

# **CHAPTER - V**

## **CONCLUSION**

In the foregoing chapters of the dissertation thirty stories and short novels of Doris Lessing have been analysed. All these stories are based on the African life, experienced and observed by the writer in early phase of her career as a novelist and short-story writer. All these stories are bound together with the theme of African-ness which includes: the theme of individual's collision with an oppressive environment, the evils like: oppression, colonialism, racialism and poverty, natural superiority of the African natives, the exploited feminity and landscape. All these stories are set against the backdrop of beautiful but dangerous African landscape.

The theme of colonialism and racialism is dominant in all the African stories. The individual's hopeless struggle against his surrounding is determined first by poverty and then by a transgression against the social code. In 'The Second Hut,' Major Carruthers tries to keep harmony between himself and the Dutch assistant, Van Heerden by building the second hut with the help of the natives with whom the Dutchman behaves with animosity. But his struggle fails and he decides to go back to his 'home' — England. The Gales in 'The De Wets come to Kloof Grange' cannot live peacefully with their assistant De Wet — the traditional enemy— without disturbing their lives. The settlers like Alec

Barnes in 'Eldorado' and Stephen in 'A Mild Attack of Locusts' are described struggling to survive economically as farmers in Africa. Alec Barnes fails to be successful as a farmer and so takes to gold prospecting but there also he has to face the failure. The old Stephen who has been farming in Africa for nearly forty years keeps rooted in the soil facing famine, drought and attacks of locuts; and hoping for a good season to come.

The exploitative colonisers like George Chester in '"Lepoard" George,' Mr. Macintosh in 'The Anthheap,' Mr. Black, Mrs. skinner and Mrs. Pond in 'A Home for Highland Cattle' represent racist settlers in Africa. In spite of these exploitative settlers, there are quite few characters who represent white paternalism at its best like Jane McCluster in 'Little Tembi' and Marina Giles in 'A Home for the Highland Cattle' whose treatment of natives is humanitarian and just. Many settlers are trapped in some of these stories by their false memories of 'home' — England which hampers their survival as successful colonisers like the grown-ups in 'Flavours of Exile.' While the elders are facing failure in the country, the children who are not prejudiced against apartheid are shown successful and optimistic in these stories. Tommy in 'The Anthheap' makes Mr. Macintosh to send his half-caste friend, Dirk to the university and Paul Barnes in 'Eldorado' gets success in finding

gold mine in the farm while his father Alec fails to find it besides his years of endeavour.

The exploitative feminity is one of the major themes of the stories. Molly Slatter in 'Getting off the Altitude' is exploited by her errant husband Charlie Slatter; Mrs. Barnes in 'Eldorado,' Lucy in 'Lucy Grange' and Margaret in 'A Mild attach of Locusts' are shown as submissive and struggling for their existence. They cannot revolt against the circumstances in which they live. But Julia in 'Winter in July' and Mrs. Gale in 'The De Wets come to Kloof Grange' are self-awared women. Most of the female characters face isolation and solitude to which they react in their different ways. Sometimes they get tempted to sexual attraction. Lucy Grange finds escape from loneliness and idifference of her husband in her relations with a city salesman; Molly Slatter gets attracted towards her assistant George Andrews and Julia shares two half-brothers, Tom and Kenneth. The girl in 'The New Man' finds relief in her relations with a middle aged farmer; and sometime they take to prostitution like Marie and Lilla in 'A Road to the Big City.' This theme reaches to its highest point in the character of Mrs. Gale in 'The De Wets come to Kloof Garge,' when she reflects:

*Sitting here, buffeted by winds, scorched by the sun or shivering with cold, she could challenge anything. They were her*

mountains; they were what she was; they had made her, had crystallized her loneliness into a strength, had sustained her and fed her.'<sup>1</sup>

After having portrayed African life from various angles in depth, Lessing indirectly suggests that this oppressive racist regime of colonisers in Africa could be dismantled by the natives. In "Leopard" George, George Chester comes to the position of his neighbouring farmers when the Old Smoke leaves his farm for George has developed relations with his wife who is finally eaten by leopard. In 'No Witchcraft for Sale' the native, Gideon shows superiority of his herbal medicine to the developed medical science of the whites by saving the white child from snake-spit. Dirk in 'The Antheap' reacts very aggressively to the white man's tendency to exploit the African soil and the natives psychosomatically when he reflects on his determination:

When I grow up I'll clear you all out, all of you, there won't be one white man left in Africa, not one.<sup>2</sup>

After proving her metal as one of the major contemporary novelists in English, Lessing tries her hand at another important literary genre called the short-story. Her success as a short-story writer has been testified when she is placed in the line of the major short-story writers like James Joyce, D. H. Lawrence,

Dostoevsky, etc. Thus she has enriched the short-story as a literary genre by contributing to it both in terms of themes and techniques.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1  
Lessing, Collected African Stories : Vol.I(London:  
Paladin, 1992), p. 84.

2  
Ibid., p. 401.