CHAPTER III
The New Woman in The Middle Phase:
Martha Quest of "Children of Violence"
I. Introduction:

This Chapter makes an analytical study of Doris Lessing's novel sequence, "Children of Violence". The chapter makes a critical study of the five novels of this sequence and traces the life of Martha Quest, through five important phases in each of the five novels. *Martha Quest*, the first novel of the sequence, shows Martha in her adolescent phase. It shows Martha as a young girl who does not yet know what she is fighting for. The novel gives a picture of Martha searching for an ideal to live for, and an image to form her personality. At this stage of her life Martha dreams for an ideal society where all people live in harmony. *A proper Marriage* shows Martha in the traditional roles of wife and mother. Martha in this novel, tries to find her identity in the institution of family and finds it unsatisfactory. For some time, Martha adapts quite well to the mores of suburban housewives, but soon realizes that this kind of life will not help her in attaining the goal of her quest. She somnambulistically drifts through her roles as wife and mother and at the end of this novel, she is attracted to the communist party. *A Ripple From The Storm*, the third novel of the sequence, shows Martha absorbed in the communist party work. Having found the family unit as unsatisfactory, Martha now tries to find her identity as a member of the communist
party. During this period Martha hopes to achieve her ideal through communism. The novel shows her gradual disillusionment with that political unit because she realizes that the ideal theories of communism cannot be brought into practice. *Landlocked*, the fourth novel of the series represents a transitional phase in Martha's life. While the earlier three novels show Martha drifting through different roles, - as an adolescent girl, a married woman and a political party-member, - in this novel Martha stops drifting and grows speculative. Where as earlier novels show Martha in her forward movement, this novel shows Martha's inward movement - thus marking the transition from her social quest to spiritual quest. Martha gains spiritual insight through her relationship with Thomas Stern. She also begins to have 'dreams' which are Lessing's means of picturing the deeper, unconscious and unacknowledged part of her protagonists' minds. During this period of her life Martha dreams of England, and in *The Four-Gated City* the last novel of the sequence she is in England. This concluding volume of "Children of violence", shows Martha attaining the goal of her life's quest. Here Martha achieves inner freedom and integrity and wholeness of self through her spiritual experience. Martha gains an understanding of her inner fragmentation, and overcomes that fragmentation by accepting and integrating the unacknowledged and unconscious darker aspect of herself into her awareness. Martha achieves this
during her 'madness', by defeating her 'self-hater' which she recognizes as her shadow or inner enemy. The novel gives a clear and detailed account of how Martha attains this inner freedom i.e., freedom from inner fragmentation. The novel also suggests that the ideal four-gated city of Martha's dreams, where all the people live in equality, is due for fulfilment in the near-future. Martha is shown as a woman who nurtures the "new children", the builders of this ideal city. The novel, thus, shows Martha as a "New woman" in the most real sense of the term - as one who has attained inner spiritual freedom; as one who builds an ideal order of society for mankind.

Thus this chapter shows Martha's development through the five novels of the sequence. The chapter shows Martha achieving an ideal society for mankind - a society where all races and both the sexes live in equality. The chapter suggests, through a critical study of the five novels, that the traditional unit of family fails to help a woman in this achievement. In this chapter, Martha emerges as a 'new woman' when she achieves spiritual freedom besides social freedom.

The chapter also shows how modern women are affected by the violent undercurrents of the time and brings out the relevance of the title - "children of violence".
II Martha Quest:

Martha Quest, the first novel of Doris Lessing's novel sequence, Children of Violence, traces the life of Martha and her search for identity. Martha Quest is a defiant and rebellious English girl living in South Africa. She cherishes unconventional ideas about traditional institutions like marriage and family and thinks of them as utterly unsuitable in shaping the personality of an individual. Hence she dreams of an ideal society with 'many-fathered children':

"... groups of elders paused, and smiled with pleasure at the sight of the children - the blue-eyed, fair-skinned children of the North playing hand in hand with the bronze-shinned children of the South. Yes, they smiled and approved these many-fathered children, running and playing among the flowers and terraces, through the white pillars and tall trees of this fabulous and ancient city... "

The children are "many-fathered", and so, free from the neurosis of their biological parents. With this vision of the ideal city in mind, Martha defies her parents and their society for their conventionality. She feels dissatisfied with the lives of women around her; feels sympathy for the black, and associates the condition of the black with that of


All subsequent references to this novel (MQ), are to this edition.
the women and hopes to achieve for herself a life distinct from and superior to the lives of those 'shackled women'.

Martha's dissatisfaction with the orthodox definitions and stereotype, her sense of being 'different', comes out in small acts of rebellion, like ostentatiously reading Havelock Ellis in front of her mother and Mrs Van Rensberg, their neighbour, or wearing an off-the-shoulder gown to the Van Rensberg's dance. She reads Havelock Ellis because months before she had heard her mother say angrily that such writers are disgusting. She also reads Engel's books on the origin of family in a way that her mother should notice it. She uses these books as her chief weapon against her mother's oppressive presence. Against her mother's orders, Martha Walks alone, which is an utterly unconventional act, contrary to the rigid though unwritten rules of her colonial society—that a white woman should never walk alone, as a black man might attack her. When Mrs. Quest warns Martha of this, she fiercely replies that a black man would never attempt to attack a white girl because, if he ever did he would be sentenced to death. She also adds impatiently that if a white man molested a black girl he would just be fined ten pounds, thus pointing out the injustice being done by the white man in power. She gets these progressive ideas from the books she reads, and she gets them from the Cohen boys at a store near the station. These boys being Jews, this friendship of Martha's with them still more annoys Mrs.Quest.
Martha borrows and reads books on Sociology, Economics and Psychology. The books on Psychology provide her with the knowledge of herself from outside: that "she was adolescent and therefore bound to be unhappy; British and therefore uneasy and defensive, in the fourth decade of 20th century, and therefore inescapably beset with problems of race and class; female, and obliged to repudiate the shackled women of the past." (MQ., p.14)

Hence, in this role of a 20th century woman obliged to repudiate the shackled women of the past, Martha hates to be like her mother and Mrs. Van Rensburg, who spend their life in small-talk, gossip and in criticizing their black servants. Looking at the large and unshapely legs of Mrs. Van Rensburg Martha feels disgusted and thinks that they are so because she has eleven children.

Martha's acts of rebellion express her "restless condition of mind" (MQ., p.44), which later becomes a passion of restlessness"(MQ., 216). This is not mere evasiveness; but represents in an as yet undirected form, her intolerance of half-truths, her unwillingness to accept an identity that does not fit with "that part of herself she acknowledged to be the true one" (MQ., p 196). This acknowledgement comes only in fits and starts at this time - she senses "a guide within her" (MQ 261), hears a "voice" (MQ 301) protesting or calmly dissenting, but has not yet developed the control of will that will enable her to act in accordance with this "guide's" suggestions.
Martha cherishes modern ideas of women's rights. She once sends a note to Joss Cohen asking for a book on women's emancipation. She feels jealous of her brother Jonathan who studies in a boarding school -"why should he, with half her brains, be sent to a good school?" "Why was it that he should inevitably be given the advantages?" - the modern girl in her challenges thus, though she herself had been telling her mother fiercely that nothing could induce her to join that snob school.

Thus cherishing high ideas, Martha finds her family and society oppressive and she challenges the conventionality of her parents. When Mr. Quest complains about the international ring of Jews who controlled the world, Martha argues against him and when Mrs. Quest says that all Kaffirs are dirty and lazy and inherently stupid, she defends them enthusiastically. Martha sees her mother "... like a baneful figure in the nightmare in which she herself is caught, ... the eternal mother, holding sleep and death in her hands, like a sweet and poisonous cloud of forgetfulness." (MQ., p.33). Hence, Martha always tries to avoid her mother's influence, which, she thinks with dread, might one day make her as conventional and hypocritical as her mother herself. So she wants an escape from her family, and feels relieved when once her father angrily shouts that she can leave the house if she so desired. She jumps at the idea when Joss Cohen suggests to her a job in town. Martha also wants to be
free from the colonial society and its people and their comments. Once, while walking from the station to her house, she feels free and happy: "she walked... not wanting the journey to end, she was savouring freedom: the station far behind, where she was convinced every one remarked her, commented on her; the house not yet in sight, where the mere existence of her parents was a reminder that she must be wary, ready to resist.... She was happy because she was, for the moment, quite free; she was sad because before long she would reach home...." (MQ., p.60).

Martha is shown to be an unconventional girl who defies her parents and society because they all stand for tradition and rigid conventions. When Joss Cohen sends her a copy of Engel's *Origin of the Family*, Martha reads it and agrees with every word in it. She agrees with the information gained, which was "a confirmation of her belief that the marriages of the district were ridiculous and even sordid and most of all old fashioned" (MQ., p.32). She hates Marnie Van Rensburg talking about boys, affairs and marriages; and always thinks of marriage and family as a trap set for her: "She sat under a tree... and the sight of her long and shapely legs made her remember the swollen bodies of the pregnant women she had seen, with shuddering anger, as at the sight of a cage designed for herself. Never, never, never, she swore to herself..." (MQ., p.66). Later, in town, one day while taking bath, looking admirably at her own body, Martha thinks with
horror, of the sweating body of her land-lady, of the scar on her mother's stomach and of the unshapely, disgusting legs of Mrs. Van Rensberg. She then reassures herself that hers will never, never be like them.

To Marnie, Martha says irritably that she would rather die than marry so soon. Then, in town, when Joss once ironically says that if she wanted to marry she could have remained in the district instead of going to town, she immediately and strongly denies the idea of her marriage. And when Adolf, with whom she had an affair for a few days, comments that she would marry a good city father and become very respectable and have five nice, well-brought-up children, Martha says she would rather die. And this suggestion of Adolf makes her furious, and she feels as if he has been insulting her and that it is the end of their affair.

There is also another incident to show Martha's feelings against family and children. In town, when she meets Mr. Pyecroft and two other gentlemen, Mr. Pyecroft says that his wife would be coming soon, after having given the children their tea. Other two men also apologize similarly for the absence of their wives. Martha accepts these remarks not for their social value, but with a statement that sounds hostile: "Children are a nuisance, aren't they?" (MQ., p.129). Though she does not want to be hostile, she
unconsciously says so because that feeling of resentment is always there, deep in her heart.

Martha holds sympathy for the black and associates the cause of the women with that of the black. She dreams of an ideal society when she feels dissatisfied with the lives of women and the black. Martha feels helpless when she could not find a single woman whom she could take as her standard. "She would not be like Mrs. Van Rensberg, a fat and earthy house-keeping woman; she would not be bitter and nagging and dissatisfied like her mother. But then who was she to be like?" (MQ., p.20). While Martha sits dissatisfied reflecting on her own state and finding all the women's life she had seen, disgusting, she sees a team of oxen, a plough, a native driver with his long whip, and at the head of the team, a black child. Then, "... the pity she refused herself flooded out and surrounded the black child like a protective blanket. And again, her mind swam and shook, like clearing water, and now, instead of one black child, she saw a multitude.... (MQ., p.18). This pity for the black child is associated with her pity for her own condition, for the condition of the young women of her time. Her pity for the black child overflows at the time when she is thinking about her mother and Mrs. Van, whose life-style she positively despised. At that time she was feeling helpless not finding any woman's life she could have followed. So her sympathy for the black child at this time is an expression of her
concern for the whole helpless section of humanity which, besides the black, includes all women as well.

At this time, thinking of the swollen bodies of pregnant women, thinking of Mr. Van Rensberg and her own mother, Martha dreams of an ideal city, "...glimmering whitely over the harsh scrub and the stunted trees, a noble city, set foursquare and colonnaded along its falling flower-bordered terraces. There were splashing fountains and the sound of flutes; and its citizens moved, grave and beautiful, black and white and brown together; and these groups of elders paused, and smiled with pleasure at the sight of the children the blue-eyed, fair-skinned children of the North playing hand in hand with the bronze-skinned, dark-eyed children of the South...." (MQ., p.17).

This dream of a city, where all people lived happily together, is experienced by Martha when thinking of her own society that can only produce women like Mrs. Quest and Mrs. Van Rensberg, or girls like Marnie Van Rensberg who always talked of affairs and marriages. Martha finds her colonial society suffocating because it is a society full of snobs with racial prejudices. She repeats angrily to herself that she will never be like these women with their small-talk and hypocrisy, that she will not be like Marnie.

Martha dreams of this noble city for the second time when she goes to town, and there too fails to find an ideal image to shape her identity with. When she meets the
intelligent town women of the "Left-Book Club", she is disappointed to find them awkward and resentful, and to Martha's puzzlement, they are even less likeable than the unashamedly house wifely women of farm whom she has already firmly rejected. She watches these scolding and fussing women as if her eyes are glued to them with horror. And she says to herself, 'Never, never, I'd rather die' than be like these. As the women come and apologize and fuss and explain how the children have been troublesome and go into its detail, Martha grows more and more hostile and critical. The women seem to her unpleasant and absurd, with all their fuss and demands: "She was as much on the defensive as if their mere presence was a menace to herself" (MQ., p.130).

She feels derisive and uncomfortable and hears a fierce and passionate voice repeating more and more inside her, 'I will not be like this', for, "comparing these intelligent ladies who nevertheless expressed resentment against everything in every tone of their voice, with the undemanding women of the district, who left their men to talk by themselves while they made a world of their own with cooking and domesticity - comparing them there could be no doubt which were the more likeable. And if, like Martha, one had decided to be neither one nor the other, what could one be but fierce and unhappy and determined? (MQ., p.131)

Immediately after this visit, Martha sees her dream of "the white-tiled, broad thorough-fared tree-lined fourgated
city where white and black and brown lived as equals" (MQ., p.17); "where people were not at all false and cynical and disparaging, like the men she had met that afternoon, or fussy and aggressive like the women" (MQ., p.134). Seeing that even these intelligent town-women are nagging and fussy and irritating, Martha feels helpless. She could follow neither the conventional women of the district nor the fussy and complaining women of town. So, again Martha's mind dreams of an ideal city. One can notice that here also, she associates the helplessness of women like herself with that of the black - in her dream-city, white and black and brown live as equals, and hence there is no hatred or violence. With this dream she sleeps, and towards morning she wakes up cold and stiff. Shivering at the cold, she leans her head against the door frame. She sees outside, a milk-cart, and behind it, a black boy of about seven years whose teeth were rattling so loudly that they sounded like falling pebbles. On seeing this, Martha feels sad and depressed, and thinks that if such a world is going to be changed, it cannot be changed by the people she had met the previous afternoon; and this thought makes her even more sad. She searches for a book which included the deprived black child and her own fierce unhappiness. Though there is no direct reference to the heroine's concern for the cause of women in this dream, there is a suggestion of it, Martha's meeting with the intelligent women of town had made her feel extremely unhappy and helpless. And this helplessness gets itself associated
in Martha's unconscious mind with the helplessness of the black whom she regards as her fellow-sufferers. Thus throughout the novel, Doris Lessing indirectly associates the theme of women's problems with another favourite theme of hers that of the problems of the black, thus putting even more strength to the former theme.

Martha feels caged and imprisoned and spends an hour of violent anger when she gets a letter from her mother in which her mother had complained bitterly against the black servants.

Martha Quest opens when Martha is at the age of fifteen. Nicole Ward Jouve has pointed out the significant omission of any description of Martha's childhood. At fifteen her character is already formed, and it is this character - accentuated, modified, battered, reshaped, but essentially the same - with whom the reader is involved. But the reader is not allowed to see what influences created and formed the foundations of this individual except in tiny retrospective glimpses or what we can deduce from Martha's relationship with her parents." Ruth Whittaker refers this to the problem of relating fiction and autobiography: "Has Doris Lessing avoided giving us Martha's childhood because it is also her childhood, at once too clear, too distant and too painful to fictionalise?... Here the omission means that we have to take Martha's character on trust, as a given state

and it is a peculiar gap given the centrality of Martha to the whole work."

But fifteen is the proper age to begin the story of a 'New woman' with — an age when Martha is becoming aware of herself as someone with a separate identity, though the nature of that identity is not yet clear to her: for the most part, it is, at this stage based on a "swelling dislike of her surroundings" (MQ., 16), a resentful challenging of whatever is expected of her, especially by her parents. Certain aspects of her life are certainly unchangeable — her parentage, her sex, her temperament, her time and place of birth; as Martha puts it to herself, "she is adolescent ... British ... in the fourth decade of the twentieth century ... and female" (MQ., 20), and at present she is "merely expected to play the part 'young girl'" (MQ., 12), against the familiar roles of her family and neighbours. The very fact that she is able to recognize the existence and power of these roles over herself, gives her the beginnings of a kind of freedom. This New woman is carrying the burden of expectations and conditioning, but is also "developing a weapon which would enable her to carry it" (MQ., p. 19).

Martha is superior to her family and society in spirit and intelligence. Whereas Mrs Quest is revolted by modern art, Martha can "look at the work of an Epstein with the same

excited interest as at a Michelangelo" (MQ., p. 5). She is lifted above her social milieu not only in mere matters of taste, but also in her ambition to overcome convention and pursue an ideal, and is constantly frustrated by the disjunction between reality and her ideals, as her ideals are nebulous. Yet the very ideals founded in naivete do eventually carry Martha through transcendence in the years of her maturity, depicted in the later novels of the series.

The emblem of her ideal is the four-gated city. Martha sees a vision of a gleaming white city, "somewhere between the house on the Kopje and the Dumfries Hills" (MQ., p. 120), where black and white and brown lived as equals. The first thing Martha knows about her dream city is about those who do not belong there: "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". (MQ., p. 11). In Martha's version of the golden age there must always be at least one person standing at the gate to exclude the unworthy. In this novel, at this early stage of her development toward self realization, Martha hardly gets beyond the stage of negation. Her experience during this phase, however, does contribute to the building of the city, which occurs in symbolic terms in the last volume of the sequence. Through exposure to life Martha clarifies her sense of what human limitations the citizens of her city must overcome. Later in town, her exposure to leftist politics,
for example, makes her long for that city " where people were not at all false and cynical and disparaging ... -- where people altogether generous and warm exchanged generous emotions". (MQ., p. 120). Out of negation she begins to conceive a vague notion of the virtues that would characterize "the white-piled, broad thorough-fared, tree-lined, four-gated, dignified city where ... there was no hatred or violence" (MQ., p. 120).

The vision of this ideal city is tied to Martha's childhood moments of illumination. It is as if her ecstatic experiences put her in touch with values and visions that are part of the order of experience to which the four-gated city belongs. Besides the vision of the ideal city, Martha has another visionary experience when walking back from the shops and station to the farm. Observing the colours of the countryside, the birds, a pair of buck close to the road, she is temporarily suspended, released from the role-playing self-consciousness of her daily life; she feels "a joyful melancholy" (MQ., p. 71), sensing at the same time the possibility of freedom and the inevitability of being bound by circumstances. Then "there was a slow integration," and "she knew futility; that is, what was futile was her own idea of herself and her place in the chaos of matter ... it was as if something new was demanding conception, with her flesh as host; as if it were a necessity, which she must bring herself to accept, that she allow herself to dissolve and be formed by that necessity." (MQ., p. 74). If Martha wishes to find
freedom from the role-playing expectations and conditioning it will not be merely by escaping into some ideal city or country of the mind, but also through "her life in the world," her "flesh". What will have to change is not merely the conventions of society, but her way of looking at them. And she cannot escape -- indeed there would be no point in escaping -- from who, what, and where she is.

These two experiences — her vision of the ideal city and her ecstatic experience while returning from the station to the farm — stand out from Martha's ordinary life. They are signposts in the direction of self-knowledge, though not the way itself, which has to be pursued amidst the confusing trivia of everyday experience.

Martha moves rapidly through a succession of roles in her journey toward attaining her identity which is tied up with the attainment of ideal city. At home she is the 'young girl' and is impatient to move on from this role to that of an adult. She hates her mother treating her like a young girl. Her mother wished her to fit properly in this role; she always stitched Martha's dresses like a girl's. Martha tries to change her dress-pattern because she does not want to be considered a young girl. Once, while returning from station, being tired, Martha first thinks of going to Mc Dougall's farm. There she would be given wonderful scotch tea and griddle cakes and newly churned butter. But she changes her mind because the Mc. Dougalls had not yet noticed that
she was now Miss Quest; they still considered her a child and treated her like that, and this she could not tolerate.

And again, "... it seemed to Martha that her chief grievance against her parents was this: that in her exchange with them she was held down at a level she had long since outgrown . . . . " (MQ., p. 64).

In town, when she visits one Mr. Spur he advises her to read books that come her way, for which she feels grateful. Her says, "Yes, my child, you must read. you must read everything that comes your way. It doesn't matter what you read at first, later you learn discrimination . . . " (MQ., p. 231). Martha reacts to it in a cool manner because that remark was addressed to a child, whose affectionate admiration she so entirely disowned. From all these instances it is clear how much Martha longs to be free from this role of a 'young girl.'

Martha's next role is an attempt at a "fairly successful imitation of a magazine beauty" (MQ., p.62). Even though Martha's quest is for "something different", attempting to assert and explore her uniqueness, the means she chooses to do so, or the only means available to her at this stage, is through imitating a commercially produced stereotype. This change, however stereotyped, is a signal to her family and to others that they need to redefine her role. For herself, this new role is a temporary support, an
assurance that she is moving forward into a new stage. As John F. Cartwright points out, "Rather than inhibiting and confining her, it [the new role] releases her into new possibilities; having explored and exhausted the possibilities of this role, she can move on to test others, having advanced slightly towards a knowledge of who she, Martha, really is and—just as importantly—what she is not." 

Martha then goes to town thinking that life there would be fascinating, thinking that "She was a new person, and an extraordinary, magnificent, an altogether new life was beginning" (MQ., p. 92).

But she soon gets disillusioned, finding that it is not the four-gated, dignified city of her dream. When she joins the Sports Club, she gets bored and starts longing for something different, within a few weeks. She observes with unease the assumption of imposed characters among the "golden girls and boys" (MQ., p. 147) of the Sports Club. When she looks at the dancers there, she notices that "they were serious, anxious, even pleading, while all the time their bodies, their faces, contorted into the poses required of them" (MQ., p. 204). They were all intoxicated, and though their faces wore a sentimental look, and though their bodies danced happily, their eyes had a gleam that did not agree

with those smiling faces and dancing bodies. Knowing fully well that they wore that expression merely out of habit, Martha does not enjoy the dance. Though the emotional part of her adolescent self enjoys the attention and flatteries she gets from the young men, she knows well that this attention is merely a part of convention. In this state of conflict and helplessness Martha sees a day-dream in which she imagines that some rich and unknown relation would come forward with a hundred pounds, and say, "Here Martha Quest, you deserve this, this is to set you free" - which implies that she is feeling caged and longs for freedom from this new role of a city girl enjoying the parties and dances of the city.

In Marnie Van Rensbarg, who has just come to town, Martha recognises a stage that she has already passed through, "the new girl . . . the fresh arrival" (MQ., p. 267), drawing the ritual howls of despair from the club men. And she thinks that she would break with "the sports club and everything it stood for" (MQ., p. 272), and she makes "various inconclusive attempts to escape" (MQ., p. 273), thinking she might be a window dresser, a journalist, a chauffeur, a shorthand writer, a freelance writer; if she embarked on a career, she would "know where she was going" (MQ., 262).

Then Martha meets the men and women of the "Left Book Club" who seem to promise enlightenment as well as a congenial collective identity. But she is soon disappointed finding the men unheroic and ordinary and women fussy and
resentful. After the visit when she is back in her room with a copy of the 'New Statesman', removed from the reality of the Left people themselves, she gains, as she reads it, "a feeling of warmth, of security" (MQ., p. 157). The vision of the ideal four-gated city that she again dreams of, at this time, is serene and dignified, but is still confusingly remote from her everyday experience.

Martha is thus disillusioned by both the Sports Club and The Left Book Club. She sees that 'assured young man' Donovan to be 'distressed and lost'. Attracted by the outcast status of Adolf, the Jewish musician of the Sports Club, she has an affair, which fails to touch her real sexual nature.

Thus Martha fails in her attempts to find her identity by merging her self with different groups or by adapting to different roles. As Robert Morris puts it, "One group . . . one structure, one ideology, then another, offers a way of life potentially attractive, sound, certain; but all are ultimately disillusioning, unable to satisfy those inherently mystical, partially absurd and chaotic longings and stirrings within Martha . . "

Betsy Draine lists three impediments in Martha's


quest toward her ideal: Firstly, the social pressures of a corrupt society—a society full of conventional and petty-minded people; people like those of the Sports Club with its racial prejudice, war-mongering and rigid sex-roles. Secondly, Martha's own sense of being without free will; her passive acquiescence to the social pressure. Though Martha repudiates the sports club with its racial prejudice and war-mongering, and rigid sex-roles, she is at the same time unable to resist the impulse to behave "inevitably, inexorably, exactly like everyone else." (MQ., p. 211). She sometimes complies with the racial prejudice as when she is threatened by the fact that a black man in her office makes a salary not less than her own; or with the war fever as when dreaming of being a Florence Nightingale to the troops.

Roberta Rubenstein refers this passive compliance of Martha's, to her self-division. This critic opines that despite her desire to gain rational control over the direction of her life, Martha's actions are rarely deliberate and consistent, and "more often, they emerge out of her own self-division and her effort to discover her truest self in the welter of competing feelings and needs." Martha often feels as if "half a dozen entirely different people inhabited her body, and they violently disliked each other, bound together by only one thing, a strong pulse of longing; anonymous, impersonal, formless, like water." (MQ., p.153)

Martha's marriage with Douglas Knowell in her teens is an instance of her inner self-division. Martha's anxiety and ambivalence over her imminent marriage near the end of Martha Quest, for example, typify her inability to distinguish clearly which of her many selves is her true center. "She need not marry him; at the same time she knew quite well she would marry him; she could not help it... She also heard a voice remarking calmly within her that she would not stay married to him.... " (MQ., p.253).

Thirdly, Martha's sex is another impediment in her journey toward attainment of her identity as well as in her quest for the ideal city. Martha is unable to resolve the sexual dilemma— to choose between conventional marriage and her unconventional urge toward sexual freedom. The sexual dilemma first presents itself in the opening scenes of the novel, where Martha is pictured as reading Havelock Ellis on sex, taking good care that her mother and Mrs Van Rensberg should know it. Martha despises the "loathsome, bargaining, and calculating " (MQ., p. 2) attitude of these woman and is disgusted by their conventional admonitions that she must "make men respect her" if she intends to "do well for herself". In striking out for the city, she expects to be able to live out her choice—of free and ideal sexual relation. Martha, "a girl whose first article of faith was that one was entitled to lose one's virginity as romantically and as soon as possible " (MQ., p. 142) finds that an affair
embarked upon for its shock value fails to touch her real sexual nature. "Retreating in grief from her first sexual attempts, she finds herself repossessed by fears about sex that somehow don't fit into her simple schema of convention versus freedom. As she had in adolescence, she anxiously fears the loss of her perfect body". (Betsy Draine, Ibid., p. 43). Looking in a mirror, or lying in bath, she thought of the ugly scar across her mother's stomach, and swore protectively to her own that it would never, never be so marred. Her own attractive body makes her remember "the swollen bodies of the pregnant women she had seen, with shuddering anger, as at the sight of a cage designed for herself, Never, never, never, she swore to herself, but with creeping premonition." (MQ., p. 57). Whether she chooses conventional marriage or claims her right to 'free love', she is trapped by nature's curse on her sex— or so she thinks, at this early stage of her development.

Martha is, thus, left will-less, passively stricken before equally repugnant options. Moreover, her dissatisfaction as a new woman is not limited purely to her physical fate; she also rejects her social options. She will not contentedly submit to a husband in the fashion of the women of the district. On the other hand she scorns the attempts of modern women, like those of the Left Book Club, to participate with men in work at the same time as they raise their families.
During such a state of mind, Martha is aware of "that knowledge of something painful and ecstatic, something central and fixed, but flowing. It was a sense of movement of separate things interacting and finally becoming one, but greater." (MQ., p. 262). She emerges "restless with energy" and meets Douglas Knowell. She likes him because he is "So different from the sports club men!" (MQ., p. 281). She marries him, though "She felt there was some kind of discrepancy" in him, as the pressure of people's expectations pushes her towards marriage -- "it appeared that every one in the city knew." (MQ., p. 293). This is an indication of the compliant nature of Martha. Though she is a rebel, she submits to the pressures of her society. Even though she defies her mother, sometimes she is intimidated, as for instance, when she stops meeting the Cohen boys for sometime, fearing a scene with her mother who opposed her friendship with the Jew boys. Similarly, in town, she adjusts herself, though temporarily, to the norms of the sports club and to the advices of Donovan, son of a friend of Mrs. Quest. Everybody seems to mould Martha. Eager for experience, she keeps falling under influences, discovering too late her loss of autonomy. Her mother wants to make her into a sweet English girl, the Cohen boys want to educate her as a socialist, Donovan thinks he can transform her into a fashionplate, and the crowd at the sports club expects her to adopt the group style. Having given up the notion of directing her own life, she falls a prey to collective pressures. For example, she readily waits for Donovan's advice as to how to dress her
self up and how to behave in accordance with the fashions of the town. She gives up her own sense of rebellion and submits herself to his choice — even in choosing a friend. Lessing adds this authorial judgement: "For this way of hers; submitting herself to a person or a place, with a demure, childish compliance, as if she were under a spell, meant that she did not consciously expect or demand: she might dream about things being different, but that, after all, commits one to nothing." (MQ., p. 149). She had fallen into a "rich and pleasurable melancholy" (MQ., p. 167) that absolved her from the necessity to exert her will against the will of others.

Martha also conforms to the sports club where one lived a role, where one made oneself sexually available according to group conventions: "But it did not matter with whom one danced; it was all impersonal: one moved trance-like from one man to the next... and kissed; and always in the same way... (MQ., p. 156). Through half unwilling compliance to the group, "her own idea of herself was destroyed" (MQ., p. 157).

Again, her marriage with Douglas is partly a result of her acquiescence. She passively lets things march on her life without taking positive action against their pressure. She marries Douglas not out of any long-lasting love for him, but because 'it seemed the whole city knew' that they had decided to marry.
Doris Lessing builds a heavy irony into Martha's final capitulation to the conventional female role. Martha feels 'aged and imprisoned' when she gets a letter from her mother which is full of racist cliches. Martha's too passionate and unexamined revulsion against her mother leads her to conspire in her own entrapment to the marriage she had been loathing. Betsy Draine relates this compliance of the rebellious Martha to her conviction of fatality:

"It seems that a feeling of fatality controls Martha's actions and saps her of the strength to resist the course of events" (Betsy Draine Ibid., p. 44). Before her marriage, Martha "said to herself that now she could free herself, she need not marry him: at the same time, she knew quite well she would marry him; she could not help it; she was being dragged towards it whether she—liked it or not" (MQ., p. 243).

Martha resembles Mary Turner of The Grass is Singing in her passive compliance to social pressures. Like Mary Martha chooses the limited route initially available to her leaving her family to take a job as a secretary in a nearby town. Like her fictional predecessor, Martha also tries to find, in marriage, an escape route from the dissatisfactory conditions of her life. She drifts from one possible role available to her to another, searching for her identity and happiness. She hopes to find her identity in the traditional role of a wife. But unlike Mary, Martha does not fall a prey to the social pressures or the pressure put by those roles.
She tests the potentiality of each role and moves on to the next, thus achieving progress in her path toward self-knowledge.

Martha acts out her own will when she refuses to come down to the level of her conventional society and its people with 'small understanding and pettiness of vision'. She educates herself by reading extensively. "She read like birds collecting twigs". She thus shapes her personality superior to the milieu in which she is born. She dreams of an ideal society; goes to town thinking that there she may find a solution to her 'creeping restlessness'. She joins the sports club and adjusts to its mores and conditions. But she does not participate in its acts of racial hatred. Under cover of group Perry, one of the dancers, humiliates a black waiter and the whole group of dancers joins him against the black. Martha refuses to join the club men in this act of racial hatred. She is infuriated by those men's apish eagerness to go to war; she is also disgusted by the rigid sex roles they were playing. Her disgust finally propels her toward the rebellion from this collective toward which she had been tending, since her rebellion from her parents and from farm district society. She finally says "She is finished with the sports club and everything it stands for." (MQ., p. 208).

Roberta Rubenstein thinks of Martha's compliance during her marriage with Douglas as an instance of her own self-division. Her anxiety and ambivalence over her marriage to
Douglas typify her inability to distinguish clearly which of her many selves is her true center.

But this critic says that unlike Mary Turner's pathological self-division, Martha's is a critical regulator through which she gradually reduces the disparity between what others expect of her and what she really feels. Frequently her choices and decisions are negative ones, acquiescences arising out of a desire not to do something. Her marriage to Douglas at nineteen is typical of the way in which her rebellion against one set of values forces her to re-define herself in the context of another often equally mistaken, set -- a judgement which she is able to make later.

And unlike Mary's self-division, Martha's self-division, though a temporary impediment, gradually moves toward unity and even to occasional visionary capacities. The earliest suggestion of visionary perception is her fantasy of the four-gated city imagined when she is still a young girl on the veld. Though at this stage it is a product more of day-dreaming than of psychic insight, it includes Martha's search for the ideal of wholeness that transcends the divisions of her external world as well as her psychological universe. (Roberta Rubenstein., I bid., pp. 36 - 39).

Martha's choice of marriage with Douglas includes her rebellious nature - she marries him not merely out of her fear of society, but also to defy her mother's advice. Her mother disapproves this marriage, and this confirms Martha's
decision to marry him. She acts out her will against her mother's advice. Thus pushed by, and at the same time reacting against, other people's views of what is proper for her, Martha drifts into her next major role -- that of a wife. Martha's life in this new role, her expectations from it, and their disillusionment, are shown in detail in the second novel of the Children of Violence series, viz., A Proper Marriage.

III. A Proper Marriage.

A Proper Marriage (1954), the second novel of Doris Lessing's Children of Violence sequence, continues the story of Martha Quest who has now become a married woman. In her eagerness to proceed toward an understanding of herself, Martha moves on to the role of a wife and mother, and A Proper Marriage pictures Martha in this new role, and her subsequent discontent and disillusionment with it. Martha being a New woman, cherishes utter disregard for the institution of marriage and so naturally she does not hope to find fulfilment through that institution. Nevertheless, she somnambulistically accepts this new life and, for sometime, considers making it her life-time preoccupation. But the New woman in her remains dissatisfied, longing for freedom, and the novel ends with the break-up of Martha's 'proper marriage'. The novel also introduces Martha to the communist party and its ideals.
Martha, as the novel opens, is shown as a married woman who strongly resents the marriage she has committed herself to. She feels a strong dislike for herself, for her husband and his friends. She acknowledges, "... that she didn't like any of the things she had become obliged to like by the fact of marrying".

Marriage tires Martha. Images of imprisonment and limitation abound: she is "caged and trapped", "in the grip of the great bourgeois monster, the night-mare repetition"; there are "nets tightening" "a mesh of bonds"; she is "a fly caught in the web of her incapacity to move." Martha feels exhausted. Her behaviour when met with Mr. Maynard, the magistrate who had performed her marriage, is indicative of the depth of her feelings. She goes to him, clutches at his sleeve, and with tears in her eyes, she says desperately, 'Mr. Maynard'. And he understands that "She was probably about to ask him if he could divorce her as rapidly and informally as he had married her." (APM., p. 16).

Shortly after her marriage, when Martha visits Solly Cohen who was living in a commune in the Coloured quarter of the town helping the Jews, Martha impulsively asks to live there too - as if her marriage did not exist. She thinks of joining Solly's commune as an escape from the shackles of her married life. As she sets out of her flat to meet him, she

All subsequent references to the novel (A.P.M.) are to be this edition.
starts savouring freedom. " ... no sooner had she turned the corner which shut out the flats, than it seemed as if not only they but her marriage did not exist - so strong was her feeling of being free. She was regarding her marriage, the life she was committed to, with a final, horrified dislike. Everything about it seemed false and ridiculous .... " (APM., p. 45). And she walks as quickly as possible, as if running away from something horrible.

The same passive compliance that had made Martha marry also makes her remain married. She dislikes being a mother at that young age. She strongly reacts to Alice saying, that she will not have a baby, for years. She enquires with great interest about the devices her friends use to 'protect' themselves from it. During their conversation Alice tells that if a woman starts a baby, then it is illegal not to have it. To this, the New Woman in Martha flares up at once into animated indignation, and she asks, "Do you mean to say that a woman's not entitled to decide whether she's going to have a baby or not?"

But she finds herself pregnant, unexpectedly. With all her revolutionary ideas, Martha becomes as much shackled as any woman. She is not free from the social conventions of marriage and family; -she is not free in deciding when to have a child. Though she is modern and intelligent, she is naive. She has complete faith in doctor's advice and in what
he says about her body. As she follows his advice she thinks herself free, though she is pregnant. Her situation is exactly as ironical as that of a modern woman with revolutionary ideas. Modern woman thinks herself a liberated person and does not know that in reality she is shackled. Thinking about the pregnant Alice, Martha feels caged. She could feel the bonds around herself. She consciously shakes them off and exults in the thought that she is free. "Free! And the half-shaded flat she had left, with the pale sallow-looking woman in pink taffeta, seemed like a suffocating prison." (A.P.M., p. 105).

In her flat, thinking of her own heavy body, Martha's instinct tells her that possibly she too is pregnant. "... here came a flood of pure panic, and then she subsided into perfect trust in Dr. Stern. She felt particularly supported by the knowledge that ever since her second visit she and Douglas had followed the prescribed rituals.... She was free. She continued to revel in her freedom all that afternoon...." (A.P.M., p. 106)

Martha thinks she is free, but is imprisoned all the same. The ambivalence that characterised her decision to marry, also characterises her decision to have the baby. When she comes to know that she is pregnant, she decides not to have the baby. She tells Douglas that nothing would induce her to have it. He agrees, and they plan to go to
Johansberg to get rid of it. But Martha does not make any preparation for the trip. When her mother comes, against all her intentions Martha triumphantly tells her that she is going to have the baby. When Stella asks her what she is going to do to get rid of the baby, Martha finds herself explaining, in the stubborn, calm voice of complete conviction, how foolish an abortion would be at that stage. She also feels excited at the idea of having a baby. She has no control over her own emotions of love and sympathy for the coming child, and she decides at last to have the baby. She observes to herself, "What was the use of thinking, of planning, if emotions one did not recognise at all worked their own way against you?" (APM., p. 118.) Martha, who always hated the idea of motherhood, starts planning for the coming child's future. After her mother's visit Martha cups her hands protectively over her stomach and murmurs to the child within, that nothing would be allowed to harm it, no pressure would deform it, freedom would be its gift. "She, Martha, the maternal force; the maternal Martha, that enemy would not be allowed to enter the picture...." (APM., p. 127).

She outlines to Douglas, the things they must avoid in the child's future - First, even to suggest that the child might be one sex rather than another might have deplorable results - to be born as it chooses is its first right. Secondly, they, the parents should never try to form its mind in any way. Thirdly, it must be sent to a progressive school. By the end of a fortnight Martha gets everything ready, filled
in a basket - enough to sustain that child for the first six months of its life. Thus prepared, she awaits the child's arrival. But this experience is disrupted by her ambivalent, self-critical consciousness. Even during the minutely documented experiences of her pregnancy and child-birth, she feels herself "essentially divided."

"One part of her was sunk in the development of the creature, appallingly slow, frighteningly inevitable, a process which she could not alter or hasten, and which dragged her back into the impersonal blind urges of creation; with the other part she watched it; her mind was like a light house, anxious and watchful that she, the free spirit, should not be implicated; and engaged in day dreams of the exciting activities that could begin when she was liberated." (A.P.M., p.144-45).

She believes that her "spirit" cannot realize its freedom while it is "implicated" in the "development of the creature." As she believes this, she is bound to swing back and forth from involvement to indifference, commitment to withdrawal.

When the time of 'liberation' comes, and the pains start, Martha luxuriates over the act of child-birth. She thinks of it as an adventure, feels lifted on a wave of excitement. Being strong-minded, she does not want any one to 'interfere' in her adventure, and resolves not to express
her painful experience. But at that moment she finds herself crying out for God's help, while that alert part of her mind gets surprised because Martha had never believed in God. During that period she also feels a sense of superiority over other women, and a sense of fellow—feeling for other pregnant women. While waiting in the hospital she hears a woman screaming from the labourward. The nurse, a girl of twenty, criticises that screaming woman. Martha at once feels angry: "What right has she got to criticise us? Because she was such a baby...." (APM., p.160).

Martha's experience is "essentially divided" even during child-birth. During her effort to remain in control of the course of labour and delivery, she observes from "the small lit place in her brain", the divisions within her physical experience. Gripped with pain, she is totally unable to imagine a painless state, released from pain a few seconds later, she can no longer imagine or remember the pain. "They were two states of being, utterly disconnected, without a bridge, and Martha found herself in a condition of anxious but, exasperated anger that she could not remember the agony fifteen seconds after it had ended." (APM., p.164).

Martha is astonished and angry at her inability to control her body and mind. "It was a complete failure of her, the free spirit" (APM., p.164). The words 'free' and 'freedom' gather irony as Martha's vision of herself as
'free' is juxtaposed with her extreme passivity, her definition of herself by events and people around her.

After the delivery, when Martha leaves the nursing home, instead of feeling liberated, she feels "expelled from the community of women". Ambivalence prevails during this period also because when Martha gets released from her pregnancy and temporarily from her husband who goes to serve in War, Martha's hoped-for liberation and fulfilment do not materialise. She prepares for 'a romantic love affair' with an Air Force officer, but eventually comes home "feeling herself to be the only cold, sober, isolated person in a moon-drugged city given over to dancing, love and death." (A.P.M., p 203)

In this novel, Doris Lessing gives a subjective account of childbirth and the painful experience a woman undergoes during that time. It is in such detail that only a woman writer is capable of such an account. The author brings in the cases of Alice and Stella to create a sense of generality in Martha about her own experience. The way Martha behaves is exactly the way Alice behaved, and later Stella too behaves similarly.

Martha had married not merely out of passive compliance, but also because of her urge to open herself up to new possibilities. Having explored and exhausted the
possibilities of her role as an unmarried young girl in town, she moves on to test the role of a married woman and then to that of a mother.

Martha had also married thinking that she could then escape from the destructive influence of her mother. Soon after her marriage she finds that her newly won privacy from her mother is lost to her husband. Also, her mother's oppressive presence continues to haunt her and she feels irritated and angry. Also at times she feels sympathy for her mother. As soon as Mrs Quest enters Martha's house, she arranges flowers, chairs and books, makes Martha's bed, tells her that her dressing-gown is torn, that the bathroom is not done. Martha knows "that nothing could be more natural . . . than this unfortunate woman's need to lead every other life but her own . . . her conscience remarked that she was making a fuss about nothing; but in fact she seethed with irritation. The face she presented to her mother was one of numbed hostility . . ." (APM., p.108). The sight of her nightdress clutched with nervous possession by her mother's hands was quite unendurable. And the result of that visit from her mother is that Martha decides again not to sink into a mere housewife.

Mrs Quest's another visit, later, to Martha's new house, is also given in detail. As soon as she enters it Mrs Quest starts complaining that Martha is neglecting her child
Caroline. This is because she sees young Caroline sitting on the lap of the black garden boy. At this Martha seeths with futile anger. Whenever her mother visits her, Martha's feelings are mainly those of anger and helplessness. Quelling her anger, Martha tries to reasonably tell her mother to stop interfering in her life. She asks, "you brought me and my brother up the way you wanted, don't you think I should be allowed to do the same with my children?" (APM., p. 287). She also tries to remind her mother how she too had taken care, to avoid her own mother's oppressive presence; I can remember hearing you talk to my father- that I expect you've forgotten that - about your mother. You had to put your foot down, I remember your saying. She was domineering, you said? And you were lucky enough to leave her behind in England and took care she didn't follow you?" Martha asks her mother. All these arguments go in vain as Mrs Quest does not understand Martha's feelings. And as usual, they separate in pure antagonism.

Martha fears that repetition - that she is fated to become one day, exactly like her mother. " She was looking at Mrs Quest in a deep abstract speculation as if neither she nor her mother had any validity as persons, but were mere pawns in the hands of an old fatality. She could see a sequence of events, unalterable behind her and stretching unalterably into the future. She saw her mother, a prim-faced
Edwardian school-girl, confronting, in this case, the Victorian father ... She saw herself sitting where her mother now sat, a woman horribly metamorphosed, entirely dependent on her children for any interest in life, resented by them and resenting them; opposite her, a young woman of whom she could distinguish nothing but a set, obstinate face; and beside these women, a series of shadowy dependent men ... this the nightmare of a class and generation: repetition. 

(A.P.M., p.109)

Everyday at night Martha looks at a wheel that had arrived for fair, as she reflects on her own situation. The image of the wheel turning round and round effectively brings to mind the picture of this repetition, the picture of a vicious circle. Martha becomes obsessed by "the loud sad music of the fair" and, "the persistent monotony of that flickering cycle seemed a revelation of an appalling and intimate truth."(A.P.M., p.113).

This fear of repetition, of herself being committed to be like her mother is always there in Martha's mind, which adds to her anguish.

Later, Martha finds that her behaviour with her daughter Caroline is the same as her mother's was with Martha as a child. With a resentful, grumbling, helpless voice she talks to the child as if to herself: "My poor unfortunate
brat, what have you done to deserve a mother like me? well, there's no help for it, you'll just have to put up with it .... One of the most important functions of parents is that they should be suitable objects of hate: if psychology doesn't mean that it means nothing. Well, then it's right and proper you should hate my guts off and on, you and I are just victims, my poor child, you can't help it, I can't help it, my mother couldn't help it and her mother ...."

(A.P.M., p. 227).

Thus Martha fatalistically accepts the role of a mother and behaves with her daughter like her own mother, whose behaviour she had despised all through her role as a daughter. The irony of her situation strikes her, when once Douglas says good temperedly to her complaint against her mother, that Martha will be just as bad at her mother's age: "what Douglas had said, ... struck straight at her deepest and most private terrors for if she remained in the colony when she had wanted to leave it, got married when she wanted to be free and adventurous, always did contrary to what she wanted most, it followed that there was no reason why at fifty she should not be just such another woman as Mrs Quest narrow, conventional, intolerant, insensitive."(A.P.M., p. 42).

Martha is thus overcome by a "sense of appalling fatality": She could not meet a young man or a woman without looking around anxiously for the father and mother; that was
how they would end, there was no escape for them. She could not meet an elderly person without wondering what the unalterable influences had been that had created them just so. She could take no step, perform no action, no matter how apparently new and unforeseen, without the secret fear that in fact this new and arbitrary thing would turn out to be part of the inevitable process she was doomed to. She looks, still with irritation, but with the beginnings of understanding, at her mother, who "could not help" her impulse to interfere; she hears Alice's "fatalistic giggle"; and she consoles herself with "the sustaining conviction of necessity".

This sense of fatality and determinism makes Martha passively drift through her life as wife and mother. For much of A Proper Marriage she is taken over by the demanding roles of wifehood and motherhood as defined in her class and time; "with part of herself she connived at it", because this absorption offers her a way of avoiding the uncomfortable challenge of self-examination. Therefore, at times, instead of rebelling against the overwhelming demands of wifehood and motherhood, Martha tries to make them into a life's work; She will become "a woman calm, rich, maternal, radiant", "warm, large, delightful ... She would lapse into it as into a sea and let everything go". She adapts, though temporality, to the mores of suburban housewives and acts accordingly, in her new systematic and well-furnished house.
She becomes one of the "circle of women" friends meeting in a "circle of grass chairs" as they exchange information on babies, husbands, money and household affairs. But the "cycle of guilt and defiance ruled her living", and "the idea of abandoning the person she felt herself to be" causes her "pure panic".

During this period of confusing conflict within herself, Martha seems to herself to be "formless, graceless, and unpredictable, a mere lump of clay." (APM.,p.11). She envies Mr. Maynard who is "complete - finished in his way as Stella is in hers." Mr. Maynard has built a consistent public image, and Stella moves with precision and expertness from one role to another : "the languidly enticing beauty", the "energetic house wife" the "quiet, devoted wife ministering to others". Martha envies Maisie's "placid enjoyment of life", thinks of the "simple women of the country, who might be women in peace, according to their instincts, without being made to think and disintegrate into fragments." Martha, unlike them, is difficult to categorize, and cannot long be identified with any one stereotype - this formlessness and unpredictability is in the long run, her strength, for it prevents her from becoming frozen in any one image. Mr Maynard and Stella are "finished" in more than one ways, while a "lump of clay" has infinite possibilities. Martha's 'disintegration', her critical assessment of one possible role or persons after another, is an essential part
of her journey to self-discovery and reintegration. Her society presents many roles, many "shells for living in" and she has either to experience or observe those roles which are imposed on her, or which she temporarily finds attractive as possible means of self-expression.

Finding that none of those roles finally answers, as a means of fulfilment, Martha recognises her own "unaccommodated" self, and hears her own "inner voice". It is only when she recognises this inner and unchanging presence, that she becomes able to accept fully the outer circumstances of her life—her sex, temperament, age, class, etc. John F. Cartwright opines that this vision and acceptance is based on a paradox. "The conditions and circumstances of her life as Martha Quest are, on the one hand, transitory and of no importance in themselves; on the other, they provide the necessary and indispensable means by which she is enabled to reach an understanding of their significance. They represent an inescapable limitation of her possible experience of the world as an individual being, and at the same time they are the only available means of her liberation into self-knowledge."

Martha associates her own situation and that of other women like her, with that of the black, the other oppressed

class of the white male dominated society. Learning that once a woman starts a baby she has no right to decide whether or not to have it, Martha burns inside with helpless indignation. It is at that very moment that she sees, with nostalgic sympathy, a native woman. The native woman held a small child by one hand, and a slightly larger one by the other, and there was a new baby folded in a loop of cloth on her back. The older children held the stuff of her skirt from behind. And, "Martha stopped to look at her. This woman summed up her uncomfortable thoughts and presented the problem in its crudest form. This easy, comfortable black woman seemed extra-ordinarily attractive compared with the hard gay anxiety of Stella and Alice. Martha felt her as something simple, accepting-whole." (A.P.M., p.26).

Martha argues hotly with Alice and Stella for the cause of the native woman. Feeling sympathy for the native woman Martha remarks, "It's all very well for us, 'We're all right, but how about her?' To this Stella tells Alice that Martha always got hot and bothered about the black. She also says brightly, ".. It's different for them. They're not civilized, having babies is easy for them, every one knows that". (APM.,p.27) Alice then says that Dr.Stern has a clinic for the native women and that he charges them only six pence. Stella gets horrified at the treatment of Kaffirs by Dr.Stern. After some moments of silence she remarks dubiously that one should be kind to them. At this Martha laughs sneeringly which makes Stella angry. Stella says
sourly that if every one were like Martha the Kaffirs would get out of hand. She also remarks that they are nothing but animals and it doesn't hurt them to have babies. Alice being a nurse to Dr. Stern, says that he is making a study of it and adds that the native women are the same as white women. While Stella gets shocked, Martha bitterly says, "It seems even Dr. Stern is only interested in writing papers about them." Alice, offended, asks 'How many doctors can you think of would work as hard as he does all the week and every night and then all Sunday mornings helping Kaffir women with their babies? And for as good as nothing too.' (APM., p.27). Martha protests, 'six pence is the same for them as ten shillings would be for us'. Alice gets angry, 'It's not the same for Dr. Stern'. Martha immediately demands, hotly, 'whose fault is that?' (APM., p.28).

This long argument brings out Martha's concern for the black. Six pence for them is like ten Shillings for the white, which shows their condition of poverty. Martha feels this injustice deeply and the same feeling is expressed in her argument.

Martha tries to join Solly Cohen and others in their attempt to serve the Jews. When her life with Douglas becomes tedious she contacts her Left wing acquaintances who invite her to a meeting to raise money for 'our Allies' which now include Russia. She buys some literature at the meeting and for the first time in her life reads about Russian
revolution, and feels as if her eyes had been opened and her ears made to hear. She feels as if it was a rebirth, and that for the first time in her life she had been offered an ideal to live for.

Almost at the end of the novel Martha involves herself with the Communist group because she admires the communist ideals of equality of race.

At the end of the novel Martha leaves her husband and daughter partly because she is disgusted with the dullness and stupidity of her married life, and partly because of her involvement with the communist party.

Thus Martha holds feelings of sympathy and understanding for the black. She cherishes this concern for the black along with her quest for freedom and integrity as a woman.

In her reactionary ideas about marriage and family, about the status of the black and the women in modern society, Martha is essentially modern. She has a great sense of freedom. Once Stella says to Alice criticizing Martha's sympathy for the black "Don't take any notice of Matty. Douggie'll, put some sense into her head. You can't be a Red if you're married to a civil servant." (APM., p.28) Martha feels acutely depressed because the finality of what Stella said hurt her sense of freedom. When Douglas talks of the fact that it is illegal to procure abortions, the modern woman in Martha flows into angry tirade against "governments
who presumed to tell women what they should do with their own bodies; it was the final insult to personal liberty.  
(APM., p.106)

Martha unconsciously wishes for a daughter, not a son. On seeing Martha knitting a frock for the baby to come, Mrs. Quest asks why Martha did not choose a blue cloth for the dress. Blue is traditionally meant for boys. Martha grows sarcastic and keeps the cloth in a drawer as if concealing it from her mother.

Again, once she gets a letter from Mr. Maynard. Hoping that she would have a daughter he wrote that he had wanted a daughter for himself rather than a boy. "This sentence touched Martha deeply.... It was to the writer of that sentence she sent an affectionate reply, ignoring the rest."  
(APM., p.132)

As a new woman, Martha defies parental care and authority as destructive. She thinks her mother's influence oppressive and so constantly tries to keep herself away from it. She tells her daughter Caroline in her puzzled monologues, "... You'd be relieved, my poor brat, if you knew that when you were with my mother I never thought of you at all - that's a guarantee of your future emotional safety, isn't it? (APM., p.228).

Martha gets angry and disillusioned about Solly's Commune when she knows that it keeps women out. She also regards it as rotten at the core when she comes to know that
it flourished on the income from the Cohens' Store in the colony. Because, this New Woman holds no belief in an institution that depends on parental care.

Martha regrets the hasty marriage and motherhood that she has committed herself to. She says to her young daughter Caroline, "... two years ago I was as free as air. I could have done anything, been anything. Because the essence of the daydreams of every girl who isn't married is just that: it's the only time they are more free than men. Men have to be something, but you'll find when you grow up, my poor child, that you will see yourself as a ballet dancer, or a business executive, or ... you'll imagine yourself doing all sorts of things in all sorts of countries; the point is, your will will be your limit. Anything'll be possible. But you will not see yourself sitting in a small room bound... to a small child. For God's sake, Caroline, don't marry young..." (APM., p.228).

10 Sidney Janet Kaplan opines that the inner


In this study Kaplan analyses the cycles of "rebellion, acquiescence", and the elements of biological and cultural conditioning of women. Kaplan focuses on the specifically female aspects of Martha Quest's (and Anna Wulf's) development - the "'feminine consciousness' made up of passivity, submissiveness, resentment against men and disassociation between body and mind." (p.171). She interprets 'Martha's extrasensory perceptions in the later novels of the series as an extrapolation of her essential 'passivity', linking those intuitive, visionary powers to the 'feminine consciousness' that only much later transcends sexual identity and is understood as part of a 'Universal consciousness'.

10.
contradictions of Martha's roles as wife, lover, mother, and what she describes "vaguely but to her own satisfaction as a person" (A.P.M., p.228), are the most crucial challenges of her growth toward freedom and self-definition in both her social universe and the universe of her mind.

Roberta Rubenstein opines that most of Martha's early character develops "through her attempts to reconcile that sexual identity - understood through the constraints and expectations placed upon her as a female in a world shaped by conventional male values-, with her desire to be a complete person, due all the rights of her male counter - parts." Martha is distressed to discover the disparity between the idyllic life she had been led to expect from the fiction she reads, and the disillusionments of her own experience, created partly by her own passive compliance. She expresses this illusionment in her monologue with her young daughter:

".... If you read novels and diaries, women didn't seem to have these problems. Is it really conceivable that we should have turned into something quite different in the space of about fifty years? Or do you suppose they didn't tell the truth, the novelists? In the books, the young and idealistic girl gets married, has a baby - she at once turns into something quite different: and she is perfectly happy to spend her whole life bringing up children with a tedious

husband."

And from these speculations emerged a definite idea - that "There must be, if not in literature, which evaded these problems, then in life, that woman who combined a warm accepting feminity and motherhood with being what Martha described... as 'a person'". (APM., p.228).

Martha constantly struggles to reconcile her romantic expectations with her real circumstances. Her journey to awareness is charted through her discovery of her identity as a woman in a world full of conventional male values. Martha reflects on the series of events in her life that have resulted in an existence in which she is utterly miserable. She finds that in spite of her intentions and beliefs and rebellion, she has done the exact opposite of what she had intended to do, that she has passively accepted the external prescription for social behaviour. Thus a sense of fatality and determinism underlies Martha's experience. Yet, the only way to find out who she is, is by making choices and learning from what she is not.

Resuming political education through the Left Book Club, Martha gains insight into the culturally conditioned choices she has made. She realizes that many members of her society have reinforced the masquerade of marriage, including Dr. Stern, who recommends her a second pregnancy as a cure for the restlessness caused by the first one. Her mother, her
husband, her friends, and even her doctor undermine Martha's legitimate negative feeling by assuring her that they are unreliable, predictable and temporary. As Roberta Rubenstein writes, "Too often lulled away from those inner voices by such explanations, Martha finally acknowledges that they represent her true self, and that the cajoling voices of her elders and contemporaries are the ones that must be resisted," (Roberta Rubenstein Ibid p.44).

Her husband's year long absence from her as a drafted soldier makes Martha aware of the schisms at work in both the political universe and Martha's private one. She attempts to overcome the external pressures of society as well as the unknown forces within her personality that had all those days, resulted in her passive acquiescence. By the time her husband returns, the rift between them has widened to expose the falsity of their relationship, the emotional and intellectual chasms that separate them. In the final section of A Proper Marriage ironically prefaced by an epigraph from Jung on marriage - Doris Lessing details Martha's painful and hesitant efforts at extricating herself from the confinements of that social institution. As a further irony, Martha and Douglas move into a house whose location is almost a parody of the visionary four-gated city that Martha's deeper consciousness seeks - a house in the
older part of the city, at the corner of a block. From its gate one could see a mile in four directions along tree bordered avenues'. "Everything was straight, orderly, unproblematical". (A.P.M., p.273)

Martha's political involvement gives her the moral strength to make the final break from her family. The duality of her inner world is transferred from the personal to the political, a form of escape that she only later understands as a repetition of the same pattern of self-division. As she focuses her attention on the "socialist sixth of the world", she had two clear and distinct pictures ... one noble, creative and generous, the other ugly, savage and sordid. There was no sort of connection between the two pictures. As she looked at one, she wanted to fling herself into the struggle, to become one of the millions of people who were creating a new world; as she looked at the other, she felt staleness, futility." (A.P.M., p.315)

These ambivalent images are reflections in a political context of the same ambivalence that characterised Martha's private life. And Martha chooses to believe whole-heartedly in the first and reject the second, again endorsing the same romantic idealism that persistently clouds her perception.
Martha wants to overcome the duality that underlies her married life by joining hands with the members of the communist party. Her final departure from her family is a step forward in her attempt to attain wholeness and understanding of her self. Martha knows that she will die emotionally and spiritually if she remains with Douglas. Nearly at the end of this novel, Douglas behaves in a stupid, egoistic, almost mad way. This behaviour arising out of his jealousy over Martha's brief affair with an Air Force Officer, becomes unendurable to Martha.

By breaking herself away from her "Proper marriage", Martha also thinks that she is helping her daughter out of the vicious legacy of parental tyranny. Her belief that parents invariably cause their children irreparable harm stems from her appalling relationship with her own mother and it enables her to leave Caroline when she separates from Douglas.

Whereas the circle of family life has enclosed and shaped her development up to this point, her decision to leave her husband and set her young daughter free from "the tyranny of the family" is her extraordinary act of independence, embodying both her political zeal and her personal disillusionment. She firmly believes that "a child without any parents at all clearly had a greater chance of survival as a whole personality."
This attitude is rooted in Martha's perception of her own negative childhood and her need to repudiate her destructive mother. It also has its roots in Martha's vision of the ideal state where children are 'many fathered' — indicating this new woman's disregard for the traditional institution of family and its prescripts.

While Martha Quest and A Proper Marriage together frame the same setting as The Grass is Singing, the preceding novel, of growing up female in South Africa—the psychic geography develops in a completely different direction. Mary Turner of The Grass is Singing tries to escape the anxiety and chaos caused by her inner duality, by running first into the arms of Dick Turner, then of Moses; Martha run in the opposite direction — away from the arms of husband and daughter, determined to face her own inner self and overcome its division. In that extraordinary choice, she breaks out of the cycle of family life by severing the connections among three generations of females — her mother, herself and her daughter — who were otherwise doomed to the inevitable repetitions of family history and misery.

Martha thus frees herself from the bindings of her "proper marriage" which she had hitherto accepted as an escape route from her town life and her mother's influence.
She breaks up her marriage not because of her love affair with an Air Force man, but partly because of her inability to remain in the social institution of marriage, and partly because she is impatient to proceed to the next possible role in her move toward self-knowledge after having tested that role of a wife and mother.

This second volume of *Children of Violence*, thus, ends with a sense not of enclosure, but of release. Disburdened of her idealistic expectations of marriage and motherhood, Martha Quest is yet to be disillusioned by the unattainable idealism of the Leftist political movement, which is detailed in the next novel of the series, viz., *A Ripple From the Storm*. In this sense, *A Proper Marriage* ends in a similar vein to that of *Martha Quest*: Martha escapes from one circle of tedium and begins a wider, new life. But one knows the irony inherent in this 'escape' of Martha's because by now it is quite clear that Martha is fleeing her own self-division and it is only a self-confrontation that can free her and enable her to attain wholeness of self. Meanwhile, however, the communist Party offers her a means of defining herself anew.
Martha Quest, who leaves her husband and daughter to join communism, seeks, in that political grouping, an escape from the 'tyranny of the family', into a world of freedom in the 'four-gated city' of her dreams. *A Ripple From the Storm*, the third novel of the *The Children of Violence* sequence, shows Martha in her new role as a zealous communist, and her subsequent disillusionment with that role. The novel ironically shows Martha entering again into marriage with Anton Hesse, the Chairman of the communist party and the failure of this marriage also.

Martha, a typical modern woman with revolutionary ideas, devotes herself completely to the communist party work, because she thinks that communism paves way for a better society, a society that ensures freedom and equality to all its members.

This dream of the bright future includes a profound distaste for the present. Martha hates any kind of pressure her conventional society puts on her. William, with whom Martha has had a brief affair, once tells her that Douglas, her husband, had put pressure on the authorities to get him posted out and also that Douglas was thinking of citing him as a co-respondent in a divorce case. He says this with pride. Listening to this, Martha begins to dislike William. Because, "Her own contempt for any forms of pressure society might put on her was so profound and instinctive that she as
instinctively despised any one who paid tribute to them."

Listening to old Mr. Maynard, Martha feels disgusted because he is, for her, "a specimen of horror from the dead epoch."

Her horror of that dead epoch is expressed in her dream about an ancient, mysterious lizard: "It's alive after so many centuries. And it will take centuries more to die ... alive still in the massive weight of the earth. She looked down at the half-closed patient eye and thought, you must be too old even to see me." (R.F.S., p.36)

This dream symbolizes Martha's nightmare of the dead weight of the past.

Her hatred for the past, and her dissatisfaction with the present which still contains the elements of the dead past, give way to her hopeful dream for a better future—an achievement of the Communist Party. At the sight of Mrs. Carson, her land lady, who is always obsessed with her fancies and fears about the black servants, Martha muses that Mrs. Carson, "was the product of a certain kind of society, and the Mrs. Carsons would cease to exist when that society came to an end... over there, she thought, meaning in the Soviet Union—over there it's all finished, race prejudice and antisemitism. (R.F.S., p.27)

All subsequent references to this book (R.F.S.) are to this edition.
For Martha, as for all communists, Soviet Union is an ideal place, as Communism flourished there.

Martha and her comrade Jasmine are shown to be so much occupied with their visions of the future, that they do not feel anything when their lovers leave them for war-service. The fact that their lovers were leaving them seemed to them not only unimportant but also the proof of their belief that time was coming soon when pain would cease to exist.

And at that very moment, they see in the opposite corner, a small ragged barefooted, black child, pot-bellied with mal-nutrition. On seeing him, "Martha and Jasmine smiled at each other, saying in the smile that because of them, because of their vision he was protected and saved the future they dreamed of seemed just around the corner; they could almost touch it. Each saw an ideal town, clear, noble, and beautiful, soaring-up over the actual town they saw... The ragged child was already a citizen of this town, co-citizen with themselves..." (R.F.S., p.34)

As this vision points out, Martha has great concern for the black. Her joining of the Communist party itself is an indication because the chief motto of the party was to help the weaker section of the society. Martha feels angry and disgusted when Mr. Maynard tells her not to indulge in such political activities that would upset the kaffirs. She understands that he has told this to her as one white person to another. She also feels that he knows so little of her as
a communist, that he cannot even imagine that this appeal would be contemptible, and even irrelevant to her.

Then she goes to an Indian shop where she had kept her bicycle, and sees a couple of black children playing with the cycle there. The moment the Indian shopkeeper saw her, he dragged the black children to their feet and said, "Kaffirs, run away home, black kaffir dogs". And he watched her, for a favouring smile from the white woman. This incident makes Martha suddenly depressed. "She thought of Mr. Maynard and of the incident with the bicycle and felt the depression deepening." (R.F.S., p.56)

There are many such instances that show Martha's sympathy for the black. This sympathy for the black, in a way, is a sympathy for the fellow sufferers. The weaker and oppressed section of society, which communism tries to help, includes the black as well as women. Martha's concern for the black is associated with her concern for women. It is also closely allied to her need for personal freedom because she sees, in the oppressed black, an image of her own state.

This alliance is implicit in her vision of the four-gated city which is above all an image of integration. On the collective level it represents an ideal state where all races and both the sexes live in harmony enjoying equality, whereas on the individual level, it implies the wholeness of self.
the goal of what Jung calls individuation, of which Martha is constantly in quest.

Thus, Martha's vision represents both her political ideal and her yet unconscious personal goal. As Jean Pickering opines,

"It (Martha's vision of the four-gated city) symbolizes both what the world should be like and what she should be like. These two aspects of the image, the exterior and the interior are, at the depest level inseparable."

Martha, therefore, is "linked with (the communist brotherhood) and from the deepest needs of her being." (R.F.S., p.55)

Martha's political stand is thus coloured by her personal needs and experiences. This is the case with other communist members too. Martha slowly comes to know about the mixed nature of human motivation and the partiality of human vision. John F. Cartwright endorses this very point:

"A Ripple From the Storm illustrates among other things, this interplay of personal considerations and political groupings; the young women's longing for a mission that will take them out of themselves in "an all comprehensive compassion for the whole of humanity" (R.F.S., p.48), Mrs. Van's banishment of emotion and


"determined advance towards her own goal" (R.F.S., 226), Colin staying in the group for Marjorie, Maisie joining it for Andrew, etc.,"

Martha's dream of the future society is also one where women will lead a better and more free life. The women members of the Party often talk of the better lives for women. Comrade Marjorie for instance, tells Martha that she will go to Italy after the War. But suddenly she remembers her husband Colin and the baby, and says, "It's hard to remember one isn't free. It's funny, isn't it, Matty? ..."

Martha replies that a baby ought to make life fuller, not narrow everything, and she adds that in the Soviet Union, with the creches and nursery schools, everything must be different, relations between men and women must be quite different, that there must be real equality. The two women speak of the lives of women in Soviet Union. Then they fall into silence and both pursue the same fantasy: "They were in the Soviet Union. They walked into some factory or industry which was run by a woman, who was of their age, or perhaps a little older, some one competent, matter-of-fact, sympathetic ... 'Under Capitalism', she might have said, ... 'women have to diminish themselves. Women like you, ... are entitled to spend a year or so in the socialist world so as to strengthen your vision and carry it back home with you, and hand it on to others." (R.F.S., p. 168)

Martha's sense of freedom and her concern for women's problems are obvious. She feels relieved when William, her lover, goes to war, because he thought of her as his property. "When William spoke of 'getting legal advice' and she understood that he was enjoying the idea of a fight with Douglas over the possession of her — ... she had seen the two men as one, and identical with the pompous, hypocritical and essentially male fabric of society. That was why she now felt relief at the idea of William's going" (R.F.S., p.25)

One of the reasons why Martha admires Anton and agrees to marry him is that he talks about the problems of women. Once, in the Party meeting, when Comrade Jimmy complains about the women comrades using cosmetics, Anton says that he cannot bring up the big question of the position of women so casually, and that an evening must be appointed for its discussion. At this, Martha watched in herself, the feeling of trust and relief well up, "as if Anton's words built a pillar on which she could support" (R.F.S., p.134)

She is deeply touched when Anton talks of Women's life and she feels safe in his company. She muses: "When I'm with him, I feel safe? She wondered, remembering, how he had said: Women's problems are not sufficiently considered, and how she had responded to the promise of understanding. Yes, he's kind, she decided" (R.F.S., p.102).

As a modern woman, Martha questions traditional ideas and customs that pose problem to modern women. Maisie, a
friend of Martha's was pregnant before her marriage and she wanted the child. But should she have it, then society would ill-treat her and her baby. When Maisie tells all this to Martha, Martha hotly remarks that it is disgraceful that women cannot have babies even if they want, if they don't have husbands.

Martha cherishes unconventional ideas about love and marriage. Thinking of her own affair with Anton which had begun with his visit to her when she was sick, Martha thinks - "it might have been any one... If Jasmine had been sick, Anton would have kissed her on the fore-head, and I would be thinking of Jasmine now as she is thinking of me - don't be a fool" (R.F.S., pp. 86-87).

When Jasmine advises her not to marry, Martha muses - "It's like someone outside a danger zone warning some one inside it" (R.F.S., p. 187). And on the day of her marriage Martha "discovered that she was depressed, and examined herself the reasons: of course, she was going to get married that morning" (R.F.S., p. 133).

However, in spite of all these ideas Martha involves herself in an affair with Anton and then marries him, primarily because she sees him as an embodiment of the communist ideals. She is carried away by this party-Chairman's impressive speeches, by the calm and responsible certainty of his voice, when he talks of the communist principles. As he speaks of those principles, it seems to
Martha that "this unhurrying voice was cutting the past from her, that ugly past which Maynard had described that afternoon as a record of misery, brutality and stupidity, ... It was all finished ... " (R.F.S., p.62)

It is mainly because of such speeches from Anton that Martha likes him, and then involves herself in an affair with him. But even during the affair she is resolved not to marry. However, ironically she marries him later, out of a kind of 'chivalry' to help him. Anton being a German Jewish refugee, is threatened with internment in a camp for enemy aliens if he continues his affair with Martha, and she marries him to allow him the freedom to continue his work for the communist party. For this act of chivalry Martha has an example before her - that of Comrade Andrew. Maisie had an affair with Binkie Maynard. Now Binkie's parents did not like their son's marrying Maisie. So they asked her to get-rid of the nuisance. But Maisie wanted the child. Andrew marries Maisie in order to help her have the child without any fear of her child being branded illegitimate. They could get divorce after the child's birth. Andrew had been praised by all the comrades for this. Martha is also very much impressed by this. With this ideal of Andrew's before her Martha marries Anton, though she does not really love him. She assures herself that 'it's nothing but a formality, after all' (R.S. p.189), and that she can be free after the war.

Ruth Whittaker opines that Martha could have broken off the affair in order to help Anton, but she marries him.
because, "Martha cannot yet be herself without a man" because she still is that kind of woman who depends on a relationship with a man to give herself an identity. "If the man goes away, there is left an empty space filled with shadows; she mourns for the temporarily extinct person she can only be with a man she loves; she mourns him who brought her 'self' to life. She lives with the empty space at her side, peopled with the images of her own potentialities until the next man walks into the space, absorbs the shadows into himself, creating her, allowing her to be her 'self'--but a new self, since it is his conception which forms her." (RFS. p. 46).

'Martha's relationship with Anton and her feelings for him, however, are characterised by ambivalence. While his fatherly lecture on the necessity of preserving her health creates resentment in Martha, reminding her of her mother, his pronouncement that the problems of women have to be given sufficient thought in the movement gives her a feeling of being 'liberated into understanding and support'. When Anton suggests to have a whole evening for the discussion of the position of women, Martha experiences a feeling of trust and relief, but she does so, "... with surprise, because it was contrary to what her instincts told about Anton" (RFS.. p. 134).

At the beginning of her relationship with Anton, Martha expects the Austrian woman with whom he formerly had an affair, to come and make scenes. When that woman does not do so, Martha asks Anton about her and he says that she is a sensible girl. This really repels Martha, and she thinks:

"Anton had chosen to be sensible and left Tony Mandel no alternative but to choose sense? Presumably... But would he be sensible if she, Martha, decided to be? Her instinct said not..." (R.F.S., p.170).

Martha feels safe and supported and admires Anton when he talks of women with concern. But when he praises his dead wife before Martha, saying that she had 'a mind like a man's', "Martha made note of it with a feeling that it said a good deal about Anton" (R.F.S., p.246).

Martha's relationship with Anton is also determined by her passivity. When she is ill, he visits her in bed and kisses her, and "she was aware that he had again kissed her on the forehead and hot nausea came with the thought: well, that means Anton and I will be together" (R.F.S., p.82). The same passivity characterises her eventual marriage with him too.

Thus, Martha who always resolved not to enter into marriage again, yet marries Anton. Soon after her marriage she finds that Anton is quite different from his image as the party chairman which she had respected. She soon comes to
know that Anton has a great sense of property while Martha, as a communist, hates it. Though Anton is a communist, yet he does not like the presence of other comrades in his house. He becomes dependent on Martha in a way which she does not like. He wants her to be with him, to give him all her attention. She understands that.

"... it would please him if she became less of a communist. That morning he had said reproachfully, 'so you're going to congress and leaving me behind?' She had not expected it, had never imagined it possible that this formidable revolutionary from Europe .... could wish her to fold her hands and become passive..." (R.F.S., p. 275)

Martha's married life is not a happy one. Anton is not a good husband, and irritatingly, talks constantly to Martha about his dead life. Martha protects herself by "resting in imagination on the man who would enter her life and make her what she knew she could be" (R.F.S., p. 281). Anton has no sense of humour, and when Martha makes a joke about Stalin he refuses to speak to her for a month. She realises that Anton can be kind and patronising only if she acts the role of a charming little girl. Martha gets constantly irritated and remains dissatisfied, as her husband turns out to be quite different from what she had expected him to be.

Then, the failure of the Andrew-Maisie pair, which Martha had seen as the ideal one, comes as a severe blow to
her. She had seen it as an ideal relationship because it demonstrates that family relationship need not be based on a man's ownership of a woman or a child. This experiment, however, fails—because, with the arrival of Binkie Maynard, the 'biological father', Andrew becomes suddenly aware that the child does not belong to him. This kills his love for Maisie. When Martha comes to know of it, she loses all hope because in the failure of the Andrew–Maisie relationship she sees her own failure: "She was extra-ordinarily dismayed and protected herself by allowing herself to feel a small contempt for Maisie, an on-set of distaste. To the extent to which the happiness between a man and a woman has been a symbol for others, they can expect a corresponding disapproval when that happiness collapses. Martha was thinking: there was Mrs. Van lastnight, and now Maisie and Andrew.... She did not conclude her thought, which was: then there's no hope for me" (R.F.S.,p.,252)

The life of Mrs. Van der Bylt, a leading member of social Democratic Party, is given in detail in order to draw a parallel between the lives of Mrs. Van and Martha. Mrs. Van, many years a town Councillor, and chairman of many welfare organisations, lacks nothing in life, apparently. She has a respectable family, name and fame. Yet some part of herself is dissatisfied and unhappy. When she visits Martha on the latter's marriage day, she notes that Martha does not love Anton, and foresees the failure of that marriage. She
feels depressed because she sees in Martha's marriage, a repetition of her own marriage. The roses that Mrs. Van gives are symbolic. Looking at Martha laughing, Mrs. Van notes that, "the lower half seemed to grimace while the dark eyes remained serious and watchful. Mrs. Van involuntarily looked at the still water-fresh roses. "But scarlet petals had already scattered on to the bare board beside her sturdy brown shoes" (R.F.S., p.218).

Observing that Martha was pale and withdrawn, Mrs. Van grows unaccountably sorrowful. When Mrs. Van presents the fresh roses to Martha, "Martha went pink, her eyes filled with tears and she frowned...... stood as the prickly bunch of roses whose red petals fell slowly on the pale wood of the table ... and she thought confusedly: There she is, with that dry old husband of hers, and all those children, every one of them a pillar of society, and grand-children by the half-dozen, and everything tidy and safe and nothing painful anywhere. So then, why the roses? The pain of the thorny stems in Martha's hands seemed like a warning." (R.F.S., p.220)

At that moment Mrs. Van remembers the day on which she was married, and her voice shakes as she says, "My dear, I know all these things are very difficult, they are all very difficult..." (R.F.S., p.221)
Martha does not throw away the roses for days, which shows that she is deeply touched. The roses remain on the table and day by day the petals soften, crumple, and fade—symbolizing the scattered dreams of such women as Mrs.Van and Martha.

Marjorie and Jasmine, other women members of the communist Party, are pictured as women possessing a great sense of freedom. All women comrades get angry when at a meeting, Piet ridicules the emotions of women, and they ask him to withdraw his remark. These women often talk of the problems of women, and are dissatisfied with the conventional society they are living in. Jasmine, though she never spoke about 'personal matters', once tells Martha that she will not marry, and also advises Martha not to marry, because she thinks that marriage will bind a woman. Jasmine is having an affair with Jackie Bolten who is married and has children. When her parents had heard of her affair with that disreputable character from the camp, they confronted her and made an unpleasant scene. But Jasmine calmly told them that she intended to live with Jackie after the War, trying in vain to explain to them that it was a question of the revolution. The parents had officially disowned her: they would not speak to her. But she lived at home like an outcast because it would be a disgrace for them in their Jewish Community if she left them. So she lived at home,
being treated as if she did not exist, merely to protect her parents from the results of their own attitude. Martha admires Jasmine very much for this 'chivalry', which, she is convinced, is far beyond her own capacity.

These other women comrades, the modern women possessing revolutionary ideas, bring a sense of generality to what Martha feels.

Martha's disillusionment with Anton's character is allied to her disillusionment with the communist ideals because in her mind he had always stood for the Party and its ideals. She gradually realizes that the Marxist analytic method employed so competently by Anton, has its dangers and distortions. Anton himself is the main exemplar of the personal effects of such an attempt. "We are Marxists - or so called. We therefore apply our minds to an existing situation and act accordingly" (R.F.S., p.62) he says. It is presumed that if one "applies one's mind", any situation can be fully understood, and its future course predicted, even controlled. This attitude is in striking contrast to Martha's sense of fatality and her passive acquiescence to events. As John F. Cartwright aptly points out; "Anton's shortcomings as a husband, lover and companion... are related to his excessive reliance on rationality, even in situations where other human faculties would clearly be more appropriate" (Cartwright, Ibid.,p.55).
Ironically, it is this very clarity of mind that draws Martha to Anton in the beginning of her relationship with him. Trying to escape from her own sense of fatality and determinism, Martha clings to Anton as if he were 'a lifebuoy'. Analytical clarity, however, proves to be inadequate. Marie once tells Anton, "Logically I agree with you, when you put it logically no one could disagree. But humanly - there is something wrong." (R.F.S., p.102) Martha too, 'felt him to be logically right, she felt him to be inhuman and wrong'.

As Martha sees, external events turn out to be nonpredictable. She also gradually realizes that there are a number of human factors which are not taken into account in the group's analysis and prediction; and that future is not controllable as Anton presumes.

Martha also realizes that this 'group' can never be in touch with the black, for whose benefit it is intended. However, she reaches this awareness from her initial naiveté, only gradually. At an early meeting, Anton gives an outline of Marxist history with - "Comrades, this is the dawn of human history"; and Martha becomes enthralled as she listens to it. Some members of the group are working-class air-men and they do not understand what he is saying because he uses such long words. One of the group, Jimmy, acts as an ironic
foils, to reflect the impracticability of marxist ideals. He tries hard to understand the proceedings, but fails, and is always conscious of his lack of education.

Martha thus realizes the futility of her political commitment because she comes to know that the communist ideals cannot be put successfully into practice. Even the comrades themselves are not able to free themselves from certain conventions of society. For instance, when comrade Jackie Bolton tries to have a friendly talk, in public, with a black taxi driver, others - Martha, Jasmine, and William - are embarrassed; are afraid of the consequences if someone sees this scene. And all these three are staunch communists.

The communists had among them, one black member, Elias. All the members cherished tender feelings for this black comrade. Once, after their party meeting Elias says that he must go first and they all feel bad because they know that he is going first because it would be awkward for them if they went out in a body and probably decided to go to a cafe where he would not be allowed to enter. With this feeling of sympathy they shake his hand. "It occurred to them as they did so that they would not shake each other's hands: the effort to avoid some forms of racial descrimination leads often enough to others." (R.F.S., p.67)
Ironically, this only one black African member turns out to be a spy planted by Mr. Maynard, the local magistrate.

The group, sustained for a while on a collective fantasy about its future effectiveness, draws up a document on how the colony should be run under communism, voting on it clause by clause. It makes racial prejudice illegal and plans for all contingencies, including economic boycotts and war. Maisie puts forward a commonsense criticism that there is no chance of implementing this plan, because the communists are not even contesting election. These communists, Martha realizes, merely talk and talk without achieving anything. She says, "we talk and talk and analyse and make formulations, but what are we doing? what are we changing?" She comes to know their failure to materialize the communist ideals. And gradually, all the members leave the party. When Martha tells Anton all this, Anton simply says, "We must make a fresh analysis of the position and begin again." The novel ends with Martha in bed, turning her back to Anton while he begins a fresh analysis of the situation. Martha's turning her back to Anton implies her turning away from everything he stands for. When the group was disbanded, "Martha felt herself cut off from everything that had fed her imagination: until this moment she had been part of the grandeur of the struggle in Europe, part of the Red Army, the guerillas in China, the French underground, and the partisans in Italy,
Yugoslavia, and Greece." (R.F.S., p. 278) But in Zambesia Martha realizes that the cause to which she had hitherto committed herself entirely, does not enable her to get closer to the Utopia of her dreams. Thus, this novel shows how Martha's illusions about communism get shattered. It begins with Martha devoting herself completely to communist work and ends with her disillusionment with communism. At the beginning Martha feels guilty of wasting time when she lies idle in bed because of fever. At the end, she "... allowed herself to slide into sleep like a diver weighted with lead." (R.F.S., p. 281)

Hence one can assume that Martha is a transient 'ripple' from the "storm of communism". The title also suggests Martha's widening intellectual horizon, her recognition that she is part of a bigger and more complex pattern than she had previously realized. Though Martha is "overwhelmed with futility" as her hopes for finding a meaning for herself through political commitment meet with disappointment, this is yet another gain for her. However uncomfortable the let-down may be, another false salvation has been explored and tested, and Martha has gained the positive benefits of a sharpened intellect and a clearer sense of the duties and limitations of political and social commitments and responsibilities.
V. Landlocked.

*Landlocked*, the fourth novel in Doris Lessing's novel-sequence, *Children of Violence*, shows Martha completely disillusioned about her communist ideals. Also her dreams for the life after the War are shattered, and she looks forward, with hope for her life in England. The novel marks a stage of transition from the political to the spiritual.

When this novel opens, the Communist group is disbanded, and Martha is static, locked in a futile and deadening marriage. Her life with her second husband Anton Hesse has turned out to be one of just formality. Martha's attitude towards Anton is that of complete indifference. She does not even 'remember' that she is married and that Anton is her husband. Once, when Athen asks her, 'how is your husband?' she knows he had said 'your husband' instead of Anton deliberately and she smiled, and said 'you know, meeting you I am always reminded ...." She calls him naive, and he asks, "Naive? Because I remind you of your marriage with Anton? - to which Martha replies, 'I'm not married'. She thinks that in the real sense of the term Anton is not her husband. Later, during a conversation with Thomas, she again says - "He's not my husband".

Martha waits for Anton to get naturalisation so that they could get divorce, and then he would go to Germany. and

she, to England, "But she knew quite well that Anton would not at all mind being married to her .... Some people don't really mind who they are married to -- marriage is not really important to them. Martha, Millicent, Grete— it doesn't matter, not really." (LL., p.117) She thinks about their own marriage— "we have nothing in common, we have never touched each other, not really, where it matters: we cannot make love with each other, yet it would suit Anton if I stayed with him and we called it a marriage. And that other marriage with Douglas— he thought it a marriage. As far as he was concerned, that was a marriage' (LL., p.117) Martha thinks it an extraordinary thing that people call this a marriage. "But they do. Now they've got used to it, they can't see anything wrong with this marriage." (LL., p.117).

Martha thus does not cherish any feeling for her husband, and so she is tired of her married life. There is a sense of sterility, of wasted energy in Martha. It seems the sense-making medium of realism is inadequate to convey the non-sense, the irrationality, and the fragmented nature of Martha's personality. The linear and chronological storytelling method seems unable to convey the complex potential of Martha's 'self', of which she is constantly in quest. Instead of moving onwards in order to progress, Martha has to move inwards. Doris Lessing examines the whole process of writing fiction to explore the ways in which the form can imprison such complex potential of the content, in her The Golden Notebook which will be studied in the next chapter.
Landlocked, with which Doris Lessing returned to the Children of Violence sequence, is different from the first three novels of the sequence. The narrative is more fluid and moves easily between external and internal worlds. The sentences are longer and more explorative. There is a greater variety of possibilities for Martha in the sense of psychical exploration. She is able to explore the 'real' reasons for being 'landlocked'. By this time Doris Lessing had become a student of Sufi, and the novel shows a profound influence of sufism which continues to influence all her subsequent work. Sufism is a form of mysticism which developed in Persia about a thousand years ago. It maintains that man is capable of achieving perfection through an evolutionary process which can be accelerated through individual's capacity to transcend ordinary physical and perceptual limitations. In Landlocked, Martha's new understanding is not intellectual, but intuitive as it includes symbolic images, dreams and telephatic and visionary experiences. Regarding Doris Lessing's work from Landlocked onwards, Ruth Whittaker writes:

"The striking originality of Mrs. Lessing's later work lies partly in the ways in which she attempts to render the complex states of the human psyche. She conveys everyday reality, but with a tenacious insistence on simultaneously conveying the elusive, unconscious and sometimes irrational thought-processes that accompany those day-to-day events. In this way she is both describing and
enacting in her writing her belief that
there is another dimension available
to all of us if only we could shift the
perspective of our consciousness."

Martha, in this novel, experiences a recurring dream as being
imprisoned on a high dry plateau, unable to reach friends who
are sailing across the sea. The sea of her dreams represents
life in England. The 'high dry plateau' stands for life in
South Africa of which she is tired. As soon as Martha goes
to sleep, she sees the sea with hissing waves, and it becomes
an obsession with her: "... she had only to shut her eyes and
waves lifted and crashed across her eyelids and an enormous,
longing joy took possession of her. She no longer thought:
I'm going to England soon; she thought: I'm going to the sea,
I'm going to get off this high, dry place where my skin burns
and where I can never lose the feeling of tension and I shall
sit by a long, grey sea and I shall hear the waves break and
sink in a small hiss of foam." (LL.,p.247).

Once sitting in Mrs Van's house, looking at the
small children playing in the graden, "She shut her eyes: the
noises of the afternoon, children's voices, insects in the
grass, winds in leaves, made waves, made sea: against her
dark lids rose and crashed thundering salt waves."
(LL.,pp.257-58)

As precursors of change, Martha's dreams are very
important. Martha, in these dreams, longs for water and this

18. Ruth Whittaker, Doris Lessing (London : Macmillan
is symbolic of the spiritual aridity she feels. Her obsession with the dream of England also indicates her dissatisfaction with the life she has been leading in the South African Colony. Martha feels imprisoned in this land and wants to go to England. The title of the novel, *Landlocked*, is therefore quite apt. Martha is 'landlocked', and is waiting to get free and go to the sea.

Martha also dreams of the image of house which, in this novel, appears in symbolic terms. In this novel, Martha dreams "... of a large house, a bungalow with half-a-dozen different rooms in it, and she, Martha (the person who held herself together, who watched, who must preserve wholeness through a time of dryness and dis-integration) moved from one room to the next, on guard. These rooms, each furnished differently, had to be kept separate - had to be, it was Martha's task for this time."

Moving from one room to another, playing many roles at once, Martha realizes that none of those roles is fully herself, and underneath them, 'What was real in her ... remained and intensified.'

There is no joy during this period of her life, and Martha is 'sticking it out, waiting, keeping herself ready for when life would begin'.

In Jungian terms, Martha yearns for a synthesis of her personality. Martha finds it through Thomas Stern, a Polish
Jew, who is a gardener, based on a farm, but working as a 'nursery man in the city'. A gardener, nurturing growth in an alien environment, can also be seen as an apt metaphor for Thomas's effect on Martha. This peasant comes in the dizziness of Martha's life; his home in town is a shed "at the bottom of a large garden". Gradually Martha begins to spend as much of her time as she can in this place, in the loft above the seedlings. This is the new "room" that has become her centre, "in a shed whose wooden walls grew from lawns where the swinging arc of a water-sprayer flung rainbows all day long, although, being January, it rained most afternoons." (LL., p.122) This verdant setting of earthy growth and vitality reflects Martha's state when she is with Thomas; she is taken out of herself, is "dissolved" - not in a group or role as earlier, but it is "an absolute giving up of herself" through trust and love for another person. She experiences, for the first time, that her sexuality is a means to meeting and mutual knowing, rather than to separate self-satisfaction. Their love becomes "the most real thing that happened to her", their feeling for each other ends the division in Martha: "her real nature had been put into cold storage for precisely this". (LL., p.124) Thomas and Martha shed facades, they explore their inner lives, they 'break down' for each other. When Thomas leaves for Israel, Martha and Thomas communicate telepathically, and this is described not as an esoteric experience, but as a natural consequence.
of profound empathy and sensitivity. Thomas goes mad and later dies of black water. But even earlier, Thomas has already expressed doubts about conventional categorization of human minds into "sane" and "insane". "I tell you Martha, if I see a sane person then I know he's mad". This Laingian view is expanded in The Four Gated City. Thomas leaves a sheaf of damp, ant-eaten papers which are eventually given to Martha to decipher. It is a difficult task because the unnumbered pages having different sorts of notes are scribbled all over with wild comments in red pencil. Martha first types the notes which include obituaries of native villagers, Polish poetry, recipes, etc., and then types the red-pencilled comments. Doris Lessing implies that the nonsense needs to be considered with the sense, and that it is only the two together that make a meaningful whole. Martha takes this typescript with her when she goes to England. It is Thomas's legacy to her, and travels with her when she leaves behind her marriage and political commitment.

But until she goes to England, which she does in the next novel of the sequence, Martha continues to dream of leaving "this high, dry place where skin burns" and longs to cross the sea to go to England. But, however much she may long for this release, Martha does not attempt to evade the immediate and various responsibilities that she has identified for herself. She does not evade reality, however
much she may long for spiritual fulfilment. And there is a sense of fidelity to reality in the novel. After her period of involvement with communist group, Martha finds herself with a variety of obligations and duties: attending the sick Johny Lyndsay and her sick father; her father's illness draws her back to the family house and she cannot avoid meeting her daughter Caroline; she has to remain wife of Anton until he gets naturalization; and she is unromantically earning her living as a typist in a lawyer's office. Martha also finds herself as a mediator between Maisie and Mr. Maynard. Maisie, after her quarrel with Andrew, is living in a club as a barmaid. Her kind of life is looked down upon by the society. Mr. Maynard tries to take Maisie's daughter to his house as the child is the daughter of his son Binkie—he does not want his grand daughter to grow up in the low atmosphere of the club. He tries to persuade Maisie through Martha thus giving much trouble to both the women. This multiple role as mediator, sick-visitor, secretary, moral support etc., demands that she has to adapt and respond constantly, without thought for herself. Martha sees herself, without complaint, as a "general dogsbody", someone whose "role in life, for this period, was to walk like a house keeper in and out of different rooms" (LL., p.24).

Martha waits for Anton to get naturalization so that they can get divorce, and then he would go to Germany and she would be free to go to England. For his sake she remains as
his wife though she does not cherish any feeling of love for him.

The novel shows the post World War II life, and expresses the feeling of depression prevailing during that period. Martha too feels depressed and unhappy. Even her ideal, happy relation with Thomas gets soured because of the memories of War: "Perhaps, when Thomas and she touched each other, in the touch cried out the murdered flesh of the millions of Europe—the squandered flesh was having its revenge, it cried out through the two little, creatures... it was all much too painful... (LL.p.193)

The novel also shows how Martha's hopes as a communist get shattered. All the women-comrades had dwindled into conventional housewives. Marie Du Freez was now the wife of a very successful builder, and she was bored though she enjoyed her wealth.

Betty Krueger had two small boys, and her "delicate charms had all vanished into an obsessed maternity". (LL., p.254).

Marjorie Black, with her humorous grumblings, with a smiling defiance, with an amused self-criticism, has turned into a nagging wife and mother. She snapped at her husband, her children, then smiled, sighed, apologized; she said to Martha that she was ashamed—she slept badly, and was
ashamed of that, she slept in the afternoons and despised women who did; she found her husband intolerably conservative and dull - but she hated women who married men for their solidarily and then complained.

These women were all dissatisfied with the kind of life they had been living, and it was "just as if they had never made resolutions not to succumb to the colonial small-town atmosphere" (LL. p.255).

And the author writes that the terrible thing with them was that they could never forget their early resolutions, and, "they watched their own deterioration like merciless onlookers... the states of mind that once only afflicted people on death beds or at moments of acute crisis are their permanent condition. Lives that appear to them meaningless, wasted, hang around their necks like decaying carcasses. They are hypnotized into futility by self-observation. It is as if self-consciousness itself has speeded up the process, a curve of destruction. At thirty five they drink too much, or are in nervous-breakdown, or are many-times divorced. And it is these people who are at twenty the liveliest, the most intelligent, the most promising" (LL. p.255)

Jasmine, that vigorous party secretary, too has changed. When Martha, Marjorie and Jasmine, the 'old reactionaries' are invited to attend a party meeting held by
the younger generation, Jasmine enters late looking far too elegant. She had been at a family dinner with her parents and a suitable businessman they hoped she would marry. Jasmine sits in a bench after having examined it carefully for dust - which makes a bad impression on the zealous young communists. Jasmine's changed behaviour indicates her changed attitude towards such communist party meetings.

As a firm believer in communist ideals, Martha had her dreams for the betterment of the lives of women and the black. So also had the other women comrades. The novel shows how they fail to achieve any of these dreams.

With the end of the War the life of women remains the same. Every morning, as she receives her women visitors, Martha remembers her earlier days as the wife of Douglas Knowell - 'the cast had changed, the play was the same'. After the women leave, Martha can see the soft, poisonous web of comment and gossip they had created, hanging in her little room. Martha sees that these 'intelligent', some of them even "educated" and progressive, people, are basically the same as the middle-class house-wives. These women did not complain about their servants; they deplored, instead, that they had servants. They did not complain about their husbands, but about 'society' which made marriage unsatisfactory. They did not talk scandal in the sense of 'have you heard that so and so has left her husband'?
They discussed people's character with all the dispassionate depth offered them by their familiarity with 'psychology'. Recipes they exchanged — to talk about food was not reactionary, though to discuss clothes for too long was frivolous, if not reactionary.

All these women had sworn, in their early youth not to dwindle into gossipping housewives. But now just like the frivolous non-progressive women of the avenues, they spent their days over cups of tea, and went home in a sort of dragging, rather peevish dissatisfaction, while in their heads still ran on, like gramophone record that could not be turned off, the currents of their gossip: "the trouble with Betty is, she is mother fixated."

Women leading different kinds of life are pictured as unhappy wives. Marjorie, Marie, Betty — all once-communists, who had earlier made resolutions not to become gossipping housewives, now lead the conventional life of a housewife. They all remember their resolutions and hate themselves for being what they are — discontented and unhappy.

Then, the kind of life Maisie is living — that of a bar-maid — is looked down upon by the society and she is extremely unhappy and weary.

There is also a detailed account of the life of Mrs. Quest, whose "nights were always tense, peopled with regrets,
fitfully menacing..." (LL., p.78) : This woman had lost her mother in her early childhood. She decided not to be a Victorian lady and fought her stern father so that she could be a nurse - which no real lady was. She had got her way, had fought her father and she had become a nurse - through the War.

On the night before the Victory Day, Mrs. Quest dreams of her beautiful mother who had died during childbirth. In the dream, her mother gives her three crimson roses: "The beautiful young woman had leaned down, smiling, from heaven, and handed the daughter she had scarcely known, three red roses fresh with bright water. Mrs. Quest, weeping with joy, her heart opening to her beautiful mother, had looked down and seen that in her hand the roses had turned into - a medicine bottle." (LL., pp. 80-81).

The meaning is obvious. Her life had gone - nursing.

A good part of Chapter Three of Part I, is devoted to express Mrs. Quest's feelings of unhappy regrets and disappointment. She feels depressed as she remembers the cruelty of the dream, and also feels extremely disappointed when her husband refuses to attend the Victory Day celebrations in the town, for which she had planned so much.

Martha's life with her husband also is not one of happiness and contentment. Martha and Anton do not cherish
mutual love and affection. Their's is a formal marriage and both of them are waiting for a proper time to get divorce. Anton plans to go to Germany whereas Martha intends to go to England. She is free to have an affair with any one she likes. Anton develops an affair with a girl called Millicent, and Martha, with Thomas Stern. Martha realizes the true nature of love in this relation with Thomas, and, that she had "knotted her emotions tight with Thomas and shut Anton out". Even then Martha is not quite comfortable because of her own conventionality of which she herself is not aware. She sometimes feels disgusted with her own infidelity with her husband. She feels disgusted and feels her body revolting against her self: "... if she let her... remember Anton and that he was her husband, well, her nerves reacted at once and in the most immediately physical way. She vomitted.... Her stomach, her intestines, her bladder complained that she was the wife of one man and they did not like her making love with another." (LL., p.142).

So because of such conventionality, Martha is always torn, and is continually on the edge of physical discomfort. Martha also tries to avoid Sarah, Thomas's sister-in-law while going to meet Thomas. She secretly fears an encounter with that orthodox woman because she knows that Sarah disapproves of her relation with Thomas.

Observing her own life and the life of other women, Martha thus realises that women's life has not changed for
the better. She observes women of her age "hypnotized into futility by self-observation. It is as if self-consciousness has speeded up the process, a curve of destruction." (LL., p.255). But Martha's self-examination has become much more cool and detached, less panicky: "you can foretell the end of what you are creating now, if you know how to look for the signs"

She has learned to make connections between the "rooms" of her own being, between her actions and their probable results. As John F. Cartwright writes: "In learning to recognize and accept the many apparent limitations on her freedom of action (sex, temperament, nationality, etc) she is developing a different kind of freedom and control." Martha also realizes the failure of communists in the upliftment of the black. Even after the War, the condition of the black remains as before. As Martha sees it all clearly, the black do not trust the communists. The situation was such that the communists would do more harm than good, working with the Africans. Because these communists were all considered to be traitors and spies. The situation was such that the people they had known for years looked embarrassed or hostile when they met. Because of this the communists did not approach the Africans, who in any case, were not keen on being

approached. Mrs. Van's weekly meetings had dwindled from fifty, sixty people to five or six and it was widely known that Mrs. Van despised the Africans.

There were several groups of white people organised to help the black. Communists, the group of Solly the Trotskyist, and then that of Mrs. Van. But none of them was really able to help them. During a conversation with Solly Cohen, the Trotskyist, Martha visualizes the plight of the Africans in the hands of these different groups of white people. When she talks of helping the African group, Solly asks her, "what can you do for them that I can't do?" It is now Martha who sees that image - "the African group, like a small starving child, its hands held out for help, was being torn to pieces by a group of adults fighting for the right to help it." (LL., p.56).

Completely disillusioned about communist ideals and the life of the post-War World, Martha attends a Communist party meeting held by younger generation, to see that nothing has changed except the faces. Looking at a young man speaking his "vision" out, Martha remembers Jackie Bolten :" Martha was so strongly transported back to that other office to that other group, she had to look around to see if Anton Hesse, Andrew McGrew, the two sensible solid men ... were sitting in their places...." (LL., p.340).

She then recognises the qualities of Anton and Andrew in two silent critics, a square bespectacled man sitting in a
corner, and a dark, rather beautiful girl in the position of Chairman. Martha sees that this meeting is going on exactly as their meeting used to go on - "an impassioned speaker was expressing his vision, all the others leaned forward, absorbed, lost, gone into the speaker's high - winging language, and the two silent critics knew that they were a minority - and so they were silent" (LL.p. 340)

Being an "experienced" communist, Martha forsees everything that is to happen to this group, and thinks - "So if history was repeating itself - and why not ? If the dramatis personae were the same, presumably the plot was also - this group would not be in existence, these people would not sit all night on comfortable benches talking about nation-wide networks which would transform the country, if it had not been for the impassioned orator ? ..." (LL.p.341)

When Marjorie says to the young communists"It's awfully nice of your people to ask us old reactionaries around, 'At once eyes met, lingered. Grimaces, silence, hostility' (LL.,p.343). Martha suddenly remembers a past incident which is eight years old. That day, Jasmine had entered their office and had said that she had met Mr. Forester who said, 'Well, thanks at least for acknowledging the existence of old reactionary like myself." Jasmine had said in prim, shocked, sneering tones - 'Imagine ! he wasn't even ashamed of saying it aloud. He actually said it in so many words." (LL., p.343)
Remembering this incident Martha thinks, "Lord, Lord were we really so awful, so stupid?" (LL., p. 343).

Later telling them about their party and its functions, the chair person says that they can't say more than that - to which Majorie says, 'of course', with a friendly gruffness. "This remark for some reason caused general ill-feeling.... It was clear that afterwards people would ask each other: "Who told her our affairs - there must be a traitor in our midst." (LL., p. 344) They do not know that these old reactionaries know everything they do, even without being told; that they can even foretell their programmes - from their similar past experiences. Majorie, at the end, exclaims, "If only they'll learn some lessons from our mistakes!" (LL, p. 343).

Thus, seeing no real change and no progress in the group of communists, Martha concludes that there is no hope. Thus being completely disillusioned about the ideas she had once firmly believed in, and also being tired of the after-effects of the War, Martha becomes a representative of all the women of her times.

At the end of this novel Martha is poised for her journey to England. Thus the novel paves way for the next novel - The Four Gated City, which shows Martha in London with new prospects.
VI. The Four-Gated City:

The *Four-Gated City*, the last of the novel sequence, *Children of Violence*, shows Martha exploring her deeper self; it shows her in spiritual rather than social quest. It is the most complicated novel in the series, and it stretches from early fifties to late sixties, and has an appendix reaching into nineteen-nineties. At its beginning Martha has just arrived in London. The appendix to the novel contains various letters, one of which reveals Martha's death.

The *Four Gated City* is a comprehensive synthesis of the ideas that have steadily evolved through the earlier novels of the series. The novel makes a shift in the form of Martha's quest from external to internal; from political and social involvements to psychological, philosophical and mystical apprehension of the nature of reality as well as of her own 'self'. Despite this shift, however, the realism of detail maintained in the earlier novels is not abandoned. The narrative maintains the essential plane of social interaction and event in its documentation of the fifties and sixties, intensified by the parallel and more developed exploration of Martha's own consciousness on the symbolic level.

Roberta Rubenstein writes that the novel unfolds on two levels simultaneously:
"...the literal or phenomenal plane traces the development of events in the macrocosm, the world of other people, while the symbolic plane connects those events to the microcosm of Martha Quest's own consciousness."

The narrative movement in this novel is not so much linear as concentric, with Martha at the centre of three overlapping worlds: the outside world of politics and wars, and immediate community of the Coldridge family, and the inner world of her expanding consciousness. Doris Lessing shows how these three circles affect one another, and how Martha's quest for 'wholeness' has changed the focus from that in the earlier novels. While earlier Martha was interested in merging herself into a marriage or a political cause, in the course of this last novel of the series, Martha concentrates on her own individuality; she concentrates on her inward journey toward attainment of wholeness and integrity of self. Here Martha achieves extrasensory perceptions and trains herself to use them for the very survival of the human race.

As the novel opens, Martha has arrived in London—the constant dream of her earlier days; feels free, and is ready to start a new life. She stays for some time in Joe's Cafe, but leaves it because she does not want to be tied down. Walking through London streets she wonders why those famous

shops sell thin low-quality material. She does not like the way London people wear uniform like dresses that have no grace or eleg ance. The first impression of the city dissatisfies her, and she becomes critical of the great city.

As she drifts through London, Martha discovers that by minimizing her sleep and controlling her food intake she can induce a kind of "high" mental state and reach a new area in her self. Beneath her several familiar identities she discovers a "soft dark receptive intelligence" that is sensitive to the "wavelengths" of other dimensions of consciousness and unaware of time. One of her crucial problems at this stage is of remembering such experiences, of returning to that area of 'receptive intelligence'.

Encountering her own characteristic ambivalence, Martha Quest 'crosses the river' to the other side of Thames, where her friend Jack has built a house out of some one's war-bombed house. Jack's primary mode of existence is physical. While with him, Martha learns that the "wavelengths" she had discovered through Thomas Stern have different valences; Jack has the same ability to tune in to that area in the psyche, to "go into it, as if it were a place." But she understands that the wavelength he enters also contains his inner enemy, and bears the negative valence of hatred. Martha learns that Jack is possessed by "thousand volts of hatred for humanity", and so he will "fall down and break his crown." In spite of this realisation, Martha's vision during
this early stage of her psychic journey, is still clouded and ambivalent. Her erotic relationship with Jack is entirely physical, lacking the sense of total emotional fusion that she had experienced with Thomas Stern.

When Jack asks Martha to live in the lower part of his house and give birth to his children, Martha remembers Caroline. She refuses Jack's request. She also decides against a secretarial job. When offered the job of assisting Mark Coldridge who is writing a book, she visits his house in Radlett street and finds it very imposing. Mark tells her about his wife Lynda, who is mad and is in the mental hospital. Martha meets his mother Margaret, does not like her; meets his son Francis and feels sorry for that boy. Ambivalence characterises her decision to work for Mark too. At first she decides against working there. She expresses her impression before Jack: "... — Everything as sick and neurotic and hopeless as you can imagine ... and a dominating mamma over all, and a wife in a mental hospital, and a man just sitting waiting for some sucker like me to cope with everything."

By that time she had no money left. So she joins as Mark's secretary, though of course, intending to leave it

soon. But despite her ambivalence Martha decides to remain at the Coldridge house rather than with Jack. Symbolically, Martha wakes up in the Coldridge house "rising towards light". The last chapter of Part One thus opens with a clue to Martha's location on the right path toward awareness and eventual spiritual illumination. In the context of the correspondence between the house and her state of consciousness, Martha has settled in the more 'respectable' though conventional house compared to Jack's house built out of some one's war-bombed house. Though Martha is initially employed as Mark's temporary secretary, she soon becomes a permanent friend and indispensable member of the household. She becomes the maternal figure who takes care of the children, and a person who struggles to hold the house together.

Every one in the Coldridge house has felt the effect of the chaos and violence of the times. Little Paul, Mark's nephew, loses his mother Sally - Sarah, who commits suicide; his father has defected to the Soviet Union; Francis has to be sensible and careful with his mother because she is mentally sick; he endures all the agony of shouldering the family responsibility silently and behaves like an elderly person even at that young age. Lynda, whose extrasensory powers are labelled as madness, is tormented by psychiatrists with their machines and pills. She is also troubled by her guilt of making Mark unhappy. Mark is unhappy because of Lynda's illness. He is also tormented by the journalists and
the police because his brother is a spy and Mark is suspected to have helped him. So each and every one in the house has had 'bad' experience. Martha tries to grasp the experiences of all these people. As Carol P. Christ writes,

"In her position as mother, matron and counselor, the one who holds everything together, Martha absorbs the experiences of the other characters .... Through the others she finishes the unfinished struggles of her childhood, heals the wounds, and as she puts it, pays her debts." 

And in this process, Martha becomes more mature, and becomes able to experience more deeply. She no longer is the earlier 'Matty' - she does not feel jealous or violent. Now, "they were emotions without force behind them, like jets of water without pressure." (FGC, p.61)

Martha lives in Mark Coldridge's house as his secretary, housekeeper, mistress, and surrogate mother for assorted children. Though she involves herself in all these roles completely, she does not find fulfilment in any of them. Sometimes she sees herself as the lynchpin of the household, a matron holding everything together. But she acknowledges the brevity of her power:

"luckily one never stayed in any stage long, these caravanserais were only for limited visits." (FGC, p.98)

The constant goal of Martha's life is not merely to cope with the situations of ordinary life, but to strive for 'individuation' or wholeness of self also. Martha

concentrates intensely on the experiences of other people in the house, as also on how her own mind works. While expecting her mother, Martha suffers from conflicting emotions when she gets letters from her mother, she forces herself to read them. "Even the act of reaching out her hand to pick up a letter, and to rip open the envelope, started up in Martha, as if buttons had been pressed, or sluice gates opened, two violent, but opposing emotions, One was pity, strong, searing, unbearable. The other was a wild need to run - anywhere." (FGC, p.240).

Struggling with such conflicting emotions, Martha feels that she is going to have a breakdown. She then goes to Lynda - 'there was no one else who could understand her' (FGC, p.237) Lynda's presence helps Martha in achieving visionary powers. She also begins to 'hear' the thoughts of Mark and Paul, - experiencing other's experiences. Staying with Lynda, and observing her keenly when she is in her 'mad' state, Martha gradually understands Lynda, and her language. She enters Lynda's region, and gets a deeper knowledge. The basement room of Lynda and her friend Dorothy becomes for Martha a place where she discovers new possibilities in herself, eaters new territories, feeling angry that she had not done so earlier, for, "this door (like so many others, she must suppose) had been standing here, ready for her to walk in any time she wished" (FGC, p.508). Later, in Paul's house Martha tries and gets hold of the self hater, - that
part of her self which she had not hitherto known. It dawns upon her what Lynda was fighting. It was nothing else but this self-hater. Martha now clearly understands Lynda's tragedy. Lynda was forced to confront this self-hater, this antagonist, when she was too young to fight. "Was it possible that one could be worsted in that battle and be forever, like Lynda, 'ill', 'unfit for ordinary life' because of having to confront that buried self-hater when one was not strong enough?" (FGC., p.535). Lynda was very young when she began to hear what her step-mother thought, and being young, and not knowing that ordinary people don't hear thoughts, told it and was treated by psychiatrists. Then she began to hear unfriendly and accusing voices, which said she had been cruel to her father. But she kept quiet, did not tell this to anyone and so they thought she was cured. Then she married Mark, felt assaulted, and afterwards cracked under the attacks of her self-hater who said that she was unkind and cruel to Mark, and she was again handed over to Dr.Lamb.

When Martha shares the 'energy of madness' with Lynda, images of electricity, - of vibration, wires, dynamos, volts, currents, tension and fields fill Martha's monologue. Doris Lessing accepts the views of R.D.Laing, the radical British psychiatrist, that the so-called mentally ill are those who are particularly receptive to reality and able to hear the thoughts of other people by simply tuning into their 'wave lengths'. These special individuals are sometimes unable to
control their above-normal experiences: "There were people whose machinery had gone wrong, and they were like radio sets, which, instead of being tuned into one programme were tuned into a dozen simultaneously. And they didn't know how to switch them off. Even to imagine the hell of it was enough to make one want to run, to cover one's ears." (F.G.C., p.523)

Even if such sensitive 'receivers' are not attuned to dozen programmes at once, they may also be destroyed if they get stuck on a channel that transmits only negative messages. This is the case with Lynda.

Martha now perfectly understands all this, and feels that the human race itself is faulty. Because the human race knew that its primitive members used all kinds of senses not used by itself - telepathy, visions, etc. It knew that members of its own kind experienced these capacities at certain times.

"But it was incapable of putting these facts together to suggest the possibility that they were calling people mad who merely possessed certain faculties in embryo." (F.G.C., pp. 538-39)

Martha also thinks that if Lynda had been in a society where "hearing voices" was not sick; if she had met some one who could suggest to her that when she heard her future stepmother saying she hated her, it was just a bad mood, or fantasy; who might have asked her if she liked to be judged by her fantasies; or if one of the doctors said that she
should keep quiet if she did not want to be locked up; then she would not have become a cripple, mentally.

It is suggested that an alarming number of people who have nervous break downs in the novel, do so because, as Betsy Draine writes:

"Like Lynda, they are being worn down by the tension between society's pressure to repress a body of knowledge that lies within them and the opposite pressure of the knowledge, which wants to force itself out into the open."

Feeling sorry for Lynda, and for people like her, Martha hopes for better things to come in the future - when truth would be admitted. As we now talk of olden days when people burned witches out of ignorance, soon we will be saying:

"When they stopped torturing and killing witches, they locked people with certain capacities into lunatic asylums and told them they were freaks, and forced them into conformity by varieties of torture.... By these means, these members of the population with capacities above normal (these people now considered to be in the main line of evolution) were systematically destroyed...." (F.G.C, pp. 539-40)

In this novel, Doris Lessing echoes the Laingian premise that madness is vision. For some, for Thomas, for Dorothy, for Sally-Sarah, madness and vision are also death. Mark, an "above ground visionary", survives. But Martha survives in a more meaningful way - as a promoter of the 'new children'

born during the catastrophe which is detailed in the Appendix. Thus though Lynda, her 'educator', seems to suffer a kind of defeat, Martha survives - she will not undergo Lynda's long history of institutionalization and treatment, shock therapy, drugs, etc. That history has taught Martha how to survive in the outer world of doctors, families, friends. She becomes able to hide her visionary powers and live in both worlds - the one in which madness has become more subversive than Marxism, and the world of the seer and hearer. Also, while Lynda is defeated in her fight with the 'self-hater', Martha confronts it and at last, with great difficulty, defeats it. In this mental struggle she emerges a victor. During this 'mad' state, Martha realises how Thomas and Jack had been destroyed. Thomas was destroyed because he was unable to understand and integrate his 'darker aspect', represented by seargent Tressel, his 'enemy'. Martha realizes that he went to Israel as a guerilla, 'to get his back on seargent Tressel'. Thomas does not recognize Tressel as his shadow', he never manages to integrate the dark side of the human imagination into his scheme of things. From Martha's experiences in exploratory madness it becomes clear that Thomas had become stuck in the 'hate wavelength' of human emotionality. Though Thomas gains sight of wholeness and integration in his relationship with Martha, he never achieves it like her, because he cannot integrate the dark side, the shadow, into his vision. Martha now understands that every person has a ruling passion, a driving
need that in its extreme form unbalances his personality, producing the inner enemy or self-hater or the shadow that may become his madness. This truth, given in its basic form in Mary Turner of the Grass is Singing, is the psychological basis for breakdown. If not recognised as part of the self, the emotional energy of the shadow is projected onto the outer world, and may result in self-division that drives one mad. Martha realises that "Madness" is not a personal disorder, but something "in the air" that a person may "hook into" quite accidentally (FGC p.380). This, Martha comes to know, had been the case with Thomas who went mad and later died - more due to self-division that black water fever.

Martha also understands that Jack was destroyed because he could not overcome his hatred for humanity. Jack's house has a lower level occupied by a "crazy" person, as Mark Coldridge's house has a basement occupied by 'mad' Lynda and her friend Dorothy. This seems to suggest that the deeply buried aspect of the self (the shadow, the self-hater or the inner enemy) must be integrated into the whole personality. While Mark neglects the basement as 'that sick hole under our feet', Martha immerses herself into that part of the house, and emerges as an enlightened person. But for Jack that assimilation ultimately takes a negative form. Ten years later when Martha visits him again, she sees how his inner enemy has possessed his entire personality, changing him into a master of psychological degradation who breaks young girls in for careers as accomplices in sexual perversion. This
sadistic Jack, Martha finds, is an inversion of his former self, the "old Jack's shadow side, turned outwards."

The inner enemy that manifests itself in Jack is the same shadow or self-hater which Martha carries within herself, which is there with her ever since her childhood. During her childhood the dark side was simply in the surroundings. The War in Europe brings a permanent shadow to her vision of the ideal city, colouring both her politics and her sense of the nature of humanity, souring even her ideal relation with Thomas: "Perhaps when they touched each other in the touch cried out the murdered flesh of the millions of Europe - the squandered flesh was having its revenge". (LL,p.199) But during the course of this last novel of the sequence, during her exploratory madness, Martha confronts her self-hater and experiences a temporary inversion like Jack, becoming "turned inside out like a glove or dress" (FGC, p.524). But unlike him, she remains the watcher, the listener, successfully resisting total identification with the inner enemy, thus defeating that enemy, the 'self-hater'.

During this mental struggle Martha also comes to realize the collective aspect of the shadow; that groups of people, whole nations, like individuals, can be plugged into hating as Germans did under Hitler. Thus Martha's experience of madness gives her the knowledge of the shadow, the darker aspect, which human race must understand and try to defeat - as Martha defeats her own shadow. Thus Martha's process of
'individuation' leads her not merely to an understanding of her own nature, but of all humanity. Jean Pickering writes:

"Her journey into strange rooms leads her, paradoxically enough, not merely to greater "I" ness, but to greater "We" ness too, for as she pushes further into the hidden recesses of her own being, she discovers that she makes contact with states of mind common to all humanity."  

Here, as elsewhere in her fiction, Doris Lessing stresses the failure of the family as a social institution:

"A baby is born with infinite possibilities. But there's no escaping it, it's like having to go down into a pit, a terrible dark blind pit, and then you fight your way up and out: and your parents are part of it, of what you fight out of. The mistake is, to think there is a way of not having to fight your way out. Every one has to." (FGC, pp. 68-69).

The symbolic journey from innocence through ignorance or corruption to experience and then to a state of wholeness and reintegration of the self is the circular path of the mythic and spiritual journey that shapes Martha's quest for wholeness. The obvious weak link in this process is shown to be the family unit. In The Four-Gated City Martha Quest is without a family or a country, a position that facilitates her leap from the private to the transpersonal.

In *The Four-Gated City*, Martha is no longer committed to Communist Party or any other political cause. When Mark becomes a communist, she looks at him and Patty Samuel, another comrade, with callous indifference. She looks at them as at her earlier self. She discovers another community, that of madness, when she enters into Lynda's Psyche. Jean Pickering in the above quoted critical work writes:

"She catches a glimpse of possibilities of human future. There is, she discovers, a community of madness, greater and more satisfying than the community of marxism where she had once looked for emotional brother-hood." (Jean pickering, Ibid,p.27)

Jean Pickering gives out the similarities between what she calls Lessing's "Politics of th Left" and "Politics of Madness" - At the most obvious level, both the communists and the mad possess a strong sense of initiation into a cult. Secondly, both have a strong sense of group-feeling in opposition to an outside authority. For both, opposition is important to maintain group-feeling. It depends on the threat of persecution, of being locked up, which is why they band together in tight groups. Thirdly, both are gripped by a vision of election - the future is in their hands.

Besides these surface similarities, Jean points out that there is another point of connection between the communists and the mad. They both have their roots in a vision of Jerusalem, the archetypal ideal city. The Martha of the earlier novels had joined communism because all the communists believed that they could build the ideal city.
And it is while experiencing 'madness' that Martha realises that the ideal city is possible only when human race destroys its darker aspect.

Early in their relationship, Martha confides to Mark her dream of the fourgated city and he contributes to her fantasy. Martha and Mark together plan the ideal city, which takes the form of the novel "The city in the desert". Mark tells Martha about this city with great roads, wide streets lined by trees. The centre was planted with trees. There were schools, libraries, and market places; but their functions were not overdefined. The city had been planned as a whole, it had not grown haphazard. Every house had been planned, and who would live in each house. Every person had a function and a place; but there was nothing static, people could move into other functions. It was a gardened city. Even trees and plants were grown exactly in relation to other plants and people and buildings, and it was among the gardeners that most of the people who protected and fed that city were hidden.

And Martha, who had experienced and confronted the darker side, adds a shadow city to this ideal city:

"... around that city, just like all the cities we know, like Johansburg for instance, grew up a shadow city of poverty and beastliness. A shanty town. Around that Marvellous ordered city, another one of hungry and dirty and short-lived people. And one day the people of the outer city overran the inner one, and destroyed it. (FGC, p.151)"
This ideal city in the desert is nothing but a developed version of Martha's earlier ideal city. This ideal city is present throughout the Children of Violence series. Young Martha of the first volume dreams of -

"a noble city, set foursquare and colonnaded along its falling, flower-bordened terraces. There were splashing fountains, and the sound of flutes; and its citizens moved, grave and beautiful, black and white and brown together.... they smiled and approved these many fathered children ... " (MQ., p.17)

In A Proper Marriage, the second novel of the series, Martha decides to leave her daughter Caroline, with the thought that she is setting her free. The image of the ideal city underlies this decision - the children of that city are 'many fathered', and so free from the neurosis of their biological parents. In the third novel, A Ripple From the Storm Martha dreams of this city, sharing the dream with comrade Jasmine Cohen:

"Each saw an ideal town, clean, noble and beautiful, soaring up over the actual town they saw..." (R.F.S., p.34)

In Landlocked, Thomas Stern's Zionism is a perversion of the ideal city. Thomas Stern, with whom Martha had her first spiritual experience, is a gardener. And it is to be noted that the people who fed and protected the ideal city of the last volume, were believed to be among its gardeners, the hidden keepers of an ideal order.
Martha's life, as it comes out in the earlier volumes of the series, was characterised by ambivalence and self-division - as while marrying Douglas and Anton, or in joining the sports Club or during her relationship with Thomas. Even when she joins communism, her vision is essentially divided. As she focusses her attention on the 'Socialist Sixth of the world.' (Which was the title of one of the books she read),

"She had two clear and distinct pictures... one noble, creative and generous, the other ugly, savage and sordid. There was no sort of connection between the two pictures. As she looked at one, she wanted to fling herself into the struggle, to become one of the millions of people who were creating a new world; as she looked at the other, she felt staleness, futility." (A.P.M., p.315)

Martha, as she joins the communist party, chooses to believe whole-heartedly in the first image, and rejects the second. Thus in the early phase of her life, Martha's perception is persistently clouded by romantic idealism.

She overcomes this in Four-Gated City, when she integrates both the images in her perception, when she adds the 'shadow city of ugliness and beastliness' to the ideal city of her childhood dream. While in her earlier visions Martha does not include the 'shadow city', now she does, because of her deeper experience. It is because she gets hold of this knowledge, she could defeat that darker side in herself, and thus could achieve individuation or wholeness of self. She also gets a vision of the future. Lynda too gets glimpses of future, of England being poisoned.
It can be noted here that Martha's dream is always for a 'city', not a 'garden'; for Jerusalem, not Eden. Eden consists merely of the innocent, while Jerusalem is an abode of the experienced and the enlightened. Martha's quest for wholeness leads her in her spiritual journey from innocence to experience. Experience enables her to achieve wholeness and reintegration of the self. Her experience also enables her to visualize the shadow city that can destroy the inner city - thus leading to the building of Jerusalem anew.

Just as Martha proceeds on her spiritual path only after experiencing chaos and conflict, human race too has to experience chaos and conflict before it can proceed on its evolutionary path. The catastrophe and the events that lead to it are indicative. Martha, Lynda and Mark plan to take over a village on the sand of Tunisia to house the refugees after the catastrophe is over. Francis and Paul take a large farm in order to rehabilitate their friends.

And, as the reader comes to know from the Appendix, the catastrophe, (which is vague), occurs, and the members of the Coldridge house disperse. Martha, along with some others, lands on a far off uninhabited island, where they lead their life with minimum of necessities. They have no sweets, no oil, no radio or Television. But they live quite happily and they do not want to be 'rescued'. The 'new children' born on that island are very healthy and they develop extrasensory powers. They know what is going on in the outside world.
though no body tells them. Martha thinks that they are more enlightened than ordinary children. And,

"they are beings who include the knowledge [of what the human race is in this century] and who have transcended it" (FGC, p.662)

These children are grownup - mentally and emotionally; they can foresee the future - they say that in three year's time Britain will be opened again, and that it will begin to revive. Martha gives all this information in a letter to Francis who is Deputy Head of the Reconstitution and Rehabilitation centre near Nairobi. She also writes that there is Joseph, one of the 'new children' the son of the Negro who had accompanied Martha to that island. She writes that Joseph 'sees' that after being rescued, he would go to the settlement near Nairobi and that Francis would look after him. This prophecy of Joseph comes true, as it is evident through a letter to Francis from his Head, that a boy named Joseph has come to their settlement. The doctor who had examined him, classes him as subnormal to the 7th, and unfit for academic education, but fit for 3rd grade work.

The 'new child' from Martha's city, endowed with superhuman powers, is classed 'subnormal' by the ordinary people of the outer city. So, it appears that the outer ordinary shadow city emerges stronger than the inner ideal city. But one cannot forget Joseph's prophecy, that "more like them are being born now in hidden places in the world and one day all human race will be like them." (FGC, p.663).
And it is to be noted that his other prophecy has come true. Francis too expresses that he has "hope for the future of the world" (FGC, p.672).

Reflecting on the novel, Carol, P. Christ opines that like Martha, Lessing too seems to believe that some nuclear catastrophe is inevitable, and this leaves her pessimistic about social change and somewhat detached from women's social quest for equality. Carol P. Christ wants women "to be more than witnesses and prophets of disaster or hope, more than mothers or nurturers of new children." (Carol P. Christ., Ibid, p.73)

But there is no pessimism in Martha's vision of the catastrophe. The Catastrophe is very vague, and one can assume that the real menace is the atrophy of the human race, rather than the Catastrophe. Once, after sharing Lynda's experiences, Martha goes out and enjoys the fresh day. She looks up at the sky, at the trees, which send her messages of joy and peace. She also feels extremely happy looking at the white cloud so deliciously lalloping up in the blue air. And she walks and walks, looking and gazing at the cloud, the trees and the sky. But when she lets her eyes fall, she wishes to run back, to get anywhere where she does not have to look at the beings around her,

"... For these people walked in their fouled and disgusting streets full of ordure and bits of refuse and paper as if they were not conscious of their existence here, were somewhere else." (F.G.C., p.521)
Observing these defectively evolved animals whose organs - eyes, ears, teeth, - were defective, who smelled abominable even under the sweet chemicals they used to hide their smell. Martha walks fast. Meanwhile, she observes:

"But the most frightening thing about them was this: that they walked and moved and went about their lives in a condition of sleep walking: ... each seemed locked in an invisible cage which prevented them from experiencing their fellows' thoughts, or lives, or needs. They were essentially isolated, shut in, enclosed inside their hideously defective bodies, behind their dreaming drugged eyes, above all, inside a net of wants and needs that made it impossible for them to think of anything else" (F.G.C., p.522).

And these people, in spite of all their defects, are very vain. Martha imagines how a space traveller may report on these inhabitants of earth:

"...their faculties of attention and comparison are either atrophied or as yet underdeveloped to an extent which enabled us to work and live among them as long as we needed, without doing more than using their clothes and their system of communication (partly sound - oral). ... They are so susceptible to flattery that anything may be done with them, provided they are not allowed to suspect their inferiority. For they are so vain, that they would kill or imprison or maim any being they suspect of being better endowed than themselves."(F.G.C., p.523)

So Martha realizes that on earth everything is beautiful - sky, trees, cloud, the warm sunlight, etc., - except the human
race that inhabits it. Only when human race comes out of the present atrophy, the ideal city can be built. The catastrophe is a means of bringing out a radical change in the present order of things. So what underlies the catastrophe is the vision of the ideal city.

It appears that in this novel, Doris Lessing is concerned about human race as a whole, and so has abandoned her concern for women in particular. But, the latter is implied in the whole vision of the ideal city. The ideal city to be built after the catastrophe is present throughout the "Children of Violence" sequence. The city inhabited by the 'new children' is no other than the "noble city ... (whose) citizens moved, grave and beautiful, black and white and brown together..." (MQ., p.11) And as can be seen in the earlier novels of the sequence, Martha's sympathy for the black is closely allied to her concern for women. Thus, on the level of the collective, the four-gated city represents an ideal state where all human beings live together in harmony, which vision implies equality to women, along with the black.

And, on the personal level, Martha achieves individualization, through her knowledge of the four-gated city, which includes the knowledge of the shadow city. The shadow city represents the dark side of human race, and Martha achieves an understanding of this dark side. The process of her understanding and individualization is gradual, and it has four
stages. House, which is the interior version of the city, is used to bring about this process. Jean Pickening, in ("Marxism and Madness..." (Ibid., p.26)), gives a clear description of how the four houses in The Four-Gated City represent four stages of Martha's individuation; Iris Cafe, where Martha takes a room when she first arrives in London, promotes a reversion to "Matty", the good sport Martha hoped to leave behind forever. The episode in Jack's house summarizes and extends the Martha whom Thomas called into existence. In spite of Jack's perversity, Martha attains her first truly visionary experience. Paul's house, stocked with waifs and strays of post-war England, provides a haven for Martha to explore further this hidden dimension of her mind. The Bloomsbury establishment of the Coldridge family shelters a collection of disparate elements, of which Martha is the centre and finally the sum, for she integrates the entire experience of the house in her own being.

Martha's personal achievement consists in her developing beyond her previous capacities. Betsy Draine in her Substance Under Pressure (Ibid., p.61) writes of a whole series of metaphors that link Martha's development with the natural evolution of living things growing beyond the previous limits of their nature. These images appear as early as in the first volume, Martha Quest, where, in her moment of difficult knowledge, Martha
"...felt the rivers under the ground forcing themselves painfully along her veins, swelling them out in an unbearable pressure: her flesh was the earth, and suffered growth like a ferment.... It was as if something new was demanding conception, with her flesh as host." (MQ, pp: 52-53)

The image of fluid straining against a swelling body, and the suggestion of rebirth are repeated at the end of the volume, in an image of the caterpillar, which exhilarates her:

"She saw, ... two enormous caterpillars, .... their silky-paper surfaces were stretched to bursting, as if the violence of this pulsating month was growing in them so fast (Martha could see the almost liquid substance swimming inside the frail tight skin) that they might burst asunder with the pressure of their growth before they could turn themselves, as was right and proper, into dry cases, like bits of stick, and so into butterflies or moths. They were loathsome, disgusting; ... - they were repulsive, but she was exhilarated. She went home singing. (MQ, p.199)

These creatures are participating in their cycle of development, yet repulsively, they push their development beyond its former bounds, stretching their skins to the limit. This image becomes a model for Martha's process of self-development, as also for the evolution of human race. In Landlocked, Thomas suggests that the pains of her life are simply her straining against a "frail tight skin" like the caterpillar. He proposes that there may come a mutation that
will bring transformation in the human race such as the caterpillar's metamorphosis from crawling insect to butterfly:

"Perhaps that's why we are all so sick. Something new is trying to get born through our thick skins" (LL., p.145)

The loathsomeness of the "fat and seething creatures" is analogous to the 'madness' of the many persons who are in the main line of evolution. "I tell you, Martha", he says, "if I see a sane person, then I know he's mad. You know, the householders. It's we who are nearest to being - what's needed."

These caterpillars are about to become butterflies. Lynda, Martha and Thomas are "in the main line of evolution", yet society rejects them, because, "It [society] is like one of those sea creatures who have tentacles or arms equipped with numbing poisons: anything new, whether hostile or helpful, must be stunned into immobility or at least wrapped around with poison or a cloud of distorting colour."(LL., p.148)

Martha herself battles continually to waken herself from lethargy and impercipience. At the very brink of her final moment of vision, Martha feels herself as a heavy impervious insensitive lump that, like a planet doomed always to be dark on one side, had vision in front only, a myopic search light blind except for the tiny three-dimensional path open immediately before her eyes in which the outline of a tree, a rose, emerged, then submerged in
dark. But Martha waits, like the sycamore tree, for her curve of growth" to develop, until from a dead looking eye, or knot, it bursts again in a new branch, in a shape that is inevitable but known only to itself. She persistently nurtures the growth of her extrasensory skills - even amidst a society hostile to such growth. Also, her development is in accordance with the rhythms of everyday life, characterised by a fluid sort of patience. She learns, despite her extrasensory perceptions, that there is no point in avoiding everyday reality:

"She had learned that one thing, that most important thing, which was that one simply had to go on, take one step after another: this process itself held the keys." (F.G.C., p.588)

Martha never abandons the daily challenges, in which often "to put one step soberly after another seems harder than to wrestle with devils or challenge dangers." Martha understands that on the path of self-discovery and self-realization, there are no short cuts, no escapes from the everyday, and no substitute for "common sense". Her final wisdom comes through a voice from her brain which says that beauty, transcendence - whatever she is seeking- is "here, where else, you fool, you poor fool, where else has it been, ever..." (F.G.C., p.591) If the novel ends with Martha attaining a vision of beauty in the present moment, the Appendix details the apocalyptic future time in which the prophecy of Martha, Lynda and Thomas is fulfilled.
The children born after the Catastrophe are above normal; they can sense the sounds and sights of distant places; they can foresee the future. They are awaken to heights of perception hitherto unknown. These children are Martha's butter flies; born out of the straining of her thick caterpillar skin. As critic Betsy Draine observes, these children are the response to a necessity that man acquire new organs of perception, as the Sufi prophet Idries Shaw says in the passage used as epigraph to part four of The Four Gated City. Shah states in flat prose the belief that Doris Lessing has expressed metaphorically:

"Humanity is evolving towards a certain destiny. We are all taking part in that evolution. Organs come into being as a result of a need for specific organs. The human being's organism is producing a new complex of organs in response to such a need. In this age of the transcending of time and space, the complex of organs is concerned with the transcending of time and space. What ordinary people regard as sporadic and occasional bursts of telepathic and prophetic power are seen by the Sufi as nothing less than the first stirrings of these same organs. The difference between all evolution up to date and the present need for evolution is that for the past ten thousand years or so we have been given the possibility of a conscious evolution. So essential is this more rarified evolution that our future depends on it. " (FGC., p.448)

Martha is as one of the new children reports, "a sort of experimental model" of which nature has had enough now that the clairvoyant children have been born. (Betsy Draine., Ibid., p.64).
The accuracy of the prophecies of Martha and Lynda along with the appearance of the predicted special race of children, seems to point toward the existence of the "certain destiny" of which Idries Shah spoke. Thus Martha was right when she thought that her life was controlled by fate, by forces beyond her control. But she was wrong to fear these forces and wrong to believe that inevitability was inimical to her growth as well as to the human race. Now she learns that it is possible to live with dignity in harmony with the will of nature. Thus, during the course of this novel, Martha overcomes her earlier acquiescence to fate, and attains a fruitful receptivity. She discovers that one may accept the demand that 'the future be conceived in one's own flesh' (MQ, p.52); one may become one's own midwife and assist the future in its birth.

The attitude of fatalism that had plagued the young Martha Quest, causing her to lie down passively and to allow the fate to march over her, also victimizes Mark Coldridge. Affected by the "Fatalism, the determinism which is so oddly rooted in [communism] that revolutionary party" (FGC., p.148), he falls, from idealism into nihilism and loses his will. If one gives up belief in one's decisions and acts, one ends up a cynic like Mark, moaning, "what point has there been ever"? (FGC., p.653). Martha, on the other hand, follows the drift of events, using intelligence and imagination to chart a survival course, and so, at last, arrives at an island where
even "the face of the world's horror could be turned around to show the smile of an angel." (FGC., p.643)

While Mark can merely dream of the ideal city in the form of a prophetic novel, Martha actually labours to bring it about. It is on account of her intuition of the coming catastrophe that a small number of people are sequestered on an island where the gifted children of a new age are born. She refers to these children as "our guardians'. The dream of Mark's novel is due for fulfilment when Martha sends Joseph, the most gifted of the new children, to become a gardener in Nairobi, the 'city in the desert', where Francis heads a colony of refugees from the catastrophe.

So, Barnouw is wrong when he writes:

"Matty is neither moving toward a choice, a determining decision she will make at one time or the other, nor is the fact that she is incapable of such a choice integrated into the substance and structure of her development." 25

On the contrary, both the plot and the structure of the series show Martha moving through a series of stages, each climaxed by either a willed decision or an acquiescence to destiny. Indeed the question of whether active choice or passive acceptance is the appropriate response to life is one of the chief issues of the series. In the earlier novels, Martha takes wrong decisions - as when marrying Douglas and

Anton, while fate delivers to her door every good she is later to cherish—like her affair with Thomas Stern, and later her association with the Coldridge household—her ultimate means of salvation. And Martha finally learns that growth cannot be willed but can be nurtured, enhanced, and protected from impediments. In accepting the natural order of life, or fate, she has not simply given up choice, but she has given up egocentric wilfulness in order to exercise wisely in the service of the whole of humanity.

Patricia Spacks also is mistaken when she writes thus of Martha:

"She [Martha] stands for nothing, defies nothing successfully, .... She is passive when she should be active, obtuse when she should be perceptive. Her heroism consists merely in her suffering and her rage, not in any hope or promise of effect."

But, by holding back from decisive action, Martha keeps herself open to the wisdom that Thomas Stern and others bring to her. She is not passive to the point of despair, but she knows the value of latency—she waits until the time for action is ripe.

Martha thus achieves what was her constant quest, in the final volume of *Children of Violence*. There is no pessimism expressed in the novel; it ends with a note of hope.

in the future. In an interview given just after the publication of this novel, Doris Lessing expressed a strong faith in the future of mankind, even though that future maybe born out of violence. "May be out of destruction there will be born some new creature. I don't mean physically. What interests me more than anything is how our minds are changing how our ways of perceiving reality are changing. The substance of life receives shocks all the time, every place, from bombs, from the all pervasive violence. Inevitably the mind changes." 27

Hope is finally embodied in the image of the four-gated city and its hidden gardeners. This vision of hope - that, in the struggle between the human desire for good and all within us that holds us back from attaining it, the good will prevail - is quite vivid in Martha's report of a year on her island:

"... during that year ... we became aware of a sweet high loveliness somewhere, like a flute played only just within hearing. We all felt it. ... It was as if all the air was washed with a bright promise. Of what? Love? Joy? It was as if the face of the world's horror could be turned around to show the smile of an angel .... It was from that time ... that we took heart and held on to our belief in a future for our race."

(F.G.C, P.643)

So, the novel is an expression of hope, on the part of its writer, for a future society, an ideal one, where all people (who include women) live happily. The 'new children' are the builders of this city, and New woman ought to feel proud in being the 'nurturer' of these children.

CONCLUSION

The chapter shows the emergence of New Woman through the life of Martha Quest, tracing her life and development through the five phases of her life given through the five novels of "children of violence" sequence.

The chapter points out various problems a woman has to face, in developing as a "New woman". It links the problems of women with the problems of the black. Martha looks of the black as fellow sufferers and hence struggles for the betterment of the black. Moreover the chapter points to Martha's constant quest. Her quest is for social and political freedom in the early novels of the series. In The Four-Gated City the last novel of the sequence she achieves inner, spiritual freedom. The chapter shows the failure of the social unit of family in helping women in achieving this freedom and individuality.

These novels of Children of violence picture modern society as a fragmented society affected by the violent undercurrents of the times. As citizens of this society,
mankind is affected by the violence of repetition. In *A Proper Marriage*, Martha thinks of how this repetition has affected her life, how her life is a repetition of her mother's life. The image of the cycling wheel of the fair clearly brings out the idea of the ceaseless round of repetition. Also, as Martha observes nearly at the end of *Landlocked*, the activities of the young communists were a repetition of the activities of the older generation of communists - There was repetition even in Politics. In *Martha Quest* Martha is affected by the conventions of her society. There is also the violence of war which has affected the relation between Martha and Thomas stern in *Landocked*.

*The Four Gated City*, shows a society full of psychological cripples, whose lack of proper understanding leads to disaster which is suggested by the vague catastrophe. So mankind is shown to be a viction of the violence of its own lack of proper perception and understanding.

Thus, violence has affected mankind in all spheres - social, political and psychological. So human beings in modern society are "children" or products of violence. By taking Martha Quest, a modern and 'new' woman as her central character, Doris Lessing seems to suggest that women, in particular, are more sensitive to the violence of our times.