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**FINANCIAL ABUSE IN DORIS LESSING'S *TO ROOM NINETEEN***



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**ABSTRACT**

Doris Lessing's story *To Room Nineteen* addresses a few subjects. Lessing disagrees with the privileges of women and the uncalled because of the limitations imposed on them. Both of these subjects are touched upon in Susan's adventure of self-revelation, and are highlighted in the startling final product for Susan by virtue of these limitations. Her frenzy is a manifestation of the time. In addition, her frenzy is conceivable in light of the fact that she sets out to be a person, to be free and settle on her own decisions, aside from societal and domestic desires. By demonstrating the demolition levelled upon Susan, Lessing specifically indicates how women are financially dependent on their husbands particularly when they are not working. Susan, the mother of four children, in Lessing's story is a victim of financial abuse. The reader becomes more aware of the frequency and consequences of financial abuse with the story. Susan seeks for a way to evade from her heavy responsibilities and tries to find the strength to rebuild her life. *To Room Nineteen* is a painstakingly made scrutinize on social mores that, as a number of commentators and readers have proposed, adequately highlights why Lessing is viewed as one of the best short story authors of her time.

**KEYWORDS :** Doris Lessing, To Room Nineteen, Financial Abuse

## RESEARCH PAPER

### INTRODUCTION

Doris Lessing is “the most extraordinary woman writer of our time, and one of the most controversial” (Greene 1). She was born on 22nd of October 1919 in a British family as Doris May Tayler in Kermanshah, Persia (now Iran). Her father, Captain Alfred Tayler, already an armed force man, was a representative in a bank (Imperial Bank of Persia) while her mother, Emily Maude Tayler, was a nursemaid. The family moved to Zimbabwe in the trust of expanding their wage through maize cultivating. Be that as it may, lamentably this received no rewards for the Taylers.

Doris Lessing's mom was a strict lady and in the expectation of raising a demure and legitimate little girl, upheld a considerable measure of guidelines and controls in the house. Doris was sent to a community school and afterward later to an all young ladies secondary school in the capital of Salisbury. Lessing, in any case, dropped out of school by the age of thirteen and from that point began self-instructing. She cleared out her home two years after the fact in the trust of a free life far from her mom's stern precept. “Although Lessing rebelled against her parents, she also inherited two strong characteristics from them: her father’s scepticism and her mother’s industry” (Fallon 241). Doris utilized as a nursemaid where she included herself in perusing different points, for example, legislative issues and human science. Later she moved to Salisbury and began filling in as a phone administrator. It was then when she met and after that wedded her first spouse, Frank Wisdom with whom she additionally had two kids. She had started composing at this point; an enthusiasm that would soon turn into her long lasting vocation.

After her separation in 1943 Lessing joined a comrade book club named 'Left Book Club'. Gottfried Lessing was a principle individual from this gathering who Lessing wedded later on. They had a child, Peter, who stayed with Lessing after her second separation in 1949. She moved to London where she started her expert profession and distributed her first novel *The Grass Is Singing*. Lessing was always interested in ideas about “class, nation, race and gender” (Watkins 1). Her books were fundamentally anecdotal and can be sub-classified in three various topics; The Communist subject which kept going from 1944 to 1956. The Psychological Theme began from 1956 to 1969 and after that Sufism.

Doris Lessing has won more than fifteen honours for her commitment to the English Literature. These incorporate the Somerset Maugham Award (1954), the Los Angeles Times Book Prize (1995), Order of the Companions of Honor (1999), the David Cohen Prize (2001),

S.T Dupont Golden PEN Award (2002) and the most good 'Nobel Prize' in 2007. She likewise got a privileged degree from Harvard University in 1995. Her most recent book is called *Alfred and Family*. She has declared this book to be her last and final work. Lessing died on 17 November 2013 in London.

## **1. FINANCIAL ABUSE**

Domestic violence can be physical, psychological, sexual, financial or emotional and “these elements will often combine and reinforce each other” (Abrahams 28). Financial abuse (also called economic abuse) is one type of domestic violence. Withholding cash, taking cash and confining the utilization of funds are a few cases of financial abuse. The matter can be exceptionally unpretentious. It can incorporate revealing to you what you can and cannot purchase or obliging you to share control of your financial balances. At no time does somebody you are dating have the privilege to utilize cash or how you spend it to control you.

The following are a few cases of financial abuse practices:

- Giving you a recompense and nearly watching what you purchase.
- Setting your pay check in their record and denying you access to it.
- Shielding you from seeing shared financial balances or records.
- Restricting you to work or constraining the hours you do.
- Keeping you from going to work by taking your auto or keys.
- Getting you terminated by badgering you, your boss or associates at work.
- Covering up or taking your understudy budgetary guide check or outside monetary support.
- Utilizing your government disability number to acquire terrible credit advances without your authorization.
- Utilizing your tyke's government managed savings number to assert a pay impose discount without your authorization.
- Maximizing your charge cards without your consent.
- Declining to give you cash, nourishment, lease, medication or apparel.
- Utilizing stores from your kids' educational cost or a joint bank account without your insight.
- Burning through cash on themselves yet not permitting you to do likewise.
- Giving you displays as well as paying for things like supper and anticipating that you should by one means or another arrival the support.
- Utilizing their cash to hold control over you since they know you are not in an indistinguishable money related circumstance from they are.

However, over the long haul, the other individual in the relationship (generally a woman) will abruptly understand that she has no money related influence, and that, regardless of how awful things get, she can't take off. She has no cash of her own. She has poor credit, since her accomplice has assumed out acknowledgment cards or advances in her name and maximized them. Her supervisors fire her since he generally disturbs her work. On the other hand, she can't work, period, since he won't let her.

Financial abuse is something that we once in a while talk about straightforwardly since it is frequently treacherous and wrapped up in the limits of what has all the earmarks of being something else, an ordinary relationship. Rarely do women in these connections talk about the issue due to the disgrace appended to accounting for each penny spent or even request cash just to buy the extremely essential necessities in life.

“Women in financially abusive relationships are often forced to take career paths they would not have chosen on their own.” (Dean 2014). This shields them from succeeding, in the long run turning out to be monetarily steady and free in their own particular right. Numerous women in these circumstances are either homemakers or in the event that they do work, it is low maintenance with the consent of their life partner. In the event that the woman is sufficiently fortunate to have the capacity to work all day in such a relationship then her accomplice frequently disrupts her profession/work life by driving her to remain home or giving a final offer around leaving the place of employment or closure of the relationship.

## **2. TO ROOM NINETEEN**

*To Room Nineteen*, which is a very interesting contribution to feminist literature, was written in 1958 by Doris Lessing. The short story happens in 1960s London, and all things considered, addresses the chronicled setting of women' rights and their part in the moderate London society of the time.

The account recounts the tale of Susan, a moderately aged lady living in mid-twentieth century London. Since time is running short period, Susan's life spins around her family, where her days are spent obliging her significant other and her four children, and keeping up their home. As she assumes the part that society has allotted to her, from every single outward appearance, Susan and her significant other Matthew have all the earmarks of being a model couple—idealize even. With a great house in suburbia and four children, it appears to every other person that the two have settled on the best options in life. The appearing tranquillity of the family is soon cracked when the most youthful children are sent off to class. Susan all of a sudden deals with the need to be separated from everyone else keeping in mind the end goal to recapture autonomy from her family. She desired of having a room full of freedom

(Lessing 368)<sup>1</sup>. At the point when the suburban house all of a sudden turns into a jail, in which her children progressively swarm her, she chooses to lease a mysterious room at a shoddy London hotel. In this room she spends extend periods of time sitting on a chair, making the most of her self-governance.

Susan starts scrutinizing her life and life decisions. She thinks about whether the decisions she and her significant other have settled on are without a doubt the right decisions, as everybody trusts they seem to be. This fracture in Susan's life because of her contemplations is soon augmented when she finds that Matthew has been having extramarital illicit relationships. With the finish of her ideal family life gone, Susan sets out on a voyage of self-revelation with terrible results, inevitably finishing with Susan going frantic.

Susan is relied upon to carry on with her tranquil existence without contemplating it. This is highlighted superbly by Lessing when Susan starts to scrutinize her life and finds that her significant other has been having illicit relationships. This disclosure typically demonstrates how the quiet, consummate lives that individuals lived were not as perfect as they appeared all things considered. In the event that Susan was the "ideal" spouse and mother, one who utilized rationale to oversee her activities, society would have her failing to find out about her significant other's disloyalty. Similarly, she could never start an adventure of self-disclosure once discovering something like this either. When she starts to advance as a lady, nonetheless, she starts her own, edified excursion. Because of societal imperatives, in any case, she languishes over her independence.

For women of Susan's day, Lessing demonstrates that the future frequently appeared to be disheartening. And for Susan, this reality prompted to franticness, a typical decision on Lessing's part that at last shows how the confinements put on women are socially harming, as well as expressly harming too. On account of Susan, who is image for all non-working women, her plummet into franticness demonstrates how the mind responds to the heart's powerlessness to pick unreservedly. The either-or polarity that was constrained upon women was not a practical decision, at last.

### **3. FINANCIAL ABUSE IN *TO ROOM NINETEEN***

Susan and Matthew Rawlings were in their all-around prepared late twenties when they wedded. Both had generously compensated employments. Matthew was a sub-proof-reader on an extensive London daily paper, and Susan has been working in a promoting firm for many years. Susan and Matthew had lovely flats before they wedded, however they felt it imprudent

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<sup>1</sup>All the quotations from the story are from the version: Lessing, Doris. (2002). *To Room Nineteen*. London: Flamingo; hereafter they will only be marked by page numbers.

to construct a marriage with respect to either level, since it may appear like an accommodation of identity with respect to the one whose home it was definitely not. Therefore, they moved into another flat in South Kensington. Susan and Matthew lived in their enchanting flat for two years, giving gatherings and going to them, being a prominent youthful hitched couple.

And afterward Susan got to be distinctly pregnant, she surrendered her occupation, and they purchased a house in Richmond. They had a son first, then a daughter, then twins- son and daughter. The Rawlingses lived with their four children in their gardened house and were happy. It seemed as if they had everything they had wanted and had planned for (353).

“In To Room Nineteen Lessing suggests that even a “perfect” marriage, based supposedly on intelligence and mutual respect can become an animal-like struggle to meet subjective desires. In this case the husband wins, and the wife, her needs completely unmet, kills herself.” (Rigney 72).

Susan as we see is essentially pregnant every other year of the marriage, ensuring that she will never have the chance to return to work. Forced to a family with the birth of each child, it is impossible for her to return to work. Her life’s work is to care for children and her partner while never knowing what it is like to taste financial freedom and independence again. Ultimately, Susan in this relationship is dependent upon her husband, which is a type of financial abuse, for her survival. Although her old firm, missing her qualities of humour, balance, and sense, invited her often to work again, Susan was full devoted to her family, since the children needed their mother to a certain age.

After twelve years of marriage Susan was in her fortyish. Her older children were already ten and eight, at school. But the six-year-old twins were still at home. Susan did not have nurses or girls to help her (358), therefore she was often very tired. But unfortunately, nothing was paid for all her exhaustive labour at home. Soon the twins started school, and they would be away from home from nine in the morning until four o’clock in the afternoon. And now Susan was alone in the big house, every day of the school term, except for the daily woman who came in to clean. With this extraordinary situation Susan was filled with tension, like a panic, as if an enemy was with her. She spoke to herself severely, thus:

“All this is quite natural. First, I spent twelve years of my adult life working, living my own life. Then I married, and from the moment I became pregnant for the first time I signed myself over, so to speak, to other people. To the children. Not for one moment in twelve years have I been alone, had time to myself. So now I have to learn to be myself again. That’s all.” (360).

Susan began to question her life by making a comparison between her working and non-working years. She discovered that while working, Susan was living her own life. On the contrary, during her marriage, Susan had never the opportunity of being alone. As a housewife, she had a lot of responsibilities to do, always possessed with restlessness. When the youngest children started school, Susan thought that she could have seven free hours every day. However, Susan was usually disturbed by Mrs Parkes- the daily woman.

Susan was planning how to be somewhere where Mrs Parkes would not come after her. She was possessed with resentment that the seven hours of freedom in every day (during weekdays in the school term) were not free (363). Susan dreamed of having a room or a place, anywhere, where she could go and sit by herself, no one knowing where she was (368). Then she decided to rent a room, telling no one, because she was determined to rearrange her life so that she could have solitude more often. However, a room would cost her three or four pounds a week. Since Susan did not earn any money, she questioned herself how she could ask money from Matthew who has the control of it. We observe that Susan encounters financial abuse since she has no personal saving accounts which puts her in the position of relying on her husband for her very existence. Because of this, Susan feels herself in an economic repression. Besides, she is not healthy enough or have the confidence to work again, even part time (370).

Virginia Woolf suggests that “a woman must have money and a room of her own” (A Room of One’s Own 7) to demonstrate the need for material riches and a free place for women. In Lessing’s story, Susan finds a room in Fred’s hotel where she could stay three days a week provided that she paid in advance each time she came. Susan chose the farcical name Mrs Jones while staying at the hotel. The room 19 was hideous with a single window and green curtains:

“She was no longer Susan Rawlings, mother of four, wife of Matthew, employer of Mrs Parkes and of Sophie Traub... She no longer was a mistress of the big white house and garden, owning clothes suitable for this and that activity or occasion. She was Mrs Jones, and she was alone, and she had no past and no future. Here I am, she thought, after all these years of being married and having children and playing those roles of responsibility – and I’m just the same. Yet there have been times I thought that nothing existed of me except the roles that went with being Mrs Matthew Rawlings. Yes, here I am...” (376)

Susan later decided to stay five days on weekdays. Meanwhile she found a German au pair named Sophie Traub who could look after her children when she was away from home. As for

the money Susan had to pay for room number 19, she asked Matthew for it which leads people to an insulting feeling. However, she was worried that Matthew may ask the reason for the money since he has control of every spending. Matthew agreed to give his wife five pounds every Sunday and Susan had to wait for it the whole week. This situation lasted nearly a year and Susan went regularly to Fred's hotel.

Matthew on the other side began to search out her wife to where she was going on weekdays. He then found that Susan constantly stays at Fred's hotel. Subsequently Susan's secret stay became evident. A few days later, at bedtime, Matthew said: "Here's your five pounds," and pushed them over at her (382). Yet his wife rejected the money due to the insolent movement. Susan then, after a debate with her husband, confessed and invented an imaginative lover called Michael Plant.

With confused feelings at home, Susan went down to find Mrs Parkes, and asked her for the loan of a pound, since Matthew, she said, had forgotten to leave her money (385). Instead of confessing that she is financial dependent on her husband, Susan exchanged with Mrs Parkes variations on the theme that husbands are all the same. Afterwards, she left the house with the money that she borrowed from the daily woman and went to Fred's hotel. Finally in room 19, Susan turned on the gas and committed suicide-a tragic end.

## **CONCLUSION**

Doris Lessing is noted for her craftsmanship in sharpening stories that successfully study the social settings of her time. Thus, *To Room Nineteen* addresses the battles of women in 1960s London, including a heap of interior clashes. The story makes an incredible showing with regards to of moving toward the division between the keenness and intuition. One case of this is seen in Susan's scrutinizing of her life decisions. This division amongst insightfulness and intuition, in the "right" decisions versus the "wrong" decisions, is typical of the unending, general battle between the psyche and heart. It likewise highlights the travails of "conceiving of brand new ideas" for women of Susan's day.

In *To Room Nineteen*, the title room speaks to Susan's mission for flexibility from the different family duties. In any case, the opportunity in the end swings to give a space to her suicide. This story investigates the mental reflection of an English woman who is moderately aged. Her reality amid the mid twentieth century London people group, rotated around her four kids, husband and home. Notwithstanding, even after she turned out to be physically freed when her kids went to class, she discovers that she has been a slave with no money in the family. This makes Susan set out on a voyage of self-rediscovery, which inevitably prompts to frenzy and suicide.



The story catches Susan as an amazing case of a casualty of domestic violence, who needs solace, opportunity and love and cash in the meantime. The story mirrors an exceptionally idealized starting for Susan's family which is later portrayed by distress. Susan's family was an immaculate case of a high-minded and cheerful family since she had everything, for example, home, kids, and a handsome husband. These are social things that consider a relationship and a family effective. In Susan's family, it creates the impression that what individuals see from outside contrasts with within. Although they had all material things they longed for, yet Susan needed freedom from all her responsibilities. Later she decides to rent a room at Fred's hotel for which she had to pay in advance. Since Susan did not work, she was financial dependent on her husband. During the marriage, Susan had no income or bank account. So she always had to ask her husband who had control for the money at home. In the end of the story, Susan borrows a pound from the daily woman. Lessing here demonstrates the significant financial abuse which Susan had faced in her marriage. Finally, with the borrowed one pound, Susan rents her peaceful room 19 and gives an end to her life.

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