
Appearances of Love & Fear in Moyes's *The Last Letter from your Lover* and Lessing's *Love Again*

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Abstract

Love and fear, as human feelings or values, have been highlighted by many writers as a source of inspiration for the Love and trepidation for fear since civilizations started as subject matter themes related to human life. The current paper aims to find comparative thematic aspects of Love and fear in Doris Lessing's *Love, Again* and Jojo Moyes's *The Last Letter from Your Lover*. The comparison of the study will adopt the Psychoanalytic feminist theory as a literary method to discuss both novels. Both feelings are affected psychologically by the behavior and thinking of a woman.

Keywords: Love, fear, feminism, Psychoanalytic, Lessing, and Moyes.

Introduction

The human movement has passed many stages of development, especially in the technological field, but the values and feelings as principles are ongoing without change anywhere and anytime. Many writers have mentioned the Love and fear of their writings. The paper is a trail to find the features of Love and fear in two novels, *Love, Again*, written by Doris Lessing, and *The Last Letter from Your Lover*, written by Jojo Moyes. Both deal with Love and fear to reflect how the female protagonists express their sentiments toward the man. Also, how do these sentiments embed interactions with sexuality and body features? As a result, to discuss Love and fear in both novels, the researcher will highlight short biographies of novelists and briefs of the stories and the literary theory adopted for analyzing them.

For Doris Lessing, she was born October, 1919 in Kermanshah, Iran and she died November 17th, 2013 in London, UK. She is UK writer whose novels and short stories are primarily "concerned with, where she lived from age five until she settled in England in 1949" (Britannica, 2020). So, she was defined as an African writer because she wrote about the

tragedy of Africans Lessing, the most considerable author of the post-war generation, has discovered several of the most significant thoughts, social issues and ideologies of the twentieth century. The works' writer like *Love, Again, The Summer Before the Dark, The Grass Is Singing, The Four-Gated City, The Golden Notebook* and so on. Her works exhibit various interests and anxiety, discrimination, feminism, socialism, psychology, and theology (Rege, 2011).

Lessing's "*Love Again* tells the story of "A 65-year-old lady who falls in Love. Instead, Sarah Durham is in a state of Love, in another country and is struggling to regain her health. Sarah, widowed for a long time and having children, is a writer who works at the London Theater". During her work, "she falls in Love with a seductive young actor, Bill, stunning and androgynous 28 years old; then Sarah finds herself in a state of longing and lust with the maturer, 35 years old director, Henry. She thought the province of younger women" (Lessing, 1995).

Jojo Moyes was "born in 1969 and grew up in London. A writer and journalist, she worked for The Independent newspaper until 2001. She lives on a farm in Great Sampford, Essex, England, with her husband, journalist Charles Arthur, and three children. She has been a full-time novelist since 2002. She is the author of nine novels, two of which, *The Last Letter From Your Lover* (2010) and *Foreign Fruit* (2003), have won the RNA Novel of the Year award" (Lambert, 2015).

Moyes's *The Last Letter from Your Lover* story started in the 1960s. "When Jennifer Stirling woke up at the hospital, she could remember nothing - not the horrific car crash that brought her there, not her husband, not even who she is. In her own life, she feels like a stranger until her passionate letter signed "B" literally stumbled and asked her to leave the husband. Long years later, in 2003, in a forgotten letter in her newspaper archive, a journalist called Ellie finds the same mysterious letter. She is consumed with the story and hopes her faltering career will grow again. So, if these lovers had a joyous finish, they would also have a problematic love life. Ellie's journey will re-write the history and allow her to see the reality of her modern story." (Moyes, 2008).

Both novels focus on Love as a desire that the protagonists look forward to achieving. Meanwhile, this Love faces challenges, making the protagonists afraid of not keeping their passions ongoing.

Love Again and The Last Letter from Your Lover

As highlighted, Love and fear are the focus of discussion and analysis in both novels. As a literary work, Psychoanalytic Feminism Literary theory is the method that is used in the article to analyze and discuss both novels. The approach consists of two main parts, which are feminism and psychoanalysis. Feminism is "a broad movement embracing numerous phases of women's emancipation. It is the freedom from sex determined role freedom from society's oppressive restrictions, freedom to express her thoughtfully and to convert them freely into actions." (Hooks, 2000). Psychoanalysis is the central part of the theory. It gave further productive horizons for the feminist movement by merging psychology with what feminists were struggling for. The approach is called 'Anglo-American Psychoanalytic Feminism.' Jessica Benjamin adopts it (1988, 1998). The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy mentions;

It emphasizes pre-Oedipal sociality or intersubjectivity. It also focuses on the father-son relationship and its aggression, hostility, Love, and mourning. Deploring this "struggle for power" (Benjamin 1988) in which women are merely the triangulating to psychic and cultural representations" (Benjamin 1988).

The dissatisfaction with the continuing feminist project may be a concern for all people. On the other hand, alongside the experiential tendency, there remains an additional tendency of reflection, which is exceptionally unnoticed by feminists. And that is associated with the names like Doris Lessing. She preferred for the responsive and deferential association and coexistence between the contradictory sexes as an alternative of polemic practices. Despite that, she was harshly criticized by other feminist activists. (Szapuvá, 2006). Helen Wilkinson criticizes Doris Lessing for talking of something old-fashioned (news.bbc.co.uk). A close analysis would construct obviously how valuable they are at the time of disquieting, ever-widening gender divide.

A look at Doris Lessing makes it clear that she is crowned as the 'epicist of the female experience' by the Noble Awarding Committee. She is the author whose "fame rests heavily on *The Golden Notebook*, a book that broke ground in expressing women's dissatisfaction with the gender roles of the time. It made many men feel guilty about their gender at the same time it seemed to advocate for women" (womensissues.about.com). Then, people would undoubtedly discover her as a feminist, though, she disagrees with it. Lessing disagrees with calling her a feminist because of her direct lament to continuing feminist ventures resulting in 'unthinking and automatic rubbishing of men.' So, to answer the question of what type of feminist she might be called, audiences must answer it following Dr. Niaz Zaman 'she is 'not-a-men bashing-feminist' (thedailystar.net).

Doris Lessing, on August 13, 2001, in her speech at Edinburgh's Consignia Theatre, said:

"I find myself increasingly

"Why did this have to be at the cost of men?" (Xia, Q., 2003: 32-37.)

Doris Lessing, therefore, protected men against what she called the "unthinking and automatic rubbishing" by feminists. However, Doris Lessing is one of many intellectuals who did this. An increasing population of thinkers is noticeable with parallel apprehension. It is clear to see, to 'fight back' of which Lessing was concerned, moreover feminist intellectual ventures, male oppose venture has already started its voyage. (Szapuvá, 2006). Influential feminist groups, however, remained mostly quiet on these matters. Feminists have adopted what Lessing calls the "lazy and manipulative" ideology of male-bashing and man-hating instead of performing the necessary yet challenging task of working for all women everywhere (Szapuvá, 2006).

As mentioned, *Love Again* examines the affinities and relationships between romantic Love, depression and sorrow, homesickness, and childhood emotional deprivation. The two men Sarah "falls in love with, one after the other, causing her to relive her stages of growing up, from immature and infantile love to the mature" (dorislessing.org).

At the novel's beginning, Sarah falls in Love with two young men and knows that society has constrained her desire because she is an older woman and widow, although she

feels young inside. Moreover, Sarah as female protagonists in her sixties, but she finds herself in the position through which an exploration of a new path cannot get ignored. The discovery is achieved by observing her body in front of the mirrors and mirroring herself to others who encounter her way. In revealing her body to both her own eyes and the eyes of others, Sarah disposes of those obliging social and cultural values that place her outside their cultures (Oró Piqueras, 2007). When Sarah is affected by Bill's looks and attention, she falls in Love. She "went to the mirror several times during this excursion around and about her room, for an inspection that deserved to be called scientific" (Lessing, 1995). Sarah wants to reflect that Love and desire are the terrains of the young and the attractive ones. It reflects the feeling of Love, but when she finds out that she had misunderstood Bill's attention because he is dating a young woman, the feelings of fear have been flamed. To avoid such an event, she falls in Love again, but this time with Henry, the play's director, a middle-aged man. About these feelings, Oró Piqueras commented "Even though Sarah does not start an affair with any of these men, woman in her youth." (2007). Therefore, she observed herself in the mirror and expressed, "She could, but there was another as vulnerable as the flesh of roses" (Lessing, 1995). Sarah understands that her passionate feelings were not "tamed by the quietness when she has lived on her own as a widow for years. Throughout her journey, unaffected by age" (Oró Piqueras, 2007).

As a result, Sarah was controlled by these passionate emotions that she could neither keep nor satisfy. In the novel, via the motif of the mirror, the voice of woman is heard as Sarah expressed her uncontrollable emotions. That is what called the fear generated from consequences of Love in old age. Another picture of fear which led to depression is when Sarah said, "The old woman is only an old woman, old or did not care enough to think herself into being old" (Lessing, 1995).

In Moyes's *The Last Letter from Your Lover*, the protagonist, Ellie, tries to copy and imitate Jennifer, who lived forty years ago. She tried to reflect her feelings of Love and fear by simulating old events with present ones. Although the feelings of Love and fear appeared clearly in the affairs of the novel, the differences between the two decades have changed the lifestyle, which impacted love and fear feelings. The feelings of fear can be seen in this paragraph;

"Ellie's head sinks into her hands, and she weeps for the unknown Boot, for Jennifer, on your own except being able to sob uninhibitedly at will." (Moyes, 2008).

Despite the features and expressions of Love being apparent, the protagonist, Ellie, tries to make Jennifer's Love an example. However, the feelings of fear and frustration from not keeping such emotions ongoing fill the section. Moreover, the fear of the unknown and the inability to see her Lover with other women are indicators and signs of fear that cannot be gotten rid of without assisting the Lover.

"I ask you not to judge me for my weakness. The fall would come - it always did - but she usually collected enough memories to cushion it a little." (Moyes, 2008).

Love's feelings in the novel seem enthusiastic and optimistic due to the consideration of her Lover. The read of the following sections explains such sentiments. "Somewhere in this world is a man who loves suspects he always will." (Moyes, 2008).

Also, in other sections of the novel, the writer continues to express the scope of Love by picturing the meeting of eyes and silent moments as the title of deep Love between each other. She continues using symbolism and exaggeration to convey how Love is fabulous and cannot be imagined.

"Their eyes met, and in those few silent moments, he told her everything.

Who desires you, who sees you as a better version of yourself, is the most astonishing gift." (Moyes, 2008).

Moyes expresses the flood of Love and fear excellently and attractively, which keeps the reader in touch with the events and emotions.

Conclusions

Love and fear are not related to class level or age. They are absolute values and feelings which give a motivation to reinforce life happily. Moreover, Love regards an engine granting power of ambition to feel of life. On the other hand, the social circumstances are still governed in some way the lifestyle of lovers. Both social circumstances and age contribute to the fear of lovers. Besides, feminist aspects in *The Last Letter from Your Lover* refer to the vast difference in social lives between the 1960s and 2000s. Within 40 years, the lifestyle has imposed different rights and duties on women.

Moreover, feelings of Love and fear can be noticed in the novel when both Jennifer and Elli try to keep it sparkling whenever their passions and emotions remain the same. For Love Again, "the force with which Doris Lessing confronts the challenges such as the sexuality of middle-aged, or older makes this novel one of the most compelling and memorable she has ever written" (The Guardian NP). In addition, Doris Lessing said

she has lost none of her power to shock or surprise: she is a writer for whom there are no taboos. Nor has she begun to give easy answers: that this, perhaps, is what life is really like. (1996).

Lessing presents archetypal 20th century women in the novel made her astonishing and her classification had to illustrate the new characteristics of modern women.

For Moyes, *The Last Letter from Your Lover* offers several open and sentimental Love scenes. Both novels share several similarities because they use Love and fear as proof that they are honest emotions.

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