


The writer as “an architect of the soul”: A Study of Doris Lessing’s theory of literature

Md. Mahmudul Hasan

13 April 2021


- 
- “‘My’ people, that is, the whites, with whom after all I had grown up, were coming to escort me out of the country, while to ‘my’ people, the blacks, amiable multitudes, I was invisible” (Lessing, 1992: 12).


Declaration




Lindsay Anderson
Kenneth Tynan
Stuart Holroyd
John Osborne
Doris Lessing
Colin Wilson
Bill Hopkins
John Wain

- writers ... as a unity, almost like an organism which has been evolved by society, as a means of examining itself. This “organism” is different in different epochs and always changing. Its most recent evolution has been into space and science fiction, predictably, because humanity is “into” studying space, and has only recently (historically speaking) acquired science as an aptitude. The organism must be expected to develop, to change, as society does. (Lessing, 1987:8)

- 
- a functionary nor an employee completely given up to the policy goals of a government or a large corporation, or even a guild of like-minded professionals. In such situations, the temptations to turn off one's moral sense, or to think entirely from within the specialty or to curtail skepticism in favor of conformity, are far too great to be trusted. (Said, 1994:64)



Some time ago, in a very testy mood, I began a lecture with these words: *Art for art's sake is just another piece of deodorised dog-shit*. Today ... I should be quite prepared to modify my language if not my opinion. In other words I will still insist that art is, and was always, in the service of man. Our ancestors created their myths and legends and told their stories for a human purpose (including, no doubt, the excitation of wonder and pure delight); they made their sculptures in wood and terra cotta, stone and bronze to serve the needs of their times. Their artists lived and moved and had their being in society, and created their works for the good of that society. (Achebe)



My mind is full of splendid memories of Africa which I can revive and look at whenever I want. How about those sunsets, gold and purple and orange, spreading across the sky at evening. How about butterflies and moths and bees on the aromatic bushes of the Kalahari? Or, sitting on the pale grassy banks of the Zambesi, the water dark and glossy, with all the birds of Africa darting about. Yes, elephants, giraffes, lions and the rest, there were plenty of those, but how about the sky at night, still unpolluted, black and wonderful, full of restless stars. (Nobel Lecture, p. 7)

- In giving expression to the plight of their people, black writers have shown again and again how strongly this traumatic experience can possess their sensibility. They have found themselves drawn irresistibly to writing about the fate of black people in a world progressively re-created by white men in their own image, to their glory and for their profit, in which the Negro became the poor motherless child of the spirituals and of so many Nigerian folk tales.
(Achebe)



Thiong'o:

In the era of imperialism where do we really stand? In a society built on a structure of inequality, where do we stand? Can we remain neutral, cocooned in our libraries and scholarly disciplines, muttering to ourselves: I am only a surgeon; I am a scientist; I am an economist; or I am simply a critic, a teacher, a lecturer? As Brecht says in a poem addressed to the students of the 'Workers' and Peasants' Faculty:

Your science will be valueless, you'll find
And learning will be sterile, if inviting
Unless you pledge your intellect to fighting
Against all enemies of mankind. 105

Picture speaks...





