**LESSING, DORIS (1919-2013) Picture**

1919 Doris May Taylor born in Kermanshah, Persia (Iran) to Emily Maude McVeagh and Alfred Cook Taylor.

1921 Younger brother Harry is born.

1925 Family moves to Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) and purchases farm land in Banket, Lomagundi.

1926 Doris and her brother are sent to boarding school in Salisbury.

1927 Doris sent to convent school in Salisbury.

1932 Enters Girls’ High School in Salisbury.

1933 Leaves school and continues education through reading.

1939 Marries Frank Charles Wisdom and has a son, John.

1941 Daughter Jean is born

1942 Joins the Left Book Club in Salisbury

1943 Divorces Frank Wisdom. Marries Gottfried Lessing, a German Emigre

1944 Lessing and other Communists lobby for a black African branch of the Southern Rhodesia Labour Party

1945 Writing and submitting short stories and poems. Writing first drafts of *The Grass is Singing*

1946 Works for a Communist newspaper in Cape Town. Peter born.

1948 Lessing and husband begin divorce proceedings.

1949 She and son Peter emigrate to London.

1956 Exiled from Zimbabwe

1981 Film *Memoirs of a Survivor* released

1982 Film *Killing Heat (The Grass is Singing)* released

1999 Appointed Companion of Honour for national service and Companion of Literature.

2007 Nobel Prize for Literature

2013 Dies

Most of Lessing’s Papers are in the Harry Ransom Humanities Research Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

The Doris Lessing Society publishes an academic journal, *Doris Lessing Studies*, previously *Doris Lessing Newsletter.*

Doris Lessing was one of the most diverse writers of the twentieth century, distinguishing herself for closely observed natural detail in *The Grass in Singing,* and for FORMALISM and IMPRESSIONISM in early African stories such as “Sunrise on the Veld.” She also excelled with a NEO-GOTHIC Frankenstein tale in *The Fifth Child,* with spiritual and psychological journeys in *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* and *Memoirs of a Survivor*, and by shifting into SCIENCE or space FICTION in *The Canopus in Argos:Archives* series. Few writers have experimented with as many genres and techniques, including the novel, stories, non-fiction, plays, poems, opera libretti, autobiography, and even a graphic novel. She was concerned with Communism, social criticism (*The Sweetist Dream, The Golden Notebook )*, Sufism (Indries Shah), the psychology of R. D. Laing, mythology (*Memoirs of a Survivor, Briefing for a Descent into Hell),* archetypes, gender roles *(The Golden Notebook, A Man and Two Women)* fairy tales, global warming, andanti-colonialism evolving into POSTCOLONIALISM *(Mara and Dann and General Dann).* Because her sophisticated handling of irony, parody, and points of view is often misunderstood, Lessing has been mistakenly viewed as a traditional rather than a MODERNIST writer, sometimes relying on stereotypical characterization in *Martha Quest* and *The Cleft.* Her masterpiece, *The Golden Notebook,* displaying the self-reflexiveness, antifiction, intertextuality, complex structure, parody, and irony associated with such international postmodernists as Samuel Beckett, Margaret Atwood, Angela Carter, John Fowles, Kurt Vonnegut, and Toni Morrison is now apparent as a POSTMODERNIST text which further develops Modernism. This metafictional work not only makes what the reader constructs as the main text into fictional works written by her characters, but opens the ending, as Du Plessis recognizes: she writes beyond the ending. Lessing died at her home in London on 17 November 2013.

NOVELS

*The Grass is Singing* 1950

*“CHILDREN OF VIOLENCE” SERIES*

*Martha Quest* 1952

*A Proper Marriage* 1954

*A Ripple from the Storm*1958

*Landlocked* 1965

*The Four-Gated City* 1969

*The Golden Notebook* 1962. Wins the Prix Medici 1976.

*Briefing for a Descent into Hell* 1971

*The Summer Before the Dark* 1973

*Memoirs of a Survivor* 1974

*Mara and Dann* 1999

*Memoirs of a Survivor* film. 1981

*The Diaries of Jane Sommers*

*The Diary of a Good Neighbor* 1983

*If the Old Could. . .*1984

*The Good Terrorist* 1985 and the WH Smith Award and the Modello Prize1986

*Playing the Game:* a Graphic Novel illustrated by Charlie Adlard 1995

*The Fifth Child* 1988

*Love, Again* 1996

*Ben, In the World* 2000

*The Sweetest Dream* 2001

*The Grandmothers* (Novellas) 2003 filmed as *Two Mothers*

*The Story of General Dann and Mara’s Daughter, Griot and the Snow Dog* 2005

*The Cleft* 2007

*Alfred and Emily* 2008

*“CANOPUS IN ARGOS: ARCHIVES” SERIES*

*Re: Colonized Planet 5, Shikasta* 1979

*The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five* 1980

*The Sirian Experiments* 1981

*The Making of the Representative for Planet 8* 1982

*Documents Relating to the Sentimental Agents in the Volyen Empire* 1983

*SHORT STORIES*

*The Story of a Non-Marrying Man*—published as *The Temptation of Jack Orkney and Other*

*Stories* in the US

*Collected African Stories* 1972-73*:*

*Volume I This Was the Old Chief’s Country*

*Volume II The Sun Between Their Feet*

*The Habit of Loving* 1957 UK

*Five* 1953 UK wins Somerset Maugham Award

*A Man and Two Women* 1963 UK

*The Black Madonna* 1966

*Winter in July* 1966

*The Story of a Non-Marrying Man*. UK title. 1972

*Collected Stories*

*Volume I To Room Nineteen* 1978

*Volume II The Temptation of Jack Orkney and Other Stories* US title. 1972

*Through the Tunnel* 1990

*The Real Thing: Stories and Sketches* (US) 1992

*London Observed* (UK) 1992

*Spies I Have Known* 1995

*The Pit* 1996

*CAT TALES*

*Particularly Cats* 1967

*Particularly Cats. . .and Rufus the Survivor* 1991

*The Old Age of El Magnifico* 2000

*On Cats (combination of above cat books)* 2002

*OPERA (* Music by Philip Glass)

*The Making of the Representative for Planet 8* 1988

*The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five* 1997

*POETRY*

*Fourteen Poems* 1959

*Wolf People* 2002 (Inpopa Anthology, also by Robert Twigger and T. H. Benson)

*NONFICTION*

*Going Home* 1957

*In Pursuit of English* 1960

*A Small Personal Voice* 1974

*Prisons We Choose to Live Inside* 1985

*The Wind Blows Away Our Words* 1987

*African Laughter: Four Visits to Zimbabwe* 1992

*Under My Skin* (Autobiography to 1949) 1994

*Walking in the Shade* 1949-1962 (Autobiography) 1997

*Time Bites: Views and Reviews* 2004

*The Doris Lessing Reader* 1989

*Problems, Myths and Stories* 1999

PLAYS

*Each His Own Wilderness* Three Plays (Not available in the US). 1958 Premiers at the Royal Court Theatre

*Play with a Tiger* 1962 produced at Comedy Theatre, London

*The Singing Door*

*REFERENCES*

Drabble, Margaret. “Chronology.” *Doris Lessing: Stories*. 2008

DuPlessis, Rachel Blau*. Writing Beyond the Ending.*

Ingersoll, Earl G. *Doris Lessing: Conversations.*1994

*---. Putting the Questions Differently.* 1994.

Perrakis, Phyllis Sternberg, Debrah Raschke. Sandra Singer. *Interrogating The Times.* 2010.

Rubenstein, Roberta. *The Novelistic Vision of Doris Lessing: Breaking the   
 Forms of Consciousness.* 1979.

Watkins, Susan. *Doris Lessing.* Contemporary Women Writers. 2011.