

## THE VOICES OF GENDER RECONSTRUCTING HISTORY IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE CLEFT*

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**ABSTRACT.** *The Voices of Gender Reconstructing History in Doris Lessing's The Cleft.* This essay analyses Doris Lessing's vision upon history as a postmodernist story written from a masculine and from a feminine perspective according to the narrators' specific gender. It shows that the voices of gender lay the groundwork for subjective, gender-biased discourses on the history of gender relations, on the evolution of the male-female relationships in time. The capacity of gender to influence the protagonists' vision upon history as well as the development of their cognitive and linguistic abilities will be focused on in this essay.

**Keywords:** *gender, voices, the feminine principle, the masculine principle, history, story, language competency, sexuality, vision.*

**REZUMAT.** *Reconstruirea istoriei prin vocea genului în romanul Mitra de Doris Lessing.* Eseul analizează viziunea scriitoarei Doris Lessing asupra istoriei ca poveste postmodernistă scrisă dintr-o perspectivă masculină și dintr-o perspectivă feminină în funcție de genul specific al naratorilor. Eseul arată că vocile genului naratorilor pun bazele discursurilor lor subiective și părtinitoare despre istoria evoluției relațiilor dintre genuri, dintre bărbați și femei în timp. Capacitatea unui gen de a influența viziunea protagoniștilor asupra istoriei și dezvoltarea abilităților lingvistice și cognitive ale acestora va fi scoasă în evidență în acest eseu.

**Cuvinte cheie:** *gen, voci, principiul feminin, principiul masculin, istorie, poveste, competență lingvistică, sexualitate, viziune.*

### Introduction

Explaining the importance of acknowledging the essence of our world and of our history as being defined by male and female voices and focusing on the evolution of the relations between males and females in time, Doris

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Lessing's *The Cleft* (2007) approaches an imaginary history of the development of human race, human feelings and mentality from a feminine and from a masculine perspective. This essay shows that the alternating accounts in Doris Lessing's novel, Maire's account and the Roman historian's account, evince gender-biased discourses wherein history is presented from a biased perspective influenced by the narrator's gender. Reconstructing a dim and distant past, the two stories enlarge upon a series of events which may have caused the present evolution of the male-female relationships. The feminine voice of Maire and the masculine voice of the Roman historian, who keeps his name anonymous, account for the different interpretations of history in time. In a postmodernist fashion, history is presented as a story told from a certain perspective – the feminine or the masculine perspective – which is gender-biased. Gender influences one's vision and interpretation of history, of the past and the present. The voices of gender account for the differences of mentality and perspective in reconstructing ancient history in Doris Lessing's novel.

As a symbol, the title of the novel, *The Cleft*, stands for the crossroads of life and history. It is the females' cleft which allows human life to be given birth to. It is the females' cleft which allows the coming out of new generations with new stories and history. In Doris Lessing's novel, *the Cleft*, which "rises out of the Killing Rock" (Lessing 12), allows red flowers to grow and life to exist. It is also the pit of a volcano which swallows human life following the humans' careless acts. It symbolizes the human sacrifice in history, the crossroads of life and death. According to Maire, the narrator of her story, this sacrifice is necessary for the females' normal life: "But we know that if we don't cut the red flowers (...) if we don't do that, we will not have our flow" (Lessing 9). The females in the novel are called the Clefts. As the spokesperson of the Clefts, Maire explains the importance of the Cleft to them:

The Cleft is that rock there, which isn't the entrance to a cave, it is blind, and it is the most important thing in our lives. It has always been so. We are The Cleft. The Cleft is us, and we have always made sure it is kept free of saplings that might grow into trees, free of bushes (Lessing 10).

The Cleft allows nature and divinity to cultivate the seed of life and to maintain the flow of human existence. The same as the females' cleft allows them to make the continuation of life possible by giving birth to children, the cleft in heavens allows the begetter of life or the spirit of God to turn up in order to protect the abandoned baby boys' lives. In Doris Lessing's novel, the spirit of divinity is represented by the eagle which protects the boys' lives. Thus, every time a Cleft gives birth to a boy, which they call "Monster" (Lessing 23) and which they condemn to death by abandoning him on the Killing Rock, an eagle

turns up in order to save him, fighting for his life and taking him to a valley where the male community could live and develop.

The importance of the cleft is appreciated differently by the male and the female protagonists. To the females, the cleft is a sacred place and a symbol of the feminine principle. To the males, it is a burden which lies heavily upon their minds as it used to be their killing place in an ancient past they can hardly remember. It is the males who finally destroy the Cleft in the mountain setting the stage for an Age of New History and Stories.

### **The Voices of Gender Reconstructing Ancient History**

As long as a unique omniscient perspective upon history and the past does not exist, the two narrators, Maire and the anonymous Roman historian, make many references to the existence and the content of the females' historical records and of the males' historical records whose versions of history sometimes differ and sometimes coincide. History is recreated by the females and the males' vision upon the past, upon the order of things in the Universe, upon the evolution of life and human relations in time. It is marked by many questions and inexact details about the precise time when the events presented took place. Both the Roman historian's account and Maire's account are replete with questions and personal interpretations. Legends, myths, songs and the alleged historical documents investigated by the Roman historian are reinterpreted from a feminine and from a masculine perspective. The voices of gender reconstruct history and the past.

Maire's account presents the females as the first human beings on Earth, endowed with a self-sufficient gender and the power to become pregnant and give birth without any previous sexual intercourse with a male. According to this account, the feminine principle gave birth to the masculine principle, viewed as inferior and as the abject *Other*. Maire's story goes back to an ancient history when women were associated with sea creatures, having a world apart and giving birth to children without having ever known any man or without having ever had any relationship with any man. They used to abandon their baby boys on the Killing Rock without feeling any remorse. Maire's story enlarges upon the image of an ancient powerful woman too satisfied with her human condition and too close to Mother Nature that nothing could determine her to try to broaden her cognitive and life experience by tasting the apple of knowledge associated with understanding the different world beyond the women's shore. The "old shes" (Lessing 10), who, according to the historian's account, used to call themselves "people" (Lessing 65), without including the males into this category, lived on a prehistoric shore, having the sea as their habitat and the moon as their shelter. The feminine principle used to be the unique principle ruling the world. It was the primordial principle beyond the

body and the visible world. This idea is analysed by Judith Butler (1993) in *Bodies that Matter. On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* where she tries to define the essence of the feminine:

The problem is not that the feminine is made to stand for matter or for universality; rather, the feminine is cast outside the form/matter and universal/particular binarisms. She will be neither the one nor the other, but the permanent and unchangeable condition of both – what can be construed as a nonthematizable materiality. She will be entered, and will give forth a further instance of what enters her, but she will never resemble either the formative principle or that which it creates (Butler 1993:42).

In Doris Lessing's novel, the old females used to reject the masculine principle or the boys who were associated with the abject *Other*, the peripheral, the ugly *Other*. They never experienced any maternal feelings or human feelings for the *Other* represented by their own baby boys. Their conservative nature marked their destiny until one of their kind decided to leave their shore, to cross the mountain to see what is new beyond it. The first Cleft to have reached the boys' valley was raped to death. The second Cleft to have arrived in the boys' valley was Maire who came to know and understand the boys' different gender and sexuality.

Maire's discourse focuses on women's gifts and qualities as compared to men's qualities and gifts viewed as poor and inferior. Her account speaks about her own experience, presenting history from her feminine perspective. She turns into a postmodernist narrator and heroine whose feminine voice and experience make history a mere story. At this point, we should quote Linda Hutcheon (2002) who has thoroughly analysed the postmodern means of representing history in literary texts, including one's subjective personal experiences reflected in writing history:

Besides the postmodern self-consciousness here about the paradoxes and problems of historical representation (and self-representation), there is also a very feminist awareness of the value of experience and the importance of its representation in the form of 'life-writing' – however difficult or even falsifying that process might turn out to be (Hutcheon 2002: 162).

Maire's discourse plays down men's abilities and gifts in a straightforward manner. Telling the story of the merciful female Cleft who decided to cross the mountain in order to feed the newly-born boys, Maire proudly comments that "there is always milk in our breasts. Our breasts are useful. Not like yours" (Lessing 19). She evinces the physical differences between males and females in order to highlight their gifts, advantages and usefulness, leaving open question marks for our further interpretation: "That was when the

idea first happened to us that the Monsters' tubes were for making eggs, and if so why and what for?" (Lessing 20). Maire admits that there are various accounts regarding the evolution of the relations between women and men in time, insisting on the dichotomy *he # she, I # we*. The direct representation of these first relations in snapshots of bare sexuality, turn pornography into an artistic means of depicting the male-female relationships: "Some of the young ones went over the hill and when the Monsters saw them, they grabbed them and put their tubes into them, and that is how we became Hes and Shes, and learned to say I as well as we – but after that there are several stories, not one" (Lessing 20). She questions the truth of the stories accounting for the evolution of the female-male relationships: "There are many stories and who knows which one is true? And some time after that, we, the Clefts lost the power to give birth without them, the Monsters – without you" (Lessing 20-21). The first sexual relationships between males and females have laid the groundwork for acknowledging gender and sexuality differences as well as for accepting the feminine and the masculine principle as interdependent for life to go on.

The Roman historian, who associates himself with a "Monster" (Lessing 23), makes comments on Maire's story, having a biased male discourse and looking down on women's character, qualities and vision. He makes a distinction between the females' "official story" (Lessing 23) and his own "official story" (Lessing 23-26), focusing on the differences of approaching historical truth. He evinces the women's biased vision transmitted from generation to generation and the omission of bits of historical truth in the females' accounts so that they could tell only the part of the story that gives them an advantage. Admitting that we just read stories wherein history is reconstructed either from the females or from the males' perspective, Doris Lessing's novel proves its condition of "metafiction" as defined by Patricia Waugh (1984). The anonymous Roman historian shows that the parts of the stories incriminating women's past actions have been intentionally omitted from the females' accounts but have been included in the males' tales and offered to the future generations for interpretation. Historical truth is to be discovered by considering both the females and the males' stories and perspective and by putting them together in order to create the big picture of the past. The male narrator remarks that his account is based on facts and appreciates the females' manner of presenting history: "The method used by the females, the careful repetition, word by word, and then the handing down to the next generation, every word compared and checked, by a method of parallel Lines of Memories, is a very efficient preserver of history" (Lessing 26). In his view, truth lies hidden in a prison. It is not only revealed by the females and the males in their accounts but also by drawings on ceramics: "You would be surprised at the mass of material in our – I jokingly called them prisons. Yes, this, I am afraid, is the joke used by us official warders of the forbidden truth" (Lessing 26).

Having a discourse marked by male prejudices preserved in history from generation to generation, the anonymous Roman historian views the *shes* as inferior to men: “We are the senior, they our creation” (Lessing 25-26). He rejects the idea that the females appeared the first in history and associates the males with the “eagle people” (Lessing 27) and “the rulers” (Lessing 28). According to his account, “males are always put first, in our practice. They are first in our society, despite the influence of certain great ladies of the noble Houses” (Lessing 28). He presents the women as not endowed with curiosity and interest in their past history. In his view, ancient women were naïve as they took myths and legends for granted without questioning their ideas and truth: “Their minds were not set for questions, even a mild interest. They believed – but it was not a belief they would defend or contest – that a Fish brought them from the Moon. When was that? Long, slow, puzzled stares. They were hatched from the moon’s eggs” (Lessing 31). The fact that the Clefts “lived in an eternal present” (Lessing 31) evinces the women’s conservative character, their unity with Mother Nature and the sea which have never changed ever since the beginning of times. In their ancient past, women seemed to be living in a dream shattered by the Monsters’ birth and survival beyond *their shore*: “It was not the first Monster that shocked them out of their dream” (Lessing 32); “Shock after shock was felt by this community of dreaming creatures and it was their helpless panic that caused their cruelty” (Lessing 33). The male narrator hints at the hatred of the males against the females which might have been caused by the females’ old habit of abandoning the baby boys on the Killing Rock and by their cruelty towards these baby boys: “We knew we hated the Clefts though we did not remember anything of our earliest days, of being put out on the Killing Rock, or being carried over the mountain by the eagles” (Lessing 29). As the narrator shows, the males dislike the females’ different anatomy. If the females view the males as “monsters”, the males are not attracted by the opposite gender at all: “Those large pale things rolling in the waves, with their disgusting clefts, which we saw for the first time, and as we looked, from the cleft of one of those slow lolling creatures emerged a bloody small-sized thing. We saw it was a tiny Cleft” (Lessing 29).

The historian’s account just presents his own vision and interpretation of the past based on the sources he has investigated: “Yes, yes, previous attempts at solving the mystery have offered solutions more like myths than probabilities. How did the community of males begin?” (Lessing 34-35). To understand the past better, he makes associations between Romulus and Remus’s story and the story of the baby boys abandoned by the Clefts on the Killing Rock, saved by the eagles and fed by the does in the forest. Retelling what the preserved ancient “chronicles” (Lessing 40) and songs revealed about the boys rejected by the Clefts and saved by the eagles, the anonymous historian keeps asking questions about certain missing details related to the events he presents. His comments on the “chronicles” (Lessing 40) make a new story which gives rise to other questions as

our food for thought: "Soon there was a community of young males, we do not know how many. The chroniclers did not go in for exactitude" (Lessing 40).

Depicting the boys' sexual drives, desires and the sexual intercourses in a straightforward manner, the Roman narrator's gifted hand turns pornography into an artistic representation of the male-female sexual relationships. The story of the young Cleft who decided to leave her shore to discover the land beyond it, the land of the *Monsters*, presents the progress of the females' mentality regarding their relations with the opposite sex and gender. The young Cleft analyses the boys' anatomy, lifestyle and surroundings and, as compared to her fellow female relatives, she shows her interest in developing human civilized relations with the boys, acknowledging the gender differences.

She was staring at their fronts, where the protuberances were. They did not seem horrible now (Lessing 52).

Driven as she was, she put out a hand to touch his protuberance, the terrifying thing (...) at once it rose up into her hand and she felt it throb and pulse. What had driven her here was an imperative, and in a moment she and this alien were together, and his tube was inside her and behaved as its name suggested" (Lessing 52-53).

Not only do the protagonists become conscious of their differences following their heterosexual relationships, but also the concepts of the masculine and the feminine sex and gender take on their specific meanings in their minds. This idea is enlarged upon by Judith Butler (1990) in *Gender Trouble. Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* where she defines the concepts of gender, sex and desire:

Gender can denote a unity of experience, of sex, gender, and desire, only when sex can be understood in some sense to necessitate gender – where gender is a psychic and/or cultural designation of the self – and desire – where desire is heterosexual and therefore differentiates itself through an oppositional relation to that other gender it desires. The internal coherence or unity of either gender, man or woman, thereby requires both a stable and oppositional heterosexuality (Butler 1990: 30-31).

Discovering the different *other* helps the females to understand the essence of the world which comprises the feminine and the masculine principle. The females' curiosity leads to their knowledge and understanding of their own human condition marked by gender differences. This moment of illumination can be associated with the Big Bang phenomenon as it marks the power of gender differences to create a new world with a new history: "Without males, or Monsters, no need ever to think that they were Clefts; without the opposite, no need to claim what they were. When the first baby Monster was born, Male and Female was born too, because before that were simply, the people" (Lessing 78).

Gender pride and gender consciousness give rise to specific reactions. The dialogue between the boy and the Cleft girl curious about their different anatomy shows that both of them are sexually and gender proud. The boy's theatrical gestures boasting about his physical qualities, anatomy and sexuality indicate the males' gender pride, their feeling of superiority over the females. Through the voice of children, who are said to always speak the truth, the dialogue parodies the males' pride and prejudices. We witness a well-directed play which turns the male character into a superior being and the female character into a tragic heroine:

'Because I am a boy', announces the child, and what he is saying dictates a whole series of postures. He thrusts out his pelvis, and makes some jerky movements which he seems to associate with some game. He holds the tip of his penis down and releases it in a springing gesture. All the time he frowns belligerently, not at his sister, but probably at some imaginary male antagonist (Lessing 53).

The little girl, seeing all these achievements, none of which are possible to her, frowns, looks down at her centre and says, 'But I am nicer than you' (...) 'My pee-thing is better than your pee-thing' (Lessing 54).

This play is echoed by the dialogue between the two children of the anonymous historian. The new dialogue between his two children mirrors the dialogue between the children of the past, which is presented as based on historical documents. The same as the above-mentioned dialogue between the Cleft girl and the boy, Lydia and Titus's dialogue about their different anatomy reveals the boy's pride in terms of his sexuality and gender and the girl's feelings hurt by the boy's boastful, proud and superior attitude. Her hurt feelings and reactions turn her into a tragic heroine:

She was intrigued, shocked, envious, repelled – she was gripped by strong contradictory emotions. (...) At this Titus pushed forward his equipment, and began wagging his penis up and down, looking at her with lordly air. 'It's mine, it's mine', he chanted and said, 'And what have you got? You haven't got anything (Lessing 60-61).

'I think it's ugly, you are horrible', she states, comes nearer to him, and says, 'I want it' (Lessing 61).

To further insist on the image of woman as a tragic heroine, the Roman narrator tells us the story of Horsa and Maronna, whose different vision and approaches of life, different types of reactions and arguments hint at the clichés regarding the gender differences in terms of mentality, communication and behaviour. Horsa is the imposing male leader who makes decisions by himself and who is too proud to openly accept Maronna's criticism and advice. He is the Roman "coloniser" (Lessing 216) whose historical mission of conquering new territories is



more important than his brothers and children's sacrifice and lost lives. Maronna represents the devoted and caring mother who keeps scolding Horsa for his careless attitude towards the children he takes on his secret missions across the sea. Her reactions betray her inner pain and tragedy: "Maronna was weeping with anger and frustration and humiliation, and she was tired: it was a good long way from the women's shore to this one" (Lessing 189). As her efforts to convince Horsa of the importance of her advice and arguments have not been successful, she becomes a tragic heroine who mourns her dead children and her human condition. Nevertheless, she finally forgives Horsa, her own son who understands his mistakes and sins and gives in to her love and mercy:

He was trembling, he was limp with the grief he now genuinely did feel, because her agony of grief was telling him what an enormity he had committed. And she saw this, understood it. She saw, and really took in that pitiful leg, the shrivelled, twisted leg (Lessing 257).

The greater the capitulation to the female, the greater there will be the recoil (Lessing 258).

Forgiving her son, Maronna takes her condition of mother for granted. She accepts the start of a new life marked by the destruction of the Cleft by Horsa's boys. The all-encompassing and self-sufficient feminine principle represented by the Cleft loses its power and gives in to the masculine principle. Swallowing her pride and taking the destruction of the Cleft for granted, the female gives in to historical change initiated by the males. Maronna overcomes her tragedy by her strong capacity to empathize with her son and with the world she feels she has to take care of. The female's strong sense of duty for the world urges her to overcome her own tragedy. Her voice represents the caring and loving mother's voice that survives history, raising the males' consciousness on life issues. Maronna, the tragic heroine, who can be associated with a Greek heroine on the stage of Doris Lessing's novel, remains superior to men, acting as a model to be followed by them. In line with this idea, in the essay, *Playing the Other: Theater, Theatricality, and the Feminine in Greek Drama*, F. I. Zeitlin (2002) argues that the "theater uses the feminine for the purposes of imagining a fuller model for the masculine self" (in McClure 2002: 122).

### **The Impact of Gender and Sexuality on Language Competency**

Evincing the strong relationship between the progress of humankind's knowledge, mentality, social relations and the progress of their language in time, Doris Lessing's novel, *The Cleft*, offers a particular vision on the way sexuality and gender have marked the evolution of the males and the females' linguistic competency in time. Language is viewed as the attribute of progressive females

interested in broadening their cultural horizon, in improving their knowledge experiences. Language comes easy to the females whose voices speak for an ancient Mother Nature-influenced spirituality and knowledge. As the males' voices are seen as influenced by their sexuality, by their sexual needs and impulses, their language is less evolved, being associated with the stage of childish communication. Their sexuality dominates their mode of thinking, of acting and of communicating:

The males – with their restless, ever-responding squirts, which were sometimes large, sometimes limp, but mostly stiff with need, so that it was unpleasant for them to bump into a bush or tall grass – did not know that their hungry wanting, their need, was the voice of their own Squirts down there, but felt as if it were their whole selves that wanted and needed (Lessing 88).

Only the two young Clefts, Maire and Astre, who decided on leaving *their shore* in order to improve their knowledge experiences, could speak an evolved language. Understanding the *other* world beyond *their shore*, acknowledging the anatomical differences between their bodies and the males' bodies, they get the power of discourse to express the essence of the world. Their bodies and mind are no longer passive but active and can generate an articulate discourse. According to Judith Butler (1990), “any theory of the cultural constructed body, however, ought to question ‘the body’ as a construct of suspect generality when it is figured as passive and prior to discourse” (Butler 1990: 176). Therefore, the feminine and the masculine principles dominated the world and defined human bodies before any discourse could express this fact. We can say that discourse appears and develops when the subject, be that male or female, acknowledges the essence of the world as feminine and masculine, understanding the complexity and the role of his/her anatomical body, the importance of gender differences. The two females' mind could process a new linguistic reality following their acknowledgement of the feminine and the masculine principles which are the essence of the world and which contribute to the evolution of life and of Logos (The Word). The females are the initiators of linguistic progress whose importance the males become aware of: “The Clefts' speech was clearer and better. They tried to remember words used by Maire, and how she put them together. But they didn't know enough, they knew so little” (Lessing 69). Women have the gift of speaking which they share with the males in an interactive way so that reciprocal learning could round up their education:

We have accounts of the visit of the two girls, Maire and Astre, from the male records – ours – and from the Clefts' histories. They do not disagree, and both insist that what the boys wanted now were lessons how to speak. Listening to the Clefts, they had learned of their clumsiness. Both sides were learning fast from the other, particularly as the more they learned, the more they knew how much there was for them to know (Lessing 74).

Not only do the two young Clefts become aware of their evolved language and of their gift of speaking in an articulate, accurate way but they also experience feelings they have never had before and broaden their perspective on life, on the *other* associated with the males. Seeing how her own baby boy is fed by the doe in the forest and understanding his need for a mother, Astre experiences the feeling of pity for all the children abandoned by the Clefts, acknowledging her maternal responsibility for the future of the coming generations. According to the Roman historian, Astre's strong and deep feelings are evoked in his account following his own analysis and interpretation of reality: "This historian is allowing Astre tears, though none was ever recorded in any document we have" (Lessing 71). Therefore, history becomes a story told by a historian-narrator who admits that his vision and his own interpretation of the past have marked his story.

In Doris Lessing's novel, gender and sexuality are presented as playing an important role in the progress of the world and history as well as in the progress of language competency. It is the females' gender which promotes the development of language for an accurate communication of the latest states of affairs, states of mind, feelings, historical progress, knowledge progress. Maire and Astre's story evinces the importance of improving one's knowledge experiences for developing one's linguistic competency. The two female characters are associated with the "founders of families, clans, tribes" (Lessing 102), "the first mothers of our race, carrying in their wombs the babes who were both Cleft and Other" (Lessing 102), the promoters of moral values, the speakers of an evolved language which is their attribute. They teach this evolved language to the boys who admit the females' linguistic superiority. On the spur of an instinctive, primitive sexuality, the boys' language cannot evolve unless they overcome their barbarian state of existence, their primitive sexual impulses. As they notice the linguistic differences between them and the females, being eager to learn a more evolved language, the males can broaden their cultural and linguistic horizon only in their social relations with the females: "They all practised among themselves the language spoken by Maire and Astre. They were proud to be leaving behind infantile babble" (Lessing 89). Due to its attributes of making the birth of life possible and of driving the evolution of Logos (The Word), the females' gender contributes to the males' progress in terms of linguistic competency. As the world is male and female essence, the feminine and the masculine principle complement each other, causing knowledge and language to develop.

## Conclusion

Accounting for the pre-eminence of the feminine gender at the beginning of the world, Doris Lessing's postmodernist novel, *The Cleft*, shows that history, which is nothing but a story, is reconstructed according to the different vision,

approach and mentality pertaining to the feminine and the masculine storytellers. The voices of gender reconstruct history and the past and put forth subjective, gender-biased discourses. Maire's account and the Roman historian's account, which approach the same subject of the evolution of the relations between the males and the females in time, demonstrate the idea that history is subject to our own interpretation. One's gender influences one's approach to history and the past. As the masculine and the feminine gender complement each other, we have to put both perspectives together in order to analyse and understand the past and history based on our cultural and gender experiences which we cannot escape.

Not only is history reconstructed and reinterpreted by the females' voices represented by Maire and by the males' voices represented by the Roman historian, but so is gender. In Maire's account, the feminine gender is viewed as superior to the masculine gender in terms of cognitive and linguistic capacities. Accepting and understanding the masculine principle, the feminine gender brings about progress in mentality, in language, in history. Developing a growing consciousness of the needs of the world, of gender differences whose joint efforts cause the world to make progress, the females accept the importance of the masculine principle, forgiving the males' sins and coping with the destruction of the Cleft. The feminine protagonists facilitate cooperation with the masculine protagonists for the world's benefit and harmony. In Doris Lessing's novel, the feminine principle is associated with intelligence and open-mindedness, accepting the masculine principle for the harmonious progress of humankind, history and Logos (The Word). Viewed as superior to the masculine gender, the feminine gender is subject to stories and various interpretations the same as history and the past.

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