



UNIVERSITI PUTRA MALAYSIA

***ENGENDERING A NEW FEMININE IDENTITY AND RECONSTRUCTING
CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING IN DORIS LESSING'S SELECTED NOVELS***

PEDRAM LALBAKHSH

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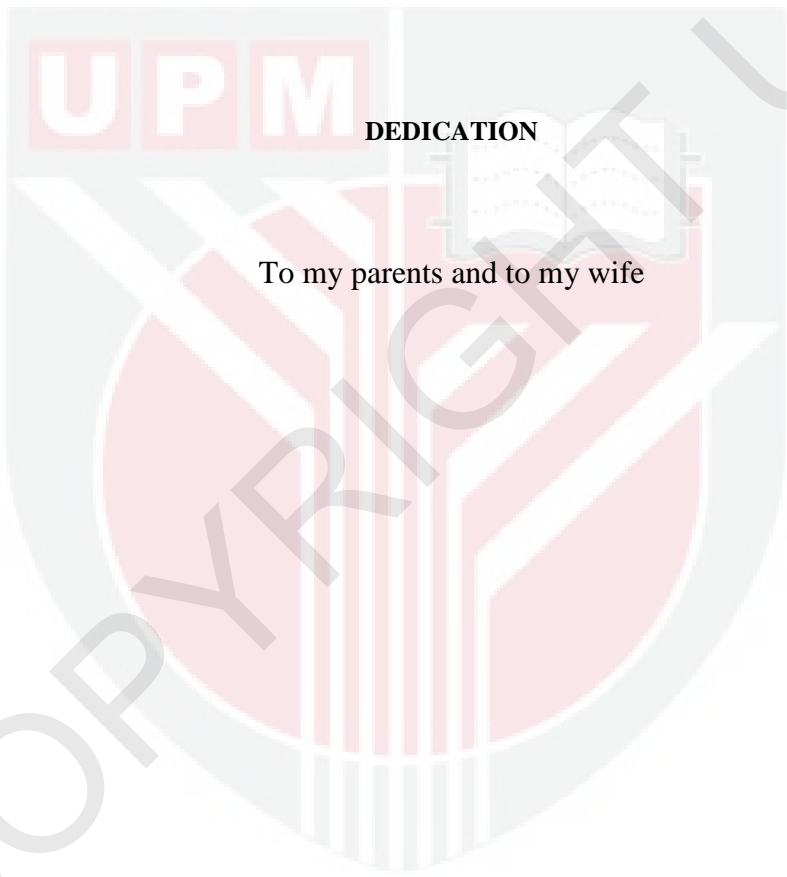
**ENGENDERING A NEW FEMININE IDENTITY AND RECONSTRUCTING
CONSCIOUSNESS-RAISING IN DORIS LESSING'S SELECTED NOVELS**

By

PEDRAM LALBAKHS

**Thesis Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies, Universiti Putra Malaysia,
in Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

July 2012



To my parents and to my wife

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Abstract of thesis presented to the Senate of Universiti Putra Malaysia in fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Faculty: Modern Languages and Communication

Looking from a socialist feminist viewpoint, the present study discusses selected Doris Lessing's novels to identify and analyze her engendered New Feminine Identity and her Reconstructed Consciousness-raising. Characterizing women who are entangled in patriarchal and/or capitalist systems (family or family-like structures), Lessing presents and criticizes the oppressive relations that aim to overwhelm women and make them comply with false identities. In all the societies she presents, women are defined in terms of their relations to men as the center of power to which women have limited or no access. These societies see women as an inferior secondary class whose consciousness needs to be shaped by the ideology that respects both patriarchy and capitalism's interests. Imbued with patriarchal capitalist ideology, women, like exploited workers, find themselves positioned in systems that essentially hinder their essential development. Showing many facets through which women are exploited, oppressed, abused and dominated, Lessing foregrounds her Engendered New Feminine Identity marked by self-confidence,

desire and daring to perform a missionary role in women's emancipation. The findings of the study prove that despite society's omnipresent imposed pressures to incapacitate her characters, they are shrewdly aware of their true power and identity marked by reason, seriousness and practicality, as well as the desire and courage to revolutionize the power dynamics and educate men whom they find to be unaware of the realities of the feminine world. By placing strong female characters, New Women indeed, in contrast with impulsive undeserving monstrous males, Lessing shows the need to include a man-educating process in women's struggle against oppression and domination. This seems to be a part missing in socialist feminism's consciousness-raising, which is a highly valued strategy in women's struggle for emancipation and equality. While socialist feminism's consciousness-raising mostly focuses on and is limited to women, the inclusion of men, as Lessing shows, will be a great means to change the mentality and consciousness of the oppressor. For Lessing it is time to include the oppressor in the fight against him. Lessing's novels show that revolutionary action on the part of New Women will not result in success as long as the oppressor is not educated to the point where he willingly gives his power up (or a portion of it) to the benefit of women whom he must recognize as absolutely equal and deserving. Such engendered feminine characters and modified consciousness-raising will take socialist feminism a step further in its fight against the inherent oppression of patriarchy and capitalism, promising a better life for both men and women.

Abstrak tesis dikemukakan kepada Senat Universiti Putra Malaysia untuk memenuhi keperluan ijazah Doktor Falsafah

**PENGENALAN IDENTITI FEMININ BARU DAN PEMBINAAN SEMULA
KEBANGKITAN-KESEDARAN WANITA DALAM BEBARAPA NOVEL
DORIS LESSING**

Oleh

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Melihat dari sudut pandangan sosial terhadap feminin, kajian ini membincangkan beberapa novel yang ditulis oleh Doris Lessing untuk mengenalpasti dan menganalisis Identiti feminin baru yang dibina semula atas kesedaran terhadapnya. Beliau mencirikan wanita kepada mereka yang terbabit dalam sistem patriarki dan / atau kapitalis (keluarga atau struktur seperti keluarga), Lessing mendedah dan mengkritik hubungan mereka yang menindas untuk mengatasi wanita dan menjadikan mereka sentiasa mematuhi identiti palsu. Dalam semua masyarakat yang diperhatikannya dia menyatakan bahawa, wanita ditakrifkan pada hubungan mereka terhadap lelaki sebagai pusat kuasa, manakala wanita pula amat terbatas dan dianggap tidak mempunyai akses. Masyarakat melihat wanita sebagai kelas menengah yang lemah dan kesedaran mereka perlu dibentuk oleh ideologi yang menghormati kedua-dua patriarki dan kepentingan kapitalisme. Disemai dengan ideologi kapitalis patriarki, wanita merupakan pekerja yang dieksplotasi, dan

mendapati diri mereka berada dalam sistem yang pada dasarnya menyekat perkembangan yang sepatutnya. Banyak paparan memperlihatkan aspek wanita yang dieksploitasi, ditindas, didera dan dikuasai oleh lelaki, Lessing yang menyedari hal ini telah melahirkan pandangan baru identiti Feminin yang ditandai dengan keyakinan diri, keinginan, dan berani untuk melaksanakan peranan dakwah dalam emansipasi wanita. Hasil kajian membuktikan bahawa walaupun terdapat tekanan masyarakat yang dikenakan untuk menyangkal tingkahlaku beliau, mereka sebenarnya sedar kuasa mereka dan identiti yang memperlihatkan sebab, dan praktikal, sebagaimana keinginan dan keberanian untuk merevolusikan kuasa dinamik dan mendidik kaum lelaki yang kurang perihatin terhadap realiti dunia feminin. Dengan meletakkan watak-watak wanita yang kuat, wanita baru sesungguhnya, berbeza dengan lelaki yang tidak berhak mendapat impulsif yang besar, Lessing cuba memperlihatkan keperluan memasukkan proses mendidik lelaki dalam perjuangan wanita menentang penindasan dan penguasaan. Ini seolah-olah sebahagian yang hilang dalam mempertingkatkan kesedaran feminisme sosialis, dan merupakan satu strategi yang sangat penting dalam perjuangan emansipasi wanita dan kesaksamaan hak. Walaupun kesedaran penjanaan feminisme sosialis kebanyakannya tertumpu dan terhad kepada wanita, tetapi terdapat juga pada lelaki, sebagaimana yang diperlihatkan oleh Lessing, ini akan menjadi satu cara yang bermakna untuk mengubah mentaliti dan kesedaran yang menindas. Bagi Lessing, sudah sampai masanya untuk melibatkan penindas dalam perjuangannya. Novel Lessing juga menunjukkan bahawa tindakan revolusioner bagi pihak wanita baru tidak akan menghasilkan kejayaan selagi pihak penindas tidak dididik hingga kepada satu titik yang mereka rela memberikan kuasanya (sebahagian daripadanya) yang boleh dimanfaatkan oleh wanita untuk mengiktiraf kesamaan hak. Ciri-ciri feminin dan

perubahan kebangkitan kesedaran akan meletakkan feminisme sosialis selangkah ke hadapan dalam perjuangan menentang penindasan patriarki dan kapitalisme, serta menjanjikan kehidupan yang lebih baik bagi kaum lelaki dan wanita.



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APPROVAL

I certify that a Thesis Examination Committee has met on **4 July 2012** to conduct the final examination of **Pedram Lalbakhsh** on his Doctor of Philosophy thesis entitled “**Engendering a New Feminine Identity and Reconstructing Consciousness-raising in Doris Lessing’s Selected Novels**” in accordance with the Universities and University Colleges Act 1971 and the Constitution of Universiti Putra Malaysia [P.U.(A) 106], 15 March 1998. The Committee recommends that the student be awarded the Doctor of Philosophy.

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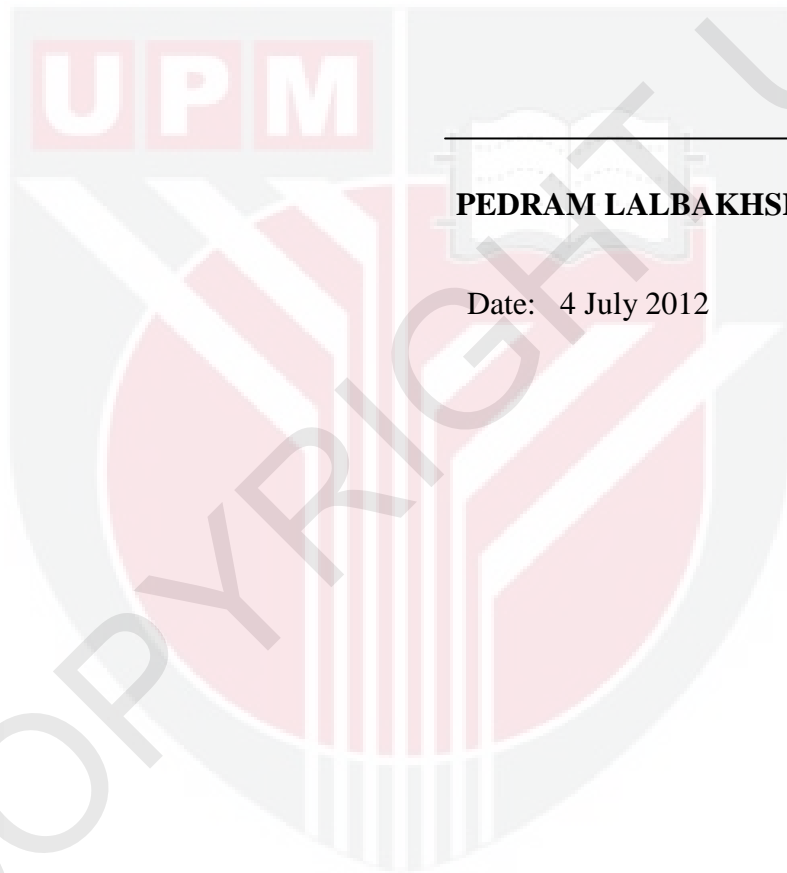
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DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is my original work except for quotations and citations which have been duly acknowledged. I also declare that it has not been previously, and is not concurrently, submitted for any other degree at Universiti Putra Malaysia or at any other institution.



PEDRAM LALBAKHSH

Date: 4 July 2012

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