

REPRESENTATION OF THE CONCEPTS OF "HUMAN AND NATURE" IN THE WORKS OF DORIS LESSING

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Abstract: This article examines the interpretation of the concepts of "nature and man" in the works of English writer Doris Lessing. Lessing, in his works, deeply analyzes the complex relationship between man and nature, showing the interdependence between these two concepts. In his works, nature appears not only as a background, but as an integral part of human life. Lessing sees nature as an important factor in the formation of the human psyche and psychology, which leads to the study of the interaction between the inner world of man and the external environment in his works.

Keywords: Doris Lessing, literature, nature, human, dependence, mental state, problems, life, psychology.

Among the numerous themes in Doris Lessing's early prose, the understanding of humanity and the surrounding nature dominate. The peculiarities of the artistic representation of these issues in the works of her early short fiction are the focus of this article. The relationship between nature and humanity in the stories from Doris Lessing's African period defines the internal space of the literary work, becomes a key aspect of the plot's development, significantly influences the formation and development of the characters, and constitutes the essence of the author's concept. Therefore, it is possible to speak about the emergence of the concepts of "nature" and "humanity" in Doris Lessing's early prose.

Although Lessing acknowledges the falseness and inconsistency of the myth of the empty land, she recognizes that there is an element of primordiality and wildness in this region, which challenges, frightens, but also attracts settlers. In her stories, the author shows that this phenomenon can be observed even on farms with cultivated land. It can be confidently stated that the first shade of primordiality, wildness (the first component or layer according to Y.S. Stepanov) of the concept of "nature" in Doris Lessing's stories emerges from the existing socio-linguistic and historical peculiarities. Therefore, paying close attention to the concept of "nature" not only allows for the analysis of Lessing's stance toward the natural world but also:

1. examines how the writer depicts the wildness and unexplored areas of Africa, and through this presents a complete and complex picture of the settler society in her stories;
2. demonstrates how the author shows different types of relationships between the settlers and the wild African landscape, and how this characterizes them (which brings forth the concept of "human");
3. identifies the differences between settlers and indigenous people, primarily in their relationship with nature (which brings forth the concept of "human");
4. determines the value of this wild land for Doris Lessing and the place of humans within it, i.e., outlining the role and significance of the concepts of "nature" and "human" in the early stories of Doris Lessing.

Nature and humanity in Doris Lessing's stories are in constant interaction, typically being the driving forces that shape the plot's development. The primary component of the concept of "nature" — primordially, wildness, untamed — can also be applied to humans. The concept of "human" in Lessing's works always carries a dual nature, presenting contrasts: "settler" – "indigenous person." Each of these has a dual possible reading: "settler" – "civilized"/"colonial"; "indigenous person" – "native" / "savage." Each of the two variations of the "human" concept has its own distinct features. For example, some of the settlers depicted in Lessing's works refuse to stay in a house for long and prefer to roam the bush under the starry sky, "subjugating the wild nature to themselves." The indigenous people, although they live in their homes, differ from the settlers in their closeness to the natural environment. Their knowledge of wild plants, for instance, can be seen in the story *No Witchcraft for Sale*, in which the servant Gideon heals a boy's eyes with plants from the bush. Gideon perceives the "bush" not as an unexplored wilderness, but as a well-known territory. The component of wildness, untamed nature in the concept of "nature," in the sense of "uncivilized," is brought into Africa through the settler culture, marking the perspectives of the continent in terms of its explored state, reflecting the settler's experience. As we can see, it is the colonial context of the stories that introduces the component of primordial wildness of the environment into the concept of "nature," thereby reflecting one of the goals of colonial politics — "taming," "subduing" this wild land to bring it under control.

Thanks to the component of primordial wildness in the environment, the concept of "nature" in Doris Lessing's works becomes one of the most important aspects of portraying the colonial world. Through the description of the relationship between settlers and nature, the surrounding world, the author manages to recreate the mentality of contemporary colonizers, showing their true attitude toward Africa and dismantling the stereotype of the settler created in society. Thus, Lessing's use of the concept of "nature" provides an opportunity to see the weaknesses of settler society and demonstrates its complexity and ambiguity. The author's stance reflects Doris Lessing's critical view of many aspects of the life of white settlers.

The concept of "nature" in Lessing's works is presented as a complex system: depictions of nature are conveyed through the narrator, who focuses the reader's attention on them in the text. These descriptions of nature serve as an indirect, intricate structure of primary reality, which, in turn, conveys important information about the narrator and the characters who come into focus within the narrative. Their perception and evaluation of the surrounding nature provide clear insights into their origins and cultural values. In this way, the concept of "nature" modulates various manifestations of the concept of "human." This was confirmed in an interview with Doris Lessing in 1964, where she emphasized that her stories address not only the issue of "colored populations" but also the impact of the natural world on the human world:

"Back then, I wrote short stories set in the region where I grew up, where isolated white farmers lived far apart on their properties... People who could have been perfectly ordinary citizens in a society like English society, to which they were supposed to conform, could become completely wild eccentrics, something they wouldn't have dared to be anywhere else... I don't think my memory is deceiving me, but I think people of 'colored races' would return to South Rhodesia due to the impossibility of finding living space for themselves" [7: 3].

In Doris Lessing's works, the interconnection of the concepts of "nature and humanity" is expressed deeply and complexly. In her works, nature is considered an inseparable part of human life, further enhancing the interaction between the internal and external worlds of a person. Lessing presents nature not only as a backdrop but also as an important factor in shaping the human psyche.

Her works address themes such as the relationship between nature and humanity, ecological issues, and humanity's responsibility toward nature. Lessing emphasizes the need for a change in humanity's attitude toward nature and urges readers to deepen their understanding of the relationship between nature and humanity.

So, in the works of Doris Lessing, through its exploration of the relationship between nature and humanity, focuses on environmental issues in contemporary literature and highlights the need to increase humanity's responsibility toward nature. This, in turn, helps students better understand the complex relationships between nature and humanity.

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