's remark about Virginia Woolf: "When a literary reputation is once established, people quickly forget how long it was in growing." (Tiger,1980,p:286)

Many copious disheveled novels, a regiment of short stories, poetry, memoirs, essays, plays and recently apocalyptic fables-Lessing's considerable oeuvre is undeniably part of the literature of our time. Lessing's work challenges traditional assumptions about writing, reading and criticism. She provokes kind of response that Gabriel Josipovici details in *The Modern English Novel* (1976): "What the sophisticated reader needs to recognize is what every naïve reader instinctively knows...symbolic system including novels, are not repositories of meaning but invitations to take part in certain kinds of activity." (Tiger,1980,p:286)

Thus, as Rubinstein comments in her preface, dealing with Lessing's law in one critical way, one critical focus, is one form of academic archeology Prolific, prolonged... but always fantastically sensitive as a measure of the complex Twentieth-century climate. For the past 30 years, Lessing has spoken directly to the experience

of an entire generation, teaching it about private pain, public chauvinism, the divisiveness inherent in even the most radical causes. (Tiger,1980,p:286)

Lessing's twenty-three books cover broad topics ranging from left-wings politics, feminism, and sexual license to the generation gap, religious zealotry and schizophrenia.

Many of these coalesced in the encyclopedic study of intellectual women in *The Golden Notebook*, when critics were tempted to see it as Lessing's definitive statement on twentieth-century women and the traditions of female fiction. However Lessing's conclusions about contemporary femininity derive from Lessing's moral commitment to issues larger than private consciousness and women's grievances. (Tiger,1980,p:287)

From the start, her themes were ponderous and public her moral seriousness was like the great realists: Balzac, Tolstoy, and Turgenev. And hunger for enlightenment was like that of great icons: Lawrance, Yeats, Francis Bacon, Rene Descartes, John Locke, Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Paine...

Lessing shares her main theme –the fragmentation of consciousness and civilization- with a large number of modern writers: Faulkner, Joyce, Woolf, Golding. She processes what is still very rare for women writers, which is a rich sock of experience as she writes about some central longing for moral coherence, which is what led her through different belief-systems. (Tiger,1980,p:287)

That's why Lessing is considered a somewhat demanding personality.

Previous studies on Lessing by Dorothy Brewster (Doris Lessing 1973), and Paul Schluter (Doris Lessing's Novels 1973) were useful, albeit limited, and provided

introductory evidence and foundations for more detailed examinations of the edifice. Two more recent considerations explored major symbols, images, and motif. Mary Singleton (*The city and the Veld*, 1917) outlined the sources for Lessing's vision: Alchemy, Carl Jung, Idries Shah, R.D Laing, and Ellen Cronan Rose (*The Tree Outside The Window*, 1976) analyzed the *Children of Violence* bildungsroman, using Erik Erikson's Psychoanalytic theories on the 'eight ages of man', and both are illuminating studies, though neither gives a new and challenging methodology such as one can distinguish in Martin Green's *cities of light: Songs of morning* (1972) or Elaine Showalter's "both a movement forward and return to the concerns of the earlier fiction at deeper levels of meaning and complexity," the study is divided into three sections: 'Breaking Down, Breaking Out' treats the five novels from 'The Grass is Singing' to "A Ripple from the Storm", arguing that these depict 'feminine history', *A literature of Their Own* (1977). (Tiger,1980,p:287-288)

Rubinstein's new vision of Doris Lessing is more ambitious; he does not delve enough into the problem of critical theory, and never engages in rigorous scrutiny of the text, because he is committed to a new critical style.

Eschewing biographical, formal, feminist, and Marxist schema as too reductive, she adopts an interdisciplinary psycho-literary approach: identifying the ideological furniture of Lessing's creative house. Her central thesis is that the common denominator in Lessing's Fictional world is the concept of mind: "The mind discovering interpreting and ultimately shaping its own reality." Borrowing the term of 'abnormal consciousness'. To point out the mental states of the increasing acceptance which suffer from many of Lessing's heroes, he turns the analysis of mental experience into a meta-character of Lessing's work; and this may explain why

Rubinstein's schematic critical language tends to obscure and even confuse Lessing's own fiction. Reading benefits from the chronological treatment of novels, as it documents the changing of fiction of the concept of madness in Lessing's work. (Tiger,1980,p:288)

From a cumulative perspective; Rubinstein argues that Lessing's character progresses from the psychology of self-perception to the metaphysics of mystical truth. (Tiger,1980,p:288)

#### **4. Marxist Literary Criticism**

Basically, Marxism is a theory of history that should include a commitment to social change, that is, a commitment to a socialist future in which the productive forces are not owned privately as they are in capitalist policies, but under common ownership. Thus Marxism is not just a moral duty or a written order that things ought to be. (Alderson, p.10)

Marx wrote a little about how societies should be organized in post-capitalist future. Even if different political regimes, most of them Stalinist or neo-Stalinist, claim Marxism origins. Rather it claims scientific status, and has commonalities with other sciences such as economics and sociology, although it cannot be reduced to either.

Karl Marx makes claims about how and why people are oppressed, and what about capitalist societies that make them vulnerable to change by these people in particular. (Alderson, p.10)

Lessing frequently surprised her group of loyal readers with sudden shifts, shifting allegiance to the historical realism of the early novels when the last volume appeared

radically diverging from the realm of mad politics to a singular inner world. However this topic did not appear for the first time in *'The Four Gated City'*, it was hinted at the possibility of some kind of solution to this world in *'The Golden Notebook'*. (Pickering, p.17)

The first reviews declared that *Shikasta* (1979) is not similar to what Lessing had written previously, as in the introduction to this novel she indicates that she writes 'space fiction', but the first reading reveals that it is familiar with the interests: the nature of political power, the relationship of the individual (especially the gifted individual) to the group, and the election of the insane...

There were familiar names, including Linda, Coleridge and Martha Quest. As the action takes place on the same old planet under a cool new name, we realize that the changes we perceive are a matter of context, not Lessing's starting point. (Pickering, p.17.18)

These basic premises were remarkably consistent, that the concept of sequential evolution is determinable to understanding the relationship between Lessing's works. The chronology is not particularly important to understanding her vision, as it may become apparent when another work is published, and thus all the connections were on Lessing's mind from the start. For example, the shift from the politics of the left to the politics of madness in *'The Small Persona Voice'*, Lessing clearly states that *'The Children Of Violence'* is a study of the individual conscience in its relationship to the group. If we see this relationship as a struggle between collective politics and Personal matters, we are bound to consider her idea of "madness as a possible salvation for the contemporary world" as a "new alternative to political reform", a radical shift in the basic premise. And there are other relations besides the conflict

between self and society, and it became clear that Lessing had no fundamental conflict between salvation through Marxism and salvation through madness.

Phenomenological speaking, they are two manifestations of underlying image that structures her entire world view. (Pickering, p.18)

On the most obvious level, Lessing's politics of the left and the politics of madness have similarities that provide a superficial continuity of their apparent transformation from to the other.

First, both the communists and the insane have a strong sense of belonging to a cult that must be preserved against the uninitiated. This applies to the group of people incapable of a normal life revolving about Linda, Dorothy, Rosa and Melendip as it is the case of the Zambian communist party in *'The Golden Notebook'*. Secondly, the opposition of the two is important to maintain the collective feeling. This sense of 'Us' and the relief it brings to the lone ego is clearly manifested in the starvation where the detached Gabavu of his family and tribe is influenced by his sense of 'I' impelled by a sense liberated from the collective 'we' of the subversive political organizer of oppressed Africans.

As Martha Quest realizes, a sense of collective solidarity is only possible for a group of educated people against an outside power, and is one of the reasons why the lunatics unite together in informal, even if unofficial, groups. However, both are surrounded by an electoral vision. (Pickering, p.18.19)

## CHAPTER TWO: HISTORY AND THE DECLINE OF WESTERN CIVILIZATION

### 1. Doris Lessing and the Forming Of History

Literature and History; both of these intellectual practices complete each other; so that 'History ends and Literature begins'. And man remains the common subject between them, as the writers in general resort to the use of history and their personal experiences... to narrate and depict their influence, either on nature, beauty, love, imagination, or even the miserable situations in which several places of the world were.

Reading enthusiasts can discover the written history of a literary character through fictional or real events narrated by literary experts and novelists through the pages of their books in the form of plays, short stories, drama, non-serial jokes, etc.

When Lessing's writing turns towards history, it will not be just a question to find the literary form that might best represent it, as the question involves the same relationship between form and history as they meet in every new work. These questions may be common in literary criticism, but the breadth of chronology of Lessing's career and its sheer variety and productivity are both particularly useful in her work. As she moves from colonial Rhodesia to post-war Britain, and from war-torn employs the full panoply of techniques, modes, genres and effects that are referred to as forms: short stories, realism, serial fiction, documentary, drama, jokes, Sufi tales, reportage and more. (Brazil. Sergeant. Sperlinger, 2016,p:01)

Two opposing understandings of history can be seen taking place through the work of Lessing, and it is the irresolvable tension between them that makes the question of history as much as the question of form, such a persistent and unifying theme in her oeuvre.

On the one hand, there is the concept of history as a teleological and determining process; that guides the actions of the living that its logic can be understood by those who have sufficient awareness to see it.

The most important source for this belief was Marxism to introduce the only vision of anti-colonial resistance and anti-racist humanism to a young critic of colonial Rhodesia.

Lessing later argued that the Marxist utopianism and its attempt at ‘a global mind, a global ethics’ was but one secular aspect of a permanent pattern, as well as an understanding of history as a meaningful process in itself. ( which it was the writers task to recognize its form) appears in many forms in Lessing’s work, and this combination of sacred and secular utopia provides one of the most vivid images of this concept of history, that was recorded in Anna Wool’s Red Notebook on August 28,1954:

“Time has gone and the whole history of man, the whole history of mankind, is present in what I see now, and it is like a great soaring hymn of joy and triumph in which pain is a small lively counterpoint” (270)

Against this determinism, Lessing’s belief stands in how great the influence of the individual, albeit outwardly ambiguous, leads a quiet life. Individuals are the ones

who change society, produce ideas, stand in the way of opinions and change them. (1994:91).

This gives the individuals the ability to generate new ideas and thus shape the history that shapes them. She spoke of her viewpoint, referring to her own life, where she says that while there is something inside her, she realizes that it is unique and excites her more than other things that she is responsible for, and at the same time looks at herself in history as she is something created by the past and governed by the present. (1996:76). (Brazil. Sergeant. Sperlinger, 2016,p:01-02)

The point may be to resolve these two positions through the autobiographical transformation of youth followed by mature disillusionment, but this risks simplifying the fatigue of both positions into a naïve belief in Marxism followed by discreet liberalism, as well as imposing a deceptive linearity to Lessing's thinking. Lessing had an accurate understanding of the development of young people's commitment and criticize it later in life, and she continued to experiment with these questions until her latest book 'Alfred and Emily' (2008), in which her parents were released from the Great War. Lessing gives her parents an agency that did not exist in their lives and distance her-self from history entirely by imagining an alternate reality in which that war never took place.

This fictional alternative is counterbalanced by a sobering retelling of how things actually turn out, and thus the most productive procedure for literary criticism is to follow Alfred and Emily to rethink the relationship between these two to rethink the relationship between these two to history and how they might generate from each other. This was one of the exercises that occupied Hannah Arendt's mind, and

bringing Arendt and Lessing together can do much to shed light on the intricacies of Lessing's understanding of history. (Brazil. Sergeant. Sperlinger, 2016,p:02)

The concept of history as a teleological and meaningful process has been subject to lot of skepticism and has often been reduced to caricatures where it is difficult to understand what it entails and attracts. In fact, Lessing herself expressed this skepticism in her ironic portrayal of Klorathy's belief in 'The logic of History' in documents concerning the emotional agents of the Volyen Empire. For this reason, Arendt's careful disclosure of what is a remarkable talk about Marx's conception of history is very useful, especially since it is a concept that she herself reject as Lessing. (Brazil. Sergeant. Sperlinger, 2016,p:03)

For Arendt, what was distinctive about Marx's heart of Hegel's philosophy of history was that his materialist philosophy which resulted from history contained two elements:

First: The idea that history is a process resulting from human activity, a process I which repetition cannot occur. (Brazil. Sergeant. Sperlinger, 2016,p:03)

Second: the belief that this process has an end result, which can be defined in advance as a plan by which humanity can act to make history and thus end history. (2006: 76-78). (Brazil. Sergeant. Sperlinger, 2016,p:03)

Thus, in Lessing's work from the beginning, repeated attempts were made to depict a scale corresponding to the unfolding process of history, whether that of world, cosmos, or evolutionary time, punctuated by visions of idealism and accuracy. (A remarkable city, towards which is this operation is heading).

Lessing's work is seen as a powerful testament to the ways in which we wish to escape the fragility of human reality by interpreting it in the image of making. Arendt sees that story is the mediator between the actions that make up history and works, of art such literature, and Lessing's work is strongly committed to our ability to act in the world in ways unexpected by any teleological vision through the stories told about our actions. Since we all born into an already existing web of human relations with its innumerable affinity and intentions, no actions can achieve its intended purpose. Therefore, our actions naturally produce stories with or without intention of producing tangible things. These stories can then be recorded in documents and monuments. (Brazil. Sergeant. Sperlinger, 2016,p:03)

Signs of regression and construction of the sunset of Western Civilization appeared after a set of factors and influences that contributed to the dissolution of the West, and by the spread of a group of realistic and modernist literary figures, this contributed to conveying the reality of Western decline and describing the vague picture of Western society after the decline witnessed by the modernists transferring the ugliness of what they were coexisting with, each in his own style.

Memoirs of a Survivor, the story of a middle-aged woman's struggle, her final acceptance of her repressed, cruel history, her invocation of the past into the present, and the witnessing of the present of changing ego. This woman; whose name has not been mentioned, is responsible for a 12-year-old girl named Emily.

This book; that the writer describes as an attempt to autobiography, is daily diary of that woman and is a quick look at future (future History) more terrifying than our present, and the only forces capable of saving us from total destruction.

In this novel, the writer experiences the lived reality behind the scenes of idealism and her concerns represented in the futility of investing human relationships in promoting spiritual growth and resulting alienation from the material world, using a calm style to tell the events of this nightmarish novel, and events that take place in both the inner and the outer worlds (the conscious and the unconscious), as the author mixes symbolism with realism.

The concepts and symbols of the decline of Western culture are embodied in this novel, where:

The novel begins with the division between 'we': the social community in the past, and 'it': the current state of chaos and anarchy in the political sphere and the unfeeling youth of society. This 'we' symbolizes the final integration of the final chapter which cannot take place without an understanding of the cultural forces that have divided 'I': (the narrator's subjectivity). The chaos of the outside world requires its rejection, the transition to an integrated higher reality. The narrator presents herself as an idealist, as 'one of those who looked up, imagining how things might be there in the higher regions where the winners admitted a better atmosphere'. (Jost, p.46)

"We all remember that time. It was no different for me than for other. Yet we do tell each other over and over again the particularities of the events we shared, and the repetition, the listening, is as if we are saying: 'It was like that for you too? Then that confirms it, yes, it was so, it must have been, I wasn't imagining things'. (Lessing, p.01)

## 2. The Shift from Utopia to Dystopia

[A]rtists have been so busy with the [contemporary] nightmare that they have had no time to rewrite the old Utopias. Doris Lessing "The Small Personal Voice (1958)". (Tiger, p.63)

Life changes from being ideal (utopian) to miserable (dystopian), as stagnation sweeps across aspects of life in societies one by one.

"We knew that all public services had stopped to the South and the East, and that this state of affairs was spreading our way" (Lessing, p.05)

In this section, the narrator mentions that all public services stopped, and everyone left those two parts of the country, except for gangs that most of which consist of young man. From this point on; Western civilization took its way back down (abandoning identity), and the lives of individuals there became unimportant due to the vacuum created by the frightening situation, and there was no sense of safety and existence, as it appears as if characters of the story were wondering and looking for any meaning to their lives, after it began to stagnate and retreat little by little (an indirect question about the meaning of life).

"I was feeling more and more that my ordinary life was irrelevant. Unimportant ... I was going to say, an obsession.... I was feeling as if the center of gravity of my life had moved, balances had shifted somewhere, and I was beginning to believe-uncomfortable still-that what went on behind the wall might be every bit as important as my ordinary life" (Lessing, p.06)

This refers to the rejection of the external projection of the world and the shift towards internal growth, but the narrator cannot go simply leaving the material world behind with the horror that she imagines. But she prefers to stay and wait impatiently and look calmly at the pattern of the wall under the bleached paint and see the flowers, leaves and birds, and it is a symbols of the discovery of the natural world of

Edenie. Looking at a wall for a long time is like waiting for an egg to hatch (symbol of rebirth), as both the soul and the egg need their exact time “to get out of the dark prison” (Lessing, p.06). (Jost, p.46)

At first the narrator plans to leave, like all the other residents who left in search of survival.

“We would have to move. Yes, we would go. Not yet.  
But it would soon be necessary and we knew it”  
(Lessing, p.05)

Everyone here is trying to escape from himself, selves formed from sterile, indifferent culture. (Jost, p.47)

The narrator then stops trying to escape from her psyche when Emily, who embodies her childhood, stands in her way. The narrator finds herself an anomaly for her mother (symbol of authority), but, since Emily represents one of the psychological aspects of the narrator, she becomes her mother, her own superego. She examines Emily’s past, her adolescence, her sexual maturity and her struggle for social belonging. (Jost, p.47)

By restoring the child’s life, the narrator will understand and escape the dark prison of a world that fails to reinforce the self. Behind a wall, the incorrect chaos of her past life is arranged and perhaps eliminated (far away voices must be forgotten), and the child who represents the self must be reassured and comfortable. (Jost, P.47-48)

At the end of the first chapter, the narrator depicts her first entry into this transcendent world in a group of abandoned, unfurnished rooms filled with dust, paper, and dead insects. Standing on the sidelines between world where she

“Felt the most vivid expectancy, a longing: this place held what I needed; knew was there, had been waiting for-Oh yes, all my life, all my life .... I saw someone in white painter’s overalls lifting a roller to lay white paint over the faded and stained surface” (Lessing, p.07)

This person who is about to draw and arrange is her herself, but the task requires work, and she didn’t talk about a group that brings about change, but rather specified in her saying ‘I saw someone’ (Lessing, p.07), within the surrounding chaos, and therefore positive change starts from the individual. The novel depicts this work, and the gradual cleaning of her soul, and ultimate transcendence.

The last foreshadowing promise is offered in:

“Sweetness, certainly-a welcome, a reassurance .... The face I saw .... Was familiar to me .... This was the rightful inhabitant of the rooms behind .... The exiled inhabitant” (Lessing, p.07-08)

Then optimism and success are prophesied, despite the intervening struggle. (Jost, p.48)

The retreat and decline touched even the human side, as the population dwindled little by little, until it was absent in some areas, and the places turned from teeming with life to deserted places and dwellings, and the narrator expresses this as:

“There was no furniture. Paint had flecked off the wall in places and lay in tiny shards on the floorboards with scraps of paper and dead flies and dust .... The rooms were empty .... Fallen plaster, the corner of a ceiling stained with damp, dirty or damaged walls” (Lessing, p.07)

### **3. Manifestations of (U)(Dy)stopia through Memoirs of a Survivor**

Corrupt city literature, dystopia or sick reality world; it represents a frightening, corrupt, undesirable imaginary society which is the opposite of the literature of utopian city.

Dystopia means a society in which chaos reigns. It is an illusory world in which there is no place for good. The most prominent of which is devastation, oppression, deadly diseases, poverty, and in other words, a world in which a person is stripped of his humanity, and turns into a medium dominated by monstrosities antagonizing each other.

All this and more are embodied through the novel of "*Memoirs of a Survivor*", where the survivor describes the terrible void that pervades the city.

"The rooms next to mine would be empty now. Empty .... Very few people around the lobby, the corridors ... told me that he and his family gone off, had left.... Up and up, floor after floor empty, with no liveliness of trading and bartering anywhere." (Lessing, p.122.123)

So little by little, the emptiness prevailed in the place, and the inhabitants one by one, family after the other; began leaving behind a terrible void in the houses and apartments that were once full of life, and thus those luxurious apartments at the top turned into stables housing sheep, cattle and horses...

This is exactly how the utopian world of the narrator was in decline in front of her eyes. And in absence of security, the society eroded and turned into a forest, and

people did not differentiate between friend or foe, as even children who had tasted torture and strayed on the streets since their births turned into creatures that nothing can rule with it, they kill without hesitation in order to get food or anything to fill their stomachs ...

Diseases have also spread, and the survivor community has rejected the elderly, and the majority claimed that they “should be allowed to die” (Lessing, p.59)

This added a new dimension horror among this group of people. And due to the harsh conditions surrounding the people there, they had to adapt and get used to things that they cannot stay in order to survive and for the sake of survival. It is difficult to obtain any food easily, so they struggle with death to survive.

Through the change from utopian to dystopian in general, a set of results emerged, where the influence reached not only the areas of daily life; poverty has spread in a terrible way, as well as the scarcity of transportation and the media have lost their credibility (rumors).

“While everything, all forms of social organization, broke up, we lived on, adjusting our lives, as if nothing fundamental was happening. It was amazing how determined, how stubborn, how self-renewing, were the attempts to lead an ordinary life .... There were moments when the game we were agreeing to play simply could not stand up to events: we would be gripped by feelings of unreality, like nausea .... The enemy was reality, was to allow ourselves to know what was happening.” (Lessing, p.10-11)

The situation deteriorates rapidly, and the rioters leave a dead body under the broken windows and collapsed shops on the sidewalk. The situation intensifies in the first chapter and leads to psychological crisis in middle age, reaching other

transitional points in life: birth and childhood premature, symbolized by frequent crying and adolescence. (Jost, p.49)

In contrast, Emily's first activity is absorbing much-needed food and sleep, and preparing for growth and important life experiences. The narrator also realizes a feeling of happiness in her own possibilities as well. A kind of organic emotional feeling leads her towards the transcendent world. Although she is not ready to enter it yet; she must unite herself first. (Jost, p.49)

The second chapter ends with a concrete statement of the problem afflicting the region, its inhabitants and every person on the ground:

“Hunger, a need, a pure thing, which made her face lose its hard brightness, her eyes their defensiveness. She was a passion of longing. For what?...Good bread, uncontaminated water from a deep well, fresh vegetables; love, kindness, the deep shelter of a family.”  
(Lessing, p.20)

As the situation worsens as each person flees from his responsibilities, and there is no safety and riots dominate the city, and the police are hidden, and the authorities do not want and cannot remedy the situation.

“The police were not to be seen; the authorities could not cope with this problem and did not want to: they were happy to be rid of these gangs who were in the process of faking elsewhere the problems they raised.”  
(Lessing, p.21)

Thus, the rate of safety and peace gradually decreases, and the place turns into chaos that cannot be stopped, and thus spreads outrageous acts and moral corruption due to two circumstances, namely the absence of supervision and the law, as well as the deterioration of the city's conditions: “A household that had held five people suddenly held twelve.” (Lessing, p.12)

Thus, corruption spreads little by little, starting from one individual to another, to overwhelm the society as a whole. And in absence of the relevant authorities from organizing and providing safety, it will be difficult later to control the bad situation. And by disavowing individuals of their responsibility, the meaning of humanity is removed later from existence, so no one cares about the bad situation that others suffer from (only the one who stepped it feels the heat of the coals), and in the absence and spread of crimes and chaos; fear is generated, and fear of individuals from each other, so there is no help between them. “Because of the fear of ordinary people felt by the official class.” (Lessing, p.31)

This is an indication of the scarcity of transportation, except for those who have their own cars (the wealthy class), which takes a long time to move from one place to another that may last for days.

“The trains and buses were so infrequent and unreliable, and the cars nearly all of them used by officialdom .... I walked, have discovered the uses of my feet, like most people.” (Lessing, p.31)

Then, people live because they are deprived of privileges such as access to food, goods, clothes, and transportation.

What make the situation more difficult is the scarcity of the media and the loss of credibility of news, so rumors spread, and the need for correct and reliable news increases. Especially that they see that “radio without which we were still convinced we could live” (Lessing, p.71).

The narrator then says that their identity and reassurance were represented in the authenticity of news or a rumor, and that they had the right to obtain it:

“But then all news is inaccurate .... Was to isolate residues of truth in rumor .... We felt we had have this precious residue: it was our due, our right, Having it made us feel safer and gave us identity. Not getting it or enough of it deprived us, made us anxious.” (Lessing, p.30)

In ignorance of the correct news and the spread of rumors, the characters of the story are affected psychologically, gradually becoming depressed, and consequently the incident of suicide and madness increases, as well as migration.

This decline did not affect the material aspects of society only, but even moral and psychological aspects of the people, where, because of the scourge of war that man suffered due to the fact that they were the first and prominent victim in the war, she became depressed, so the narrator remember this say:

“In the background was a man, looking uncomfortable. He was a soldier, or has been one .... Sat back in his chair, smoking .... Her father’s, full of pain-guilt” (Lessing, p.42).

And by virtue of the fact that woman is known to be the man’s first partner in his life, she, too, had a share in this suffering, as she was very marginalized, receiving many responsibilities without pity, and she had no opinion in society, which bear insults, hard work, beatings, violence..., so we see that through what the narrator narrates, she sacrifices and bears what is beyond her capacity for the sake of her children, so there is no way for her to escape from the prison created for her by a male society.

The narrator mentions that and says:

“Her arms and legs looked uncomfortable, she had not wanted to put on these clothes, but had felt she must .... Those eyes .... Have been blue for too many weeks, and will continue blue and regular for weeks yet .... Whose hands were hurtful .... She was like a child, that tall,

solid, confident woman; she needed understanding as a child does. She sat looking inward into the demands of her days and her nights. No one else was there for her and her nights. No one else was there for her, because she felt she was talking to herself: they could not hear, or would not. She was trapped, but did not know why she felt this, for her marriage and her children were what she personally had wanted and had aimed for, and what society had chosen for her. Nothing in her education or experience had prepared her for what she did in fact feel, and she was isolated in her bafflement, sometimes even believing that she might perhaps be ill in some way.” (Lessing, p.41-43)

Transferring the novel and describing it for details that no one might notice, explaining that the role of women was limited to housework and childcare, and that society at that time did not pay much attention to women, and their role is represented in cooking, procreation and education, as she became isolated in her ordeal and confusion, which would cause her mental illness. Women were treated like slaves.

This was the case of the woman, and the same is the case for children, especially females, as the young girl that the narrator contemplates was treated as if it was a sin and that it was not supposed to be born, at an age when she needed the kindness and warmth of the family, she was neglected and no one cares about her existence, she was treated cruelly, as if she was not born after a throe and pain, she suffered from a lack of tenderness and emotion, which may affect her psyche in the future, so she releases her repressions from childhood in the form of reckless and inappropriate actions.

“The little girl, who was about five or six .... Her face was shadowed and bleak because of the pressure of criticism on her, her existence .... Like her father’s full of pain-guilt .... She fell back, dropped away, like something left behind as a rush of water goes past, on a stream of air. She drifted to the floor and lay there, face down wards, thumb in her mouth .... Nothing could stop it, could stop these emotions, this pain, this guilt at

ever having been born at all, born cause such pain and annoyance and difficulty. The voice would nag on there forever, could never be turned off.” (Lessing, p.42-43)

The situation of children, especially for females, is what makes a stone cry How a young girl herself needs care take care of a baby. And by virtue of the fact that the little girl was a disgrace or that she should not have been born. The treatment of society in general and the family in particular was very harsh, but she did not choose to be like that the ugliest of that, which is unbelievable and does not even come to mind, is where the narrator recounts and reveals that the father of the child Emily was sexually fondling her, as she was something that satiated his sexual deprivation, especially since she is young and does not know anything about life.

Emily’s memory becomes ill after she grows up and different things became clear to her while searching for emotional fulfillment, and by immersing the narrator in the space of the child, she witnesses and visualizes long images of the above, and a woman and a nurse devote their attention to the infant brother, which forms a graphic diagram of the rivalry between siblings, which generates pain in the memory. Although it is the apparent experience of Emily and her pain that the narrator witnessed is in fact the narrator’s pain as well. So, the narrator notices this and says: “her condition was as close to me as my memoirs.” (Jost, p.53)

Besides fear, the narrator sympathizes with the girl who is striving to learn how to be a woman.

In the fifth chapter; the narrator watches, waits and patiently accepts Emily’s stage of grief. Returning to the physical dimension; sexual desire is the bridge between the two worlds and this time the scene that the narrator sees is a late stage of Emily’s childhood, and the focus is on her father, who apparently innocently tickles his

daughter. It would be a painful experience for her because his guilty way of playing with her confuses her.

“twisting to escape the man’s great hands that squeezed and dug into her ribs, to escape the great cruel face that bent so close over her with its look of private satisfaction....The fear of being held tight there, the need for being held and tortured, since this was how she pleased her captors. She shrieked: No, no, no, no... helpless, being explored and laid bare by this man.... The little girl suffered .... The exquisite torture began again. There, there, there, Emily, muttered the great man.... This scene faded like a spark or like a nightmare...the man bent lower and gazed, and gazed....she feels now, and the violence of her pain is such that she can do nothing but stand there....As when her father ‘tickles’ her, a torture which will recur in nightmares for years afterwards.” (Lessing, p.54.55.56.87)

Parents did not do good to their children in any way when they became homeless and suffered because their parents abandoned them and left them in the lonely street under the pretext that they were either unable to provide supplies and food, or they simply left because of epidemics and poverty towards better places.

“These kids, then, were living like moles or rats in the earth... they seemed never to have had parents, never to have known the softening of the family. Some had been born in the Underground and abandoned.... They were just children... but they are wicked... they had been roasting rats.” (Lessing, p.108-112)

This refers and highlights the fact that the individual there is abdicating his responsibilities. Even animals were not spared from the cruelty of conditions and the cruelty of humans in a society where the strong eats the weak, and they were not spread from the harsh conditions.

“He ate the nasty substances that were being sold as dog food, but preferred the remains from our plates and showed that he did.... Leaving her animal unprotected.” (Lessing, p.32.45)

The situation of children, especially for females, is what makes a stone cry. How a young girl herself needs care, take care of a baby. And by virtue of the fact that the little girl was a disgrace or that she should not have been born. The treatment of society in general and the family in particular was very harsh, but she did not choose to be like that, the ugliest of that, which is unbelievable and does not even come to mind, is where the narrator recounts and reveals that the father of the child Emily was sexually fondling her, as she was something that satiated his sexual deprivation, especially since she is young and does not know anything about life.

Emily's memory becomes ill after she grows up and different things became clear to her while searching for emotional fulfillment, and by immersing the narrator in the space of the child, she witnesses and visualizes long images of the above, and a woman and a nurse devote their attention to the infant brother, which forms a graphic diagram of the rivalry between siblings, which generates pain in the memory. Although it is the apparent experience of Emily and her pain that the narrator witnessed is in fact the narrator's pain as well. So, the narrator notices this and says: "her condition was as close to me as my memoirs." (Jost, p.53)

Besides fear, the narrator sympathizes with the girl who is striving to learn how to be a woman.

In the fifth chapter; the narrator watches, waits and patiently accepts Emily's stage of grief. Returning to the physical dimension; sexual desire is the bridge between the two worlds and this time the scene that the narrator sees is a late stage of Emily's childhood, and the focus is on her father, who apparently innocently tickles his daughter. It would be a painful experience for her because his guilty way of playing with her confuses her.

“twisting to escape the man’s great hands that squeezed and dug into her ribs, to escape the great cruel face that bent so close over her with its look of private satisfaction....The fear of being held tight there, the need for being held and tortured, since this was how she pleased her captors. She shrieked: No, no, no, no... helpless, being explored and laid bare by this man.... The little girl suffered .... The exquisite torture began again. There, there, there, Emily, muttered the great man.... This scene faded like a spark or like a nightmare...the man bent lower and gazed, and gazed....she feels now, and the violence of her pain is such that she can do nothing but stand there....As when her father ‘tickles’ her, a torture which will recur in nightmares for years afterwards.” (Lessing, p.54.55.56.87)

Parents did not do good to their children in any way when they became homeless and suffered because their parents abandoned them and left them in the lonely street under the pretext that they were either unable to provide supplies and food, or they simply left because of epidemics and poverty towards better places.

“These kids, then, were living like moles or rats in the earth... they seemed never to have had parents, never to have known the softening of the family. Some had been born in the Underground and abandoned.... They were just children... but they are wicked... they had been roasting rats.” (Lessing, p.108-112)

With parents abandoning their responsibilities, the authorities did not increase and tended to ignore these young people, and society did not care about them, and little by little all meaning of humanity and assistance disappeared.

“Some parents were dead, because of violence, or epidemics. Other had gone away out of the city and left their children behind.” (Lessing, p.59)

#### 4. Social Class Struggle in *Memoirs of a Survivor*

Lessing maintains an unwavering interest in space and time, and the use of social class as an integral part of individuals' identity, and the fact that conflicts are portrayed as intergenerational, between products of one time and another; points to Doris Lessing's belief in 'historical categories'. The situation stemming from the twenties or from the Great War is precisely named and defined. (Bloom, p.24)

Often Lessing's essays provide social descriptions of what it was like in a particular place at a specific time. (Bloom, p.25)

In *'The Memoirs of a Survivor'*; society is divided into three layers that are as follows: The upper (Ruling) class, The Middle (Working) Class, and The Lower Class (Lower reaches of the society).

Starting with the Ruling Class; it represents the government and the privileged

“There was a level of our society which managed to live as if nothing much was happening-nothing irreparable. The Ruling class- but was a dead phrase, so they said; very well then, the kind of person who ran things, administrated, sat on councils and committees, made the decisions ....The bureaucracy. An international bureaucracy .... The section of society which gets the most out of it maintains in itself ....An illusion of security, permanence, order ....that some people do well while others starve and fail.” (Lessing, p.66)

This class was primarily responsible for the worsening of the situation, as in addition to its representation of the role of the blind, it did not allow any change or improvement to take place, as it was using its power to incite terror and to judge those who are weaker. And its worst nightmare was the public gatherings that had to change the system of the government there.

“Has there been a rime in our country when the ruling class was not living inside its glass bell of responsibility or of wealth, shutting its eyes to what went on outside? Could there be any there any real difference when this ‘ruling class’ used words like justice, fair play, equity, order, or even socialism?.... administrators lived cushioned against the worst, trying to talk away, wish away, legislate away, the worst-for to admit that it was happening was to admit themselves useless, admit the extra security they enjoyed was theft and not payment for services rendered.” (Lessing, p.66)

“What government really did was to adjust itself to events, while pretending .... That it initiated them .... The processes of law were infinitely tricky and prolonged .... The prisons were full as ever.” (Lessing, p.114)

Passing through the second class in society, which is The Middle (working) Class; which is the dominant class in the novel and in the narrator’s society (England). The Middle Class was burdened with responsibilities, in which every individual struggles to survive, and it also includes the educated class of society, as the narrator mentions this and says:

“We (meaning the educated)” (Lessing, p.70)

This group of society is the one which maintains the course of the story’s events in both the internal and external worlds, and it was represented by a group of young people who took on thr role of the authority (that was absent) to protect themselves and what they possess:

“Stood two armed youths, on guard, with weapons: gunges, knives, knuckledusters .... Two armed boys were valuable.” (Lessing, p.72)

Or they guarded to receive a wage for their livelihood:

“They get money .... Or get something in exchange.” (Lessing, p.72)

The children of the middle class used to work during school holidays and off days on “packing goods for firms, cleaning the restaurants, selling behind the counter .... Sat and mended-gadgets, broken saucepans, clothes, furniture.” (Lessing, p.73)

And speaking of repairing fractures, knowing that Gerald’s personality who wanted to take care of children who were criminals abandoned by their parents since birth, Gerald here is considered as a symbol of the struggle for change and construction, and considering that he is from the working class that includes all handicraft workers, doctors (educated category), and sellers and the owners of cafes and shops .... It is the most active group in society. Therefore; the middle class is a symbol of reform, continuing and positive change, although it is afraid of the ruling class, yet it hopes for change and looks forward to it but as the writer mentions at the beginning of the novel

“Could not stand being alone for long; the mass was their home, their place of self-recognition. They were like dogs coming together in a park or a waste place.” (Lessing, p.21)

They do not believe in the individual’s power to change, and the most struggling group with the harsh conditions of survival.

And finally, arriving to the Lower Class (Lower Reaches of the Society), representing the poor group who completely abandoned their responsibilities, starting with their children who were abandoned and left to the streets that turned them into monsters, down to their own selves. This category of society includes criminals of different age groups who are ordinary people in the beginning, “whose structure evolved under the pressures of necessity.” (Lessing, p.65)

Later on, the survivor narrates about the relationship between the middle and lower classes and says:

“We (meaning the educated) had never found a way of sharing that plenty with lower reaches of our society .... The deprived, thinned speech of the poor had always had somewhere in it the energy of resentment.”  
(Lessing, p.70)

People from this level die because of starvation and illnesses: “others starve and fail” (Lessing, p.66). In addition to that they had no place to return to.

Through what was mentioned in the novel of ‘*Memoirs of a Survivor*’; Lessing depicts the state of England in an interesting, terrifying and realistic way, and as social class is an integral part of the identity of individuals, the reader can realize the reality of each social class, and thus Lessing has provided detailed social descriptions of what was it the case in England during the Post-war period, where society crumbles and as a result of which western civilization collapses, which fades horribly little by little through the events of the novel.

## CONCLUSION

Through the foregoing, we note that the identity of the narrator's society (The Western Society) is gradually obliterated in a society whose components are gradually falling apart, and the raw materials suddenly disappear, and that forces people to leave the region, and the Western Civilization collapses due to the stagnation that resulted from previous wars. And fool and young people take over areas where authorities and the law are absent, and the security that was prevailing in the atmosphere is lacking. Unconsciously, the individual that on which the civilization is based adopts habits and ideas through admiration; they acquire unconnected habits as a result of imitation, where they do not follow basis of certain habits, so; their acquired habits are mixed, they choose what suits them from each habit, and because everything around them is mixed, they are affected and living in the midst of mixing knowledge and habits, thus resulting in either an evolution towards the worse or the better. This happens in their acceptance of other people, atmospheres, events, and places that affect the individual which in turn affects the growth of society, and often is consciously that they develop by liking.

“But in fact people develop for good or for bad by swallowing whole other people, atmospheres, events, paces-develop by admiration”

(Lessing, p.33)

From this pulpit, the individual abandons his previously mentioned responsibilities, whether is raising and caring for children, or their responsibilities in society, which were represented in riots and corruption instead of reform and construction. As well as the prominent authorities in the community abandon their responsibilities. And this is what contributed to the demolition of a society known as the most ideal society.

And accordingly, the individual is the first and last responsible for the retreat that the un-named narrator mentioned.

What was previously mentioned is a depiction of the mechanized decline of western culture, and accordingly it becomes clear to us that Western society is not that ideal, as is the case with other societies and civilization around the world. For despite the tyranny of its idealistic descriptions, there remains a dark side behind the scenes that only those who arrive there can realize, and this can be realized through literature (novels, theatre, books, history books...) that convey, directly or indirectly, the state of society. In the novel '*Memoirs of a Survivor*' Lessing believes that positive change for society begins with the individual, as society develops for the better when each individual fulfills his or her own responsibilities without waiting for anything in return or initiative from another because they realize that the judgment or decision is made collectively.

“The need to punish the individual criminal, even if it took days and weeks and hundreds of our hard-worked police force to do it... Crucial-accident, which interrupted the even flow, the development of civilization... They had relinquished individuality that was the point, individual judgment and responsibility... For one knew that in a confrontation. If it came to that there would be a pack judgment. They could not stand being alone for long; the mass was their home, place of self-recognition. They were like dogs coming together in a park or a waste place.” (Lessing, p.11.21)

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## المخلص

لطالما استخدمت دوريس ليسينج خلفيتها وسمعتها السيئة في كتابة رواياتها ، ونتيجة للتنوع الثقافي الذي تعرضت له خلال حياتها ، تمكنت من استخدامه في كتاباتها ، والتي غالبًا ما تحدثت عن المشاكل والأحداث في تلك الفترة من الزمن. تجسد روايتها "مذكرات من نجا" الجوع وعدم كفاية اللغة ، حيث تلجأ ليسينج إلى الاستعارات لملء هذه الحاجة بعقلانية حتى لا تنزلق إلى غير الواقعية. لذلك تحكي عن التاريخ المستقبلي لمدينة ترهب شوارعها الجردان والعصابات ، حيث تخلت السلطة الحاكمة عن مسؤولياتها. تصف من خلال بطلنة الرواية الأحداث والأزمة التي عانت منها مدينة تتلاشى مع مرور الوقت، مما يفقدها هويتها بشكل يثير الرعب بطريقة هادئة. علاوة على ذلك، تؤكد هذه الدراسة على تدهور الهوية والحضارة الغربية وأهمية رعاية الفرد لمسؤولياته. وهكذا تنقسم الدراسة إلى فصلين. يعرض الفصل الأول السياق الاجتماعي التاريخي والإطار النظري. الفصل الثاني، يحلل تدهور الثقافة الغربية في ضوء "مذكرات أحد الناجين" لدوريس ليسينج.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الثقافة الغربية، الحضارة، الانحدار، الهوية، الفرد، اليوتوبيا، البائس.