

The Invisible Women: The Abject Ageing Female in Doris Lessing's *The Diary of a Good Neighbour*

Dr Smitha M.

Assistant Professor, Dept. of English, Maharaja's College
(smitha.madanan@gmail.com)

Abstract :

The ageing female identity in literature is stereotyped into the binary of the witch and the wise grandmother. The second wave of feminism raised concerns over the abjection of ageing female identity but was not successful in addressing it completely. Certain writers, including Doris Lessing and Margaret Laurence wrote ahead of their times. Nobel laureate Doris Lessing is a champion in delineating marginal identities and a few of her novels deal with an ageing female. First written under the pseudonym of Jane Somers, and later published under her own name, *The Diary of a Good Neighbour* delineates an ageing and energetic assistant editor, Jane, and a 90-year-old Maudie. This paper attempts to look at how by bringing a contrast between the two ladies and describing the physical details of ageing, Doris Lessing makes the abject aged female identity visible. Doris Lessing, through her technique of realism, compels readers to address the ageing female. The paper also looks at how Jane attains self-knowledge by her interaction with Maudie.

Keywords: Abject, Sexageism, Invisible, Physiognomy, Shame