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## Semantic Relational Structuring and Feminism in

### Doris Lessing's "The Maimie Papers"

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#### Abstract

A semantic theoretical framework, namely, semantic relational structuring, devised by Winifred Crombie is adopted to investigate, analyze and interpret Doris Lessing's "The Maimie Papers", an essay in which Lessing reviews *The Maimie Papers*, a book written by Ruth Rosen and Sue Davidson. The aim of current study is to inspect how semantic structuring relations can help to unearth embedded belief systems, philosophies and attitudes. Crombie's theoretical framework is basically applied to detect the feminist ideologies that operate in the text analyzed. The essay is examined through the categories of Crombie's SRS by analyzing the structures of each sentence that comprises semantic structuring relationships to show how the writer manages to construct as well as promote/demote her feminist ideologies and attitudes. The analysis proves that the essay is loaded with ideological references and cues that are designed by the author to fathom out feminist ideology as it is represented by female characters in the essay as well as criticize the male-oriented society and the ill-treatment of its female half of the population. Using the various semantic relational structuring, Lessing brought to the front the hardship and suffering of women in a society that has no social justice and is not as forgiving of women when they have stumbling beginnings as it is of men.

**Key Words:** Doris Lessing, The Maimie Papers, semantic relational structuring, ideology

هيكلة العلاقة الدلالية والنسوية في مقالة دورس لسنج "اوراق ميمي"

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#### الخلاصة

تهدف الدراسة الحالية إلى توظيف الإطار النظري الدلالي الذي صاغته وينيفريد كرومبي للبحث عن الأيديولوجيات النسوية في مقالة "اوراق ميمي" للكاتبة الإنكليزية دورس لسنج لتحليلها وتفسيرها في محاولة لمعرفة كيف تساعد علاقات الهيكلية الدلالية على اكتشاف أنظمة المعتقدات والفلسفات والمواقف المضمرة في النص. يهدف الإطار النظري لكرومبي إلى اكتشاف الأيديولوجيات النسوية التي تعمل في النص. وقد جاء التحليل بنتائج تؤكد قوة وفاعلية حضور العلاقات الدلالية التي تحاول من خلالها الكاتبة توضيح الأيديولوجية النسوية التي تمثلها الشخصيات النسائية في المقالة بالإضافة إلى انتقاد المجتمع ذات الطابع الذكوري فضلاً عن معاملته السيئة للإناث. باستخدام الهياكل الارتباطية الدلالية المختلفة، سلطت ليسنج الضوء على مشقة ومعاناة النساء في مجتمع ليس فيه عدالة اجتماعية ولا يتسامح مع النساء عندما تكون لهن بدايات متعثرة كما هو حال الرجال.

كلمات مفتاحية: دورس لسنج، اوراق ميمي، الخطاب، هيكلة العلاقة الدلالية، الإيديولوجيا



## 1 Introduction

Discourse, ideology and semantics are essential terms for those who are interested in discourse studies, as they work together to facilitate the process of analyzing and interpreting texts that have ideological significance. In analyzing such a text, discourse analysts can never dispense with semantic findings because the meanings of linguistic expressions fall in with the discursual investigation. Further, lexis is the most fundamental way to explore ideology, which is revealed primarily but not exclusively through the choice of words (Van Dijk, 1998:105). On the other hand, ideology, which is defined as a system of beliefs shared by members of a social group, is generally produced, reproduced and spread via discourse whether spoken or written (Simpson, 1993: 5). Hence, in the present study, a semantic framework is adopted to probe into the ideological fabric of a text written to draw the attention to what challenges women have to face in a world that is traditionally ruled by patriarchal standards.

*Lessing's Time Bites: Views and Reviews* contain numerous and various articles and book reviews that the author published earlier in newspapers and which tackle controversial topics relevant to politics, religion and women. In "The Maimie Papers" (1979: 179-186), Lessing reviews a book that tells the story of a woman who is a survivor of all injuries, physical and psychological, inflicted upon her by the male-oriented society she found herself living in from her teen years. By reviewing the book, Lessing gives a nod to those women whose stories of survival and heroism remain untold because they are judged by society as morally unfit to be role models. Therefore, this review teams with Lessing's own personal feminist reflections, and thus deserves a linguistic/ feminist exploration. In this paper, the categories of Winifred Crombie's Semantic Relational Structuring (henceforth SRS) are traced and analyzed as they appear in "The Maimie Papers". The analysis aims to uncover how Lessing's feminist perspectives shape the arguments in favor or against certain beliefs. Such feminist orientation of the article is reflected in the use of the semantic structuring relationships. The essay is examined through the categories of SRS by analyzing the structures of each sentence that comprises semantic structuring relationships to show how the writer manages to construct as well as promote/demote ideologies, attitudes and belief systems. Also, statistical mappings of the findings and results are provided. Then, the results are discussed in detail and commentaries and interpretations are offered. As such, the study adopts an approach that is both **quantitative and qualitative** to read the essay in pursuit of relational semantic structurings responsible for its ideological content. The results are statistically detailed in tables and figures are added to show the frequencies of occurrence of every category identified in the essay. Then, the results are discussed and interpreted from critical and ideological perspectives.

## 2. Semantic Relational Structuring (SRS)

SRS has to do with way the components of a text are connected whether on a clausal, sentential or intersentential level. A text has various relations that are explicitly determined by items identified as conjunctive descriptives or sentence connectors (Longacre, 1996:52). These items have the functions of connecting independent sentences to each other. This type



of relations between sentences has been first introduced in two essays by Ballard, Conrad, and Longacre (1971a, 1971b) with subsequent expansions. These relations are derived respectively from various types of word groups and word classes. The 'conjunct sentence' or clause, that is initiated by the conjunct, follows immediately the 'preceding sentence' or clause, and because of this order, this type of intersentential relation is considered as a structural semantic relation which comprises several subtypes as elaborated on below:

## **2.1 Associative Relations:**

According to Longacre (1996: 53), Associative relations are regarded more basic to the structure of discourse than others, hence their importance. Crombie (1985:112) identifies several subtypes of associative relations:

### **2.1.1 Simple Contrast**

Contrast is a type of discourse relations that depend on opposition. Like any discourse relation, it can be explicitly indicated by some markers on the ground that *but*, *although*, *however*, *whereas* and *yet* are clear markers of contrast (Sporleder and Lascarides, 2008: 372).

### **2.1.2 Comparative Similarity**

Comparative Similarity may be identified in terms of similes which can be defined as "an explicit comparison between two things or actions" that is indicated mostly by the presence of *like* or *as* (Cruse, 2006: 165).

### **2.1.3 Statement Affirmation**

Affirmation is indicative of agreement and can be shown verbally in "yes" or "I agree" or nonverbally in gestures, such as nods and up-to-down head shakes. However, affirmation closes the door to any further progress on the subject being affirmed (Stefano & Andrea, 2008: 831).

### **2.1.4 Statement Denial**

Denials, on the other hand, denote disagreement and can be shown using verbal and nonverbal markers. People, in every day language usually depend on verbal markers *no* or *not* and nonverbal markers like *negative gestures*, such as *head shakes* (Faulkner et al., 2007: 253).

### **2.1.5 Concession-Contra-expectation**

Grote et al. (1995:98) argues that Concession is triggered when the connective of the speaker's or writer's choice indicates that one of the arguments describes a situation that "creates" an expectation, while the other denies that expectation.

## **2.2 Logico-Deductive Relations**

In this type of relations, semantic markers are operative to create logical deductions and rational results. According to Crombie, logico-deductive relations fall into the three subtypes that are discussed below:



### 2.2.1 Reason-Result

In their daily lives, ordinary people are able to decide whether there is a cause-effect relation between two events. Researchers who work in social psychology have developed many models that outline the human's use of various types of information to attribute cause. One of these models is the *inductive logic model*, which is defined as an approach to logical thinking. In this model, a generalization is made depending on specific details which are attributed to causes (Jaspars, et al, 1983: 9).

### 2.2.2 Grounds-Conclusion

Grounds-Conclusion relation can be shown through 'entailment' which is defined by Lyons (1977: 85) as a relation that holds between "P and Q where P and Q are variables standing for propositions such that if the truth of Q necessarily follows from the truth of P (and the falsity of Q necessarily follows from the falsity of P), then P entails Q". Here, Lyons tackles 'entailment' from a logical point of view.

### 2.2.3 Condition-Consequence

A conditional sentence has two clauses; the first one is called the main clause and the second one is called if- clause. The crucial point of a conditional sentence is that the action in the main clause can happen if the specific situation in the if-clause is fulfilled. English conditionals mostly convey a logical meaning "*if p, then q*" and implement different expressions, such as: reasoning and imagining correlations (Traugott et al, 1986:66).

## 2.3 Temporal Relations

*Temporal relations* usually take the form of phrases that describe precisely a point or duration (Longacre, 1996:63). It falls into the two subtypes below:

### 2.3.1 Temporal Overlap

Longacre (1996: 64) explains that temporal relation includes notional meanwhile and at the same time relations to denote "an event which takes place during a span".

### 2.3.2 Temporal Succession

This temporal relation can be indicated by lexis whose realizations are time deixis that "makes reference to the ways particular cultures conceptualize and measure time" such as: then, before, after ... etc (Marmaridou (2000:82).

## 3. The Maimie Papers: Background

"The Maimie Papers" was originally published in *The New York Review of Books* (October 1979). In this essay, Doris Lessing reviewed a book, written by Ruth Rosen, and Sue Davidson to show how "Autobiographical writing" has been a central resource in feminist projects to recognize women's contributions and acknowledge the dynamism of gender relations (Kinkead, 1997:56). In this review, Lessing gives a unique account of the life of



women of the streets and their inspiring transformation. According to the essay, "Maimie", born in 1885, was a girl from a middle-class Jewish family based in Philadelphia. She lived a comfortable childhood, but when she grew up, she was forced to work after the murder of her father when she was only 13. She worked at a department store, a job that led her to "going out with the boys". When Maimie began to spend her nights away from home, her mother and uncle put her in prison and then in the Magdalen home for wayward girls. After she was let out, she left her family and moved with a lover of hers to Boston where she first worked as an actor before she took to prostitution. By 1905, Maimie went through 31 surgeries in her left eye because of a venereal disease that made her spend an entire year in hospitals in New York and Philadelphia. Even in these dire circumstances, she married Albert Jones, then divorced him and married Ira Benjamin, a "sweetheart from adolescence" (Kinkead, 1997:56).

The analysis of this essay is undertaken for two reasons. *The Maimie's Papers* contains extremely powerful letters of a working women; these letters represent the hidden history of feminist struggle unknown to readers. Furthermore, Lessing, the Nobel Laureate, repairs a neglect by evaluating and analyzing this letter collection as well as introducing it to a wider readership.

### 3.2 SRS in "The Maimie Papers"

In this essay, Doris Lessing tackles ideological questions relevant to feminism, which are manifested in the semantic relations of SRS according to which arguments and rationales are constructed. Additionally, it is found that the various semantic relations play a crucial role in revealing and promoting the writer's perspectives. Categories like *contrast*, *comparative similarity*, *reason- result* and *condition consequences* are employed by Lessing to indicate her attitudes towards women and how they are treated by the society when they are forced to work and are taken advantage of in the workplace. The frequent use of contrast denotes the many contradictions of "Maimie" and her confusion after the loss of her father when she was only 13 years old. Left with a big family, she had to shoulder up huge responsibilities at a rather tender age. Contrast also emphasizes the polemic of a world in which difference is the norm.

Tracing Winifred Crombie's SRS in Doris Lessing's "The Maimie Papers", the analysis shows that a total number of (145) relations are detected. The analysis according to the SRS proves that *Associative Relations* have the highest frequency of occurrences in the essay under investigation with (83) instances, while *Temporal Relations* have the lowest frequency of occurrence among the relations with no more than (12) instances. This is shown in Table and Figure (1) below:

Table (1) Explicit and Implicit Main Categories in "The Maimie Papers"

Category	Explicit	Implicit	Total	Percentage
Associative Relations	68	15	83	57.24%



<b>Logico-Deductive Relations</b>	<b>41</b>	9	<b>50</b>	<b>34.48%</b>
<b>Temporal Relations</b>	<b>9</b>	3	<b>12</b>	<b>8.28%</b>
<b>Total No.</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100</b>

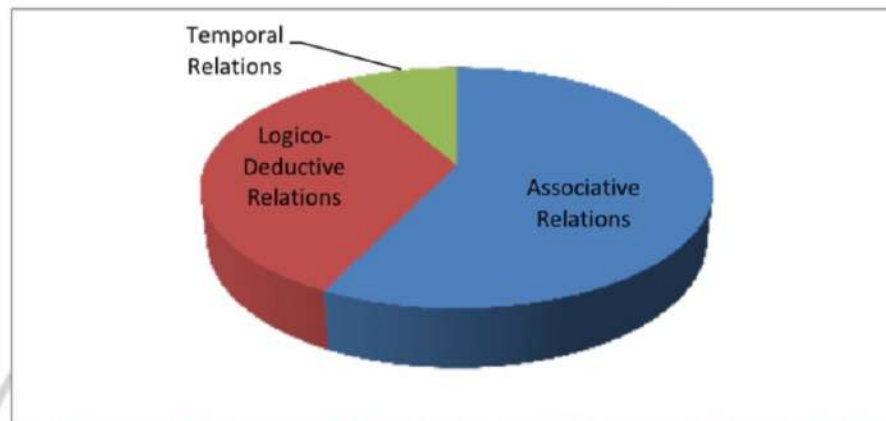


Fig. (1): Explicit and Implicit Main Categories in "The Maimie Papers"

The detailed analysis of subclasses of SRS, on which the arguments in "The Maimie Papers" are built, appears in Table (2) below where the occurrences and percentages of the subclasses of SRS are all listed. The subclasses combined in Table (2) below reveal that *Simple Contrast* achieves the highest frequency of occurrence as it appears (39) times (26.89%), while *Grounds-Conclusion* achieves the lowest frequency of occurrence with no more than (2) times (1.38%).

Table (2): Explicit and Implicit Subclasses of SRS in "The Maimie Papers"

<b>Semantic Relation</b>	<b>Explicit</b>	<b>Implicit</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Simple Contrast</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>(26.89%)</b>
<b>Comparative Similarity</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>(11.72%)</b>
<b>Statement Affirmation</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>(2.07%)</b>
<b>Statement Denial</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>(6.21%)</b>
<b>Concession-Contra expectation</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>(10.34%)</b>
<b>Reason-Result</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>(24.14%)</b>
<b>Grounds-Conclusion</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>(1.38%)</b>
<b>Condition-Consequence</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>(8.97%)</b>



Temporal Overlap	5	1	6	(4.14%)
Temporal Succession	4	2	6	(4.14%)
Total No.	118	27	145	100

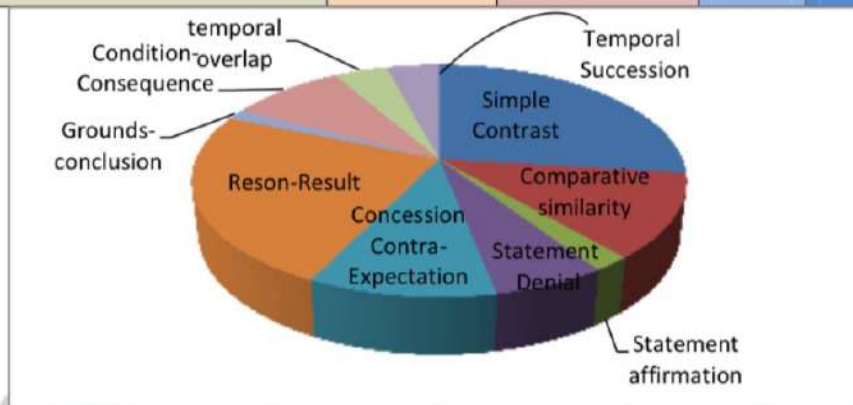


Fig (2); Explicit and Implicit Subclasses of SRS in “The Maimie Papers”

### 3.2. 1 Associative Relations in “The Maimie Papers”

The statistical analysis of the SRS in “The Maimie Papers” shows that *Associative Relations* occur (83) times, representing (57.24%) out of the total number. More specifically, they are realized by the subcategories below:

#### 3.2.1.1 Simple Contrast

According to SRS, the analysis of “The Maimie Papers” results in detecting (39) occurrences of Simple Contrasts, representing (26.89%). Doris Lessing employs contrast basically to introduce and expand on the poor upbringing of Maimie’s herself and the lack of a guiding female figure:

(1). The mother seems never to have been up to much, characterised by Maimie as ‘that woman is the nearest thing to nothing I ever knew’. (179).

In this implicit example of contrast, Lessing is talking about the relationship between Maimie and her mother, describing her mother as the nearest thing to nothing she has ever known. Unlike what a mother is supposed to be, Maimie’s mother seemed to be tremendously ignorant of her daughter "Maimie" as well as she was incompetent as mother. She was not the kind of mother that cares and stands for her daughter. The bond between mother and daughter is supposed to be the strongest. A mother is expected to take care, help as well as protect her children. A mother is the one a girl most trusts and with whom she shares her own problems, secrets and wishes. Maimie in this example above makes clear that her mother had never stood by her, nor even helped her once with the many responsibilities that she had to undertake. Maimie had to endure, all alone, the bitter circumstances after the murder of her beloved father. Moreover, Maimie's mother with the assistance of her uncle, went as far as throwing Maimie in prison at the time she was working in a department store because she



was going out with men . All this shows the intensity of the circumstances Maimie was facing during her early teens.

In another example of contrast, Lessing shows women's suffering and misery when they are poor and vulnerable:

(2). Not yet twenty, she was in a charity hospital where she had 31 operations on her left eye, which was removed. (180).

In this example of contrast marked by *yet*, Doris Lessing shows the depth of Maimie's wretchedness, and how unjust was the world towards her. The contrast is implicitly pitting Maimie against young women of her age. No woman in her twenties would be this sick or go through all these surgeries. She seems to have been punished too severely for the wrongdoings of her teenage years even though she did not really have a choice then. After the murder of her father, the responsibility of the poor and big family (sisters, mother and many aunts) fell on her. She had to work hard and do a lot of jobs to help her family. Maimie was forced into prostitution because of which she contracted diseases and in the prime of her youth, she had medical complications that cost her one of her eyes. Her tragic fate leads her then to marry in search of security especially after losing her attractiveness. Though Doris Lessing focalizes Maimie's suffering, she has at heart all women whose circumstances force them to seek work to provide for themselves and their families. Without money and proper education, many women, like Maimie, are exploited by men dominating the job market and are discarded when they are no longer useful. Later in the essay, Doris Lessing shows also Maimie, despite her misfortunes, as a generous and helpful person not only towards her family but also towards the girls who suffer from the same illness she had and can not get treatment.

### 3.2.1.2 Comparative Similarity

The analysis of the essay reveals (17) occurrences of *Comparative Similarity*, representing (11.72%). Lessing employs this semantic relation, for instance, to discuss Maimie and Ira's previous unhappy marriages and to prove that the two seem like a match made in heaven:

(3). He had married badly, as she had. (183).

After years of hard work to help her mother feed the family, and after being rejected by employers because of her deformation, Maimie decided to go to Boston and there she met Ira Benjamin who was her teenage sweetheart. In this example, Doris Lessing compares Maimie's previous marriage to Ira's; both of them married badly, a matter that ultimately brought them together. Like Maimie who left her husband to live on her own, Ira left his family, entrusting the care of his baby to his mother and sister. He was searching for Maimie with whom he was in love in back in the day, but he lost contact with after she was married. Lessing also builds on comparative similarity when she describes Maimie's longing to go back to school, a desire almost all poor children deprived of education share all over the world:



(4). A clever girl, longing for education, which all her life she saw, as children do now in poor countries, as the only door to a decent life, she had to leave school. (179).

Here, Doris Lessing has more reasons to feel sorry for Maimie other than being a smart girl who is willing to study. Maimie's suffering begins with the murder of her father, forcing her to work to provide for her family. In consequence, she has to leave school which she sees "as the only door to a decent life". Lessing compares Maimie with millions of the children in the poor countries who can not finish school because of poverty. Without proper education, it is almost impossible for women who happen to be also poor and on their own to have a decent and respectable life. Hence, Lessing's intention goes beyond simply mourning Maimie's lack of education to sending a message to the world on behalf of all those whose financial circumstances deny them proper education.

### 3.2.1.3 Statement Affirmation

Analyzing this essay using SRS, this relation occurs (3) times only. One example is when Maimie finally landed on a good job.:

(5). She was at last being recognised in the firm she worked for, and was sent up to Montreal. (184).

She is used to being discriminated against because of her disfigured appearance. She is judged as incompetent because she does not have the perfect feminine charms and her employers, being men and misogynists by nature, often made profits of her labour, but gave her no credit. It is a problem that so many working women have to deal with in the work place with their male bosses. But this time and this job are different. This company appreciates her hard work, acknowledges her competence and even promotes her. So, Lessing uses a Statement Affirmation Associative relation to show that finally Maimie's hard work pays off and she works in a place that recognizes her true value. When given a fair chance, Maimie proves that she is smart, resourceful and talented.

### 3.2.1.4 Statement Denial

The analysis of Doris Lessing's essay shows that there are (9) occurrences of Denial (6.21%). One striking example shows denial in the context of reflection as the author is searching for reasons why Maimie is an outcast:

(6). So, you find yourself thinking, was it the poverty of then that made such an either/or, knife-edge of life? But **no**, it was not only poverty, but poverty plus religion, the religion of the north, so damning and condemning and dour. (180).

Lessing, in this example talks about the life of women as they face poverty, long working hours and having to live on bad wages. However, Lessing argues that girls would not have been easy preys to predators and slipped down the road to prostitution due to poverty and need only. Western societies and religious teaching condemn fallen girls who end up being disowned by their families out of shame and cast away by religious institutes. Young girls like



Maimie find themselves welcome in no decent home and hence sink deeper in disgrace. Even long after Maimie managed to lead a decent life, her past continued to haunt her and people judge her harshly. However, Lessing, here, uses a *Statement Denial* to condemn the misery and the hardship of life of those women, for whom she feels sympathy, saying that poverty, society and religion conspire to ruin the lives of women like Maimie by never giving them second chances.

In another example of *Statement Denial* relation, Doris Lessing defends Maimie after being accused of lying about her stolen bag:

(7). She complained, and the barman said it was her fault, she had been drunk.

But this was not true. (184).

Using *Statement Denial relation*, Lessing explains the incident of the bag that Maimie lost while was travelling. But when she complained to the barman, he did not believe her story. He even went as far as telling her that it was her drunkenness that cost her the loss of her bag. Doris Lessing counters the barman's accusation with a simple, but direct denial statement "this was not true". This reflects that Lessing trusts Maimie's word, a matter that in the long run reflects Lessing's feminist sympathies and her beliefs and opinions about the unfair treatment that powerless women like Maimie have to endure.

### 3.2.1.5 Concession-Contra Expectation

The analysis of this essay using SRS uncovers that there are (15) examples of this relation, representing (1.38%). Lessing uses Concession-Contra Expectation effectively to describe an ironic situation that Maimie experienced:

(8). The prison had a library of Hebrew books donated by her father for Jewish prisoners, **but** this did not help her. (180)

In this example, the *Concession-Contra expectation relation* occurs when Maimie got herself into troubles as she often did. She quarreled with her mother "Julia", was arrested by the police and locked in a prison where common criminals are kept. In that prison, there were Hebrew books given by Maimie's father for prisoners. Her father's donation was of no use to the erratic Maimie. Besides, while she was born to such a man of learning as her father Morris Pinzer was, Maimie neither had her father's good name nor his education. Lessing seems to ridicule the fact that everything around Maimie added to her pain, failure and defeat.

Lessing also implements *Concession-Contra expectation relation* to show Maimie's good nature and intelligence in:

(9). Maimie was for a year in a Magdalen Home for bad girls, where she was cold, frightened, abandoned. She was so hungry she ate banana peel from the rubbish bin. **But** she was also able to teach girls older than herself to read and write.(180).



In this example, Lessing keeps praising Maimie's good nature via the same relation and this time by emphasizing her tendency to help others in spite of her difficult circumstances. Lessing argues that though Maimie is a poor girl and had her share of hardships, she did not lose her sympathetic side. Maimie was forced to leave school when she was only twelve, a matter she regrets immensely. She is fully aware of the importance of learning and steps in to teach reading and writing. This reflects Maimie's kindness and altruism as she never hesitates to teach the girls who need help even when she is herself frightened, cold and starving.

### 3.2.2 Logico-Deductive Relations

This type of semantic relations occupies the second position as they occur 50 times representing (34.48%). They are represented by the following semantic structuring relationships explained as follows:

#### 3.2.2.1 Reason-Result

The analysis of the essay shows that *Reason-Result* relations comes only next to *Contrast* with (35) occurrences representing (34.14%). They are expressed either explicitly or implicitly. However, Doris Lessing first, uses a reason- result relation to justify her choice of Ruth Rosen and Sue Davidson's book *The Maimie Papers* to write this essay about:

(10). I've read it three times, carefully, **because** of the way it springs speculation and fresh associations. (179).

In this example, Lessing gives the reason behind here fascination with the book which she read repeatedly using a *Reason-Result* relation. Doris Lessing was intrigued by the stories in the book as well as the interesting way in which it was written. As she describes it, this book inspires new thoughts and ideas and it is intellectually provoking. Further, it has a lot of hidden lessons that can not be revealed through a cursory reading as well as there is "so much between lines".

However, Lessing's reason-result arguments are also oriented towards criticizing businessmen in Philadelphia for their focus on the appearance of workers more than abilities and talents. She criticizes them also for not cooperating with those with special needs. For instance, the use of the reason-result relation is employed to expose why Maimie was refused to work as a saleswoman:

(11). She could never be used 'out front' where she could be seen, or as a saleswoman. Again and again she was refused because of her appearance. (183).

Doris Lessing takes to task the way society is blind to talent and competence. She criticizes beauty standards that label people like Maimie as unattractive. In this example, Lessing is talking about Maimie who lost her eye because of her many health issues and the surgeries she had when she was young. Maimie ended up with a permanent physical impairment that



made her less appealing to her employers and customers than other salesgirls and hence she is always kept backstage in spite of her good business instinct.

### 3.2.2.2 Grounds-Conclusion

Analyzing the relations of *entailment*, *Grounds-Conclusion* has the least frequency of occurrence as it is detected only twice in the entire essay, representing (1.38%). On one occasion, Maimie reflects about marital life and divorcees:

(12). I consider them (divorces) a lot of foolishness and a marriage ceremony the worst lot of cant I ever heard. That is my honest opinion and why bother about it: I could go on deep into that subject to show how I have arrived at such an unusual conclusion but I will simply say because of my observation of the various marriage contracts I know intimately about, my own, my sister's, my mother's, and a host of others. (183).

Earlier Lessing mentions Ira, a man who knew Maimie when they were young and had always loved her. He even went searching for her and arrived at the nick of time to rescue Maimie before she fell back on her old destructive life. Yet, Maimie hesitated to accept his offer and had all reasons to do so. Obviously, her experience of marriage whether hers or the people around her made her unable to compromise. The use of the *Grounds-Conclusion* supports Lessing's views about Maimie being a person of principle even though she had a rough and wayward life, observing "But she was married to another, and so was Ira, and this was sin and it was adultery."

### 3.2.2.3 Condition-Consequence

The analysis of the essay shows that there are (13) occurrences of conditional relations in total, making (8.97%). They are used by the writer to promote arguments relevant to potential speculations, starting with Ruth Rosen and Sue Davidson's book:

(13). Is it conceivable that ordinary publishers turned it down? It is not that the Feminist Press, who did the book first in the United States, shouldn't have done it **if** ordinary publishers were available, though one does have to hope that a book with such a wide appeal won't lose readers by being seen as a 'woman's book', but that the way it is presented, as if daunting problems at last have been solved, is surprising. (179).

The example above discusses the publication of *The Maimie Papers*. This book was published by the Feminist Press in the United States because no ordinary publisher would accept to take it. That is to say, the book was already judged as too womanish and too feminist for the taste of the male-oriented reading public. Furthermore, Lessing expressed fear that the book would lose its value and importance to readers (especially males) if it was categorized as a 'woman's book'. The book, in Lessing's opinion, has materials that appeal to a large readership.

Furthermore, in her essay, Doris Lessing's *Condition-Consequence* describes and comments on women's ability to be independent and earn their living themselves if the



circumstances serve them right. Lessing seizes the opportunity to reflect on how wars take their toll on women:

(14). Now she has learned that **if** there had not been a war, she would have been running her own business, and Montreal will always be for her the promise that independence for a woman is possible. (185).

Here, in this example, the writer tackles the idea of “independence”. Lessing emphasizes that Maimie and many other women of talent have the ability to depend on themselves and run their own businesses themselves without any male assistance, but sometimes difficult circumstances force them to ask for men's help. She argues that Maimie now has a good experience and has learned how to rely on her own wits and capacities. However, the war made it impossible for her to establish and run her own businesses. Again, Maimie's efforts were thwarted and her dream of independence went to the waste.

### 3.2.3 Temporal Relation

*Temporal Relations* have the least frequency of occurrence among the relations with no more than (12) instances or (8.28%). Both subcategories are detected as follows:

#### 3.2.3.1 Temporal Overlap

Analysing “The Maimie Papers” according to SRS, the analysis identifies (6) examples of *Temporal Overlap* (4.14%), marking temporally important activities, occurring at the same time and reflecting relevant issues:

(15). During all her vicissitudes, we find her again and again when just on survival's edge herself, risking everything to stake others. (184).

In this example, one can notice that Lessing continues expressing her admiration of Maimie, using *Temporal Overlap* relation. The writer, here, shows Maimie as a helpful person who risks everything to help others no matter the outcome. She never hesitates to aid anyone even during her difficult times and even when she is “just on survival's edge”. This again supports Lessing's beliefs in the solidarity of women as well as criticizes selfish male employers, who fired Maimie from the job due to her physical impairment.

Another example of *Temporal Overlap* that twins with *Temporal Succession* reflects positively on Maimie again:

(16). In the flu epidemic **after** the war, Maimie was nursing her family, all down with it, and burying the dead: there was no one else to do this. (185).

This temporal overlap is intended by the writer to show Maimie as reliable, strong and devoted to her family during such rough times as the epidemic. After the war ended in 1918 and during the Spanish flu, Maimie has spared no efforts to help her sick family. Being the only one who did not catch the infection, Maimie was working so hard to nurse the sick back to health and at the same time she was giving a decent burial to those who passed away. She had to do the job when there was no one else to do it. Again, Lessing capitalizes on the role of



women and their strength at the time of crisis and in so doing, she debunks any misconceptions about women being weak and undependable. Lessing also scorns misogynists who marginalize women and confine their role to domestic trifles. Lessing combines Temporal Overlap with Temporal Succession as she emphasizes the tremendous work done by women in general and Maimie in particular.

### 3.2.3.2 Temporal Succession

The analysis according to SRS shows that Lessing uses this semantic relation (6) times (4.14%) in the essay under study. The temporal successions relations are used to define the temporal frameworks of key incidents:

(17). Maimie's letters, kept for half a century by the recipient Fanny Howe, were handed on to her daughter Helen, who donated them to the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College. (179).

Doris Lessing opens her essay with a temporal succession relation which lists events relevant to the journey of Maimie's letters from their first owner up to their arrival in a college library. As she explained, these letters were kept as a private property for half a century by Fanny Howe before her daughter Helen donated them after her mother had passed away. Then the researchers Ruth Rosen and Sue Davidson found them and used the letters as source materials to write their book *The Maimie Papers*. The same semantic relation is used by the writer again to comment on how events led Maimie to prostitution:

(18). She went to work in a department store, **then** often the way in to prostitution for poor girls, who were surrounded by pretty things they could not buy, and besieged by men who hung around the shop waiting to supply them. (179).

Maimie obviously started to work in "a department store", which was a decent job for a girl of her background. Given the fact that Maimie had no education and in view of her family situation after the death of her father, the job must have felt very satisfactory. However, in a department store, nice things are sold which girls like Maimie desire, but can not afford. And there are men around who take advantage of clueless girls. In short, the temptation is too powerful to resist and Maimie was crushed under it. So, the sequence of activities, here, which construct a *Temporal Succession* relation gives justification if not indeed excuses for the fall of young salesgirls in the trap of prostitution. Maimie paid dearly for her indecent adventure with her health and reputation. Even after Maimie quit being an escort, she continued to be haunted by her past, which closed doors if improvements before her. Lessing advocates the importance of helping fallen girls redeem their lives and giving them second chances as well as welcoming them back to the fold.

## 4. Conclusion

"The Maimie Papers" has been analyzed via SRS to trace and unearth feminist ideologies, opinions and views, which Lessing aims to promote. Throughout the practical investigation, it is found that semantic structuring relationships used by the writer expose her attitudes towards



women and how they are treated by the society when they are forced to work. SRS categories also indicate ideological conflicts, controversial beliefs and anti-feminist and social polemics.

Through the use of *Associative* relations and mainly *Contrast* and *Comparison*, the author creates arguments that comment on the failings of an unjust and narrow-minded society. Through this kind of semantic relations, Lessing also turns the light on the efforts of women to help each other, defying class and gender discrimination. This solidarity appears most prominently in the character of the wealthy, educated and talented Fanny Howe. The respectable wife and mother of well-bred children was very sympathetic towards the misery of her fellow women even those who are ill-reputed like Maimie. Lessing also used the same relations to show her sadness about the millions of children who are deprived of proper education because of poverty. In the long run, children who are forced to work will end up going astray and are exploited by others.

Likewise, Lessing's employment of *Logico-Deductive* relations is directed towards discussing reasons, results, conclusions and hypotheses relevant to exposing the evils of rich, private businesses in Philadelphia. The focus on the appearance more than abilities and talents is likewise rationalized as narrow-minded and petty. She criticizes them for not only judging workers by looks rather than competence, but also for taking advantage of the weak and their lack of sympathy with the less fortunate. However, Lessing is not exclusively attacking Philadelphia; rather she attacks business morality that rules all over the world and to which women happen to be victims. The orientation towards treating women as commodity is rising in an heinous manner, leading to strict beauty standards required to, for instance, even hire female shop staff.

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