DORIS LESSING

Women Writers

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Women Writers

Doris Lessing

Margaret Moan Rowe

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To Jessie Moan
From her impertinent and loving daughter

Acknowledgements

My hope is that both new and veteran readers of Doris Lessing's fiction will find my readings illuminating. Yet no work, however illuminating or unique, is without its debt to others. No one writing on Doris Lessing can ignore the impressive body of existing criticism. My own debt to others with published views is specified in my text.

Here I wish to pay different debts. My thanks to graduate students at Purdue University who worked with me in two seminars on Lessing's fiction. Thanks also to colleagues for suggestions and support: Thomas Adler, Ann Astell, Marianne Boruch, William Stuckey of Purdue University, and last, but never least, Alan Wilde of Temple University.

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West Lafayette, Indiana

MARGARET MOAN ROWE

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Editors' Preface

The study of women's writing has been long neglected by a male critical establishment both in academic circles and beyond. As a result, many women writers have either been unfairly neglected or have been marginalised in some way, so that their true influence and importance has been ignored. Other women writers have been accepted by male critics and academics, but on terms which seem, to many women readers of this generation, to be false or simplistic. In the past the internal conflicts involved in being a woman in a male-dominated society have been largely ignored by readers of both sexes, and this has affected our reading of women's work. The time has come for a serious reassessment of women's writings in the light of what we understand today.

This series is designed to help in that reassessment.

All the books are written by women because we believe that men's understanding of feminist critique is only, at best, partial. And besides, men have held the floor quite long enough.

EVA FIGES
ADELE KING

A Note on Editions

Quotations from Doris Lessing's work are taken from the paperback editions listed below. Dates in brackets are original publication dates. In my text, I note abbreviated book titles and page numbers in parentheses after quotations.

Fiction

GS	<i>The Grass Is Singing</i>	Plume Books	1976	[1950]
HL	<i>The Habit of Loving</i>	Plume Books	1976	[1957]

CHILDREN OF VIOLENCE

MQ	<i>Martha Quest</i>	Plume Books	1970	[1952]
PM	<i>A Proper Marriage</i>	Plume Books	1970	[1954]
RS	<i>A Ripple from the Storm</i>	Plume Books	1970	[1958]
L	<i>Landlocked</i>	Plume Books	1970	[1965]
F-G	<i>The Four-Gated City</i>	Plume Books	1976	[1969]

GN	<i>The Golden Notebook</i>	Bantam Books	1973	[1962]
B	<i>Briefing for a Descent into Hell</i>	Vintage Books	1981	[1971]
SD	<i>The Summer Before the Dark</i>	Bantam Books	1974	[1973]
M	<i>The Memoirs of a Survivor</i>	Bantam Books	1976	[1974]

CANOPUS IN ARGOS: ARCHIVES

S	<i>Shikasta</i>	Vintage Books	1981	[1979]
MBZ	<i>Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five</i>	Vintage Books	1981	[1980]
SE	<i>The Sirian Experiments</i>	Vintage Books	1982	[1981]
P8	<i>The Making of the Representative for Planet 8</i>	Vintage Books	1988	[1982]

SA	<i>The Sentimental Agents</i>	Vintage Books	1984	[1983]
DJS	<i>The Diaries of Jane Somers:</i> <i>The Diary of a Good</i> <i>Neighbour and If the Old</i> <i>Could. . .</i>	Vintage Books	1984	[1983]
GT	<i>The Good Terrorist</i>	Vintage Books	1986	[1985]
FC	<i>The Fifth Child</i>	Vintage Books	1988	[1988]

Collections of Essays

SPV	<i>A Small Personal Voice,</i> ed. Paul Schlueter	Vintage Books	1975	[1975]
P	<i>Prisons We Choose to</i> <i>Live Inside</i>	Perennial Library	1987	[1987]