Chapter-4

Mapping the Socio Feminine Consciousness

The narrative strategies of Lessing’s writings are the expression of two systemic elements of female identity namely, a psychosexual script and a socio cultural situation. It signifies that the female characters in her novels are situated in an environment where they have to deal both with gender prejudice in their personal life and in their society as a whole. Here the study aims to focus on the second element that is the involvement of the powerful characters of Lessing in the society especially in Communism as they considered it as a panacea to do something for the betterment of themselves as for the people around them.

To begin with, the research spaces room for a vivid description of Lessing as a Communist. The critics had kept place for Lessing and tried to fix her in one or other categories of writings. They started with labeling her as a “Realist” a “Marxist”, a “Feminist” and a “Psychoanalyst” and finally a “Metaphysicist”. Each time however Lessing disdained the titles, because she disliked being labeled. In her preface to The Golden Notebook, she openly confronted the critics’ tendency to label a writer. She emphatically said that her novels were not a trumpet for women’s liberation, though it expressed many female emotions of aggression, hostility and resentment. In other words what Lessing said was that she was not a feminist but a female writer, whose women characters were intelligent, active and independent.

Though Lessing reacted against the title of “feminist” she had never denied that she was a Marxist. In fact she openly confessed that she was a Marxist. She praised
Marxism as an inspirer of “humanism” and that it was born out of the eternal aspiration of man for peace and happiness. She also claimed that the youth who avoid Marxian principles were keeping themselves off from one third of humanity as it was considered as the driving force in many parts of the world especially in the underdeveloped and developing countries. She believed that Marxism would not die, instead it would resurrect under some other name. In the Prison We Chose to Live Inside Lessing says that:

Communism was born out of the ancient dream of justice for everybody. It is a very powerful dream, a powerful engine for social change. Because communism is at this present time equated with barbarism, inefficiency and tyranny, that doesn’t mean that, the idea of real justice will not be reborn. (84- 85)

Lessing believes firmly that communalism is the answer to the problems faced by man in society. Her close association with Marxism and its members teach her the importance of commitment, strongly demanded from its supporters. Her vision of the ideal city where all are equal and people from different parts of the world are gathered and the insistence on rejecting the ill tempered people who lack the “vision” clearly spell Marxism influence upon Lessing. Her plan of action is not confined to the liberation of the whites alone but they also extend wide enough to embrace the black as well. Thus her world is a world of humanity, not a world of confined rules of rigidity and oppression.

Lessing’s first encounter with Communism was through the “Left Book Club” an organization started by a few people interested in the freedom of the Africans. This book club offers activity which is extremely appreciated by intellectuals like Lessing, who finds Marxism as a highly promising philosophy designated to eradicate the ills of the
world. She confesses in her autobiography *Under My Skin* the reason for the interest she shows in the left politics and communist groups:

> It was for the first time in my life I was meeting a group of people who read everything and who do not think it remarkable to read and among whom thoughts about the native problem. I had scarcely dared to say about turned out to be mere common place, I became a communist because of the spirit of the times. (259)

The above mentioned quote exposed the information that Lessing remains deeply rooted in her belief in Marxism as a cure for the evils of the world. She expresses its different aspects through her novels, thematically, so too in the technical side she remains faithful to the spirit of realism. Consequently, she started her writing career as a realist and her best novels were produced in that genre.

Lessing’s works have been considered in this study as a search for freedom through the philosophy of Marxism, an ideology which she came to accept as a teenager during the turbulent years of her life in the colonial Africa. Though in later years Lessing declined from following this ideology due to various reasons, certain principles basic to Marxism remained with her all through her life, giving her the directions to herself and to others, the means of becoming effective members in human society. She later wrote, “I became Political and Communist… because they were the only people I had ever met who fought the color bar in their lives”(www.nytimes.com/books/99/01/10specials/lessing). She had also witnessed the ill treatment of the black by the white found ample reference in her works. Her first novel *The Grass is Singing* expresses this painful dealing. It is viewed as a brochure of her communist belief which makes her to criticize the capitalism in the colonies by depicting the
class repression and announcing an inevitable failure of capitalism. The main character Mary’s extreme hatred for the black African characters could be defined as psychological hopelessness as she has been infused with racist notions. The inferiority of the black characters and the notion of white supremacy have been instilled in her psyche by the other white racist members of the society.

The present study no doubt deals with the same notion in which the novel exposed the relationship between the black and the white most profoundly and sympathetically. Touching upon all the intricacies of that relationship, Mary lays bare the saga of oppression of the black which reduces them to the level of mere animals, and deprives them from any human emotions. It is in this social background, that Mary’s relationship with Moses is viewed and criticized. Through this relationship Lessing looks upon the antipathy expressed towards the black as resulting from a hidden sense of guilt and insecurity which the white man tries to hide. She confirms it by saying:

What had happened was that the formal pattern of black-and-white, mistress-and-servant, had been broken by the personal relation; and when a white man in African by accident looks into the eyes of a native and sees the human being (which it is his chief preoccupation to avoid), his sense of guilt, which he denies, fumes up in resentment and he brings down the whip. (GS, 144)

The Grass is Singing was set in South Rhodesia, where racial discrimination was at its peak. Even though it was their homeland, the African people had no rights in the society. The English went there to bring civilization; however, ironically, the natives were subjected to the human and degrading treatments practised by the English. The
narrator describes the feelings of the newcomers from England related to the ideas of the natives as: “Learn our ideas, or otherwise get out: we don’t want you.” (GS, 18). Mary, too like other members of society, was taught to view the differences between the black and the white characters as fundamental to Rhodesian society. She increased the intensity of her hatred for the black characters by continually reaffirming in her mind their inferiority and danger to the white characters. The psychological state of Mary is evident:

She was afraid of them, of course. Every woman in South Africa is brought up to be. In her childhood she had been forbidden to walk out alone, when she asked why, she had been told in the furtive, lowered, but matter-of-fact voice she associated with her mother, that they were nasty and might do horrible things to her. (GS, 59)

As a result, Mary reaffirmed her white authority in the presence of the black characters working in her house or as laborers on Dick’s farm by continually giving orders and scrutinizing their behavior and work. “The sensation of being boss over perhaps eighty black workers gave her new confidence; it was a good feeling, keeping them under her will, making them do as she wanted.” (GS, 112)

The fact that Mary and the other white characters distanced themselves from the black characters and discounted their tradition and culture led to the characters’ creation of racial stereotypes in the text. This is obvious throughout the story how the white characters should treat the black according to the norms of the society.

Most of these young men were brought up with vague ideas about equality. They were shocked, for the first week or so, by the way natives were treated. They were revolted a hundred times a day by the casual way
they were spoken of, as if they were so many cattle; or by a blow, or a look. They had been prepared to treat them as human beings. But they could not stand out against the society they were joining. But it was not very long that they thought of it as ‘bad’. And anyway, what had one’s ideas amounted to? Abstract ideas about decency and goodwill that was all: merely abstract ideas. (GS, 18)

Thus Lessing represents the pathetic conditions of the natives realistically in the hands of the white superiority even in her first novel. In another instance the black characters are also regarded as equivalent to dogs. “A white person may look at a native, who is no better than a dog.” (www.book rags.com.The Grass is Singing)

First of all, The Grass is Singing is the first novel which seems to expose the colony and the color bar problems. Secondly, it not only covers the themes recurrent in her later novels but also embodies her concerned of her age. The novel is so complicated that scholars have approached it from such various perceptions as the racial, social, Marxist and psychoanalyst. For instance, Draine the translator and editor, in his Substance Under Pressure: Artistic Coherence and Evolving Form in the Novels of Doris Lessing regards Mary as a tragic heroine, analyzing the relations between her tragic desire and conscious focusing on the instability of social power structure.

According to the research, one can realize that repression acts as the main theme in the novel The Grass is Singing which reflects a complicated colonial world with full of clash in cultures and racial inequality. By discussing the white’s exploitation upon the natives or social prescriptions working on the white settlers themselves, especially on white woman the study reveals different kinds of oppressions in the colony such as racial
oppression, economic exploitation, sexual repression and so on. The study also presents the views of the readers how white colonies construct a mythical racial identity of the black through the repression of the other race and how Mary constructs her individual identity through the repression of her desires.

The novel initiates with a report of the murder and mystery of Mary. No doubt, it is a case that a native killed a white woman. Pondering on Lessing’s serious commitment to racial equality and communism, the study starts to view why Lessing uses murder in the opening of the novel and what significance does the murder have in a race and class, and in terms of race and class could the murder be regarded as the resistance of the black laborer to the white racial discrimination and class oppression.

As a result Lessing describes in detail that one can realize Moses must be victimized and degenerates as an inferior and subhuman race for his dark skin color under the apartheid system, which establishes a rigid division between the white and the black. Thus the murder of Mary seems to act as an inevitable fight- back of the repressed race and class. From a macroscopic point of view Moses’ subversion symbolizes the rebellion against the white hegemony.

Moreover, the thesis has also attempted to analyze the fact that throughout Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing*, the black characters are portrayed as a group of people like thieves who scheme to obtain wealth by stealing from the whites. The same perception is observed even in the opening paragraph of the novel in which Mary’s murderer is assumed to be a thief. He is conformed to the stereotype that black characters are dishonest and dangerous to the whites in the society. For instance, it was suggested by Charlie Slatter and Sergeant Denham that the native had murdered Mary while drunk, in
search of money and jewels. They inquired Tony to reveal the reason for the murder behind. They assumed that,

`Go ahead. Only remember, I don’t want to hear your fancies. I want to hear facts.

‘Have you ever seen anything definite which would throw light on this murder? For instance, have you seen this boy attempting to get at her jewellery, or something like that? Anything that is definite. Not something in the air. (GS, 23)

The theory describes an idea that how racism was present in a Rhodesian racist society. Additionally, the study has also presented the depiction of supremacy and domination of the white literary characters and the negative representation and inferiority of the black characters portrayed in the mirrored Southern African literary society. This negative stereotype of the black characters is maintained throughout the novel as evidenced by Mary’s hopeless distrust of the black characters. Her first contact with a black character was seen in her relationship with Samson, her domestic worker whom she deemed as a criminal. As a result of his darker skin color, she resorted to hide the keys to the storeroom as a precautionary measure against the probability that he would steal her groceries and belongings. “Boss has keys, he explained; and she was amused at his matter-of-fact acceptance of a precaution that could only be against his stealing.” (GS, 59)

The new servant Samson was also a victim of his skin color as it was also assumed by Mary that he was more of a liability than an asset to her. Mary illustrated this
view when she returned from the fields and resorted to investigate what work had not been done and what belongings were missing.

While Dick was patiently explaining about soils and drains and native wages, she was thinking with half her mind about that native alone with her things. When she got back at lunch-time the first thing she did was to go round the house, looking for what he has left undone, and examining her drawers, which looked untouched. But then, one never knew - they were such cunning swine! (GS, 69)

Thus Mary furthered the stereotype of dishonest blacks by vigilantly supervising Samson’s work. “She put out, carefully, so much meal, and so much sugar; and watched the left-over from their own food with an extraordinary, humiliating capacity for remembering every cold potato and every piece of bread, asking for them if they were missing.” (GS, 64)

After driving Samson away, Mary’s mistrust and suspicion of the black characters intensified in the presence of the new “houseboy”. Although she had never been wronged by a black character, and had always been treated respectfully, she grew more suspicious and weary of the black characters, especially the black male characters. This was proved in her attitude towards the houseboy:

... and all the time, at the back of her mind, was the thought that the new servant was alone in the house and probably getting up to all sorts of mischief. He was certainly stealing while her back was turned: he might be handling her clothes, looking through her personal things. (GS, 69)
These negative phenomenon developed by the white characters emphasized the social construction of race in the society where racism and racial group categories were created and maintained by the members of that particular community. In this way, a character understood the world, and the categories and concepts he/she used were historically and culturally specific.

With this in mind, the study portrays the Rhodesian society in *The Grass is Singing* which describes the environment created by Moses, the black as an unpleasant and aggressive as evident in Charlie Spatter’s attitude: “Anger, violence, death seemed natural to this vast, harsh country ... he had done a lot of thinking since he strolled casually into the house that morning.” (GS, 19). It was the norm for the characters in a racist society to live according to distinct racial categories or groups, maintaining the master servant relationship. “When it came to the point, one never had contact with natives, except in the master-servant relationship. One never knew them in their own lives, as human beings.” (GS, 18)

Additionally, the emphasis of different racial groups is important as the white characters use this distinction between the races as a method to elevate their superior status and the advancement of their economic well being. The idea reasserts the idea of isolation and the fact that different cultural groups do not have much knowledge on the beliefs, cultures and way of living.

They talk about their laborers with a persistent irritation sounding in their voices: individuals they might like, but as a genus, they loathe them. They loathe them to the point of neurosis. They never cease complaining about their unhappy lot, having to deal with natives who are so exasperatingly
indifferent to the welfare of the white man, working only to please
themselves. They had no idea of the dignity of labour, no idea of
improving themselves by hard work. (GS, 76)

It also explains why the characters in Lessing’s fictional prejudiced world have a
tendency to behave and think in ways that are applicable to the standards of their family,
media, political and educational systems. In the characters’ world most social institutions
elevate the status of the white characters while diminishing the position of the black
characters. It is evident that:

The three men [Charlie, Tony and Sergeant Denham] looked at the
murderer, thinking their own thoughts, speculative, frowning, but not as if
he were important now. No, he was unimportant: he was the constant, the
black man who will thieve, rape, murder, if given half a chance. Even for
Tony he no longer mattered; and his knowledge of the native mind was
too small to give him any basis for conjecture. (GS, 25)

This quote reinforces the insignificance of the black characters and the way the white
characters make certain that black characters are a threat and menace to them.

Ironically, later in the novel The Grass is Singing, there is a shift in the power
relations between Mary and Moses. Instead of Mary holding all the power, as in the
beginning of the novel, she has placed Moses in a powerful position as she has come to
rely on him. This was evident when Moses left the house to return to his sleeping quarters
and Mary commanded him to stay with her.

But in spite of the attitude of dignity she was striving to assume, she
sobbed out again, ‘You mustn’t go,’ and her voice was an entreaty. He
held the glass to her lips, so that she had to put up her hand to hold it, and with the tears running down her face she took a gulp. She looked at him pleadingly over the glass, and with renewed fear saw an indulgence in his eyes. (GS, 186)

It emphasizes the fact that Mary is utterly dependent on Moses. Although she is loathing to have him touch her, she is comforted by his voice firm and kind like a father commanding her. He, in a sense, is able to console and calm her, which contradicts her racist feelings towards him in the beginning of the novel. Furthermore, it is also ironic that Moses is a black character who is giving instructions to a white character. This was proved when Moses ordered Mary to drink water. “Drink” (GS, 151). He said simply, as if he was speaking to one of his own woman which made her to drink. And, at the same time, he put out his hand reluctantly to touch the sacrosanct white woman, and pushed her by the shoulder towards the bedroom. It was like a nightmare where one was powerless against horror and the touch of the black man’s hand on her shoulder filled her with nausea as she had never, not once in her whole life touched the flesh of a native. For a moment she could not realize what had happened; but when she recalled and grasped her circumstances out of her racist view she was engulfed with a terrible anger as well as with the dark fear. Hence, the race-oriented thinking of the English creates a very strict structure of the master-servant relationships.

Anyone who does not fulfill the expectations of the society will be alienated from social life as it is in Mary’s case. She made a grave mistake by forming a close relationship with Moses, by providing rights to his eyes to travel up her whole body and uttered a question like: “Why is Madame afraid of me?” (GS, 166) on hearing this she
started laughing nervously and said, “Don’t be ridiculous. I am not afraid of you.” (GS, 166). Thus she responded as she might have done to a white man, with whom she was flirting a little and saw him who gave her a long, slow, imponderable look; then turned, and walked out of the room. When Moses controlled Mary, it became very unsettling to Charlie Slatter, the upholder of white racism. For Slatter, the overturn of the proper power relationship between white and black, male and female that took place when white women depended black men, as Mary. He had noticed that Mary gave the same importance as she had given to Slatter. For instance, she started speaking to Moses with exactly the same flirtatious coyness with which she had spoken to Slatter. This made Charlie to raise a question, “Why do you keep him?” (GS, 177) as he did not seem to be a good servant. Lessing states:

But, in the interval, there would be a few brief moments when he would see the thing clearly, and understand that it was ‘white civilization’ fighting to defend itself that had been implicit in the attitude of Charlie Slatter and the Sergeant, ‘white civilization’ which will never, ever admit that a white person, and most particularly, a white woman, can have a human relationship, whether for good or for evil, with a black person.

(GS, 26)

Therefore, it is depicted that, Mary in The Grass is Singing, was doomed to be defeated in such a society. She was unable to adapt with the strict rules of this racist world since she felt sexual attraction towards Moses. It also expresses the social situations that existed in Southern Rhodesia through Mary and her husband. Living in the isolated farm, faced with failure and hardships, Mary turned to Moses for understanding
and consolation. It reveals the truth that Lessing succeeds in depicting the extent of apartheid in the society.

Hence the ill treatment of the black by the white both physically and mentally and at the same time the sexual weakness of human being are expressed in Mary and Moses relationship poignantly. Mary, the representative of the white woman abhors and admires fears and dominates the black, becomes an object of contempt for the white and the black. Even in the opening, the whites started to despise her because she stood before them as the one who had broken the social codes. According to Fishburn, a critic, in The Unexpected Universe of Doris Lessing: A Study in the Narrative Technique Mary has broken two codes. The first is the code of marriage and the second is apartheid by developing a mysterious relationship with the black against the social norms. Related to this, Mary's problems with the society ended in representing the disintegration of her conscious self which led her to death.

It is notable to analyze in this research that like Mary who is committed with some sort of people to get relief from her personal as well as social distress, there is another character which Lessing creates with the same intense commitment. It is Anna who is devoted as a writer with left wing politics. She is presented as a free woman with the burdens of existence in The Golden Notebook which has been highly praised for its tax heals innovations and thematic contents with violence, terror, and chaos. In such a social environment lived our protagonist Anna, a woman in her thirties who got divorced from her husband. She was an independent woman both economically and emotionally. It has been considered that the novel was not a feminist treaty, nor a political diary of the break up of British Communism, but intensely an individual story of Anna’s struggle to
reconcile her own life with the political and philosophical atmosphere of her age. It was a spectacularly intimate journey through the mind of Anna whose life was falling apart. Through her perceptive and articulate eyes this study has been taken on a journey into the political life of Anna, especially in Communalism.

However the novel *The Golden Notebook* is considered by many as a Marxist-Feminist novel. It is highly intellectual, politically involved which preceded the Women's Liberation Movement through this Anna. In the newly added introduction to the 2007 edition Lessing declares; that,

> [s]ome books are not read in the right way because they have skipped a stage of opinion, assume a crystallization of information in society which has not yet taken place. This book was written as if the attitudes that have been created by the Women's Liberation movements already existed. (GN, 9)

Anna adopted the orthodox Marxism of the mid-1950s in order to find unity, and a sort of structure that would create an order which would bring an end to the split, divided, unsatisfactory way of life. The Marxist literary theory in the mid-1950s was mainly concerned with a rebirth of the realist novel with an emphasis on unity whereby personal and social experience would be synthesized and integrated into a coherent whole.

The Communist Party and Marxism provided a framework for Anna, which facilitated her understanding of her psychic disorder. She, however, valued her problems in the light of the contemporary social problems. Her longing for psychic wholeness was reflected in her nervous breakdown at the end of the book, which instilled her with feelings of powerlessness. This split was due to the fact that two oppositional sides of
Anna’s personality were contesting each other: Anna, the woman and Anna, the Communist. Consequently Anna had become an active member of the Communist Party which played a very important role in her life and also it had to be noted that the time setting of the novel was coincided with the crisis which was facing in the 1950s in Britain. She believed firmly that by joining the communist group, she was going to change this ugly world, because there for the first time she saw people who were prepared to do more than talk alone colonial problems.

In the beginning the reader met Anna and Molly, two articulate women with a shared political(communist) interest, both dealing with problems related to their love life as well as motherhood. Anna managed to bring up her daughter Janet alone. Financially, the income from her first successful novel enabled her to live a comfortable life; thus, at a time, she could enjoy what she liked without worrying about earning a living. But at present she was suffering from writer’s block and was driven to the brink of a breakdown when her five-year love affair with Michael ended. However Molly wrote a dozen pages about her doubts about the communist party. She planned to send this document to the party. She seemed upset with herself and exclaimed that, “What is I want- a confessional? Anyway, since I’ve written it, I’m going to send it in” (GN, 150), but Anna begged her not to send it as it could get Molly hanged. She warned as, “Supposing the British Communist Party ever gets into power, that document will be in the files, and if they want evidence to hang you, they’ve got it.” (GN, 150). On hearing this Molly was consented and also advised Anna to join in the party. She decided to join the party especially for two reasons:
This although I had not, in fact, finally decided to join. One reason not to, that I hate joining anything, which seems to me contemptible. The second reason that my attitudes towards communism are such that I won’t be able to say anything I believe to be true to any comrade. (GN, 151)

The next day Anna signed up in the communist party in the hope of achieving harmony: “Somewhere at the back of my mind when I joined the Party was a need for wholeness, for an end to the split, divided, unsatisfactory way we all live.” (GN, 157). Therefore joining the party intensified the split within Anna, and it was not merely the disparity between its ideals and its practice, but something much deeper than that, or at any rate, or difficult to understand. As Anna wrote in her red notebook, she began to see that everything she wrote about the party was critical. It has to be noted that her experience with Communism in her past African days in the first segment of the black notebook was followed by a record of her joining the party in 1950 in the interesting segment of the red notebook.

The red notebook contains Anna’s political activities, which began when she was in Africa, and stayed with her when she came to England. She stated her reasons for becoming a communist at the beginning of the black notebook:

I became ‘a communist’ because the left people were the only people in the town with any kind of moral energy; the only people who took it for granted that the colour bar was monstrous. And yet there were always two personalities in me, the ‘communist’ and Anna, and Anna judged the communist all the time. (GN, 82)
Therefore the red notebook begins with triviality about Anna wanting to join the British Communist Party and facing an interview with a youth called “Bill”, who was quite sarcastic in his manner. Anna discussed the ambivalent attitude of party members towards Stalin and his doings. At formal meetings their tone was invariably one of “apology” or of bluff heartiness, yet elsewhere their tone would have been merely “dry and painful”. In this part of the red notebook there was a feeling that “something was fundamental wrong” with the party.

Anna joined the British communist group by well knowing the politics’ inner circle. She wrote very little in it and whatever she wrote was highly critical about the party. Her feelings of dichotomy were seen in the tension which she had experienced in the interview with Comrade Bill. To Molly she said, “The funny thing is I was going to say ‘I wouldn’t join’, but I did” (GN, 152) and in return, Molly gave her a small smile only for politics and never for anything else. Then she talked to Anna about the bad remarks which she had received from Ellen the member, which induced her to sign in the party. She uttered as,

One day that bitch Ellen asked me why I wasn’t a member. I was flippant about it…A couple of days later she told me there was a rumour I was an agent, because I wasn’t a member. I suppose she started the rumour. The funny thing is, obviously if I was an agent I’d have joined- but I was so upset, I went off and signed on the dotted line… (GN, 153)

Hence Molly complained to Anna about the party’s decision to view its intellectuals as enemies and to execute them. Thus, the tone was set in Anna’s record to reveal her ambivalent feelings towards the party.
Therefore the whole tone of the study is the reflection of the atmosphere in the communist circle in the late fifties when thousands of party workers were hanged as traitors to communism. Majority of the party members were dissatisfied and were disillusioned by the activities of the party, but they remained impassive to respond because like John’s (the member) words they seemed to believe, “The reason why we don’t leave the party is that we can’t bear to say good-bye to our ideals for a better world” (GN, 156). But before Anna decided to leave the party she informed her decision to Michael, her lover, who against her apprehension but supported her decision. He advised as,

My dear Anna, the human soul, sitting in a kitchen, or for that matter, in a double bed, is quite complicated enough, we don’t understand the first thing about it. Yet you’re sitting there worrying because you can’t make sense of the human soul in the middle of a world revolution? (GN, 157)

This made Anna to leave the party without any hesitation. She felt relaxed and exclaimed that, “And so I left it, and I was glad to, but I was nevertheless feeling guilty because I was so happy not to think about it.” (GN, 157)

Anna also dreamed of an enormous web of beautiful fabric stretching out. She felt excited and joyful when seeing a red picture in a shape like a map of the Soviet Union spreading over to places like Poland, Hungary and China. The red picture symbolized Communism. Her excitement and her joy embodied her hope that Communism could save people from injustice. She stood in a blue mist of space while the globe turned, wearing shades of red for the communist countries, and a patchwork of colors for the rest of the world. The colors were melting and flowing into each other, indescribably beautiful so that
the world became one beautiful picture glittering with colors, the colors Anna had never seen before in her life. This image suggested Anna’s wish that the world would be an integrated whole. She described:

This is a moment of almost unbearable happiness, the happiness seems to swell up, so that everything suddenly bursts, explodes—I was suddenly standing in space, in silence... The slowly turning world was slowly dissolving, disintegrating and flying off into fragments, all through space, so that all around me were weightless fragments drafting about, bouncing into each other and drifting away. The world had gone, and there was chaos.

(GN, 270)

This dream vision of the world implied Anna’s despair of Communism as well as her prediction of its doom, foreshadowing that Anna was to renounce her party membership, and that her political pursuit was a failure. The dream of “changing place” served as a trigger to Anna’s epiphany and she finally realized that the world reality was absurd and pointless, and that her political commitment was meaningless. Therefore, the dream functioned as a catalyst for Anna to resign from the Party. Her dream about the fabric covering the world and changing into one color might be some sort of dream about world unity and acceptance.

The idea of someone pulling one thread in this fabric and making all of this unity disappear into chaos revealed that how unstable harmony could be. Nonetheless, later on in the novel The Golden Notebook Marxism was thoroughly rejected as it failed to stand for the whole person, the whole individual, striving to become as conscious and responsible as possible about everything in the universe. When she decided to leave the
Party, it was not a coincidence but it was also joined by her menstrual problem.

Therefore the study creates a clear view that Lessing also dwells upon the physical discomfort which Anna experienced to call the attention of the reader that for women mind and body sometimes connected in ways that were different for men. The candor with which Lessing writes about the menstrual period is highly unconventional at the time, and the novel in general opened up a lot of sexual frankness in the writing of women. To add flavor to this, her disillusionment with the Party made Anna to consult a Jungian psychoanalyst, whom she and Molly called as Mother Sugar., and three of Michael’s friends were hanged as traitors to the communist party. This made him to feel bad and he regretted that the party would frame and hang innocent people. On noticing his attitude regarding this incident Anna illustrated that,

He [Michael] talked, on and on and on until finally I said we should go to bed. All night he cried in his sleep. I kept jerking awake to find him whimpering, the tears wetting the pillow. In the morning I told him that he had been crying in his sleep. He was angry- with himself. He went off to work looking an old man, his face lined and grey, giving me an absent nod- he was so far away, locked in his miserable self-questioning. (GN, 155)

These, as Mother Sugar once said, were real tears. This made Anna to comprise less confidence in the party. She did not seem to really believe in or had faith in it. She noted that the other people around her who were members of the communist party seemed to feel the same. She felt that they were lonely and view the party as their family
or were people who were not political but had a strong sense of service. But their service ended in vain. So she started discouraging the party to her friend Molly.

In addition to her disappointment, in a trip to Berlin, Anna learnt how distrustful the communist party members were. She noticed that, Michael ran into some people he knew from before the war to attract their attention, but unfortunately saw their hostile faces and shrank into himself. It was because they knew he had been friendly with the hanged men in Prague. They were traitors, so the people thought that Michael was a traitor too. This experience of Michael increased Anna’s disillusionment with the party. She regretted that,

They were like a group of dogs, or animals, facing outward, pressing against each other for support against fear. I’ve never experienced anything like that, the fear and hate on their faces. One of them, a woman with flaming angry eyes, said: ‘what are you doing, comrade, wearing that, and expensive suit?’ (GN, 157)

Anna next included the events of a group meeting which described the story about a member of the British Communist Party who had a rare visit with Stalin. The man recognized Stalin as a great man. The group was silent after this story was read, and then one listener commented that they had believed the story as a parody. All these incidents induced Anna and Molly to have distrust in the communist party and they both planned to leave from it.

Though she was no longer want to be a member of the communist party Anna attended the party meeting. The members discussed the creation of a new, improved party. For nearly a year, Anna collected articles on this anticipated change in the
communist party. About a year later, she wrote again disgusted with her own naivety that
the communist party would ever change. Molly spoke of Tommy being involved in the
socialist party. She attended one of his meetings and was surprised how similar it was to
the communist meetings of her youth.

Thus the study represents that Molly was disillusioned once again when there
were no real changes in the party. Molly’s comment about Tommy and his involvement
in the socialist party implied that there had not even been any real changes from
generation to generation. She felt that those younger generations were unable to learn
from the older generations.

She had sat in a corner listening while they talked. She felt as if ‘she had
gone back a hundred years to her own youth’ when she was first in the CP.
‘Anna, it was extraordinary! It was really so odd. Here they are, with no
time for the CP, and quite right too, and no time for the Labour Party.
(GN, 396)

Accordingly Molly pointed out that the party members talked as if Britain would be
socialist in about ten years at the latest, and of course through their efforts.

Brought up in the communist tradition, where she was instructed to be active as a
party worker, in organizing and participating in meetings, Anna had become a whole
skeptic in her writer’s role. She further explained to Saul Green, a good American boy,
identifying the cause for her confusion more clearly. She said,

Of course I know. It could be a Chinese peasant or one of Castro’s
guerrilla fighters. Or an Algerian fighting in the FLN. Or Mr. Mathlong.
They stand here in the room and they say, why aren’t you doing something about us, instead of wasting your time scribbling? (GN, 554)

It was then she finally decided to leave the Communist Party because she saw for the first time that the reality underlying the Marxian dialectic was cyclic rather than developmental:

Suddenly I see it differently. No there’s a group of hardened, fossilized men opposed by fresh young revolutionaries as John Butte once was… And then a group of, fossilized hardened men like John Butte, opposed by a group of fresh and lively-minded and critical people. But the core of deadness, of dry thought, could not exist without lively shoots of fresh life, to be turned so fast in their turn, into dead sapless wood… And as I think this, that there is no right, no wrong, simply a process, a wheel turning, I become frightened, because everything in me cries out against such a view of life. (GN, 339)

Such a process which turned individuals into cypers was intolerable to Anna and she decided to leave the party. Her leaving the Communist Party was also coincided with Michael’s deserting her. She also observed several people tried to leave the party. She noticed that,

People are reeling off from the communist party in dozens, broken-hearted. The irony is that they are broken-hearted and cynical to the degree that they were loyal before. People like myself who had few illusions (we all had some illusions- mine was that anti-semitism was ‘impossible’) remain calm and ready to start again, accepting the fact that
the British communist party will probably degenerate into a tiny little sect.

(GN, 395)

Here the study expresses Lessing’s sarcasm about communism and her attitude to the communist supporters, who are still blind to reality. It referred to the cult of the personality, especially where Anna recalls the days of the communist activities in England. It also describes Anna’s perception on communism which also coincides with the writer of the novel. It depicts that Lessing’s Southern Rhodesian days and her involvement with the communist group in Southern Rhodesian left an indelible mark upon her personality and attitudes.

The novel *The Golden Notebook* thus seemed to focus upon the failure of Marxism to help in integrating self and society. In Anna’s case the realization of the conflict between individual sensibility and communal fragmentation paved way for her decision to leave the party and pursue her own path to self integration. However the ambiguous end of the novel, describes that Anna had joined in the labor party and taught a night class twice a week and returned to write novels. “Then I went back to my diary. Now I had something to record indeed! And I was at my work until the sun rose, thinking of the greatest man in the world.” (GN, 275). This attitude no doubt resembles the writer of the novel, Lessing. For instance, though she had left the party she had remained true to the principles and gave expression to it in her analysis of the characters and society. She reaffirmed her faith in the individuality of change, hope in the future of mankind and her belief that the future society would not be based up.

Therefore Lessing’s *The Golden Notebook* is about a woman writer who lives in London, but has experienced colonial life in Africa and works actively in the left politics,
along with a member of friends who are all caught up in the vision of the ideal world. While the novel expresses the theme of the disillusionment of Anna regarding communism, Martha’s disillusionment in the *Children of Violence* also finds with the same expression as a communist supporter. Lessing’s autobiographical heroine Martha Quest rebelled against the notion of the white superiority, the bourgeois marriage and the conforming lifestyle demanded from the subjects of a suffocating system.

In the analysis, it is clearly described that, Lessing deals with the quest of a woman to define and find herself a niche in a male dominated society. Her focus on women’s perspective earned for her the name feminist despite of her many denials. She has created three powerful female characters like Mary, Anna, and Martha with a keen awareness of the problems of society and the enthusiasm to fight against it. Among them, Martha, the adolescent girl of the veldt of Rhodesia rebelled against her parents especially against her mother’s social pretensions and social mores. To express her revolt she joined the Communist group and accepted a life style that was quite shocking to her parents and her compatriots. The research work chiefly endeavors to deal with the concept where individuals considered as mere commodities and has growth stifled by a capitalist system. It also portrays Martha as a rebellion against the structure of this capitalist society. It perpetuates the exploitation and the discrimination not only of the black but also of the weaker section of the society, especially the women who lose their dominant position and becomes a shadow of men in the house.

Martha left her home to join in the group, and she accepted a middle-aged man who interpreted the “New statement” but later she rejected him because he was not a communist, at heart. She rejected the sheltered middle class life with its leisure and
children and joined a group with the belief that she was fighting a battle for equality and brotherhood. She saw the futility of violence expressed in war, and she came to disbelieve in violence which Marxism proposed as a speedy way to establish the ideal communist society. The group was everything for Martha and she felt herself enveloped by “a gentle protectiveness”, a feeling she had not experienced anywhere before. It was more than a home and a family, where everyone was cared for and emitted a haven. Hence Martha did not feel the absence of her family which she had abandoned on principle, to save a large family of humanity. Neither her parents protected especially her mother’s “registered letter” announcing that she was no longer her daughter nor the thoughts of her own little daughter Caroline and husband Douglas deterred her. From this experience of the group as a home she moved forward and it became for her a laboratory from where she emerged as a committed individual.

If Mary in The Grass is Singing destroys herself through marriage, Martha leaves marriage to keep herself alive. Her desire to liberate herself from the system in the society leads her to accept Marxism, as a political philosophy which is newly taking shape in Southern Rhodesia. The young enthusiastic Martha is inspired by the ideology of brotherhood promised by Marxism. She observes them working towards its establishment by organizing meetings where the blacks are treated equally. In Martha’s enthusiasm, she finds family and other institutions as blocks and so she sacrifices them in order to free herself to work towards Marxism where the development of each is the condition of developing and sacrificing all. For instance, her Comrade Anton gave a detail explanation about Communism and how the Communist should be with the society. He said that,
A communist, comrades, is a person who is utterly, totally, dedicated to the cause of freeing humanity. A communist must consider himself a dead man on leave. A communist is hated, despised, feared and hunted by the capitalists of the world. A communist must be prepared to give up everything: his family, his wife, his children, at a word from the party. A communist must be prepared to work eighteen hours a day, or twenty-four hours, if need be. (RS, 44)

A communist he continued,

Must remember that if he has personal weaknesses, it will be laid at the door of the Party. A communist must always order his private life in such a way that the Party cannot be blamed for it. A communist must so respect himself that when he goes to the workers he is not afraid to look them in the eyes.’(RS, 45)

Thus the word “Communist” has got repeated in Anton’s sentences is no doubt a reiteration of responsibility and goodness and Martha can feel the same exaltation that seems to be natural in her when she thinks about her own responsibility in communism.

As already discussed in the previous chapters, the painful process leading Martha out of a traumatic childhood into an attempted reconciliation with herself and society related to self education rather than formal education. It is necessary for Martha to seek her education outside her family where she has only experienced discouragement. According to Labovitz, Martha looks for the companionship of two intellectual Jewish boys, Joss and Solly Cohen, and through them she comes into contact with the socialist thought as well as the outside world, and borrowed books about politics, races and other
subjects. At the same time Martha was able to shake her relationship with her mother: being a friend with Jewish boys shocked Mrs. Quest who did not know what to do with Martha, who seemed bent on behaving so as to make her mother as unhappy as possible. Here the study portrays again that most of the actions Martha took were strongly affected by Mrs. Quest. She wanted her mother to notice the books she was reading. For example, once she was reading *Havelock Ellis on Sex*, she kept the title well in view to her mother. She purposely behaved in this sense to rebel against her parents whose bookshelves were filled with fairy tales, poetry and classics. There were also, lying everywhere, books on politics in her parents room.

At the age of fifteen Martha realized that she was a pacifist when her father called her once, “she played this part against her father’s need, just as, for him, she was that group of people in the Twenties who refused to honor the war.” (MQ, 34). Similarly, when Mr. Quest complained about the international ring of Jews who controlled the world, Martha argued against him, in the most reasonable and logical manner. Thus it was with her parents that Martha had her first discussions on politics or rather, she argued against everything they said including Hitler.

When both parents said that Hitler was not a gentleman, an upstart without principles, Martha found herself defending Hitler too; it was this which made her think a little and question her feeling of being used, her conviction that when her parents raised their voices and argued at her, on a complaining and irritable note, insisting that there was going to be another war with Germany and Russia soon … this new war was in some way
necessary to punish her, Martha, who talked of the last one so critically.

(MQ, 34-35)

Martha believed that, politics offered her something which she had been yearning for a long time. Through her left-wing activities she was able to find new mentors in her life. The first was a magistrate, Mr. Maynard, who in Labovitz’ words, used by Lessing to underscore Martha’s high-mindedness for a particular period. She was very idealistic and self-righteous both politically and in her development as a person. In the beginning of her marriage with Douglas, Martha almost fully forgot politics. After Caroline was born, she suddenly woke up to notice that the world and society around her were really changing. This was, of course, due to the World War II. Her attention was especially caught by the overall attention given to the change in post-war attitudes to the Soviet Union. Eagerly she started to read books about different political events but had a very confused idea about what she had read. She believed that,

the emotion that gripped her was mostly rage. Her rage was even greater because she had been such a willing accomplice in this process of not thinking. For there had been plenty of moments when she might have fitted a few facts together to make a truth. Her upbringing, her education, her associates, the newspapers, had all conspired to bring her to the age of twenty-two, an adult, that was, without feeling more about what was going on in the socialist sixth of the world, than a profound reluctance to think about it at all. (PM, 372)

Martha continued to read different kinds of books when she was married and she tried to find answers to the questions she had of herself and life in general, and at the
same time she continued her social quest too. According to Labovitz, Lessing turned Martha’s education into a political one beginning with Martha’s marriage to Douglas and continuing until the final volume of Children of Violence. This was shown by the fact that at the cost of her family Martha threw herself into politics in A Proper Marriage, and A Ripple from the Strom was almost fully concentrated on Martha’s life as a Communist reactionary. Still, it could not be ignored that Martha’s actions were not purely political. Later she realized that her love for William, the Air Force pilot, her affair with Douglas, and her marriage with Anton reveal the fact that she might not have become active in the communist group.

It was evident that Martha blamed both her surroundings as well as herself for not “seeing” what was going on in the world. Together with William and Jasmine Cohen she went to the meeting of Help for Our Allies Committee, and “it was like a rebirth. For the first time in her life she had been offered an ideal to live for.” (PM, 3). From this moment Martha drifted more and more away from Caroline and secured life as a housewife, and she was eager to join a Communist party, but for her disappointment there seemed not to exist one. Finally, the group was formed with Anton Hesse as the head of it, and after her divorce from Douglas, Martha dedicated all her strength for working for the group. For her, communism had a profound meaning and it replaced all other aspects which had been central in her life so far. Instead of being first and foremost a wife and a mother, she had become a servant of politics, who would like to serve people in wider circles of society.

To Martha the group signified a new way of life and it seemed to be the answer for a life style she was searching for. The group also represented a new philosophy, i.e.
communism. To her it stood as a belief in the future which replaced her sense of being bound by the past, which Martha most of all fears. Labovitz in his *The Myth of the Heroine: The Female Bildungsroman in the Twentieth Century*, argues that, to Martha the group represented a “brotherhood” in which she could be accepted as an equal, and where she might define herself as fully incorporated. All this could be seen in the way which she saw her relationship to the Group. Belonging to the group she was protected from the outside people who disapproved her divorce from Douglas and in fact she was no longer acted as Caroline’s mother. She was bold enough to express her views regarding her relationship with the Communist Party and with a corporal in the Air Force. She rose and began speaking in a tone of final contempt.

I am working for the Communist Party. Though there isn’t one yet, but if there is I shall join it. Also, I am attracted by a “corporal in the Air Force.” I should have told you about it myself, there was no need to spy on me through Mrs. Talbot. And I propose to have a love affair with him. Since you’ve been having an affair with Mollie in, I don’t see why you should object. (PM, 396)

According to Holmquist, Martha wants to disconnect herself from her past and from her family by joining the Group. Her attempts to become a servant of humanity stood for her eagerness to politicize her individual life, and by serving humanity she desired to get away from keeping up close personal relationships. Moreover, Martha’s terror was based on the feeling that Douglas and everybody else were much stronger but the group gave her comfort, because as soon as she felt herself surrounded by the people to whom “personal problems” were the unimportant background to their real
responsibilities, her fear vanished. However, things were not that simple as Holmquist continues in his From Society to Nature: A Study of Doris Lessing’s Children of Violence. He mentions Martha’s political issues as, “political identity contains a deep spilt” in which “the pain is related to her past, to those ‘personal matters’ that she tries to repress, mainly her relationship to her daughter.” (84). This reveals the fact that the politics did not offer much comfort that Martha could fully forget her relationships in the present and in the past. Thus Martha’s quest for self-discovery was still in the beginning stage, and the testing of various ideologies hindered her path towards self-realization.

According to Mona Knapp, the literary critic in fiction, Martha saw herself as a product of a deficient and violent social order and she was born during World War I, and Caroline was born on the eve of World War II in Doris Lessing. In Knapp’s view, the individual’s development is determined strongly by the armed conflicts which marked the century, and this is the meaning of the title Children of Violence. Violence had an important impact on Martha even in her childhood days. She gained a consciousness of violence already through her father, who repeated his stories of World War I. Martha’s life in town were also marked by the existence of violence. It was in the year of 1939, with the atmosphere consisted of tension because of the lurking war, Martha decided to get married with Douglas.

It is also important to mention about Knapp who makes an important point about the lesson which Martha must learn. This is that all institutionalized groupings tend to level and cripple individuality. As long as Martha was a part of the communist movement, she pushed away the thoughts of her real identity. She associated even her personal relationships with politics, and dedicated her energy towards collectivity. In the
long run, it did not satisfy Martha, and she began to realize her dissatisfaction when the group failed politically: there were only two people left beside Martha. She continued, however, to be involved in the leftist movements. Her involvement was based on a need to find alternatives to the oppressive family patterns which she had experienced till the end. Martha finally came to think that perhaps her role in society had not been fulfilled, and she decided to leave South Africa.

In London Martha was finally able to scrutinize her relationship to Communism and the fact she used Communism as a weapon against the ideal of family:

But for us (Communists) it went without saying that the family was a dreadful tyranny, a doomed institution, a kind of mechanism for destroying everyone. And so we abolished the family. We were all corrupted and ruined, we knew that, but the children would be saved. We were not right. Isn’t it funny? Do you know how many people have become Communists simply because of that; because Communism would do away with the family? But communism has done no such thing, it’s done the opposite. (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Four-Gated_City)

This was the first time Martha allowed herself to admit what her motifs were, when she was actively involved in the group. She realizes that Communism was a scapegoat for her because it gave her an alternative for the ideals in her own society. She could dedicate her life for an ideology, which not only allowed but demanded that one should blindly work for its good and abolish his/her ties to the family.

So it is visibly understood that, for Martha Communism gave the excuse to abandon her role as a middle-class wife and as a mother. It also offered her a status where
she could look down to her mother and showed that she did not care for her mother’s ideals. Martha’s idealism crumbled down, when she faced the reality of the war and the members’ presentations in many matters. She saw the members leaving one after another completely disillusioned. Many, who belonged to the communist camp actually left the camp and became successful businessman and social workers, like Tommy, Molly in *The Golden Notebook*. The disillusion was also caused by the presence of cold block and the capitalist world. According to her those who followed the path of oppression were anti-Marxist. She found Marxism and accepted it and lived through it remaining true to the concepts of oppression, change utopia, universalism, commitment and humanism which formed the basic trends of Marxism.

In *The Four-Gated City* Martha was not herself actively involved in politics, but she became affected when she lived with the Coldridge family. One member of the family, Colin, was a scientist who was publicly accused of being a Communist. This happened in the cold war era, and Martha regarded the atmosphere as oppressive. She realized that she could support neither America nor Communism;

She would have to support one or the other. No matter what form the war took this, and it wouldn’t be remotely like the last, but probably all slow spreading poisons and panic and hysteria and terror at the unknown, she would have to be a traitor, not only from the point of view of society- her country, and the point of view of her ‘side’- socialism, but from her own. Because there would be no middle place. Well then, she would be a patriot and a coward, rather than a traitor and a coward … she was immensely tired. (FG, 212)
This disturbed Martha deeply, and at this point she began to think of suicide. Here the study describes that the politics still had a strong impact on Martha, and mixed with her personal problems.

Martha’s interest in Marxism and her deep involvement in it was only a reflection of her creators’ interest and involvement. She was in the right age and in the right frame of mind to rebel against the established customs of her society. She was caught up in that frame of mind, and she was very critical and contemptuous of all that was around her and believed that she was right in expressing her contempt. From the very beginning she had a keen awareness of the ills of society, where individuals were crippled through lack of openness and opportunity. Her society was a middle class one, where the weak were exploited and the strong thrived on exploitation. She was introduced to the communist politics through the left book club, which had a few lifeless members in the beginning but became active and purposeful later. The communist group in Southern Rhodesia had all the innocence and purity and it became for Martha a school of education, from where she mastered as initial lessons of “universalism”, the inter-connectedness of things in the world and the doctrine of commitment.

To Martha the group signified a new way of life and it seemed to be the answer for a life style characterized by equality, intellectual and emotional communication which she was searching for. The group also represented a new philosophy to Martha and it stood as a belief for the future which replaced her sense of being bound by the past. All this could be seen in the way in which she saw her relationship to the group: “she lived in the group and did not care about the judgement of anyone else. She felt as if she was invisible to anyone but the group.” (RS, 30)
As pointed out in the beginning of the analysis Martha is also formed by society around her. As a teenager she claimed that she had gained a clear picture of herself by books lent to her by the Cohen boys; from Joss she learnt an interest towards economics and sociology, and through Solly, she became interested in psychology. Martha regarded herself as an adolescent, and therefore bound to be unhappy; British, and therefore uneasy and defensive; in the fourth decade of the twentieth century, and therefore inescapably beset with problems of race and class; female, and obliged to repudiate the shackled women of the past. She was tormented with guilt and responsibility and self-consciousness; and she did not regret the torment, though there were moments when she saw quite clearly that in making her see herself thus the Cohen boys took a malicious delight which was only too natural. (MQ, 12)

Martha’s self-discovery was closely linked with her quest for knowledge of her place in society. As Labovitz points out, Martha’s development followed a circular movement, which was symbolized by her compulsion to break the wheel of repetition which she found both in society patterns and in her own life pattern. She was shown to grow painfully towards maturity. In general it is clearly identified that she surrendered her individuality to various imposed identities like, dutiful daughter, good time party girl, suburban wife and mother, and a dedicated communist.

At the age of fifteen Martha constructed a fantasy of a society which was freed from oppressive racial and sexual codes. In practice, she kept searching for this ideal
Most of the people who Martha knew did not have the access to Martha’s ideal city:

Outside one of the gates stood her parents, the Van Rensbergs, in fact most of the people of the district, forever excluded from the golden city because of their pettiness of vision and small understanding: they stood grieving, longing to enter, but barred by a stern and remorseless Martha— for unfortunately one gets nothing, not even a dream, without paying heavily for it, and in Martha’s version of the golden age there must always be at least one person standing at the gate to exclude the unworthy.

(MQ, 15)

Martha’s wished to find this ideal city when she left Africa for London. Just like when she was eighteen and fled her mother by moving into town by her, she tried to flee her life in Africa for once and for all by going to London and leaving everything behind. Martha’s aimless wandering through London on her arrival from Africa symbolized her yearning to explore what it might mean not to be a women or a self-in-society.

For a few weeks she had been anonymous, unnoticed-free. Never before in her life had she known this freedom. Living in a small town anywhere means preserving one’s self behind a mask. Coming to a big city those who have never known one means first of all, before anything else, and the more surprising if one has not expected it, that freedom: all the pressures are off, no one cares, no need for the mask. (FG, 12)

Here it seems that Martha had finally accomplished her goal and there were no strings to the past, and she felt herself to be totally free. However, her feeling of freedom vanished
as she ended up living in the household of the Coldridge’s family in London where her role was near to a housekeeper. At the same time, she became into close contact with the overall atmosphere of British society. A family member, Colin Coldridge, was accused of being a Communist and a traitor to Britain, and he ran away to Britain just before his trial. Colin’s wife, Shella, committed suicide, and their child was left to be taken care of mainly by Martha.

Society as well as all these events kept shaping Martha’s identity. Her first reactions with the Coldridge reminded of her eagerness to flee tough situations:

I don’t want to be involved in all this… She (Martha) meant this atmosphere of threat, insecurity, and illness. Something new, surely, not what she had lived through already was what she ought to be doing? Why was she here at all? (FG, 121)

However, Martha did stay with the Coldridges, and as Knapp summarizes, just like other heroes of the century’s Bildungsroman, Martha strived for a higher form of consciousness and an absolute perception of the macrocosm by observing society from a distance. She observed her past from a distance; in this phase of her life Martha developed her split identity even further and the observer in her made continuous remarks of her actions. Lorna Sage comments in *Doris Lessing* that, Martha went in the world, the less she seemed to possess herself, and the more she reflected the disintegration around her.

The overall attitude in Martha’s society is that women are most of all wives and mothers, and men have the authority. She seemed to follow this pattern even though she repudiated it. As pointed out above in the study, it was problematic for a female
Bildungsroman to try to learn how to respond to social rules which determine what being female means in her culture. This problem could also be seen in Martha’s life: for example, she detested the fact that women were primarily wives and child bearers, but she also carried out this pattern herself. However, by not choosing to become pregnant again after Caroline she finally started to realize that in order to become satisfied in life, she had to take concrete actions for herself. It reveals the fact that the no choice of pregnancy in *A Proper Marriage* marks the start for Martha’s real quest for her inner and social self. She strived to break the chain of social replication by not choosing the role of a mother.

*Martha Quest* (1952) chronologically starts with Martha's adolescence and ends with her abrupt and unpredictable marriage. Lessing describes upon the various social and psychic conflicts of this turbulent period of female life, unveiling throughout the sickening atmosphere of the imperial facade of Africa. After a fruitless adjustment to social norms in *A Proper Marriage* (1954), Martha pulls free and proclaims her release through the ensuing political adventure in the Communist party. With Martha entering a new stage of political militarism, Lessing subjects the Left group in Southern Rhodesia to meticulous scrutiny; in the third volume, *A Ripple from the Storm* (1958), she contrasts the pompous aspirations with the ridiculous pettiness of this political organization. Going from one stage to the other, the heroine's single-minded drive remains to return to her homeland. In *Landlocked* (1965), the reader witnesses a dramatic stage of painful tarrying and procrastination, while Martha's solipsistic consciousness gradually lost ground. When she finally landed in England, she verged on the marginalizing stage of middle age. In *The Four-Gated City* (1969), Martha becomes a reflective consciousness
engrossed by other characters. No longer individualistic and self-centered, she merely stands as a witness of and reflector upon the surrounding selves and their life conflicts.

Hence the analysis deals with Lessing’s belief that she has reported many quarrels between Martha and her society in different views. For Martha every quarrel is a fight for freedom, either for Lessing or for the natives. She makes Martha strong enough to question the authorities and the powerful capitalists about the disparities of the rich and the poor, and the exploitation of the black. To conclude, it is exclusively obvious that, this research aims to focus on a progressive development in Lessing’s understanding of Marxism as a solution which culminated in a commitment. Her romance with Marxism is the theme in these political novels written between the years 1952 to 1969. Her serious engagement with politics and social concerns, especially her commitment to communism, influenced in the study realistically. Moreover, The Grass is Singing reveals the solitary fight of a lonely woman against the inhuman policy of Apartheid, unsupported by any ideology. In the Children of Violence, acclaimed as her autobiography, she creates Martha, a teen age revolutionary who revolts against the established norms of society.

Thus, Lessing has succeeded in giving a voice to the women socially, economically and politically. Her women have moved away from the era where it was only the man who dictated to them. They started taking decisions and seemed to be different from the traditional women who kept dancing to the tunes of the men. This perception is realized here in the study through Mary Turner, Anna Wulf, and Martha in the novels taken for analysis. Thus the foregoing study has concentrated on tracing the growth of Lessing’s heroines by understanding Marxism as a universal remedy for the ills at the same time accepts its malfunction which they face in their life.