Appendix

The study of the theme of marginality and the techniques of coping with it in Doris Lessing’s fiction would be incomplete without the inclusion of the critical study of her science fiction, *Shikasta* (Lessing, 1979); the first novel from the quintet, *Canopus in Argos: Archives*, where she offers a radically different view of the phenomena of colonization. Instead of portraying the colonizer as an oppressor, which is a norm in subaltern studies that talks about the anguish of the silent and the powerless, the colonizer is depicted as benign and benevolent, compassionate yet detached, a saintly figure who endeavours, rather unstintingly, for hundreds of centuries to promote the well-being of the colonized planet Shikasta, which symbolizes the Earth. Lessing obliquely critiques the irresponsible position adopted by the British Government towards the African colony of Southern Rhodesia after 1924, when the administration was left to the immigrant white population which ruthlessly exploited the natives by sending them to the native reserves, where the land was infertile, and imposed unjust taxes, which compelled them to serve on the white man’s land for a pittance, disrupting their socio-economic and cultural life. Lessing critiques the policy of the British Government, in her non-fictional work *African Laughter* as follows:

The British administered the sullen populations…the two northern countries were British protectorates, and their black populations actually believed in promises made to them by Queen Victoria, and that their interests would be paramount, that their countries were to be administered for their own good…meanwhile Southern Rhodesia had always modeled itself on South Africa, adapting every repressive law passed there, fitting it into the edifice of oppression as comprehensive as South Africa’s. (Lessing, 1979:6)

As a committed fiction writer, Lessing’s quest for the solution to the problem of marginalization begins with her involvement in the Marxist ideology from 1939 to 1944 during the Second World War in Southern Rhodesia, and from 1950 to 1956 in London, where she lived since 1949. Lessing’s involvement with the political ideology of Marxism is depicted in her first four realist novels from the quintet, *Children of Violence (1952-1969), Martha Quest, The Proper Marriage, A Ripple from the Storm and Landlocked*. Lessing got disillusioned with the political ideology of Marxism as a viable solution to the problem of racial oppression and the oppression of women, which she had witnessed in Southern Rhodesia, where she grew up as a member of
the white settler community as well as in London in the post war period, after the Twentieth Congress and the Russian invasion of Hungary. Lessing’s quest for the solution to the issue of marginalization took her to Laingian concept of psychiatry, which she explored through her inner space fiction in the novels, *A Briefing for the Descent into the Hell, Summer Before the Dark and Memoirs of a Survivor*, written in the decade of the early seventies. Her quest took her to the genre of science fiction which she calls as “space fiction” wherein she explored the philosophy of Sufism. Lessing turned to the philosophy of Sufism under the influence of Idries Shah from Iran in early sixties, in quest of a solution to the issue of marginalization. It is love and empathy embedded in the philosophy of Sufism which is discerned as a solution to the problem of colonization. Lessing turned to the genre of science fiction under the influence of Kurt Vonnegut whom she read avidly. In the introduction to her science fiction *Canopus in Argos: Archives* Lessing writes in praise of the genre of science fiction as follows:

What a phenomenon it has been- science fiction, space fiction- exploding out of nowhere, unexpectedly of course, as always happens when the human mind is being forced to expand: this time starwards, galaxy-wise and who knows where next… these dazzlers have mapped our world, or worlds, have told us what is going on and in ways no one else has done…it has played the indispensable and the thankless role of the despised illegitimate son, who can afford to tell truths the respectable siblings either do not dare, or more likely do not notice because of their respectability.(Lessing, 1979: 10)

As a committed writer, Lessing revisits the theme of colonization in her science fiction with a specific view to offering a solution to the problem of colonization. The love and empathy shown by Canopus towards the colonized planet Shikasta depicted in the novel *Shikasta*, which is considered here for the detailed study, paves a way to the creation of an alternative identity and offers a promise of new beginnings to the power equations, in the post-colonial discourse of the colonizer and the colonized.

*Shikasta* (1979) which symbolizes the planet Earth is colonized by the evil planet Shammat from the galaxy Puttiora after the cosmic dis-aster which puts the Canopean Lock in mal-alignment. The lock ensured a steady flow of the Substance of We Feeling (SOWF) by the benevolent planet Canopus which had colonized the Shikasta millions of years ago, since the inception of the planet. With the mal-alignment of the lock, the fruitful planet Rohanda turns into Shikasta “the wounded” for it falls a prey to the “degenerative dis-ease” which makes its people identify
themselves as individuals rather than a part of the whole. As a consequence, the planet Shikasta is ravaged by “war” and it stands on the brink of total annihilation, where the Shikastans fight against each other. Frantz Fanon, the Post–Colonial critic comments in *The Wretched of the Earth*, “the colonized man will first manifest his aggressiveness which is deposited in his bones against his own people.” (Fanon, 1965:40) It is the benevolent colonizer, Canopus, who sends its “immortal” envoy Johor, who incarnates as George Sherban and like the biblical Noah, rescues the wounded planet from being destroyed, by preserving the species, who manifest evolutionary potential, in keeping with the Canopean plan of cosmic harmony, and strengthened its existence, by restoring the Lock, which guaranteed the flow of the Substance Of We Feeling, SOWF.

At the margin of the colonial structure is the wounded planet Shikasta, which suffers from the “Degenerative Dis-ease,” (Lessing, 1979:55) which makes people identify themselves as individuals rather than “a whole” in keeping with the “cosmic harmony” and the “Laws of Necessity.” The degenerative dis-ease is caused due to dis-aster which means the mal-alignment of the stars or the cosmic bodies. As a consequence, the evil planet Shammat from the galaxy Puttiora steals into the domain of Shikasta and ruins the physical environment as well as the mind of men, who become oblivious of the principle of harmony as envisaged by the benign colonizer Canopus from the galaxy of Argos, and look upon themselves as individuals, and therefore become egoistic, greedy, materialistic and belligerent. As reported by the emissaries and documented in the Canopean archives, at the beginning of the twentieth century, under the Shammatan influence, the natives of the north-west fringe colonize the natives of the southern states for their minds are preyed upon by the divisive ideas of superiority and inferiority. The dwellers of the northern hemisphere are overcome with greed, they fight against each other, and the situation explodes into the First World War. The period is followed by the outbreak of a revolution which fuels the rhetoric of the war against Capitalism. Half the world is muzzled by the domination of the ideology. People of a certain religion are treated with cruelty and are killed en mass. Shikasta is gripped by technological power which pollutes and poisons land, air and water. Shikasta turns into a spiritual wasteland. People with paranormal powers, the Lynda Coldridge type, who manifest evolutionary possibilities are labeled as mad and are dumped in the mad houses. Shikasta is an allegory which comments on the Earth in turmoil in the twentieth century.
Shikasta, which was known as Rohanda or the fruitful one, before the mal-alignment of stars, and prior to the onslaught of Shammat, is rescued by Canopus, the compassionate colonizer, whose “invisible, unwritten, uncoded rule…is Love” (p13) Canopus, though had colonized several planets in the universe, Shikasta had a special place in the heart of Canopus, for it was always believed that it had a potential for evolution. Its emissary Johor says, “Shikasta was always there, it is on our agenda, it is not a place one could choose to forget …it was a glory and hope of Canopus.” (p13, 26)

In the nascent stage of Shikastan development, in the post-radiation period, when Canopus observed the birth of a new species, that resembled the advanced stage of monkeys, the planet was put in a symbiotic relationship with the evolved people of planet 10, who called themselves, Giants. The Giants and the natives who were put in symbiosis were mutually benefitted. The giants grew stronger physically in terms of life span and size, and at the same time, experienced the stimulation of “higher level” in mental terms (Lessing, 1979:31) The natives developed in physical terms, and showed a remarkable development in their practical intelligence. Yet, there was a room for the development for the “Higher Powers.” (Lessing, 1979:31) Commenting on the relationship between the Giants and the natives, the envoy, Johor remarks as follows:

They had established with the natives a tutelary relation which gave the liveliest of interest to both the sides. It was the Giants who taught the natives the beginnings of the plant culture. They taught them, too, how to use animals without harming the species. They were developing language in them. It was still only the basis of many talents- arts and sciences- that the Giants were laying, for it was not yet time for the establishment of the Lock between Canopus and Rohanda that would begin the Forced-Growth Phase. (Lessing, 1979: 30)

When Canopus was convinced of the state of symbiosis being complete it was deemed appropriate to establish the Lock, which would ensure a steady flow of the Substance Of We Feeling from Canopus to Shikasta. For the spiritual wellbeing of the Shikastans, they were taught to maintain contact with their “maker their Mother, their Friend, what they called God or divine.” (Lessing, 1979: 40) The Canopean emissary reports, “…their existence depended on their voluntary submission to the great whole and that this submission, this obedience was not serfdom or slavery, states that had never existed on the planet and which they knew nothing of but the source of their health and their future and their progress. (p41)
Thus the relationship between Canopus and Shikasta was characterized by love and empathy. It is the love between the creator and the creature, the colonizer and the colonized can be witnessed here. Shikasta was constantly being watched over by Canopus, the colonizer and its “Maker” or the creator and therefore, the planet, in crisis, is visited, very often, by the benign and the benevolent emissaries. In the post degenerative state, it is Johor the Canopean emissary, who incarnates as George Sherban. The saintly character, tries to bring the three factions of the Youth Armies together during the period of the Chinese Overlords, before the “Third World War.” The conference, which began in verbal aggression, ends in peace and warmth, because of George Sherban’s initiative. George Sherban’s brother, Benjamin Sherban, comments on the conference as follows:

The conference ended in a rush, with the bands playing very fast... the delegates were already streaming out to catch their coaches, many in floods of tears at interrupted friendships and loves making improbable plans to meet each other, kissing, hugging, waving... these enemies were entwined like barley-sugar sticks on a rainy day, and they could hardly be dragged apart. (Lessing, 1979:312)

George Sherban tries to “defuse” the feeling of anger and revenge that ravaged the minds of the people at the mock trial of the white races held in Greece, the ancient slave state, where the Canopean emissary, Taufiq, who was sent by Canopus to rescue the planet Shikasta, fell under Shammat’s influence and who was born in the North-West Fringe as John Oxford-Brent, took to politics, which lead to the further split in the society. Taufiq as John-Oxford, pleads guilty, and the scene is charged with anger and revenge and people hear of massacre. But John Oxford questions the people other than the white races who had suffered the white oppression that their aggressive and vindictive attitude was no different from the cruelty shown by the white races. John Oxford’s assessment of the rivals took away the poison of anger and revenge from the rival factions. The people who were planning a massacre left the arena in a passionless state.

When ninety nine percent population on the planet Shikasta is destroyed in the third world war due to the overwhelming influence of the evil planet Shammat, it is George Sherban, who like the biblical Noah, tries to save one percent of population who manifest the evolutionary potential in keeping with the Canopean laws of cosmic harmony and helps the descendent of man, Rachael’s adopted son, Kassim to build the new city with a complete sense of detachment and
further, to ensure their well being the Lock supplying SOWF is strengthened. It is love and em-
pathy between the colonizer and the colonized that rescues the colonized planet. Commenting on
the role played by the Canopean emissaries, Lorna Sage quotes Nancy Hardin as follows:

Her Canopeans are the ideal colonists, who rule only by virtue of their more intimate understand-
ing of the patterns of creation and destruction at work in the Universe. In fact they rather resem-
ble the Sufi mystics whose writings have latterly fascinated her; the point about the wandering
Sufi teachers being that they take on the colouring of whatever culture they find themselves in,
though their aim is to awaken a consciousness free of time and place. (Sage, 1983: 82)

Lessing, who had witnessed the cruelty of the colonizer, the imperialist white settler community
and the indifference of the British government which is castigated by Lessing and simultaneous-
ly, as an idealist she offers an alternative identity to the discourse of the colonizer and the colo-
nized, and paves a way to new beginnings by building a new community based on the Sufi prin-
ciple of love.

Kassim, the representative of the new Home comments as follows:

I am writing this, sitting on a low white wall that has the patterns on it. People are all around me,
working at this or that. We are in tents in the meantime, everything makeshift and even difficult
but it doesn’t seem so, and everything is happening in this new way, there is no need to argue
and argue and discuss and disagree and confer and accuse and fight and then kill. All that is over,
it is finished, it is dead. How did we live then? We were all stumbling about in a thick dark, full
of enemies and dangers, we were blind in a heavy hot weight of suspicion and doubt and fear.
Poor people of the past… fumbling and stumbling and longing for something different…always
murdering and destroying because they couldn’t help it… And this will go on for us, as if we
were being slowly lifted and filled and washed by a soft singing wind and that clears our sad
muddled minds and holds us safe and heals us and feeds us with lessons we never imagined. And
here we all are together, here we are… (Lessing, 1979:447)

Thus a new world is born on the basis of love and empathy, which would pave a way for the new
beginnings for the mankind.