

CARE TO SURVIVE! CARE ETHICS IN DORIS LESSING'S MEMOIRS OF A SURVIVOR

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Abstract

Nobel Prize-winner English writer Doris Lessing's dystopian novel *The Memoirs of a Survivor* was published in 1974, a period in which both new concerns and new ideas were bushing out. The catastrophic setting of the novel that depicts the breakdown of modern society going parallel to food and water shortage, lack of electricity, perishing of natural and social order, and appearing an anarchy prescribe the probable disaster the world may attain in the future. Contrary to this circumstance of a possible atrocity in which people just struggle to survive, Doris Lessing proposes an alternative way of living and an ethical stance that is related to "care ethics", a moral theory appeared in the mid-1980s.

Care ethics basically deals with the relationships in human life to develop "caring" both in social relations and the relation of humanity to non-human world. Contrasted with deontological and utilitarian ethics, it criticizes moral approaches based on the rights of male, liberal, and human beings. That's why, care ethics that asserts the significance of emotion, intuition, body and caring motivation for all beings is related to some ethical fields such as feminist ethics, environmental ethics, animal ethics, and bioethics all of which appear as moral and political theories based on caring for "the other".

In this study, *The Memoirs of a Survivor* will be analyzed in terms of care ethics that Lessing proposes, in the background of the novel, as an alternative to andro-anthropocentric view that could result in a catastrophe for the whole world. In this respect, "caring" for others in the microcosm of the family and macrocosm of the universe will be depicted as an ethical and political action that is practiced by Lessing's two mystic protagonists, the unnamed narrator and the teenage girl Emily.

Keywords: Doris Lessing, *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, care ethics, interdependency, responsibility.