Chapter III

The Patriarchal Structure
The previous chapter talks about the plight of the weak and the silenced in the colonial structure of power; the present chapter deals with the sufferings of women in the male-oriented society. Lessing’s engagement with the theme of “marginalization” (Arora, 1991: blurb) of women, in the patriarchal structure of power, is co-incident with her stay in southern Rhodesia, where she lived from 1923 – 1949, as a member of the white settler community watching the plight of the white women, who came to Rhodesia, in expectation of the life of social anticipation, but were met with a complete disillusionment. They led a life of social isolation and acute poverty, and consequently, suffered a nervous breakdown on the vast African farm.

Lessing talks about the plight of her mother, who came in anticipation of a lively urban social life, who, “packed curtains from Liberty’s, clothes from Harrods, visiting cards, a piano, Persian rugs, a governess, and two small children,” (1994:110) but found the isolated life on the African veld a “hell.” (Rowe, 1994:4) Lessing says that her mother was offered the matronship of the St. George Hospital in London, during the First World War, where she was preparing for a degree in nursing. Lessing’s mother could have lived the life of a professional woman, in London, but for her father’s dream of a free life, that brought her to Southern Rhodesia, where she suffered a mental illness for some time, for want of money and social anticipation on the African farm. Lessing calls her mother, a “frustrated, complaining woman.” (Lessing, 1998:4)

The colonial society that Lessing grew up in followed the Victorian ideals, where woman’s role was restricted to the position of a mother and wife. In Lessing’s semi-autobiographical novel, *Martha Quest, (1952)* two white colonial women, Mrs. Quest and Mrs. Van Rensberg, are depicted, occupying a small corner of the veranda, away from their men, discussing their children, and the inefficiency of their servants, the black natives. Lessing’s concern for the women’s issues can
be discerned in, *The Grass is Singing*, (1950). The woman protagonist, Mary Turner, is depicted as the victim of the male dominated colonial society. As an unmarried girl of about thirty, Mary is taunted by the contemporary, colonial society, for her inability to get a husband, which, later traps her into an unmatched marriage. Mary is treated as the “other.” (Said, 1977: 332) Mary, who is thrown out of the comfort zone of urban life, and financial independence, disintegrates into neurosis on the isolated African veld. Her warm relationship with the African native, which develops in her state of madness, earns her social disgrace, and Mary’s murder by the African native, serves as staple of gossip in the white colonial society. Ernest Jones calls Mary the victim of the patriarchal, colonial society, he writes, “…*The Grass is Singing*, a first novel, abounds in local colour, a South African Farm, but examines carefully, the eclipse of the dim soul, a towns woman, whom a bad marriage and years in the veld drive to madness and death.” (1950: 273) If Mary Turner is the victim of the colonial society, it is Martha Quest, the radical protagonist of Lessing’s novel, *Martha Quest* (1952) who is depicted as the character at war with the colonial culture, in quest of her identity. Martha fights a psychological battle against her mother, who wants her to live up to the Edwardian standards of dressing up. She forbids Martha, the teenager, from interacting with the Cohen boys, who were considered inferior men, for they belonged to the Jew community. Martha, who felt stifled on the African farm, very defiantly, seeks her freedom, by quitting the farm, and picking up a job, in the nearby town of Salisbury, in the lawyer’s office. In Salisbury, Martha refuses to live up to the expectations of her chauvinist boyfriend, Donovan, who wants to flaunt Martha as a model. Kate Millet comments in *Sexual Politics* that in the capitalist, imperialist, and patriarchal society, woman is an object of “utility, possession and decoration.” ((1971: 23) At the end of the novel, Martha marries Douglas Knowell, believing him to be an egalitarian in his approach to man woman relationship, for he reads the communist newspaper, *The New Statesman*. Very ironically, Martha’s marriage turns into a nightmare. C.P Snow discerns “Lessing’s affinity to Lawrence,” in the depiction of Martha’s “lost and pathetic marriage.” (1953:11) In the ironically titled novel, A Proper Marriage, (1954) Lessing critiques the oppressive institution of marriage. Martha suffers domestic violence, and she quits the house, seeking divorce from her husband. In *A Ripple from the Storm*, Martha marries Anton Hesse, the refugee from Germany, the enemy country, to put him at ease, owing to political reasons. Though, a communist, he, too, manifests oppressive propensity. He refuses to believe in the equality of man and woman. Martha
breaks off the marital relationship with Anton Hesse. Lessing critiques the institution of marriage and family, as oppressive institutions in several of her works. To fight oppression in the colonial society, Lessing joins the radical group of the local communists. She writes in her autobiography, *Under My Skin* (1991) the reason for joining the communist party in Southern Rhodesia, during the second world under the influence of the service men of Royal Air force was, “there would be no race prejudice, oppression of women, exploitation of labor, no snobbishness, or contempt for others.”(280)

Lessing came to London in 1949, and she witnessed the problems confronted by women in post-war Britain. Lessing talks about the marginalization of women, who suffered from mental illness due to insecurity and threat of war. Lynda Coldridge, the woman protagonist, from the novel, *The Four Gated City*, (1969), who suffers from mental illness, is treated as the “other,” in the patriarchal society, in post-war Britain. In the novel, *The Fifth Child*, (1988) Lessing discusses the problem of maternity. She talks about the plight of the mother who gives birth to a mentally and physically “different” child. The mother is treated as an outcast, in a so-called equal society in Britain, in late seventies. Margaret Drabble talks about Lessing’s experiences with her men publishers, who tried manipulating her for being a woman, Drabble writes:

She writes about men, about con-men of the art world, the film men, the journalists, with wit and hatred, she destroys their sexual dignity, their unspoken assumptions, and their maneuvers, with an entirely justifiable indignation. Perhaps few women were exposed as she had to such solicitations, but if they had, they had politely kept their mouths shut, she tells the truth. (1972:50-54)

In late fifties, and especially, after Lessing’s disenchantment with communism, in 1956, and early sixties, Lessing tried to find solutions to human problems in the psychiatric theory of R.D. Laing, “the unorthodox, cultural theoretician” (Vlastos, 1986: 126- 140) and the principle of love and empathy embedded in the philosophy of Sufism, under the influence of Idries Shah.

In Lessing’s literary career spanning over six decades, one observes her dealing with the women’s question, in several of her works, since, *The Grass is Singing* (1950) to *The Clefts* (2007). Just as Lessing fought for the rights of the black natives in colonial Africa, as a humanist, and a “committed” (Gindin, 2003:9) writer, Lessing fights for the rights of women in an unequal society; both in Central Africa, and post-war Britain. Commenting on the position of women, Lessing says in *The
Preface to the Golden Notebook, “I support Women’s Liberation, of course, because women are second grade citizens… and have been semi-slaves for so long.” (1971: 8)

As a writer, Lessing does not merely pose problems but offers solution to the problem. Lessing’s vision of an equal society can be witnessed in her novel Martha Quest, in the form of “a four gated City.” (1952: 21) Though, Lessing talks about oppression of women, but she does not believe in sexual isolation. Solution to the problem lies in the harmonious relationship between men and women. Talking about Lessing’s vision of man woman relationship, Neena Arora writes in her insightful work, Nayantara Sahgal and Doris Lessing, Feminist Study in Comparison:

Lessing analyses woman’s marginalization, and deprivation, both before and after marriage, and explores different avenues, open to her in her quest for identity, in the face of greater emotional and material hardship. As their search takes them through several vicissitudes, their vision ranging from moderate to militant, they find a soothing solution in harmonious and whole relationship. ((1991: Blurb)


The Golden Notebook (1962) talks about the sexual privations, emotional snubs, aesthetic and ideological suppression, and social oppression, suffered by a sensitive intellectual, social and political activist, and a critically acclaimed woman novelist, Anna Wulf, a forty year old divorcee, and a single mother in an “essentially masculine world,” (Schlueter, 2003: 27) in post-war Britain.
from 1950-1957. The novel is set against the backdrop of the dubious political climate of the cold war.

Anna Wulf becomes vulnerable, and suffers a complete loss of identity, after being deserted by her lover, Michael, an ex-European psychiatrist and an erstwhile communist, who suffers a traumatic youth during the second world war, for his parents, siblings and close relations are gas chambered in Czechoslovakia. Anna lives a life of sexual and emotional fulfillment with Michael, for five years. As the long affair is abruptly broken off by Michael, against Anna’s will, Anna suffers a sense of “futility, ennui, and disgust” which hurls her life into a state of chaos. To save herself from a chaotic state, she records her experiences in four notebooks, black, red, yellow and blue.

The black notebook talks about her dissatisfaction as a writer, and her disappointment with the film companies that desire to buy the rights of her first successful novel, *Frontiers of War*, but try to distort the content of the novel to please the “money – bags,” retaining the title of the novel, all the same, to reap profit from its celebrity status. The red notebook records Anna’s dithering engagement and a gradual disenchantment with the political ideology of communism, which fails to serve as a panacea to the problems confronted by mankind. The yellow notebook offers a fictional account of Anna’s relationship with Michael, and her sufferings after Michael abandons her, which depicts her as a bruised single woman, tormented and tortured by men, who are sadists, sexual cripples and perverts. The blue notebook serves as a diary, recording the daily events, that depicts her painful sessions with the psycho-analyst, her endearing and soothing relationship with her small daughter, Janet, her warm as well as a teasing relationship with Michael, her voluntary work for the British communist party and her unsuccessful attempt to create fictional pieces.

Anna’s failure, in man-woman relationship, and her being treated as an enemy, by the callous masculine world, her failure to express herself through her art, and her disillusionment with communism as a “viable solution to human misery,” (Vlastos,127) pushes her to a state of mental breakdown.

It is in the inner golden notebook, that all four strands come together, that ends the fragmentation of Anna’s mind, and frees Anna from the writer’s block. Anna is rescued by her American lover, a left-wing writer, Saul Green. A spiritual and a symbiotic union between Anna and Saul
serve as a key to Anna’s recovery; it raises her consciousness and liberates her from false dichotomies, which helps her redeem her true self.

At the margin of the patriarchal structure of power is Anna Wulf, the so-called free woman, the protagonist of the novel, *Free Women* written by Anna Wulf after being freed from the writer’s block, in the novel *The Golden Notebook*, who suffers a loss of identity for being abandoned by her lover Michael, the East European refugee, and a doctor, with whom Anna lived a life of sexual and emotional commitment for five years, in post-war Britain. Anna, while talking to her friend Molly in a session on ‘what’s-wrong –with- men’ reveals the precarious condition of the free women or the new women, that Anna and Molly have chosen to be, in post-war Britain. Anna says with irony, that though, they consider themselves free women, they are judged in terms of their relationship with men. Anna says “Free women… they still define us in terms of relationship with men, even the best of them.” (26) Anna while talking to Molly confides in her saying that probably the life of independence chosen by them was a “mistake.”(66) The challenges they have to face as single women test their psychological toughness. Though they try to put up a brave front, yet the price they have to pay is very high; they feel unnerved. Since Anna feels emotionally wounded after Michael’s departure from her life, she overtly expresses the precariousness of their emotional life. Anna says:

Molly? I have been thinking, you know, it’s possible we made a mistake. Both of us are dedicated to the proposition that we are tough,… our marriage breaks up, we say, well, our marriage was a failure, a man ditches us- too bad we say, it’s not important, we bring up children without men – nothing to it, we say we can cope… because when I face it, I don’t think I have got over Michael. I think it’s done for me (Lessing, 1962: 66)

Anna and Molly are divorcees and single mothers, who are financially independent. Molly is an actress and Anna is a writer of a successful first novel, *Frontiers of war*, which is based on her colonial experience in central Africa, where she had lived from 1939 to 1949. Anna lives off the royalty received from her novel. Both are sensitive intellectuals, who have been committed to the social and political cause. Molly was involved with the cause of Republican Spain, and Anna had joined the communist party in central Africa, during the Second World War, to fight against the injustice of colour bar and oppression of white colonial women; both worked for the British communist party in post-war Britain and look upon the ideology of communism as a solution to hu-
man misery, though the shocking events like the Hungarian crisis, and the Twentieth Congress cause misgivings in their minds, about the relevance of the political ideology of communism, which is dented by the dubious policies of Stalin. Anna and Molly refused to live by the conventions of the society, and they refused to be oppressed by the stifling tenets of the institution of marriage. They walked out of a sexually and emotionally incompatible and oppressive, marital relationship and never wanted to have husbands, merely as their children’s fathers. They call themselves free women, but, very ironically they are perceived and defined in terms of their relationship with men. Anna experiences the pain and the precarious condition of the free woman in all its gravity, only after the departure of Michael from her life. She suffers marginalization in emotional, social, ideological, professional, and cultural terms, which is further aggravated due to the global crisis, which intensifies her vulnerable position.

Anna came from central Africa to London in 1949, with her four year old daughter, Janet, after seeking a divorce from her husband Max Wulf, with whom she never shared any emotional and physical compatibility, and began staying with her friend Molly in her flat. She fell in love with Michael and had a long affair with him. Anna lived with a measure of financial independence, and worked for the communist party, for her first novel, ploughed in profit enough to offer her leisure to do voluntary work for the British communist party and to muse on her life in the free time. In the initial phase of her love affair with Michael, Anna had lived with Molly but later at Michael’s suggestion she had shifted to a large flat close to Molly’s house. Since Michael had broken off relations with Anna for a new girl, Anna is not only emotionally devastated but also overwhelmed with a sense of insecurity and loneliness. She is overcome with a negative feeling of futility, boredom, and disgust. Anna, who is a successful writer of her first novel, fails to express herself through art, for, as a committed artist she feels it is against her principle to feed her readers with the negative emotions of futility and disgust. As a consequence, she feels stifled in her professional life. Instead of writing a novel, frightened and insecure Anna, starts recording her experiences in four notebooks, black, red, yellow and blue, to avoid chaos. The black notebook talks about her experience as a writer, the red notebook deals with her engagement with the communist party. The yellow notebook offers a fictional account of Anna’s relationship with Michael, and the blue notebook serves as a diary recording the daily events. Anna’s resorting to expressing herself
through her notebooks, though is symptomatic of her psychic fragmentation, yet the neat recording of her varied experiences can be discerned as her technique of coping with her fear of formlessness at the initial stage.

Though, the relationship between Anna and Michael had been warm and sexually and emotionally fulfilling, Michael had always refused to commit to her. Anna anticipated that someday, at a later date, Michael would marry her, but he remained non-committal on the issue of marriage. In the initial phase of their relationship, when Michael failed to commit to her about marriage, Anna felt psychologically disturbed and she tried finding solution in psychiatric treatment, which left her more vulnerable. Moreover, when the Jungian psychiatrist, Mrs. Marks tells Anna to write a diary to express herself creatively, in protest, Anna begins sticking the headlines from the newspapers in her blue notebook, for Anna is overwhelmed and terrified with the global crisis that posed a threat to the total annihilation of mankind, Anna also refuses to write, for she believes that art has become irrelevant, in the face of the large scale destructive events. From 1950 to 1954 Anna maintains a record of the catastrophic global events that intensify her split.

In quest of humanism, comradeship and a spirit of wholeness, Anna had joined the British communist party, for Anna had come in contact with the political ideology of communism in central Africa, to deal with the issue of racial oppression and the unjust treatment meted out to women in colonial Africa, for she felt that communism was the only ideology that had moral energy in it. In the political climate of the cold war, in post-war Britain, Anna was apprehensive about joining the communist party for the atmosphere in the party was full of fear and suspicion, where the truth was suppressed. Communism had turned imperialistic, oppressive and tyrannical. Anna joins the party only to be disillusioned with it. Anna, who feels ideologically alienated, suffers yet another psychological shock, and through one of her dreams Anna learns that Michael would abandon her soon. Thus, Anna’s psychic crisis is compounded. In a state of chaos, in the final session that Anna has with the psycho-analyst in 1954, a few months before Michael’s departure, she dreams of a fragmented and splintered world which puts a seal on her neurotic state. Anna describes her dream as follows:

I dreamed … bits and pieces from everywhere, all over the world. I recognized a lump of red earth that I knew came from Africa, and then a bit of metal that came off a gun from Indo-China, and
then everything was horrible, bits of flesh from people killed in the Korean War and a communist party badge off someone who died in a Soviet prison. (230)

Anna, as a truthful writer, offers a real account of her relations with Michael in her fictional work, the manuscript of the novel called *The Shadow of the Third*, which is recorded in the yellow notebook. Anna identifies with her alter ego Ella. It is Ella, the protagonist of the novel, *The Shadow of the Third*, who is depicted as the alter ego of Anna, who suffers a helpless dependence on Paul Tanner, Ella’s lover, the psychiatrist, who came from the working class, with whom, Ella has had a long and an emotionally fulfilling affair. It was abruptly severed off by Paul Tanner, against Ella’s will, leaving her emotionally shattered. Anna depicts Ella as a divorcée and a single mother of a small boy, Michael, who lived with her friend Julia. Both believed that they were “normal” women, with emotions of conventional women, but their marriages had failed for they failed to get the men who could respond to their sensibilities. Ella’s marriage with George was emotionally sterile, which destroyed her present life as well as threatened her future, inhibiting her from entering into any relationship with man, for fear of “resurrecting her past.”(165) Though, Ella belonged to the middle class, she empathized deeply with the working class, and hated the divided British society, for she had witnessed their plight, during the second world war, in a factory. Ella worked for a woman’s magazine meant to enhance the taste of the working class women, regarding fashion and clothes, and hated it, for its capitalist snobbery. But Ella liked the work she handled, under the general practitioner, Dr. West, which dealt with answering the private letters of women, who suffered a malaised, personal lives and needed counseling. Ella had also got some of her stories published, and she was writing a novel on the theme of suicide, since the topic was negative, she had no intention of publishing it. It is at the party thrown by Dr West, at his residence, that Ella meets Paul Tanner and soon falls in love. In the initial period of their love making, Paul embarrasses her by asking her how many people she had slept with, since she slept with him out of “sexual hunger.”(183) Paul as a male, evinces a jealous attitude. Ella gets furious for she feels humiliated and vows not to see him again. Paul makes up later by humouring her. In the course of time, Ella realizes her emotional attachment to Paul. As a free woman, she believes that she need not be tied to any man and therefore tries sleeping with a publisher whom she had always hated. Since she did not love him, she feels sexually repulsed. Paul in the meantime, has a similar experience and thereafter, Paul and Ella have a serious love affair. Paul helps her in answering her letters, a life of to-
gathering begins, where Paul spends all his nights with Ella and loves eating the food, cooked by
her. Ella feels that Paul would marry her soon, for he speaks with indifference about his wife and
children. Paul had married his wife Muriel at an early age, and had two children, thereafter he went
to war, after coming back from the war, he never slept with his wife and went on having affairs
with many women. Paul remains non-committal on the issue of marriage to Ella, and Ella too,
sweeps the idea aside, since she felt truly happy in his company.

It was a couple of weeks before Paul broke off relations with Ella, she realizes that he stopped
helping her with her letters under the pretext that the job of a psychiatrist and a social worker is
like “tying poultices on the unnecessary wounds.”(197) Ella wants to know the reason of his sud-
den disgruntlement with his job when he had been absolutely committed to his work. Paul speaks
curtly with Anna, saying that, she was his “mistress and not his wife,”(198) with whom he was not
expected to share all his secrets. Ella feels humiliated. Ella also realizes that in their sexual life, he
had started manipulating her technically, giving her clitoral orgasms, which is symptomatic of es-
trangement, instead of vaginal orgasm, which stood for emotional and sexual intimacy. The shift in
the emphasis to clitoral orgasm dropped a sure hint of Paul’s departure from Ella’s life, but Ella
shrugs it off as a sign of Paul’s fractured personality, to save her the emotional wound of his depar-
ture.

Paul and Ella shared a life of emotional commitment for five years; But when Paul was about to
break off relations with Ella, Paul expressed his jealousy over Ella’s professional success, leaving
Ella in a state of shock. When Ella finishes her novel and it is accepted for publication, Paul reacts
with sarcasm and adopts a hostile view of women; obliquely suggesting Ella needs him no more.
He says:

Well, we men might just as well resign from life” He says with seriousness “My dear Ella don’t
you know what the great revolution of our time is? The Russian revolution, the Chinese Revolu-
tion, they are nothing at all. The real revolution is Women against Men…you can apply ice to
women’s ovaries… she can have a child. Men are no longer necessary, to humanity.(198)

Paul has no qualms humiliating her by calling her a socially unrespectable and insecure woman
and the male chauvinist prig in him suggests that Ella should find herself a husband instead of hav-
ing lovers at her feet. Paul took Ella to his home, when his wife and children were away on a holi-
day. Anna looked at the discordant house and guessed that Paul’s wife had been leading a loveless life and could soon break down. She suggests Paul to divorce her since he didn’t love her, so that she would find someone who genuinely cared for her and loved her, for Paul, in the past five years had never returned to her at night, he always went home “to pick up a clean shirt,”(187) in the morning. Ella is emotionally snubbed, when he retorts that his wife is “respectable and secure.” (206) Paul’s attitude to Ella as a free woman, smacks of patriarchal domination. He treats her as “the other,” as an individual of inferior social status.

Ella feels thrown out of Paul’s emotional world, when he discloses the news about his taking up job in Nigeria apparently to free himself from the wicked and poisonous world of the British middle class, but actually to rid himself from Ella, that she learns during her conversation with Dr. West. After Paul’s departure, Dr. West tells Ella of having received a letter from Paul, stating the reason for leaving England, to rid himself from a “pretty flighty piece with whom he had got heavily involved, who was pestering him to get married for being tired of a gay life and the woman was not so young, that was the problem.”(207)It breaks Ella’s heart when she learns that the “flighty piece” is none other than Ella herself, a temporary sexy diversion. Ella realizes that she had been naïve to believe that Paul would take her to Nigeria. When he had spoken about leaving for Africa, Ella was keen on accompanying him to the new place of work. She plans to go with him for there is nothing to keep her in London, and Michael could go to a local school there. But Paul remains non-committal about it. Moreover he taunts her of her “literary lunches” (195) accusing her of infidelity.

After Paul’s departure from England, Ella is emotionally enslaved to his memory, she leaves Julia’s house, for it constantly reminds her of the happy times that she spent with Paul. She is psychologically disturbed after his withdrawal from her life, when she learns of Paul’s arrival in London, she, wistfully awaits him, all dolled up, almost every night. Ella experiences a state of psychic divide for want of Paul’s company.

Lessing’s women, though call themselves, new women or free women, in reality, are not free. Though they are far ahead of Ibsen’s Nora, or Shaw’s Candida, for they have freed themselves from the shackles of the institution of marriage, and are financially independent, yet they are not
emotionally free. In 1950s, Anna and Ella, Molly and Julia, are far more intelligent, talented and self-reliant women, who had outgrown the demands put forward by women’s liberation movement in 1971. The demands of the women’s liberation group in March 1971, the first demonstration since the suffragettes stated, “Equal pay, Equal education and job opportunities… free contraception and abortion on demand.” (Jordan; Weedon, 1997: 170) In spite of being talented, creative and self-sufficient, Lessing’s women experience suffocation in the cultural landscape of the late fifties. Tapan Ghosh captures the cultural mood of the nineteen sixties, in the west, as follows:

… the radical atmosphere of 1960s nourished the feminist movement and inspired a sexual revolution. Philip Larkin identified the first stirrings of the revolution in his poem, ‘Annus Mirabilis’ 1963: Sexual intercourse began/ In nineteen sixty three/ (Which was rather late for me) - Between the Chatterley ban /and the Beatle’s first L.P The lifting of the ban from Lawrence’s most controversial novel and the release of the Beatles’ first album were viewed by Larkin as the liberating symptoms of the time. (2006: 18)

Andrew Sanders says, “In the decade of sixties…a post- Freudian openness about sexual relationship and a post – Lawrentian attempt to sanctify sexuality could be witnessed as part of a wider shift in popular culture and public morality.”(2000: 611) Though, cultural landscape of the sixties, talks about liberation of women, in Lessing’s The Golden Notebook, the concept of a “Freewoman” is an illusion. It is an ironical term. The free women, Ella and Anna are desperate to have the company of men. Though they have escaped the oppression of the cruel institution of marriage, though they are financially independent, they are intellectuals, yet they are not free. They are emotionally dependent on men. Woman is still treated as the other, the enemy, by the masculine world.

Almost a year after Paul’s departure from Ella’s life, she remains inconsolably depressed, for she is haunted by his memory. It is Patricia Brent, Ella’s employer, who empathizes with Ella, and to restore her to normalcy, she sends her on a business trip to Paris, apparently to interview the editor of Femme au Foyer, the French version of Women at Home, the magazine run by Patricia Brent. Yet, Ella remains emotionally alienated for she recalls the intimate moments she had shared with Paul in Paris a couple of years ago. Ella refuses to respond to the love offered by young men in Paris for she feels guilty. Anna says, “for with Paul, Ella had taught herself never to look at any man, even casually, for his jealously. And now, as a free woman she felt like a prisoner who had
served a prison sentence for four years, in solitary confinement, and then been told to behave normally.”(277)

Ever since Paul’s departure, Ella felt sexually deprived; she had not experienced a vaginal orgasm; she had only experienced the painful violence of clitoral orgasm, where her hand served as Paul’s. Ella is incurably enslaved to the memory of Paul. Ella feels unnerved to move around alone in Paris.

In Paris, she meets the editor of *Femme au Foyer*, Robert Brun, and identifies his infidelity to his fiancée; for she finds him looking at girls on the pavement. She speculates that in three years’ time, their marriage would turn sour. She remembers the plight of Paul’s wife, Muriel, who was neglected by her husband, and she bore the pangs mutely. Ella questions her status, though, she is free from marriage, is she emotionally free? She deliberates her so-called status, as a free woman as follows:

What did it mean, my saying I loved Paul, when his going has left me like a snail that has had her shell pecked off by a bird? I should have said, that my being with Paul essentially meant, I remained myself, remained independent and free. I asked nothing of him, certainly not marriage, and yet, now I am in pieces. So it was all a fraud. (282)

Endorsing Ella’s view of woman’s freedom being an illusion Julia says:

Free! What’s the use of us being free when they aren’t? I swear to God, that every one of them, even the best of them, has the old idea of good women and bad women and what about us. Free we say, yet the truth is they get erections when they’re with a woman they don’t give a damn about, but we don’t have an orgasm unless we love him. What is free about that?(404)

Lessing proves that women are emotionally dependent on men. Margaret Drabble calls woman’s liberation a far cry in Lessing’s *Golden Notebook*. Drabble says:

*The Golden Notebook* has of course been a book about women’s liberation and with a good cause. The title of the novel within a novel, *Freewomen* indicates that this is at least one of her subjects. How could it not be? It goes without saying that Doris Lessing is in favour of liberation of women and thinks that it has not yet come about. (1972: 52, 53)

Ella admits that she is deeply in love with Paul, and can’t imagine a life without him, offering an insight into her mind, Ella says, “the truth is that, my happiness with Paul is more important to me
than anything… My deep emotions, my real ones are, to do my relationship with a man. One man… women’s emotions are still fitted for a kind of society that doesn’t exist.(283) Lessing’s women are frank and candid about their emotional and sexual needs.

Ella, who is depressed, and panics for being alone, experiencing a paralysis of will to enjoy the charms of Paris, pining for Paul, decides to return to London. At the airport, Ella learns that the aircraft has developed some technical fault, and it might blow up in the air. Ella, who is too depressed to live, feels relieved at the thought of death. On her journey back from Paris, she meets a young and energetic brain surgeon, C.Y Maitland. She likes him, and as a free woman sleeps with him. She offers him joy; she bolsters him up, but fails to experience an orgasm. Ella realizes that she is committed to Paul. Unless she loves a man she will not be able to experience an orgasm. Ella thinks, “But with Paul, I would have come in that time- so what is wrong?” She understood suddenly, that she would never come with this man. She thought, “for women like me integrity is not chastity, it is not fidelity, it is not any of the old words, and integrity is orgasm… which is nothing but emotions.” (292) Julia, Ella’s close friend, talks about her embarrassing sexual encounter with her co-actor, who turns out to be a sexual cripple but calls Julia “a castrating woman”(398) Tapan Ghosh comments, “Lessing’s woman always tries to bolster up men, though they treat women as the other. (Ghosh, 109)

Talking about the sexual plight of the women in The Golden Notebook, Elizabeth Wilson writes, “In the strange cultural landscape of 1960s, they looked up, Cassandra’s of women’s experience, an experience that was silenced everywhere, silenced, concealed and denied.”(Cited in Rowe, 1994: 37) Discussion between Molly and Anna, and Julia and Ella about their emotionally sexual experiences with impotent men, recalls the two women discussing marriage as “an end of experience” (1) in D.H. Lawrence’s Women in Love.

Ella suffers sexual privations in Paul’s absence, ever since he has left her; Ella hasn’t experienced a vaginal orgasm. As a single woman, and a free woman, Ella’s colleagues, whose wives are temporarily away, try to seek a temporary diversion in her for they find the free women more exciting and “sex hungry,” (183) than their dull and boring wives. Dr. West informs Ella that his wife is on a holiday and invites her over dinner, Ella is reminded of the humiliating phrase used by Dr. West
after Paul’s departure, to insult Ella, and she turns down Dr. West’s overtures. Thereafter, Ella suffers a strange phase of sexual sterility. Ella suffers a state of fragmentation in Paul’s absence. The psychological doom experienced by Ella speaks of Anna’s emotional state after Michael’s departure from her life. Though, woman suffers in the masculine world, Lessing doesn’t show sexual separatism or isolation. Both man and woman are depicted playing a complementary role. It is “heterosexuality,” (Rowe, 1994: 40) which is emphasized.

Anna Wulf, the protagonist of the novel Free Woman, written by Anna, the central character of the novel The Golden Note Book, suffers in psychological terms, when Tommy attempts a suicide after reading Anna’s four books full of disgust. Tommy, who had been visiting Anna’s house, would read her notebooks, which talked about her chaotic state, as a writer, and her disillusionment with the political ideology of communism in post war Britain. Tommy is Molly and Richard’s son, who is brought up by Anna’s friend, Molly as the single mother, in the atmosphere charged with the communist dream. In the wake of the events after Hungary and twentieth Congress, Anna and Molly are filled with distrust about the political ideology of communism. Tommy was proud of Anna and Molly as better human beings, though their lives had been in a mess. Richard, Tommy’s father, is the captain of the industry in the post war Britain, who offers Tommy a job in one of his business concerns. Tommy is torn between the ideals of the revolutionary life envisaged by Anna and Molly on the one hand and the temptation of the affluent business world offered by his father. As a child of the broken marriage, he doesn’t respect his parents. Though, his father is rich, but Tommy knows about his lewd affairs with several women. He knows that Richard had bullied his mother, Molly, by casting aspersions on her character, very expediently to obtain divorce from her, and he has ruined the life of his step mother, Marion and their three children. Tommy, who is twenty years of age does nothing and has become obstinate, rebellious and spiteful. He spends all his time brooding. He suffers a state of “paralysis of will” (247) he sits surrounded by books on psychology. In a hysterical state he approaches Anna and tells her that he would be happy to step into his father’s shoes, but blames Anna and Molly for their communist activities, which prevent him from joining Richard’s business. Moreover, Tommy has been reading Anna’s notebooks, which is a receptacle of her “deathliness” (Spilka: 218-240). Tommy asks Anna why she keeps four different notebooks and not one. Anna tries to convince him as a committed writer, she doesn’t want to spread the sentiment of disgust and boredom through her work.
Anna, though tries hard to offer a sense of assurance to the confused boy, but for failure of her own convictions, Anna fails to offer him a sense of belief and thus fails to navigate him in the right direction, at the crucial juncture in his life. She realizes that Tommy fails to be convinced and is too depressed for he tells her “all is rotten” (249) and leaves. Later, the same night, he shoots himself out of total frustration. Tommy is saved, but becomes blind for his life. Anna suffers a sense of guilt for her inability to rescue him in ideological terms. She neglects her notebooks for some time.

After Michael’s departure from Anna’s life, Molly’s ex-husband and Marion’s husband, Richard, wants Anna to have sexual relationship with him, as a free woman, he wants to exploit her. Though Anna hates Richard, Marion believes that Anna is involved with Richard and she comes looking for Richard in Anna’s flat, in a state of drunkenness. Marion envies Anna’s free life, wherein, she can engage and disengage with a man at her choice. Anna confides in Marion that her life as a free woman is pathetic; however, she is free from the tyranny of the institution of marriage. Anna looks at the plight of a woman, oppressed, by the oppressive institution of marriage. In Lessing’s fiction, women suffer in the institution of marriage. Anna, Molly, Ella, Julia, Marion, Paul’s wife, the publisher, Robert Brun’s fiancé all suffer insult and torture. Lessing is against the institution of marriage. Lessing’s men, Paul and Richard are jealous of women and exploit them. Yet, men are not rejected.

Richard had married Marion, a decent, and a warm hearted beautiful woman from a distinguished family in Britain. Richard remained faithful to her only till she went to the nursing home for her first delivery, and soon thereafter, he went to his first wife Molly thinking that she would agree to be in bed with him. Refused by Molly, Richard turned to the secretaries in his office, one after the other. Marion was kept in the house as a nurse maid for his three children and the hostess of his posh parties. Richard had no qualms discussing his “sins” before Marion. Utterly frustrated in the loveless, captive life, Marion takes to drinking. Richard wants to get rid of her for he thinks that Marion would be a bad influence on children. Richard wants to send her to a home and settle down with his secretary, Jean as his wife. In The Golden Notebook, All women characters, Molly, Anna, Marion, Muriel, Elise, are seen as victims of the oppressive institution of marriage. Lessing critiques the tyrannical institution of marriage. In her novels, Martha Quest, and The Proper Marriage, Doris Lessing attacks the institution of marriage.
Anna slumps into a state of silence and emotional void after Tommy’s attempt of suicide. She is unable to talk freely and frequently with her friend Molly, who is bullied by her son, becomes a virtual prisoner in the house. Ever since Anna came from central Africa, having broken off relations with Max Wulf, Anna’s husband, it is Molly, who offered emotional support to Anna. Anna’s daughter Janet doesn’t grow up in a conventional family, yet it is Molly and her son Tommy, who offer her affection and warmth. Lessing’s women, Anna and Molly, Ella and Julia, Molly and Marion, Anna and Marion, Patricia Brent, empathize with each other. They share a warm and non-jealous relationship, which enables the women to cope with their state of emotional loneliness. The bonhomie shared by the women, is called as “sisterhood” (Arora, 1991:27) by the feminists. Anna becomes more and more lonely. Anna realizes that a frightened Anna is born after Michael’s departure from her life. She learns that once the protective shield of love is taken away, woman becomes vulnerable and defenseless before the aggression of the sexual perverts, in the masculine world. Richard behaves like a rake when Anna is called by Richard to discuss Tommy’s future and Marion’s divorce, in his office. While travelling alone by the tube, Anna is intimidated by the lewd glances thrown by the fellow traveler. The homosexuals, Ronnie and Ivor, who have been living in Anna’s flat, humiliate Anna for being a woman, calling women “fat buttocky cows.”(358) Anna uses the image of a dry well to describe her state of emotional sterility. Anna says, “that’s what’s wrong with me, I am dry, I am empty. I’ve got to touch some source somewhere.”(358) Lessing writes, “But the spring of her life has gone dry in Michael’s absence. She is haunted by the dream of a desert that her life has turned into. In the desert she was alone and there was no water, and she was a long way from the spring.”(359) The severe loneliness of her desiccated life generates a panic in her, and she feels like falling into pieces.

The only support system that Anna finds, in her state of emotional devastation, besides her intelligence, is in the form of her daughter, Janet. Janet is Anna’s passport to the normality of life. But after Janet leaves for the boarding school, Anna becomes more and more fragmented. The so-called free woman, Anna Wulf, the protagonist of the novel Free Women, written by Anna Wulf, the protagonist of The Golden Note Book, becomes a victim of the nervous breakdown. In The Wretched of the Earth, Fanon, the post-colonial critic, talks about the colonized, who, suffer from mental illness. Frantz Fanon writes:
In the period of colonization when it is not contested by armed resistance, when the sum total of harmful nervous stimuli overstep a certain threshold, the defensive attitude of the natives give way and they then find themselves crowding the mental hospitals. There is thus during this calm period of colonization a regular and important mental pathology which is the direct product of oppression. (Fanon, 201, 203)

Anna Wulf, the protagonist of the novel, *The Golden Notebook*, not only suffers in her personal life but also experiences suffocation in her professional life, after Michael’s departure from Anna’s life. Anna is overcome with a feeling of ennui, futility, and despair. As a committed writer, Anna doesn’t want to feed her readers with the negative emotions and therefore, she refuses to write. Anna suffers a psychic divide and therefore keeps four notebooks and not one. Since the publication of her first novel in 1950, to her release from the writer’s block in 1957 Anna records her experiences in the notebooks. Since it is nothing but chaos, she is reluctant to make it public. Anna starts neglecting her notebooks for some time after she speculates that the secret perusal of her letters is one of reasons of Tommy’s attempted suicide. Anna’s chaotic state in her literary life is reflected in the black notebook. Anna begins her black notebook with scrawling, scribbling, and some abstract symbols, which obviously suggests her reluctance to write. Anna tenders several excuses for her inability to write. As the author of a critically acclaimed first novel, Anna is desirous of writing a novel manifesting intellectual and moral passion, which would offer a vision or philosophy of life. She cites Thomas Mann as her ideal. As a reviewer of literary writings, Anna makes a startling observation, that novel has become “an outpost of journalism” (75) supplying information about unknown places and cultures. People have become so fragmented with in the country and within themselves, that they hardly know anything about classes and tribes living in their own country. Novel is seen as a function of “fragmentation and fragmented consciousness” (75) a source, supplying the readers with information. Anna, too, lacks a sense of wholeness, for she feels stifled because of her education, class, sex, which inhibits her from entering into several areas of life.

Though, Anna’s first novel, *Frontiers of War*, made her a celebrity, which is based on her colonial experience in Central Africa, does not make her feel proud or rather, she is ashamed of it. The novel, *Frontiers of War*, is about color bar, and it, too, is “literary fragment,” (Thorpe, 1978: 89) dealing with a particular geographical area; it is not a literary work, which is powered with moral and intellectual passion expressing a philosophy of life. At the same time, Anna is critical of the
unhealthy emotion of nihilism, that it came out of, against the backdrop of the Second World War; however, it is an authentic portrayal of the tragedy of the color bar.

Anna meets further disappointment, while negotiating with the film and T.V serial companies, who are keen to buy the rights of her novel, but want her to compromise with her artistic integrity. They are keen to retain the title for its commercial value, but distort the content to please the money-bags. Anna fights a psychological war with the film directors who pick up the artist with originality and destroy him. Anna, who is dismayed by the manipulative gimmicks of the literary critics whom she calls “prostitutes of the intellect” and film companies, collapses into depression and writes parodies and pastiches of her novel, in the wildest possible way, in a frustrated state. Anna dreams of a film being shot, in central Africa. The director assures her that, it is her novel which is being made into a film, but to her surprise, the content is changed beyond recognition. The film director tells her “it hardly matters so long as we shoot something.” Anna slumps into a state of nervousness and starts questioning and doubting her memory. Anna’s professional life is thrown into a chaos.

Anna is ideologically suppressed, which intensifies her psychic divide. Anna had joined the British communist party, for a sense of wholeness that Anna had associated it with. She looked upon the political ideology of communism, as a solution to human misery. It was in central Africa that Anna first came in contact with communism under the influence of the servicemen, who came to central Africa to be trained as pilots, during the Second World War. Communism was seen as weapon to fight the racial injustice and oppression of white women in colonial Africa. In the post war Britain, in the dubious political climate of the cold war, Anna was apprehensive or rather cynical about joining the Communist party. Yet, her long association with the political ideology of communism, made her joins the same, only to be disillusioned with it. Anna dissociates herself from the communist party, which turns intellectually rotten, and leaves her ideologically unanchored.

In post war Britain, in 1950, Anna joined the communist party with a dithering conscience. She associated communism with humanism, and a sense of wholeness, which would put an end to “the self-divide… the way we live.”(157) But communism, in Britain, Soviet Union, and Eastern Eu-
rope, during the period of the Cold War, jeopardized the fundamental principle of humanism; it was plagued with an atmosphere of suspicion, distrust, murder, frame-ups and lies, recalling Arthur Koestler’s *Darkness at Noon* (1940) and the tyrannical and oppressive atmosphere created by the “Thought Police,” in George Orwell’s *Nineteen Eighty Four*. Anna turns cynical and decides to quit the party, when she realizes that the loyalist were being suspected and tortured and hanged in Czechoslovakia and in Britain. She tries to garner support for the Rosenbergs, whom, she knew to be loyalists, through the signature campaign, but does not find many supporters. Anna says “the atmosphere of the country has changed dramatically in these two or three years, tight, suspicious, and frightened. It would take very little to send it off balance into our version of McCarthyism.”(155) Anna is disgusted and dismayed by the tyrannical atmosphere, and decides to quit the party. But after Stalin’s death in 1953, she again becomes optimistic about the revival of the real communist spirit. Anna believes that some people in the Soviet Union would reserve the process and restore faith in humanism. She is upbeat, when she learns that the British communist party has decided to restructure the entire organization and would weed out the autocratic and poisonous mindsets, who are occupying, the centre of the party. She dreams of a unified picture of a world, wherein, all the colors merge, which creates a sense of wholeness. Anna says, “I dreamed marvelously, there was an enormous web of beautiful fabric…there were many subtle and fantastic colors… I could see all the colors melting and flowing into each other so that the world becomes whole, all one beautiful glittering colour. (270) Anna awaits a reversal in the situation, but the obstinate and oppressive bureaucracy, characterized by intellectual putridity, disappoints her, and compels her to quit the British communist party. In the blue note book, she records 15 September 1954, as the date on which she left the British communist party, after an acrimonious argument with her once trusted comrade, John Butte. Anna who reviewed the articles for the communist party refuses to compromise with her integrity as a reviewer. The two books, written by a coal miner and a comrade, which didn’t project reality at any point and aren’t worth publishing, will be published, for John Butte, who follows the directives from the headquarter, is commanded by the Centre to publish the books irrespective of the expert opinion. Anna hates the farce of reviewing the books for the party. Instead, she wants to publish the letters sent by one time comrades expressing their confusions and doubts about the party. John Butte expresses his anger, crashing his fist on the desk, very autocratically he says “publish it and be damned.”(310) Anna feels her freedom to
speak the truth is muzzled. She expostulates John Butte for capitulating to the corrupt literary practices, and pointing at the genuine literary fervor of communism exemplified in the nineteenth century writings of the Russian authors, who fought for justice and who stood as instruments of change. Anna argues that the British communist party is nothing but a “crystallization of the intellectual rottenness.” (310) John Butte’s colleague, Jack Preston argues that there is no unified vision seen even in the scientific world. Anna counters him by saying that “we are humanists” and to deny a unified vision would be a “treachery to humanism.” (320) Anna says “humanism stands for the whole person, the whole individual, striving to become as conscious and responsible as possible for everything in the universe.” (320)

Anna quits the British communist party for it fails to create a world view, and for want of liberal, democratic values that Anna associated Marxist idealism with.

Anna, who is professionally stifled, ideologically alienated, and emotionally shattered after Michael’s departure for good and further tormented by sexual perverts like the hysterical, American writer, Nelson and the sadist from Ceylon, De Silva, who wants to punish Anna for denying him sexual solicitation, by bringing a prostitute in the room of her flat, so that Anna could hear him make love. Anna interprets the unwarranted and unmotivated infliction of pain as a manifestation of the menacing image of the “joy-in-spite” (419) or the “Joy-in-giving pain” which tormented Anna in her nightmares, first in the form of a vase, and later in the form of a dwarf, who tried to scathe Anna sexually. Commenting on Anna’s ruined psychological state Irving Howe writes, “Anna died before her death.” (Howe, 1962:17-20)

To relieve Anna from her complicated state, Janet, Anna’s daughter chooses a conventional boarding school and leaves home. Anna becomes further lonely and cracks up.

A way out of the situation is found, when Saul Green, a left wing writer from America, who is a victim of the anti-communist politics in America, walks into Anna’s flat, at Molly’s recommendation. Anna is rescued by Saul Green. He is a left wing writer from America, who is a victim of the anti-communist politics, who suffered during the regime of General McCarthy in 1950s. Saul Green was a “premature anti-Stalinist,” (490) who was expelled from the communist party. He was expelled from a highly paid job in Hollywood for refusing to make worthless films for money.
Highly principled and a committed person, Saul Green, experiences a state of exile not only in America but also in England, for he believes, that nobody thinks like him. Saul rents a room in Anna’s flat, which Anna is reluctant to hire out for she finds Americans too calculated, emotionally taciturn and non-committal in their affairs, in every area of their life; but at Molly’s insistence, agrees. Saul and Anna are attracted to each other, physically, intellectually and ideologically. It is through tender and combative sex, ideological bonding and a spiritual union of sort, that Anna is liberated from the cultural paralysis. In her state of mental breakdown, which proves to be therapeutic, Anna transcends the limits of her consciousness, frees her mind from the gender politics, looks at the life as a whole through a state of disinterestedness, regains self-respect, and belief in her ideals. Anna and Saul heal each other and their relationship perpetuates on the “platonic” Bloom, 2003:6) level.

Through Anna’s mental state, Lessing talks about the evolutionary potential of schizophrenia, which is reminiscent of R.D Laing. Laing was the unorthodox psychiatrist, who deeply influenced Lessing in perceiving madness as a source of inner cure. Marion Vlastos says, “Not only on her emphasis on madness but also in her very articulation of its value, she shows a striking similarity to the views of R. D Laing, the unorthodox psychiatrist and cultural theoretician. (Vlastos, 127) Laing says in The Divided Self, “It is essential to understand the mad person as a symptom and a victim of the sick society; and finally as a prophet of a possible new world, a world governed by the forces of unity rather than separation…” (cited in Vlastos, 1986:127-130) Anna’s madness can be seen as a symptom of a sick society. Anna is affected by the traumatic events that rocked the world from 1950 to 1957, which Anna recorded in her blue notebook, which served as her diary that included the Suez Crisis, the Mau Mau Movement, McCarthyism, Hungarian Crisis, The Twentieth Congress, the Korean War, the explosion of hydrogen bomb, the threat of nuclear warfare. During her discussion with her psycho-analyst, Mrs. Marks, wherein, Anna refuses the conventional methods used by the Jungian psycho-analyst, for it make Anna “clinically healthy, but not morally better.” (413) Anna asserts that she is a completely new type of woman with new experiences and it is the novelty of her experience that would keep her open for the further development of her personality. It is through Anna, Lessing says:
sometimes I meet people, and it seems to me the fact that they are cracked across, they are split, means they are keeping themselves open for something… yes, there is a hint of something, there is a crack in that man’s personality like a gap in the dam, and through that gap the future might pour in a different shape—terrible perhaps or marvelous but something new.(473)

It is Anna’s state of breakdown that serves as a break through. It is the therapeutic crack up, compounded with a creative relationship with Saul Green, that catalyses Anna’s evolution, which liberates her from the cultural and emotional paralysis. Marion Vlastos writes:

…here- in the self’s descent into madness – can be found whatever small hope is offered in The Notebook, with her male counterpart, Saul Green, her American expatriate, fellow communist, and fellow writer, Anna discovers new truths about her own nature and her relation with the world, and she emerges from insanity to a…fresh state of balance, self respect and independence. (127)

The theme of a mad person evolving into a prophet is developed at length, by Lessing in her novel, Briefing for a Descent into the Hell.

In their first encounter, Saul evinces an empathy and respect for women. He shows an insight into the challenges faced by single women like Anna and Molly and speaks about them with dignity. He also acknowledges that women are held responsible for men’s sexual inadequacies. Anna realizes that he is a man of principles. Saul says “we must take a stand, though sometimes we make a stand on false positions… but we must make a stand. Those who fail to make stand sell out.” Anna is impressed with his intelligence and his insight into political nuances. Anna realizes that he suffers from a psychological problem. He is a compulsive talker. He lectures her for a long time unmindfully. Commenting on the state of madness, repression, and McCarthyan politics, Doris Lessing, in her interview with Jonah Raskin, in 1969, at stony Brook, says:

Mental illness is a part of the mainstream… people who are called mentally ill are often those, who say to the society, I am not going to live according to your rules…Repression has been very much a part of our time…In the U.S.A radicals haven’t had an easy time, McCarthyism has had a long term effect on this country …” (Raskin, 1970:77, 78)

Anna empathizes with Saul. They are fellow victims, who try to heal each other. It is through a sexual encounter that they cure each other. It is the erotic energy, which proves to be regenerative. Mark Spilka writes, “Lessing is Laurentian in her approach to sex.”(Spilka, 1975 : 218-240) Do-
ris Lessing, in the introduction to the third edition of *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, looks upon sex as a therapy. Lessing says:

Lawrence was preaching sex as a kind of sacrament, and more than that, one that would save us all from the results of war and the nastiness of our civilization. “Doing dirt on sex, he anathematized, “it is the crime of our times, because what we need is tenderness towards the body, towards sex, we need tenderhearted fucking. (Lessing, 2006:1, 2)

After the first sexual encounter Anna expresses her sexual and emotional fulfillment as follows:

I’d forgotten what making love with the real man was like… I’d forgotten what it was like to lie in the arms of a man one loves. I’d forgotten what it was like to be in love like this… I am so happy, so happy… and Saul is relaxed, a different person from a man who had walked into my flat, a tense and suspicious, and my state of apprehension is gone, the sick person who inhabited my body… has vanished. (491)

Anna refers to Saul as a “real man.” Anna describes, George Hounslo from central Africa, as a real man, in her black notebook. He is an empathetic person, who is compassionate to women. He is a romantic, with tremendous sexual appetite, that would satisfy a woman. Talking to Susan Brownmiller, Lessing said in 1969, “the truth is, I have sympathy for men. Men ought to be horizon bashing, challenging, and raising hell. A woman would be perfectly happy with that sort of a man.”(Brownmiller, 1969: 5, 6) Talking about Lessing’s position on man- woman sexual relationship, Spark Milka says:

it is nice that Doris Lessing, still finds the penis vital, when a branch of feminist movement, seizing on the findings of Masters and Johnson experiments as evidence on the expendability in the love act of penises… they have used Masters and Johnson… to attack the male myth that penetration of vagina is vital to sexual fulfillment.” ( Spilka, 1975:218-240)

Anna and Saul regain some sanity. It is through sex, tender and combative, that Anna and Saul ventilate their buttoned up emotions. They make love out of fear, affection, hatred and jealousy. Anna’s flat turns into a “battleground and a laboratory.” They not only fight and soothe each other but break into each other’s consciousness. Anna says, “Upstairs Saul walks up and down, up and down and there are long periods of silence. Both silence and sound of feet reverberate along my nerves. When he leaves the flat to go for a little walk… my nerves tried to stretch out and followed him, as if tied to him. (503)
Saul and Anna soothe each other through music. Anna says, “He came to my room and sat on the bottom of the bed, humming a jazz tune and watching me. He said “I’ve brought you some Jazz records. Jazz will relax you.” (504)

Anna and Saul share an ideological bonding. They discuss the dismal political situation in America and England. Both believe in what Anna says, “Very few people really care about freedom, about liberty, about truth, very few. Very few people have guts, the kind of guts on which a real democracy has to depend. Without people with that sort of guts, a free society dies or cannot be born.” (496) Saul makes perceptive remarks on the position of communism. Anna shares a sense of camaraderie with Saul while discussing politics. She feels as if she is back in the Communist party.

Relationship between Saul and Anna recalls the spiritual bond between Martha and her Zionist lover Thomas Sterne, in Lessing’s *Landlocked*. Elizabeth Maslen says, “the love that Martha shares with Thomas Sterne, where their total oneness helps each to learn or at least acknowledge something very profoundly personal about themselves as individuals, echoes the culminating relationships of Anna and Saul.” (1994: 23) Though Anna experiences *bonhomie* with Saul, sometimes, she is attacked by his ego. Anna says “Saul shouted I III… but everything disconnected, a vague spattering boastfulness… and I felt, I were being spattered with machine gun bullets.(513)

The love-hate relationship that Anna shares with Saul, becomes a source of self-knowledge for Anna. She realizes that the cause of hatred and jealousy between the two has larger dimensions. It has the logic of war, the egotism, that plunges the world into dispute and war. Anna says, “I was desperately ashamed, being locked in Anna’s, an unimportant little animal’s terrors… I moved forward into a new knowledge… I as experiencing the fear of war… And I knew that the cruelty and the spite and the I, I, I of Saul and of Anna were part of the logic of war. (513)

Anna realizes that the key to her recovery lies in being disinterested or detached like the Black Nationalist leader Tom Mathlong, who Anna came in contact with in Central Africa, and with whom she maintained her political and personal relations in the Freewomen section of *The Golden Notebook*, who worked for the goodness of people without attaching himself to the outcome. Through her dream sequences, the unconscious becomes one with the conscious and Anna moves
from the individual to the collective self. Anna, who is locked up in the concern for the subjective ‘I’ moves towards the ‘We.’ She experiences the pain suffered by the humanity. Anna says:

I saw an Algerian soldier stretched on the torture bed… I saw a communist in a communist jail, but the jail was certainly in Moscow, but this time the torture was intellectual, this time the holding out was a fight inside the terms of Marxist dialectic. The end-point of this scene was where the communist prisoner admitted, but after days of argument, that he took his stand on individual conscience, that moment when a human being says: 'No, that I can't do.' At which point the communist jailor merely smiled…Then I saw the soldier in Cuba, the soldier in Algeria, rifle in hand, on guard. Then the British conscript, pressed into war in Egypt, killed for futility. Then, a student in Budapest, throwing a home-made bomb at a great black Russian tank. Then a peasant, somewhere in China, marching in a procession millions strong… (520)

Anna tries to imagine herself as Tom Mathlong, the Black Nationalist leader, but realizes that she is far away from him.

The spiritual union between Anna and Saul enables her to experience a sense of detachment and a measure of independence. Anna overtly talks about her dilemma as a writer and admits that she suffers from a writer’s block. Anna resolves to do away with her four notebooks and put all her experiences in one, the inner golden notebook. The very resolution, to end the four notebooks symbolizes Anna’s liberation from the psychic divide that afflicted her since Michael’s departure. Anna, freed from depression, goes to the shop and buys a golden notebook, in which Anna and Saul freed from their egotism, write collaboratively. Saul who plays the inner conscience for Anna raises her consciousness and extricates her from the caged truth and ego-centricism and further enables her to redeem herself, by instilling a sense of belief in her ideals by breaking down false dichotomies. The golden notebook is a collaborative work, in which both Anna and Saul write. Anna, who is inspired by Mathlong, gains detachment, and further, outgrows the gender distinction, and frees her mind from the constricted identity as a female. Anna talks about experiencing the feelings of homosexuals. Anna says “I was experiencing, imaginatively, for the first time, the emotions of a homosexual. For the first time the homosexual literature of disgust made sense to me.”(532)

This recalls Ursula K LeGuin’s novel The Left Hand of Darkness, where one meets characters without any specific gender; they become male or female according to the need of the society.
Having sought freedom from the parochial view of gender, Anna meets a personality, in her dream, which goads her to free herself from her ego-centrism and self-indulgence and look beyond her own obsessions. Anna said:

when I stood, in a dream, to one side and saw Anna sleeping, watching other personalities bend over to invade her. I was myself, yet knowing what I thought and dreamed, so there was a personality apart from the Anna who lay asleep; yet who that person is I do not know. It was a person concerned to prevent the disintegration of Anna… this person said: 'Anna, you are betraying everything you believe in; you are sunk in subjectivity, yourself, your own needs…. The disinterested person said: 'you’ve always thought of yourself as a strong person… the admonishing person said: Fight. Fight. Fight. (534)

Anna experiences an illumination of sort, which serves as self-knowledge. She witnesses the walls losing their density and the floor heaving, and slumps into a dream, wherein she finds herself being goaded by a tiger to escape the “cage of untruth.”(Schlueter, 2003: 57) Anna identifies the benign tiger as Saul. In her dream sequence, Saul acts as a projectionist who shows the clippings of films, directed by Anna, that refer to her experiences, portrayed in her notebooks, and urges her to re-examine the reality presented in them.

The first shot reflects the Hotel in Mashopi, which portrayed as an image of both beauty and destruction. Saul makes Anna discern the beauty in destruction. Lessing describes the scene as follows:

the group sauntering towards him in hot sunlight, but past us, towards the Mashopi Hotel. One after another we, too, stopped and turned to look. The hotel building seemed to have exploded in a dancing whirling cloud of white petals or wings, millions of white butterflies had chosen the building to alight on. It looked like a white flower opening slowly, under the deep steamy blue sky. Then a feeling of menace came into us, and we knew we had suffered a trick of sight, had been deluded. We were looking at the explosion of a hydrogen bomb, and a white flower unfolded under the blue sky in such a perfection of puffs, folds and eddying shapes that we could not move, although we knew we were menaced by it. It was unbelievably beautiful, the shape of death. (536)

In Anna’s black notebook, Anna tenders the reason for her inability to pursue her career as a writer. She says that her novel, Frontiers of War, though, authentic, depicts the unhealthy emotion of war; She believes that she committed a moral crime by writing the novel, which exudes a feeling of destruction. As a committed writer, she mustn’t, feed the readership with negative emotions. Though, the novel came out of the emotion of destruction, it is “destruction” which is seen as a
creative process. In Lessing’s *Four Gated City*, a novel written in 1969, the nuclear disaster paves a way to the creation of human race, which is more evolved. Ram Badode observes in his critical work, *From Chaos to Order*, “…this image with its image of life and death carries us ahead to The Four Gated City, in which it is the explosion of nuclear weapons that causes not just grotesque physical mutations but also the mental ones which may lead to the perfection of the human race.” (2006:173)

Thus Saul, the projectionist, who acts as her inner conscience, makes her scrutinize the reality, and take to her profession, as a writer, seriously.

In yet another film, Anna finds two personalities struggling to merge into each other, it is Paul Tanner, the doctor, Ella’s lover, who came from the working class and who possessed a critical irony, which enabled him to struggle in his career, yet, he suffered a defeat in his idealism, and Michael, the ex-European refugee, who was Anna’s lover, a socialist, who, too, had suffered a loss of idealism. Their defeated idealism had disappointed Anna and had led to her psychic divide. In the film, that Anna re- examines, the two lovers express their faith in idealism. The new personality says:

But my dear Anna, we are not the failures we think we are. We spend our lives fighting to get people very slightly less stupid than we are to accept truths that the great men have always known. They have always known, that to lock a human being into solitary confinement can make a madman of him or an animal… that a poor man frightened of the police and his landlord is a slave… that frightened people are cruel… that violence breeds violence. And we know it. But do the great masses of the world know it? No. It is our job to tell them… we are here, the boulder-pushers, we will go on pushing the boulder up the lower slopes of an immensely high mountain… All our lives, you and I, we will use all our energies, all our talents, into pushing that boulder another inch up the mountain. And they rely on us and they are right; and that is why we are not useless after all. (537)

It is through the heroic personality of the lovers that, Saul inspires Anna to look upon her role as a social activist and political commitment seriously. Subsequently, the Anna of the *Freewomen*, joins the Labour Party, in justification of her political commitment, and as a social activist works as a counselor in a marriage bureau.

Saul in the form of a projectionist makes Anna “check the reality” and the “emphasis” she had laid in her four notebooks. Anna feels ashamed of her notebooks for creating false patterns and for
looking at characters in the limited light. She also feels ashamed of her notebooks for putting emphasis only on the heroic and the beautiful, forgetting the brave struggle put up by the neglected and lonely characters. Anna had portrayed the wife of the hotel owner at Mashopi, in her Black notebook, as an “aboriginal” who exploited her black native servant. Anna failed to see Mrs. Boothby as a neglected wife and an over worked, white colonial woman, putting up with the cruel jokes made by the servicemen, who visited the hotel. Though, Anna lived with her partner Willie Rhode, in Central Africa, she did not share any emotional or sexual compatibility with him. When Anna returned to their room after making love with Paul Blackenhurst, a royal Air force pilot, a fellow communist, Willie expressed his loneliness by humming a sad tune. Anna had failed to see Willie’s loneliness. The projectionist, talking in a jeering voice says that Anna failed to see the “injustice and cruelty” that the neglected characters put up with. The inner conscience urges Anna to create “an order out of chaos that she has made of her life.” (538) Anna tries to create an order by creating a sense of wholeness, which she portrays in the golden notebook through formlessness, where the entire humanity presented in the compartmentalized form in the four notebooks, seeks a fusion. All false dichotomies, which are a product of the prejudiced mind, break down. Anna the protagonist of the Freewomen says “We make divisions Man/ Woman, good / bad, black/ white etc.” In the golden notebook Anna does away with the false dichotomies or distinctions. The image portrays Anna’s movement from the individual to the collective.

By seeking a fusion of her four fictional, chaotic works that led to her cultural paralysis, Anna is freed from her “self- imposed block.” (Sage, 1983: 55) Anna ventilates he true feelings before Saul. Anna says that she wants to live with one man and cook for him. She also admits that she is suffering from the writer’s block. She tells Saul that when she begins writing, she is questioned by the revolutionaries who expect her to be involved in the physical action, as a committed social and political activist. Saul, who realizes that Anna has remained in agony for too long, exhorts her to laugh, and to express herself through writing. He urges Anna to prepare a blueprint of her future. He inspires Anna to believe in herself and to believe in her ideals. Anna, too, empathizes with Saul. When he talks about his being a romantic revolutionary and never being matured in his life, Anna assures him that Saul would seek a moral progression and attain a state of “ripeness” Anna tells Saul, “people who are mature at fifty had committed emotional crimes at thirty.” Saul and Anna part in a state of reconciliation and solidarity. Anna tells Paul that we shall play the role of
“boulder pushers” and serve the humanity to be less stupid. The absurdist writer, Albert Camus’ mythical Sisyphus, who is a boulder pusher also, tries to roll the boulder up the mountain but ironically his boulder rolls back to the original position, symbolizing frustration, monotony and absurdity. Anna as a committed artist, explains her ideology of being a boulder pusher, suggesting hope and faith in the future of mankind.

When Saul declares his desire to leave for America having realized that “Love is the same everywhere” Anna doesn’t stop him and expresses solidarity with Saul, saying that “He is a brother and flesh of her flesh.” Anna realizes that Saul is not in a state fit enough to leave. She doesn’t stop him but cradles him, in her arms to soothe him. The gesture proves that Anna has transcended the sexual jealousy, which was profusely manifested in the Shadow of the third Anna’s alter-ego, Ella’s personality, and the parochial view about gender separatism. Anna evolves into a dignified, balanced and a self-respecting person, willing to share and care. Anna moves from “Joy-in-spite”(419) towards generosity and experiences a state of moral upliftment. Before Anna and Saul part, Lessing uses a powerful image suggesting the complementary relations between the sexes. Saul gives Anna the first sentence of her novel, “Two women were alone in the London Flat,” (554)which serves as the beginning of Anna’s modest realist novel, Freewomen, which threads the entire narrative split in twenty two sections of the complex, “non chronological” and “de -centered, meta -fictional work,” (King,1989:53) The Golden Notebook. Anna gives Saul the first sentence of his novel discussing the ontological dimension of the protagonist’s life. The relationship between Anna and Saul, which was characterized by “love and hate,” (Mitra, 2006:181) transcends to a higher state, a state of platonic love.

Lessing is insistent on the “interdependence of sexes” (Perrakis, 2009:151) and certainly not their isolation, despite the fact, that some men treat women with contempt and oppression. Lessing like Anna sees hope in men like Saul, who show a deeper insight into women’s problems, who are less hypocritical and more humane. Lessing is insistent on a collaborative living between sexes. Lessing’s vision of heterosexuality as a solution to man woman relationship can be witnessed in the novel, The Cleft.
The Novel, *The Cleft* (2007) described as “historiographic metafiction” (Perrakis, 151) talks about the oppression of women in the patriarchal society that existed several millennia ago. The first section of the fable, that documents the life of the pre-people, in the pre-Noise period, talks about the denial of the rightful position to women, who are called “Clefts,” in the history of human race as “the primal human stock.” (1) The clefts, who possessed the unique biological property to procreate asexually, gave birth only to females in the beginning, subsequently, began giving birth to the males, who are called “monsters” or “Squirts.” The novel can be read as a “parody” (Rubenstein, 2008:5, 6) of the biblical “myth of creation,” (Perrakis: 151) which talks about the creation of Eve out of Adam’s rib. This section of the historical fragment, that talked about the superior status of women, narrated by the women historians of the past, called “Memories” (8) was not only “unacceptable” (27) to the “monsters” that lived in the ancient times, but also to the patriarchal Roman society and its historians. As a consequence, the historical material was suppressed and was labeled as “inflammatory” (7) and was put on the shelf with the “Strictly Secret” (8) documents, in Rome. The Roman Senator, turned historian, Transit, who lived during the regime of Nero, in the first century A.D, interprets the fragments of historical pieces, that underscore the superior position of women, flying in the face of the established opinion, in the first phase of human history, called the Pre-Noise-phase. In keeping with the historical record, women lived a placid life before the creation of the males. The treatment of otherness meted out to the males, soon after their advent, leads to the creation of two distinctly different, but static communities, where women, though led an independent life, lived without curiosity and daring, and men though gifted with ingenuity and liveliness, helplessly depended on women for the supply of the male children. It is only with the creation of the new type of “Clefts” who longed for heterosexuality that new type of progeny, who had the potential for the emotional and cultural development, came into being. In the post-Noise-period, when, men or the “monsters” became indispensable to the process of procreation, history is re-written by men, documenting men as the primal human stock. Women or Clefts, who, lost the capacity to procreate asexually, were relegated to the subordinate social position and are encumbered with the laborious task of child rearing and nursing the wounded, as demanded by male community. Though men and women continue to live in their independent geographical territory, and meet up only when driven by sexual or communal need, owing to their sexual pride and cultural arrogance respectively, men look upon women as “a burden.” Men, who are imperialist by
nature and patriarchal in propensity, abandon women as well as their territory in quest of new piece of land, but fail miserably in their dangerous escapade and return to women’s community, remembering their warmth, kindness and love. Women, too, in the absence of men realize the importance of men, not only as sexual consorts but as emotional supporters. It is the interdependence between the sexes which paves a way to the further development of civilization.

At the margin of the patriarchal structure of power, are the Clefts, “the primal human stock,” who are denied their rightful position, in the history of human race, as the original progenitors of both females and males. It is Maire, the representative mother figure, who asserts that the Clefts came first on the earth. They are the original creators of the human race. Addressing the males, who are called “Monsters” or “Squirts,” Maire clamors for the just and the rightful position for women as the primal human stock, who procreated asexually. Maire asserts that though, the monsters claim that “their story goes back and back,” but “the story of the monsters is much shorter.”(13) Maire says:

We only had Shes, didn’t we? Only Clefts... and babies were born, and no one did anything to make them. I think the moon made them, or a big fish, but it is hard to remember what we thought, it was such a dream and how we thought has never been a part of the story, only what happened.”(11)

It is the Roman Senator, turned historian, Transit, who peruses the “cumbersome material” (9) dismissed by the earlier historians as “inflammatory” (7) for the “nature of its content” that challenged the established notion about the position of women in the history of mankind. The material was kept with the “strictly secret” (8) documents. Transit, the historian is an old man, who had been a colonizer in his youth, had neglected his wife and two sons who died in the military expedition, is overcome with a sense of remorse, who considers himself a “skeptic” who can deal with the explosive material that puts women in the superior position as the progenitors of the human race, with sympathy. As an objective reader, Transit is sympathetic towards the material, which talks about women preceding men, in the process of procreation and tries to verify it with all the available notions about creation of man and woman, in the contemporary Roman society. He not only refers to the Greek and Roman legends, that are predominantly patriarchal, as well as cites
from the newly formed religion, that is Christianity, which, too, asserts and endorses the patriarchal view ascribing importance to the male sex. He finds it entertaining that women are worshipped as Goddesses, but in ordinary life, they are meted out an inferior treatment. Transit observes:

No one has undertaken the task of studying the material as a serious record, and then attempting to make a coherent history… this is not a legend but a factual story… perhaps it has been felt that an account of our beginnings that makes females the first and foundering stock is unacceptable. In Rome now, a sect- the Christians- insist that the first female was brought forth from the body of a male. Very suspect stuff, I think, some male invented that. (27)

Lessing, through the creation of new history, in the novel *The Cleft* is trying to strengthen the position of women. Maire’s assertion of her position as the primal human stock can be read as the voice of revolt, of the second sex, in the oppressive patriarchal society. One can agree with Roberta Rubenstein when she says that “In Lessing’s view, women lack a sense of history, she has in an odd sense tried to correct that omission with *The Cleft.*” (Rubenstein, 2008:5, 6)

The denial of the rightful position to women recalls the agony expressed by the black natives of Africa, who are denied their history, culture and language. In *Decolonizing the Mind*, Ngugi Wa-Thiong’o writes:

The most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized, the control, through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world…To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. For colonialism this involved two aspects of the same process: the destruction or the deliberate undervaluing of a people's culture, their art, dances, religions, history, geography, education, orature and literature, and the conscious elevation of the language of the colonizer. (1987: 16)

the Roman historians and to the community of monsters, who lived in the ancient times, who “interrogate” (25) the Clefts, when males have established their domination at a later date in history, refuse to believe the precedence of the Clefts over the Monsters, but they also refuse to believe that men were vulnerable, and were helplessly dependent on women for the supply of male offspring, born only to the Clefts, asexually.

Birth of a monster was a genetic accident, looked upon as an “unfortunate birth fault” (21) in the community of the Clefts, who panicked at the birth of the male, who were believed to be the de-
formed creatures who had the male sexual organs in the form of “pipes, bumps and lumps” instead of the neat slit as the Clefts possessed. In keeping with the custom, followed by the Clefts, the damaged offspring and twins were put on the “Killing Rock” very close the rocky structure of “The Cleft” which was sacred to the community of the Clefts “as their deity.” It was the eagle, who rescued the male babies and carried them to the valley, where they were suckled by the doe. The Roman historian proves his point, by citing the song of the First Men that acknowledged the Eagle as their father figure, and savior. The song is as follows:

We are the Eagles, the Eagle, and the children of the Eagle.

The Eagle bore us on our wings; they bear us on their breath,

They are the wings of the wind, the Great Eagle watches us knows us.

He is our Father, he hates our enemies,

He fights for us, against the Clefts. (27)

Some monsters were mutilated and killed by the Clefts. This shameful part of the tale, that spoke about the vulnerable position of the males and subordinated their position vis -á-vis the women, was locked up and made inaccessible, in the patriarchal society. A colony of monsters grew up in the prosperous valley, away from the women’s caves close to the seashore, which supplied them with ample fruit and nuts. The fast flowing river supplied them with fish for food as well as reed to construct huts. The availability of space stimulated their explorative instinct, moulding them into an alert and a daring community. But when a monster perished, the community of monsters felt threatened. They waited wistfully for the eagle to bring a supply of male babies. The monsters were helplessly dependent on the Clefts for the supply of babies. The monsters were “vulnerable” for want of the capacity to procreate. Transit, the Roman historian observes:

There were songs that told of escape from pain and fear to this valley where the eagles were their friends, the deer gave them milk, and there were fish in the river and in the sea. They had shelter, better than the early heaps of sticks. They were brave and strong and healthy, and their numbers were growing . . . but they did not have the knack of giving life…they began to be anxious about the supply of babes brought by the eagles. Suppose the eagles decided not to bring the boy babies over the mountain? Once the question had arisen it would not go away. Over there on their shore …and some of the boys remembered it well – the Clefts gave birth. Without the Clefts there would be no new arrivals in the eagles’ claws, there would be no Squirts. (39, 40)
Though, two communities came up in two distinctly different geographical locations, and though women possessed the unique power to procreate without men, and men, though ingenious, depended on women, both the communities were incomplete. Women lacked curiosity, and daring. The historian writes, “but they did not do much, only lazed and yawned, and swam a little and shook their long hair out over their shoulders to dry, and then swam again. The Clefts spent all days, many days in this way of doing nothing- as the boys saw it.”(44) Men did not possess the developed language, logical thinking, and the skill of social organization. It is only when the clefts and monsters mingle with each other, and bring forth the hybrid progeny, called the New Ones, which paves a way to the emotional and cultural development of the two communities. Lessing does not believe in “sexual isolation.” Though Lessing says, that women are treated as “second grade citizens” (Lessing, 1970: 14) yet, the vision of “interdependence” (Perrakis, 151) between the sexes that can be pulsed even in her late life creation. In her novel A Ripple from the Storm (1957) when Marjorie says that women will have to fight a battle against men, after obliterating the racial injustice, in colonial Africa, Martha, the mouthpiece of Lessing, disagrees with her. Lessing does not believe in the battle of sexes, rather she believes that the “battles are best fought by men and women together.”(Brownmiller, 1969: 5, 6) In her experimental novel, The Golden Notebook, (1962) though, Anna Wulf suffers inconsolably, in the patriarchal society, in post -war Britain, Lessing perceives a solution in a creative man -woman relationship, depicted through, Saul and Anna. In Lessing’s Science Fiction, The Marriages between Zones, Three, Four and Five. Lessing depicts a symbiotic relationship between the self- sufficient but smug women’s zone and the militaristic and scarcity ridden, male province. No “radical change” ( Perrakis, 151) in Lessing’s view can be discerned in her novel, The Cleft. Lessing is a humanist to the core, who believes in the complementary nature of man woman relationship.

The two communities came together with the stirring of the sexual desire, called as “developmental yeast,”(45) in the two clefts, who believed that they had been offered a hint or a “revelation”(43) by nature, when they witnessed the mating of the fish, “by inserting the tube,”(43) which led to the production of the tiny eggs. It dawned upon the clefts, who witnessed the natural phenomenon, that the tubes of the monsters could also be useful. The two females, urged by the need
of their bodies, climbed down the mountains and walked up to the valley, where the squirts or the monsters lived in their reed huts. Besides the “sexual games” the mingling of the two communities led to the development of language, and a sense of cleanliness among the monsters. The males remembered that the first female, who had strayed in their territory ages ago, who was “raped” by the monsters, which claimed her life, possessed the gift of the developed language. When the two clefts visited the valley, the monsters realized the reason for their child-like talk. Since the monsters were reared by the “old hes,” in the valley, who were brought at an early stage by the Eagle, their language had suffered. The historian writes:

Though the murdered girl had not been able to say much that was coherent, from the words she did say they knew that the language they used was poor compared with hers and, forced to worry over the question, find a reason, they at last understood that all they said had developed from the speech of small children who had made that first brave quest over the eagles’ mountain. Their language was a child’s, and it was even pitched high, like children’s talk. Yes, they had new words, for the tools and utensils they had invented, but they talked together like children. (49)

But with the arrival of the clefts, the squirts developed their ability to speak with maturity. The Clefts, on the other hand, were reared by the “old Shes,” who were looked after by their mothers and therefore, possessed the language of the grown-ups. In addition to that, the social life of the Clefts was based on the division of labour. There were the fish catchers, the fish skin curers, the water carriers, the cleft watchers etc. This, too, contributed to the development of language. Thus, when the clefts and monsters began spending time together, it led to the development of language. The historian offers the record of acquisition of language by the males as follows:

she saw one of the great shell containers they had made. She picked one up, and they told her its name. They had made knives of the sharp shells: she learned that word too. They kept at her, saying sentences and words in that childish speech of theirs, while she replied to them, and they copied what she said, not for its sense but its sound.(65)

The Clefts lived in the clean and airy caves, with sandy flooring, near the sea shore, high up in the mountains. When the girls came down in the valley and witnessed the messy huts the monsters lived in, they made brooms from the branches of the trees and cleaned up the huts. Thus, men learnt the developed language and a sense of “consideration for their surroundings” from the clefts.
The clefts were fascinated by the alertness, liveliness and a sense of curiosity possessed by men. They were gripped by a new emotion of disgust for the “Old Shes,”(77) who lived a sluggish and an “incurious” life. The young clefts hated the old life style. Lessing says it is the disgust that leads to “revolutions.”(80) The clefts, who had been timid, so far, began exploring the territory beyond their sea shore. Fearlessly, they learn to walk up to the valley. With the passing away of the old monsters, who remembered the cruelty and pain inflicted upon by the clefts on the Killing Rock, the memory of animosity is obliterated. It helps the clefts to mingle freely with the squirts. When, by a stroke of luck, Fire is discovered in the valley, women are benefitted with the same. Fire burnt in the valley as well as in front of the clefts’ caves, and both the communities ate cooked fish and eggs.

Besides the cultural development, the interdependent community, experiences a development in terms of emotions. Maire and Astre, the two clefts, who were the first clefts to have procreated heterosexually, realize that the New One, that is the first child, who is a “half monster”, is a restless, energetic and an active child, who “walked early and talked early.” The heterosexual baby cried and sobbed. Usually, the children never cried unless put in water. Transit says that the two clefts understood that the “New One” stood for the further development of the human race. Describing the historical fragment that talks about the energetic nature of the New One, Lessing says, “A slow sleepy scene, with one agitated babe, Maire’s child, and the two could see that the Cleft who held the child was annoyed and impatient. Babies did not complain and agitate and become nuisances and flail about. Who behaved like that, all movement and energy, if not a Squirt?(79)

With the creation of the new progeny, men and women came together and felt a “tenderness,” (76) affection, or “love” for each other. Though, the men felt threatened when a couple of monsters perished, in the fire or were devoured by the hostile animals, or for want of milk, for the doe, who nurtured the boys, long ago, had grown old and had developed shrunken dugs. The monsters were aware of their inadequacy, their dependence on women for the supply of babies, but, with the loss of fear, the males move up to the women’s quarters to fetch a wet nurse. Thus, in the course of time, as he New One grew up, Maire took the child to the valley, and one could see the face of the male with whom, Maire had mated, imprinted on the face of the New One. The resemblance between the father and the offspring, led to the creation of the concept of a family. It is the relation-
ship between the males and the females that paved a way for the development of the human race in the Pre–Noise-Period. The Period of Noise talks about the large scale destruction wrought by the stormy wind, recalling the phase of apocalypse in the Bible.

In the post Noise Period, women have lost their capacity to procreate asexually; they are “colo-nized” (Fanon, 1967:201) by men. They are treated as inferior, for they are “fundamentally dependent” (145) on males. The historian writes Talking about the loss of women’s capacity to procreate asexually, the historian says, “Long ago, the females had relinquished the capacity to become impregnated by a fertilizing wind, or a wave or carried fertility in its substance; they did not become impregnated at all, except by males, the females had to be reliant on the males, to get children. (144)

As men become indispensable to the process of procreation, they become aware of their power, they write a new history, with men at the centre. The historical fragment, that prioritizes the male, is documented as follows:

When the first males were born, they were called monsters and were sometimes badly treated, even killed, must be considered as rumour. It is now believed that the earliest ancestors were males, and if it is asked how they produced themselves, then the reply is that, the eagles hatched them out of their eggs. After all, it cannot be nothing that respect for the great birds is expressed in a hundred myths about origins. It is much easier to believe that eagles, or even deer, were our progenitor, than that the people… entirely female and the males a later achievement. After all why do males have breasts and nipples, if not that they were of practical use? They would have given birth from their navel? There are many possibilities, all more credible than that females came first, and there is something inherently implausible about males as subsidiary arrivals. It is evident that males are by nature and designed by nature to be first. (142,143)

The clefts, though continue to live in their territory close to the sea, in the caves, away from the man’s valley, since they are dependent on males for procreation, they are laden with the responsibility of looking after the children, who remain with the females till the age of seven and quit their territory for they find women soft and babyish. The historian writes, “All the babies were born in the caves above the sea, and they played in the waves and were safe… New little males were not brought up by the men, but were with the little girls.” (145)
Pregnant woman, who are looked upon as a burden by the community of men, were sent to the women’s quarters as soon as the males realized that women were in the family way. The historical record is as follows:

… there were some girls who refused to leave the men’s valley, and said they liked the life there. Then, first one and then another, they returned, angry and fearful, because they were pregnant, and as their bellies swelled were told they were not wanted, even though they were useful, cutting up carcasses, making fire, clearing away rubbish and the remains of feasts. ‘Back to your own place,’ they had been told, though some did not want to go.(162)

Males indulged in adventurous sports and sometimes mindlessly risked their lives. If they broke any organ of their body they were sent to the women’s quarter to get the wound mended. When women tried to caution men about the safety of children, men sneered at women and ridiculed them as “stupid.” Males felt that women are nagging and complaining. The historical record that talks about the derisive attitude of men runs as follows:

Maronna demanded that Horsa should insist the boys leaving the women’s shore should take off openly, so that they could be accompanied. Horsa and all the men laughed at her. That she should say this meant she had no understanding at all of the boys, their feelings – and, by extension, of the men’s. Of course the boys needed to sneak away from that overcrowded shore full of children and babes, of course, that was the whole point – if the boys’ escape was going to be monitored by the women, the fun of the thing would be gone, ‘Can’t you see that?’ demanded Horsa, and said that she was stupid. (178)

Men abandon women at their whim and fancy and plan adventurous games and expeditions without consulting women. Maronna, the leader of the females, learns that the leader of males, Horsa is planning an expedition to a distant land, and is planning to take young girls, who are likely to get pregnant and impede Horsa’s venture, she also learns that Horsa is planning to take small boys with him; she wonders at the poor planning and dismal logistics, used by Horsa, which is likely to fail his ambitious but foolhardy venture. She cautions him, and in a great rage, carries some small boys with her. As Maronna cautions Horsa, her male counterpart, in the course of the narrative, the Roman Senator, Transit evolves in his awareness of his relationship between his young wife, Julia and himself. Transit had neglected his first wife and two children, who perished long ago, and he is overcome with a sense of remorse. To make up for the negligence, he married a
distant relation, from a humble social and financial status, and always thought that, his young wife Julia was “ignorant” in keeping with the contemporary prejudices about women. But, Transit is shocked to learn, that Julia was assertive and a non-conformist. Julia’s status runs parallel to the position of the Clefts, who have been in the position of power and are denied the rightful place owing to the prejudice harbored by the patriarchal society. At a later stage, it is not only Transit, who tries to caution Julia about jeopardizing her life, as the mistress of the prince. Julia is invited for the wedding of the prince and Transit opines that Julia could be murdered by the new queen. Transit says, “It is not unknown, Julia, for a new wife to punish her predecessor or even try to kill her.” Julia also cautions Transit about the new house that he desires to construct. Julia tells him that all new properties are being confiscated by Nero, the autocratic ruler of Rome, and foils the conspiracy, hatched by the slaves, by stoking up a rumour of Transit’s loss of wealth, due to shipwreck and declaring that he would not buy any new house. Julia speaks in a loud voice, audible enough for the slaves to hear, “Your trouble is you don’t see the consequences of your actions, my dear. I could have told you not to put all your money into that ship going to Thessaly. It’s sunk didn’t you know? It’s sunk, lost all its cargo” Transit says, “… so my poverty will be gossiped by nightfall.” (177) Thus Julia and Transit prove to be mutually helpful and their relationship can be identified with that of the squirts and clefts.

In *The Cleft*, the multi-layered novel, one can trace a parallel between the fable of the Clefts and the monsters and the story of Julia and Transit. The theme of interdependence of the sexes, and a growing empathy between them is replicated, which speaks eloquently about Lessing’s vision of man woman relationship.

Horsa is convinced of Maronna’s wisdom, but his “pride” does not allow him to acknowledge it. Horsa proceeds with his plan but fails miserably in his venture, and subsequently, remembers the women for their kindness, love and empathy. Horsa takes boys and young girls along, as a part of his expedition. The girls get pregnant and impede the further journey towards the proposed island. Later, Horsa moves along with his close friend towards his destination, the dream island, beyond the horizon, with an intension to colonize the new land. The girls who returned from the shore reported of Horsa’s tyrannical attitude towards the pregnant girls. Phyllis Sternberg Perrakis, writes in her critical work, “the dangers of imperialism and sexism are intertwined in Lessing’s
works” (155) Lessing had witnessed the tyranny inflicted upon women in the capitalist, male- oriented, colonial Africa, where she grew up as member of the white settler community.

Horsa fails miserably, as he draws close to the island, his flimsy boat wrecks to pieces, claiming the life of his friend, and rendering him crippled. When he returns to his island, he is left unattended. He loses his position of command, for he is unable to stand independently. It is only a, mourning girl, Maeve, who has lost her baby, who empathizes with Horsa and offers him food and water. Horsa remembers Maronna’s admonishment and he longs to be back on the women’s shore. The expedition is struck by yet another ordeal. The small boys who imitated the older ones, turn wild and stop being obedient, they sneak into the caves. Most of the children perish in the cave and those who are rescued by the adults are reduced to skeletons. Horsa, realizes his folly, and long to be back with Maronna and the other women and remembers them for their kindness, warmth and empathy. On the Women’s shore, women, who have been overcritical of men, too, pine for men in their absence, not merely as their sexual consorts, but as their emotional supporters. Perrakis, writes, “the real point of her myth of origins, is absolute interdependence of the clefts and the males for the creation and evolution of human race.” (151)

It is the destruction of the structure of The Cleft, the symbol of women’s arrogance, which also was one of the reasons which contributed to the separation of men and women, which paved a way to the new beginnings. The village historian records the beginning of a new way of life, where men and women forge a life together in a spacious locale, “and so they stood, facing each other, on the edge of the splendid beach which would soon house all the women and children and the visiting men too.” (257)

It is the image of the slave Marcus, who treats Lolla, the beautiful but quick tempered slave girl, in Rome, with contempt, all through the day, but reconciles with her at night, which sums up Lessing’s vision of man woman relationship. Transit, who serves as Lessing’s mouthpiece writes:

I did not need to watch any longer. I knew she would find an excuse to hang about the courtyard – perhaps petting and patting the oxen, giving them figs, or pretend the well needed attention. She would be waiting for him. I knew that he would want to go off into the streets with the other boys, for an evening’s fun – he was not often here in this house in Rome itself. But I knew too that these
two would spend tonight together, no matter what he would have preferred. This little scene seems to me to sum up a truth in the relations between men and women. (5, 6)

It is interdependence of sexes and not their polarization, which characterizes Lessing’s verdict on patriarchy.