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Doris Lessing in her African short novels prominently focuses the theme of survival of White settlers in South Africa. While commenting on the Whites, she impartially analyses the position of the Whites there and their relationship with the native Blacks. As in her African short stories, Lessing, in her short novels also highlights various themes like colonialism, racialism, poverty, exploitation, etc. Her short novels represent her concern for the real problems faced by the settlers and blacks in South Africa.

Alec Barnes, in *Eldorado*, comes in search of a farm and chooses a rich maize-farm though other experienced people advise him that the big money is to be found in tobacco. He takes two thousand acres from a man who has gone bankrupt. He increases acreage for farming by cutting down trees and a time comes when the farm goes bare. The experts caution him that he is spoiling his land by the way of he is farming, but Alec neglects and continues his own way of farming: 'Distance—that was what he needed. It was what he had left England to find. . . . Alec's instinct was for space . . . ' (Lessing 1992: 304).

Maggie Barnes, his wife, accepts her husband's choice though sometime she does not agree with his way of living. On the other hand, she is quite hopeful about her son, Paul. She expects her son to be engineer, lawyer or prestigious man in future. As Alec finds no hope in farming, he starts searching for gold and this makes him to neglect his farm. Maggie warns Paul against such lure and expects her son become educated: ' . . . all the rich potentialities of Africa she saw through her son, . . . Education, that was the point' (*Ibid* 314). But Paul does not understand her and oscillates uneasily between the two worlds of his parents. Condemned by love, shame, antagonism and the seer necessity of close relationships, he seeks his own standing point apart from both the parents. Opposed to the self-centered vision of the father, the mother desires for her son academician. According to her, knowledge frees a man but she grieves all her life that such a simple and obvious truth is not simple for her son. Knowing that he has not the academic ability, and is looking for a solid form of security in reaction to his father's failure, Paul drifts into a world of fan-

tasy. Alec wastes money on prospecting for gold because of his superstitions. On one occasion, Paul fights with his father saying that he is wasting a lot of money on useless thing like prospecting. Maggie, trapped between her love for son and her husband, decides to support her husband against her son. Paul turns to James, the rough and ready 'small worker' whose mine lies on the farm's boundary. Maggie tells Paul to take interest in farming but as farming is strange for him, Paul goes for advice and guidance to Alec, who does not co-operate him. Throwing in his lot with James, Paul fulfils Maggie's worst fears that he would grow up lax and happy-go-lucky, like a Colonial. Because of her husband and son she feels that the very country was against her. The woman, with her dreams of order, security, a civilized life, knows that her unbeatable antagonist is Africa. To it, in *Eldorado*, Maggie loses both her men: Paul, the son, will loot that earth; her husband, Alec, scarcely sane, will be bound for the rest of his life to its charms.

As James' mine is exhausted, Paul wanders with him prospecting for gold. They cannot find gold in neighbouring farm so one day they enter into the boundary of Alec's farm. There they find reef. They send samples for confirmation to the Government department; and when it is confirmed they decide to bring machinery in it. Maggie dare not to say Alec about Paul that his son has found a reef. Alec tries for number of years in prospecting without any success but within some weeks Paul finds a reef. When machinery comes, at that time Maggie tells Alec about it; and also tells him that Paul will be a partner in the mine. Faithful to the gold that eludes Alec but gives itself, indifferently, to his son, it is enough for him that it exists. All he says proudly: 'Well, that proves it. I told you, didn't I? I always told you so' (*Ibid* 355).

Here, Doris Lessing depicts a conflicting situation in the settlers' life. Even though elders like Alec Barnes fail in surviving as a successful settler, there is some ray of hope deposited in the efforts of the younger ones like Paul who succeeds in fulfilling their dreams. Her other short novel, *Antheap*, takes the clear-cut form of parable and we suddenly see the boys as more than themselves, as the symbol of promise for the fu-

ture or failure (Thorpe 41). Lessing, while depicting the conflict in the family relations, in *Odorado*, points out the reality that the real challenge of survival can be successfully faced by the younger generation than the elder one. The elders are trapped in their conventional ideas about farming and future prospects be-

cause of which they fail to survive in Africa. On the other hand, the younger generation is ready to face the critical situations with their own determination, and their own independent ideas and plans. So Paul becomes the symbol of a successful white settler who survives in Africa because of his own innovative endeavour.

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