DISGUST AND DESIRE: THE MALE BODY IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE GRASS IS SINGING*

Clive Baldwin, Birkbeck College

This paper focuses on the representation of the male body in *The Grass Is Singing* (1950), arguing that, despite its attention to race and difference, the novel privileges the identification of power with heterosexual masculinity, manifested through the body.

Lessing's protagonist, Mary Turner, lacks heterosexual desire – 'she had a profound distaste for sex'. The novel suggests that this lack could be overcome if Mary found 'a man stronger than herself', one who had 'taken the ascendancy over her'. However, her husband, Dick, is represented as crucially lacking such manliness. Mary comes to this realisation in a passage that concentrates on Dick's body: 'As he gripped the steering wheel, his lean hands, burnt coffee-coloured by the sun, shook perpetually. It seemed to her a sign of weakness, that trembling'. As their circumstances decline, Dick begins more and more to be associated with the Africans. Mary sees him as 'growing into a native himself' and this change is manifested in his body: for example, his skin colour becomes burned a similar rich brown.

Mary's perception of Dick reflects her racist assumptions, which involve disgust for the bodies of African men and women. Paradoxically, however, in her relationship with Moses, Mary's disgust is transformed into a transgressive desire. In contrast to Dick, Moses embodies a virile masculinity – he is described as 'magnificently built', and when Mary sees him washing, his body is also sexualised: 'He was rubbing his thick neck with soap and the white lather was startlingly white against his dark skin'. This representation of Moses may be seen as symptomatic of racist projections about sexuality and the 'other'. Yet, the key, as the narrator makes clear, is Mary's identification with Moses as another human: 'the formal pattern of black-and-white […] had been broken by the personal relation'. Within the racial structures of southern African colonial society such a relationship was taboo and it is ended through Mary's murder. However, the dynamic of the triangular relationship involving Mary, Dick and Moses is one that prioritises gendered relations of power – a relationship in which Mary is rendered powerless.

NOSTALGIC NARRATIVES IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*

Victoria Bazin, University of Northumbria

Anna Wulf, the narrator of *The Golden Notebook* rejects the narrative strategy adopted in her own account of her life in the former Rhodesia, an account which forms the basis of her commercially and critically successful novel, "Frontiers of War." For Anna, that account is 'loaded with nostalgia', written by an 'enemy'. She acknowledges that when writing the narrative, she was convinced of her objectivity, her detachment, yet in retrospect Anna perceives that she was writing as if intoxicated by the historical events she was trying to respond to.

Nostalgia embodies the idea of looking backwards, of providing a narrative overview of past events in the present and of experiencing a sense of loss in the process of doing so. It is, in other words, a particular way of writing about history. Lessing's narrative strategies in *The Golden Notebook*, I argue, are concerned with recording historical events in non-nostalgic terms. What is lost, for Lessing, is something that never existed – a fully recoverable past. To borrow a term from the Marxist cultural historian, Walter Benjamin, Lessing's novel is an attempt to resist reproducing a 'monumental history', one that serves to reinforce imperialist and patriarchal narratives of progression and advancement. The ensuing narrative, the fractured, disjointed textual patchwork that is *The Golden Notebook* is best understood as an attempt to write about history without resorting to the nostalgia exemplified in Anna's own account of her past life in Africa.

NOT JUST ENVIRONMENTAL FABLES: THE ECO-POLITICS OF LESSING'S 'IFRIKAN' NOVELS

Fiona Becket, University of Leeds

Doris Lessing's treatment of climate change in *Mara and Dann* (1999) and *The Story of General Dann and Mara's daughter, Griot and the Snow Dog* (2005) is in part an extension of her earlier considerations of the manipulations of knowledge and power in the context of macro-climatic change, for instance in *The Making of the Representative for Planet 8* (1982). These latest novels, however, explore with real urgency the disturbances of diverse human communities challenged by, on one hand, drought and desertification and, on the other, war, starvation and privation in the planetary remains after the next ice age. So Lessing writes her 'Ifrikan' novels which confront the idea of the remainder – the remains of community, of family, of knowledge. Lessing's exploration of the government of the many by the few results in an analysis of political realities and models which we ought to find uncomfortable – the benevolent tyranny of the three generals; the near-universal reliance on slavery; the notion of the military as providing refuge to the stateless; the normalisation of breeding programmes in a context of reduced human fertility; the regulation of narcotics trading; the strategic exploitation of racial others; the romance of kingship.

Further, however, and crucially, in these environmental fables of future catastrophe, both ecological and political, Lessing prompts an examination of critical responsibility. This paper argues that the eco-political narrative is central to Lessing's work, and it examines the relationship of the eco-critical and the eco-poetic in this writing. Lessing expects us to read in the full glare of our awareness of climate change prompted by the industrial cultures, or, if we are sceptical of the claims made by environmentalists regarding human interventions, in the face of the real evidence of natural climate change. So it is that Lessing is able to conceive and explore the social and political consequences of the submersion of the northern continents under ice, for millennia, the subsequent termination of modernity, and the forces which prompt the redefinition of community.

DORIS LESSING'S *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK*: AN EXPERIMENT IN METACRITICISM

Nick Bentley, Keele University

Published in 1962, *The Golden Notebook* is one of the most important novels of the twentieth century. Although rightly celebrated for its engagement with feminism, this paper will focus on another of its major themes: the exploration of the relationship between narrative form and ideological content. I argue that the novel articulates and negotiates specific anxieties and discourses in literary and critical debate in Britain during the late 1950s and early 1960s such as the 'death of the novel', the limitations of (socialist) realism and the 'reaction against experiment'.

This is achieved through the novel's blurring of the boundaries between traditional definitions of 'literature' and 'criticism', and by incorporating within its own critical discourse an examination of the processes (aesthetic, psychological and ideological) of literary production. Through the shifting perspectives of the frame narration and the central character Anna Wulf, the novel investigates the complex relationships between individual experience and the desire to represent that experience in fiction. In doing so, it produces a self-reflexive commentary on the nature of fiction that resonates with poststructuralist theories.

I will also suggest that Lessing's organizational framework for *The Golden Notebook* is derived more from drama than narrative fiction, and, in particular, from Brechtian theatre. The historical context for this will be established through reference to The Berliner Ensemble's visit to Britain in 1956 and the influence that had on left-wing literary movements at the time, with which Lessing was closely associated. By referring to her autobiographical works and her own plays of the late 1950s (especially *Play with a Tiger*), I will argue that by transferring Brecht's 'alienation technique' from the stage to the novel, Lessing aimed to produce a politically engaged form of fiction that extended beyond socialist realism.

UNRULY RHETORIC: THE IMPOLITIC COMMUNIST CRAZE IN *A RIPPLE FROM THE STORM* BY DORIS LESSING

Anne-Laure Brevet, University of Brest

According to Gabriel Pearson, Doris Lessing has never ceased to expose “the sheer human impossibility of Southern Africa” (“Africa – the Grandeur and the Hurt,”, The Guardian Weekly, 14 April 1973: 25). In all her texts dealing with Southern Rhodesia, Lessing keeps revealing the same disenchanted patterns of repetition. Indeed, even nowadays the repression of the black population still goes on although the nation has gained political independence. Lessing repeatedly showed in her African short stories that endeavouring to better the living conditions of Africans proved useless and even had disastrous consequences on an individual level (e.g in “Little Tembi” or “A Home for the Highland Cattle”). In the recent novel *The Sweetest Dream* (2001), the character who goes on missionary work in Zimlia faces the sheer impossibility of helping the Blacks, as she tries to cope with rampant AIDS by herself. When asking the government for funds for her hospital, she is let down by the corrupt African leader who used to be her admirer in London.

In *A Ripple from the Storm* (1964), the third volume of *The Children of Violence* series, Doris Lessing recounted her young autobiographical heroine Martha Quest’s commitment to Communism. Martha honestly believed that there was a revolutionary solution to the plight of the oppressed African population in Southern Rhodesia. The Soviet Union was the model of social happiness that her youthful comrades in the Socialist group had in mind. What Michael Thorpe has called a “wishful romantic idealism […] fed by the seductive simplicities of Communist ideology” led Martha and her friends to have the vision of “an ideal town, clean, noble and beautiful, soaring up over the actual town they saw” (RS, 40), recalling the adolescent day-dream of the four-gated city in *Martha Quest*. As Michael Thorpe puts it, “brotherhood is sound rhetoric, but it should not interfere with real life.” The pathetic consequences of naïve humanistic feelings for the Blacks are related in the episode about the RAF pilot. When he went to the shanty town, he was rebuffed and mistrusted by everyone, including the only African he thought was a Communist activist, and who eventually turned out to be an informer. Besides, Martha discovered that the atmosphere of her Communist group of friends was becoming poisoned by the leaders’ endless childish quarrels. She realized that the Communist rhetoric of disobedience and fight against oppression held double-talk and was itself oppressive, as her closely observed descriptions of the characters’ body language revealed. The verbose Communist phraseology barely hid a battle of wills. Although at this stage Martha was ready to sacrifice herself to the cause, she quickly lost confidence in the group’s efficiency, and understood the sheer political aberration of their Communist craze. What is voiced in Lessing’s writings about Africa is a sense of the whites being totally inadequate and out of place. In the story entitled Winter in July, the heroine says “What are we doing here? […] I feel as if we shouldn’t be here.” As Doris Lessing felt after the Second World War, the only possibility was to leave the country.

"BORN IN THE YEAR 1919": DORIS LESSING, HISTORICAL TRAUMA, AND THE INTERWAR GENERATION

Marlene Briggs, University of British Columbia

"Suddenly the woman who was interviewing me said, 'Clearly the most important influence in your life has been the First World War.' I could have wept with pleasure and relief that someone had noticed this obvious fact."

Doris Lessing in conversation with Earl G. Ingersoll (1993)

"I do know that to be born in the year 1919 when half of Europe was a graveyard, and people were dying in millions all over the world – that was important. How could it not be? [. . . .] I used to joke that it was the war that had given birth to me, as a defence when weary with the talk about the war that went on – and on – and on. But it was no joke."

Doris Lessing, *Under My Skin* (1994)

Doris Lessing repeatedly insists on the importance of her parents' war experiences to her own creative development. In "My Father" (1963), a short essay on Alfred Cook Tayler (born 1886), she relays how he had his leg "shattered by shrapnel ten days before Passchendaele" where "[h]is whole company was killed"; her mother, Emily Maude McVeagh (born 1884), a nurse during the First World War, assisted Tayler during his recovery in hospital. Lessing's multi-faceted oeuvre, ranging from the "Children of Violence" series (1952–) to brief pieces in the recent compilation *Time Bites: Views and Reviews* (2004) and beyond, attests to her lifelong fascination with war, and the First World War in particular. In *Under My Skin* (1994), the first volume of her autobiography, she admits that her interest in historical trauma has grown rather than diminished: "That war does not become less important to me as time passes, on the contrary." Yet Lessing's lifelong meditation on the transgenerational legacies of the 1914-18 conflict has not yet received the sustained critical analysis that it plainly warrants.

I will address Lessing's occasional essays, selected fictions, and auto/biographical works on the First World War. In these diverse writings, Lessing acknowledges her temporal distance from, as well as her psychological proximity to, the horrors of industrial carnage. Long before humanities scholars turned to the subject of trauma and its aftermath in the 1990s, Lessing underscored the decisive yet insidious impact of calamitous events preceding her birth, likening the First World War to a spectral presence shaping the conscious and unconscious preoccupations of her generation. Thoughtful articles on the delayed impact of Holocaust trauma by noted researcher Marianne Hirsch and others inform my own approach to the devastating wake of the Great War in Britain and its former colonies, specifically Southern Rhodesia. While "gender," "genre," and "race" have rightly received considerable attention in Lessing criticism, the significant category of "generation" demands more detailed elaboration. I will thus situate Lessing, one of the most compelling second-generation writers on the protracted psychological and social burdens of the First World War, in relation to other descendants and relatives of servicemen, such as Christopher Isherwood, Alan Sillitoe, and Ted Hughes.

RHODESIAN CHILDREN AND THE LESSONS OF WHITE SUPREMACY: DORIS LESSING'S "THE ANTHEAP"

Julie Cairnie, University of Guelph, Ontario

In the last decade or so, several established and many first-time writers from Southern Africa have published their autobiographies of childhood. Two recent examples are J.M. Coetzee's *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life* (1999) and *Youth* (2002). A few years earlier, Peter Godwin, a journalist born in Southern Rhodesia, published *Mukiwa: A White Boy in Africa* (1996). As well, Doris Lessing's *Under My Skin* (1994) and Daphne Anderson's *The Toe-Rags: The Story of a Strange Up-bringing in Southern Rhodesia* (1989) chart two white women's childhood experiences of colonial Rhodesia. Narratives of white childhood from Southern Africa deserve far more critical attention than they have received. The study of white childhood has political significance. Most notably, white colonial children had a unique relationship to Africans --whether the children they enjoyed as playmates or the adults they experienced as caregivers. Godwin, for example, recalls in detail his initiation, by his African nanny, into the apostolic church, an experience unavailable to most European adults. Narratives of a "strange" childhood, such as unfolds in Lessing's short story "The Antheap," often identify the passage to adulthood with the passage to middle-class respectability.

"The Antheap" (1953) is a study in personal relationships, which Lessing reveals throughout her writing are intensely political in Southern Rhodesia. In particular, the story focuses on the relationship between Tommy, a white boy, and Dirk, a "coloured" boy. In my paper I will argue that the boys enjoy a fraught but meaningful relationship, but their relationship is essentially severed when Tommy (most importantly) understands the codes which govern his relationships as a (soon-to-be) white middle-class man in Southern Rhodesia; Dirk, conversely, has understood those codes from the outset. I want to pursue three lines of inquiry into the intersection of personal relationships and the politics of white supremacy: first, I want to describe the so-called "poor white problem" in Southern Rhodesia and examine the ways in which Tommy, as a deviant white boy, reflects this problem, a problem that is ultimately corrected by white adult intervention; second, I want to explore the ways in which Dirk's "coloured" body reveals another fissure in the system: the pernicious problem of "miscegenation"—after all, one of the prevailing fears of the white community is the appearance of the "coloured" child; finally, I want to think about the ways in which masculinity is underscored by questions of race and class for the two boys.

"The Antheap" is a carefully crafted piece of writing, but no less "political" than, say, Going Home or African Laughter.

LESSING'S THE FIFTH CHILD: THE PROBLEM OF THE GROTESQUE OTHER IN SOCIETY

Kathryn J. Carson, Southeast Missouri State University

Doris Lessing's *The Fifth Child* is a discomforting "horror story" of the perfect family's destruction by an outsider. Its message seems simple: No one is safe. No matter how completely one tries to isolate oneself from the dangers of the world, the dangers will worm themselves into all hiding places. The threat depicted in Lessing's novel is made more frightening by its origin within the family. Lessing denies that the novel carries any particular message, calling it simply a "'classic horror story.'" However, a 1988 interview with the *New York Times* suggests the turbulence a child such as Ben could create. Reflecting on the difficulty of composing the novel, she states, "'I wrote it twice. The first time I wrote it I thought it was dishonest and too soft—this is not what would happen if such an alien creature was born into our society. Something much worse would happen.'" Nevertheless, *The Fifth Child* goes far beyond Lessing's simple explanation of "horror story." The importance of the alien Other has been copiously discussed. Additional critical studies, notably Susan Watkins's "Writing in Minor Key," have argued the presence of social and political issues within the novel, noting the presence of empirical and Victorian themes, as well as echoes of the political doctrines of Enoch Powell and Margaret Thatcher. Powell's "enemy within" corresponds to Ben's unwelcome entry into the Lovatt family, and Thatcher's promotion of Victorian ideals can be felt in David and Harriet's desire for "happiness, in the old style." Critics also have identified issues of motherhood raised in the novel, noting similarities between Ben and the monster in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. What remains unexplored are the ramifications of the alien Other that cannot or will not be assimilated into society. Louise Yelin has suggested that *The Fifth Child* poses threats and violence as the only methods for subduing the alien Other and maintaining social order, citing Harriet's threats of returning Ben to the institution as proof that society must control the Other to retain its culture. However, I propose *The Fifth Child* demonstrates that the alien Other cannot be subdued by such means. Violence seems only to beget more violence in the novel as Ben usurps the "normal" children, seizes control of David and Harriet's home, or "kingdom," and terrorizes the surrounding neighbourhood with his gang of social misfits. Noting *The Fifth Child*'s political and social themes, I argue instead that boundaries must be dismantled. Applying the grotesque theory of Geoffrey Galt Harpham, I propose that hope exists for the alien Other and society if the Other is allowed to assume a new name, offering movement from "confusion to discovery." Lessing's dismal ending may be avoided only by allowing the alien Other a separate identity and permitting multiple forms of culture within one kingdom.

THE DYNAMIC CHOREOGRAPHY OF MANDALA AS A HEALING PROCESS IN DORIS LESSING'S *SHIKASTA*

Ju-yu Cheng, (aka.Catherine Zheng), National Taiwan Normal University

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In *The Golden Notebook*, Lessing's affirmation of the importance of the geometrical shapes corresponds to Rubenstein's assertion—"the major divisions of the novel into four groups of four are abstractions of the square" (107) and "the cyclic repetitions, layerings, and recombinations of the same essential emotional events" (107) represent the circle. The images of the circle and square are crucial roles in the novel, especially when connected with Lessing's later novels, that is, *The Four-Gated City* (1969), *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971), *The Memoir of a Survivor* (1974) and *Re:Colonised Planet 5, Shikasta* (1979). In *The Four-Gated City*, the imaginative blueprint of an ideal city is illustrated through the motif of a four-gated city. In *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, the images of circle and square are represented through the Mandala square in the ruined city where the protagonist Charles Watkins's spiritual explorations occur. In *The Memoir of a Survivor*, Shadia S. Fahim considers the carpet episode as well as the four-walled garden and the iron egg as the symbols of Mandala that activate "[t]he process of contemplation by inducing certain mental states which encourage the achievement of equilibrium between the levels of perception" (108).

Aware of the spiritual and cosmic connotation of the Mandala applied in those novels, I attempt to explore the narrative interaction of *Re:Colonised Planet 5, Shikasta* through the concept of the Mandala. The image of a dynamic mandala is revealed through the geometrical shapes of the cities corresponding to their respective stars and spirits. The interrelationship between the earthly cities and the rotating planets works in a similar way to a dynamic mandala in the shape of a sandglass. The nucleus of the sandglass functions not only as the nexus but also as the turning point from whence the earth is transformed through its involvement with the galaxy and vice versa. And none can be more suitable than "consciousness" to act as the nucleus. The further extrapolation from the image of the sandglass induces the image of the Black/ White Hole, in which consciousness functions as the incubator of matter. The cosmic scope is firmly interpenetrated with the spirit. Lessing in fact has admitted the dialogue between science and spirituality in her 1980 interview with Nissa Torrents: "[t]he best scientists, those on the highest levels, always come closer and closer to the mystical. Much of what Einstein said could have been said by a Christian mystic, St. Augustine, for example"(66). Thus, my thesis attempts to search for the connections between science and spirituality in the land of literature by employing the concept of the Mandala and the Black/ White Hole theory to analyze the narrative structure *in Re:Colonised Planet 5, Shikasta*.

MADNESS AS A CULTURAL CRITIQUE IN *BRIEFING FOR A DESCENT INTO HELL*

Yuan Jung Cheng, National Sun-Yat-sen University

Based on Michel Foucault's idea of the power/knowledge relationship reflecting a sense of cultural criticism of the modern world, my paper focuses on the investigation of madness as a cultural critique in *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, challenging the status quo of culture from all aspects, social, medical, historical, political and economical.

How do we define culture? We define culture by contrasting the term with our definition of the savage, the barbarian, and the transgressive. Culture is the elementary force to shape and mould a nation, a force to homogenize and to reconcile diverse compartments of the society. As the nation centralizes through cultural homogeneity, its grip of cultural diversity is inevitably tightened. Consequently the authorities are inclined to contain the culture by establishing related institutions to regulate and implement cultural policies and thus guide its subsequent development. Unfortunately, underlying this tendency to institutionalize culture lurks a dangerous conscious or/and unconscious attempt to confine cultural vitalities and visions. As Foucault proclaims, the institutions and disciplines are powerful instruments to control a society, and they control by excluding any social deviations and undesirables. The asylum is one striking example. The prisoners of the asylum are not just the mentally ill, but dissidents of all kinds, social, political, economical, and intellectual. Freedom of thinking and that of speech are tested here.

The issue of madness in modern fiction often expresses itself in crisis and transgression of cultural establishment. The crisis of modern culture has been depicted as the madness Anna Wulf undergoes in *The Golden Notebook*. Though Anna's final breakthrough is envisioned at the end of the novel, what comes after the breakthrough is often debated. In *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, Doris Lessing suggests a possible "brave new world" in a madman's "inner space." By juxtaposing Charles Watkins's "real" world and his "dream" world the author criticizes such cultural institutions as hospitals and universities. The co-existence of multiple realities in the narrative is not just designed for narrative strategies, but also to ridicule the absurdity of the so-called "reality," the Establishment. In this respect, I propose to study the representation of "madness" in *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* as a cultural critique as well as a cultural crisis.

NEW WORLDS, OLD PROBLEMS: LESSING'S LIFETIME OF CONCERNS

Amanda Cole, University of Sydney

Doris Lessing has "proven" herself. Her literary outpourings of the past fifty years have graced bookshelves around the world. She has been both fashionable and unfashionable – paradoxically usually for the same reasons: of her energetic urge to experiment and her ability to tap into the zeitgeist. Lessing's writing has provided cultural commentary throughout the twentieth century. This paper will assess Lessing's lasting legacy through her commentary. It will take a close look into her compulsion to report on humanity's climactic moments, especially its mistakes – 'holocausts, famines, wars, and the occupants of a million prisons and torture chambers' (*Representative for Planet 8:* 126). Lessing's writing is based on the indefatigable argument that these mistakes cannot be dismissed as unavoidable blunders if ever progress is to be made.

Lessing uses critical utopianism not to provide perfect visions of society, but rather alternatives – visions that speculate, meditate, and critique current society. Ultimately Lessing's critical utopianism promotes a type of conscious evolution. Sufism argues in favour of such consciousness: 'while mankind remains mere baggage in the world / It will be swept along, as in a boat, asleep' (Hakim Sanai, 'Man Asleep', ed. Idries Shah, *The Way of the Sufi* London: Octagon Press, 1968 [1980] p.99).

Doris Lessing's writing (fictional and non-fictional alike) is written from a source taken from her immediate emotional life, in the imaginative hunger that she finds in the zeitgeist of her times. Lessing attempts to define a 'hunger' that will make sense of the world. Lessing's personal zeitgeist spans the past and the present, anticipates the future, and encompasses the general as well as the specific as her approach becomes increasingly and dramatically universal. For Lessing, responsibility is not a choice but a 'necessity'. Lessing depicts the long and painful evolution towards a higher form of life. Her characters often feel exhausted and overwhelmed, but she urges them onwards, towards useful ends, as she does humanity in general.

Doris Lessing's writing witnesses to her belief, whether acknowledged in her prefaces or not, that we, humanity, are living at a time which is 'explosive, and precarious… one of the great turning points of history… [a]nd because of this, the great dream and the great nightmare of centuries of human thought have taken flesh' (*Small Personal Voice*: 7-21). Her canon is a depiction of the many paths humanity could follow: the new worlds it explores are in actuality very familiar ones – because of the old problems they contain. Despite Lessing's constant updating of her ideas, and even her contradictions of earlier stances, her lasting legacy will be her preoccupation with the contrast between the 'great dream' and the 'great nightmare' with which humanity is faced. Lessing urges us to think responsibly about which course humanity should take.

THE POLITICS OF GENRE

Theresa L. Crater, Metropolitan State College of Denver

Genre politics are still alive and well in many places. Certainly the academy. My colleagues are polite to my face about my fictional novel, *Under the Stone Paw*, a contemporary fantasy blending alternative ideas about Egypt with conspiracy theory politics, which shows a bit of progress, but one snide Amazon review smacks of academic language. They still refuse to allow me to teach a major authors course focusing entirely on Lessing. I am allowed to teach Woolf on her own, and Woolf and Lessing together. (What about *Orlando*?) *The Longman Anthology of British Literature* has always excluded Lessing, now running to three editions, and I've switched back to Norton only because they include her.

Surely this is old news, you cry, but we have not yet gone beyond this divide. Ursula Le Guin, in a recent essay on genre, presents a parody of how the attack on realistic (literary) fiction might read and declares it obviously ridiculous. She rejects the term "speculative fiction" as an attempt to "pass as white" as they might have said in my old Southern home. In 2004, the PMLA did a special topic issue entitled "Science Fiction and Literary Studies: The Next Millennium." The lead article declares itself in the subtitle "An Emancipation Proclamation" and invents a new term, "Textism." Bookstores still divide the pure from the impure, with literary and commercial realism separated from the range of genre fiction. Non-white writers of magical realism are allowed onto the literary shelves, but Lessing as a white, postcolonial writer is not allowed to stray off the reservation into space fiction or fantasy.

Why does Western culture still resist the fantastic in literature? Why does magical realism come with an ethnic tag? I will explore these questions in more detail.

HORRORS OF THE BREAST: A KRISTEVAN READING OF *THE GRASS IS SINGING*

Edith Frampton, San Diego State University

In Doris Lessing's influential feminist text of 1962, *The Golden Notebook*, Anna Wulf notably confesses that she finds breastfeeding 'revolting'. However, Lessing's engagement with maternal nursing dates back to her first novel, of 1950, *The Grass is Singing*, in which the lactating African breast is designated as the site of utter abjection. In keeping with Julia Kristeva's theorisations of the abject in her 1980 study, Powers of Horror, Lessing's Mary Turner, is haunted by 'a vortex of summons and repulsion', in relation to the abjected breast, which leaves her, to borrow Kristeva's word, 'beside' herself. Mary, in a sense, stages the following scenario, by refusing to open her store, and then voyeuristically surveys the result.

If she disliked native men, she loathed the women. She hated the exposed fleshiness of them, their soft brown bodies....Above all, she hated the way they suckled their babies, with their breasts hanging down for everyone to see;...'Their babies hanging on to them like leeches', she said to herself shuddering, for she thought with horror of suckling a child. The idea of a child's lips on her breasts made her feel quite sick; at the thought of it she would involuntarily clasp her hands over her breasts, as if protecting them from a violation. By strictly limiting her store schedule, Mary has created her scene of abjection, precisely in order to condemn it.

Julia Kristeva, too, explores the links between 'those violent, dark revolts of being' that characterise abjection, when, for instance, 'the eyes see or the lips touch that skin on the surface of milk'. Kristeva is discussing the skin that can form on cow's milk, as one of various signifiers of 'the other side of the border, the place where I am not'. However, it is nonetheless noteworthy that the very first example of abjection, opening her influential theoretical study, centres on the charged relationship between 'skin' and milk, the combination of which induce 'a gagging sensation'.

This paper explores connections and resonances between Powers of Horror and the revulsion at breastfeeding that is so emphatically represented at the heart of Lessing's first novel. The nadir of corporeality, in Mary Turner's view, is maternal nursing, which is indelibly associated with the dark-skinned Rhodesian native women whom Mary watches from a distance.

“WHY THE STORIES AREN’T VERY NICE: CHARACTERS AND READERS IN LESSING’S SHORT FICTION”

Judith Kegan Gardiner, University of Illinois at Chicago

The canonical early 20th century short story highlights moments of intensified understanding and heightened emotion, often perceptions of loss or betrayal. The undervaluation of Lessing’s short stories, I surmise, relates to a number of factors, including their wide generic variety, their non-lapidary language, and particularly their handling of psychological revelations and social contexts in ways that thwart readers’ expectations for epiphanies and revelations – or at least for epiphanies and revelations that allow readers to unite with the narrator in empathy with the characters.

Often the Lessing story set in England appears to illustrate a thesis about modern life and particularly its noncongruence with what Lessing describes as popular ideologies about relationships. I’ll look most closely at a comparison between two effective stories, “Not a Very Nice Story,” 1973, and the more recent “The Stare,” 1997. Both stories dissect the breakdown of heterosexual relationships in two parallel couples, and in both the two women form a strong homosocial bond. Both stories illustrate the hubris of the characters who dare to congratulate themselves on making successful choices in their personal lives; in fact, both stories question the concept of individual choice altogether. In both, the narrative voice apparently criticizes the inadequacies of liberalism to confront emotional crises and stresses the impossibilities of mutual understanding both within and across gender, ethnic, and other identity categories. In the words of “The Stare,” the protagonists find that ““these people they had married were sometimes strangers to them.” They do not always realize, however, how much they are also strangers to themselves, at the same time that Lessing allows us readers, also, no simple insights into her characters.

PATRIARCHY, MASCULINITY AND WAR WITHIN *A PROPER MARRIAGE*

Benjamin Garrett

Doris Lessing has demonstrated the complex role masculinity plays in sustaining patriarchy without stripping men of their humanity. This paper will look at the character of Douglas both as a human being and as a mechanical construct of masculinity shaped by patriarchy in the novel, *A Proper Marriage*. It will look at his actions, the feelings behind those actions, and his purpose within the novel, in order to expose how he is being manipulated by society to enforce patriarchy within his assigned sphere of control, his family. It will then contrast Douglas with the model of power-over presented by Starhawk, in her book, *Truth or Dare*; as she examines the relationships between patriarchy, masculinity and war. Starhawk asserts that Power-over stems from estrangement of the individual from self worth. Worth must then be earned by conforming to a culture's standards. Power-over, as the basis for patriarchy, is born in an environment of war, and War, as an ideal, must be maintained in order to perpetuate them both. Patriarchy forces men to attempt to embody the attributes of the good king, as defined by Starhawk if they want to succeed within a Disembodied world constantly on the brink of war. Douglas' character, as a newly wedded colonial man in an environment of impeding war, exemplifies Starhawk's models of social control that enable and perpetuates patriarchy. Douglas brings that model back from the world war he was denied fighting, into the Domestic war at home. When he fails to beat his wife, strategically, in their marital conflict, the punishment he is issued is offset by patriarchal society, with a reward for having not given up on the ideas that justify it. Douglas is patriarchy's man and will not be abandoned, as long as he refuses to walk away from his role as its champion.

HOUSING AND SATIRE OF MARXISM: *THE GOOD TERRORIST* AND *WALKING IN THE SHADE*

Sally Jacobsen, Northern Kentucky University

In *The Good Terrorist* Doris Lessing raises to main characters the sort of occupants of a squat who were shadowy figures to whom the intractable adolescent Kate escaped in *If the Old Could*. Several of these twenties-something dropouts from society are university-educated; all know Marxist doctrine, live on their social security and thieving, and conscientiously try to reach consensus in policy decisions. However, so idealistic and diverse are their goals, yet so inept are they in the ability to realize them, that Lessing achieves an original comedy of manners on the squat level. The novel gives the lie to the leftist opinion of the fifties and sixties recorded in *Walking in the Shade*: "Women can't be comics. …They have no sense of humour."

Holding the squat together and feeding them the sort of cheap nutritious soup that Lessing revelled in serving gatherings is university-educated Alice Melling, who steadfastly refuses to get a job and develop a career in a corrupt bourgeois society. Alice's passion, matching Lessing's, is to preserve old houses with good structures that have fallen into filth and disrepair and are scheduled for demolition, to be replaced by ugly blocks of flats to house the poor, earning a contractor a fat profit. Alice's talent is to clear out filth, locate under-employed workmen with the proper tools to rewire and to remove concrete from toilets so that they can be used again, and to paint walls and scrounge furniture. Alice's achievement mirrors Lessing's renovation of the house she bought in Somers Town for 4,500 pounds, employing "pirate" workmen directly, left unemployed when her contractor "goes bankrupt" and leaves the country on holiday. The novel is an inspiring vision of what can be accomplished in housing by ordinary people focusing on "what we have in common" instead of on difficulties and differences that categorize us, and it is a shame that the novel is not widely enough read to spread this vision of possibility.

The adjective "Good" in the title to describe Alice has the ironic resonance of the word in Iris Murdoch's title, *The Good Apprentice.* Alice is "good" in the senses of unselfish love for those in her commune and appreciation of the value of people whom the system views as the detritus of society. Lessing says that *The Good Terrorist* explores the extremes of human nature in the way that *The Fifth Child* does. Alice is "pure" and will allow neither her body to be contaminated by sex nor her life to be contaminated by career. Her beloved, homosexual, inept Jasper, his mentor Bert, the self-destructive cockney Faye, and the nihilistic bomb-maker Jocelin illustrate in different directions French communist Louis Aragon's idea, "There is no passion for the absolute without the accompanying frenzy of the absolute"—which Lessing disavows in Walking in the Shade and dramatizes the senselessness of in this novel. Jasper, Bert, Faye, and Jocelin just want to blow something up—to get attention as much as they want to destroy a corrupt social structure. There is marvelous irony in the way that Alice, to save her friends, phones in a claim for IRA credit for their car-bombing—after the IRA had rejected Jasper's and Bert's offer to become IRA cadres. *Walking in the Shade* records the social going to demonstrations and attempts to be arrested that are comically depicted in *The Good Terrorist*.

EASTERN SUFISM AND THE ANIMALISTIC NATURE OF MAN IN THE WORKS OF DORIS LESSING

Shahram Kiaei, University Kebangsaan Malaysia

It is rather noticeable that Doris Lessing frequently employs animalistic imagery when describing humanity. I posit that the employment of this literary device is linked in a significant way to the influence of Eastern Sufism. Her characters often reveal a perception of themselves as being governed mainly by animal instincts which coincides with Eastern Sufist philiosophy. The latter believes that every individual has animalistic tendencies and that every man is governed by their animalistic nature which can be overcome by practicing to acquire a higher level of consciousness. These principles form the basis of the characterisation in a number of Lessing's fiction and I will demonstrate how this is so through a close reading of *The Four-Gated City* and *Briefing for a Descent into Hell*.

"PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE IN DORIS LESSING'S SHORT STORIES 'TO ROOM 19' AND 'HOW I FINALLY LOST MY HEART'"

Dr Mine Özyurt Kılıç, Bilkent University, Ankara

This paper focuses on the theme of loneliness suffered by female characters in private spaces as opposed to the feeling of liberation in public spaces. The compartmentalised individual lives of the female characters in "To Room 19" and "How I Finally Lost My Heart" are illustrated by the suffocating private spaces which are enclosed by separating walls. The sense of loneliness is represented through a lack of communication in these claustrophobic places which lead to imaginary phone calls, silence, madness, both metaphorical and literal losing of the heart, and suicide.

These two stories reflect Lessing's perspective regarding the significance of social bonds. In both stories, the female characters feel imprisoned and entrapped by the suffocating private realm that seems to deny them a communal life of sharing and caring. Only when these characters reach the public space can they liberate themselves from the pressure of loneliness, though the cost is a confrontation with the marginal -- suicide and madness. This thematic network of "To Room 19" and "How I Finally Lost My Heart" resembles that of *The Golden Notebook* which is also centred around the lack of communication. And in the novel, too, only when the separate parts of the notebook which symbolise a compartmentalised and fragmented state of mind are united can the female protagonist feel liberated. This resemblance further establishes a relationship between the "Preface to *The Golden Notebook*" and the short stories under discussion. As a writer who says she wants to tell her reader "what it means to be a human being" at a time when people face violence and loneliness "as soon as they open their eyes", Lessing opposes the bitterness of individual lives to the communal experience that might help individuals to overcome their sense of frustration and potentially create better existences.

“THEORIZING THE UNIVERSAL IN LESSING’S *THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK* AND *SHIKASTA”*

Tonya Krouse, Northern Kentucky University

Critics face a complex task in trying to figure Lessing’s significance to the canon of 20th- and now 21st-century literature. On the one hand, critics desire to claim Lessing as a representative author through which to promote particular ideological and political agendas, agendas that are amplified and enabled by contemporary theoretical approaches. On the other, critics desire to position Lessing as an author that supersedes any one political, theoretical approach, who possesses universal appeal and who resists such limiting categorization. It seems to me that in order to locate Lessing as a ‘woman of letters’ that it is essential to find a path betwixt and between these two critical poles. At stake in this project is our ability to acknowledge Lessing’s own attempts to control the critical reception of her texts and her authorial “image,” while at the same time to acknowledge the ways in which Lessing’s texts exceed her attempts at authorial control.

In this paper, I focus my attention on Lessing’s *The Golden Notebook* and *Shikasta*. Each of these novels exists as a collection of texts; as such, each novel resists the generic constraints of stable, novelistic narrative conventions. To focus our attention on this resistance provides us with a path toward reconciling Lessing’s experimentation with her realism, and it provides us with a mechanism through which to theorize Lessing’s place in the canon. Lessing’s texts do inspire theoretical reading, and they also demand our attention as central texts within a universal and universalizing canon. Employing the theories of Michel Foucault and Roland Barthes, among others, I demonstrate how *The Golden Notebook* and *Shikasta* depict the relationship between author, reader, and text in such a way that sustains the theoretical aptness of Lessing’s texts alongside their status as essential texts in the core of a literary tradition of writing in English.

RE-CONFIGURING THE NEW: READING *THE GRANDMOTHERS* (2003) AND *TIME BITES* (2004)

Alka Kumar, University of Delhi

Doris Lessing’s texts have always made visible (and real) her belief in whatever is in life ongoing and open-ended, defining any attempts at finality and closure as signifying imprisonment and decay. History is for her crucial not only in helping to define past moments and movements but also for constructing and configuring the contemporary in which we live today. Within the politics of nation-states today and the making of identities in a multicultural context, there is need to rethink and review many of Lessing’s ideas.

This paper assumes some familiarity on the reader’s part both with the significant body of Lessing’s work in the first fifty years or so of her writing as well as the several critical grids through which it has been viewed. Thus it aims to read two fairly recent texts, *The Grandmothers* (2003) and *Time Bites: Views and Reviews* (2004) in the light of preceding texts and contexts. It is hoped that the following questions (and others) will be addressed through this presentation: (a) Does *The Grandmothers: Four Short Novels* explore completely new vistas of imagination and experience or/and does it re-examine previous preoccupations and themes, whether in similar ways or with differences, contributing to new readings? How do earlier influences on her work, like feminism, Sufism, psychoanalysis, manifest in this text? (b) In *Time Bites,* a collection of Doris Lessing’s non-fiction written over a long span of time, can the reader find a reflection of the writer’s own coming-of-age in the globalised world order of today? And through this treasure house of her insightful comments on events, ideologies, politics, history, important writers and landmark books do we find Lessing moving on to ideas that could provide new paradigms for thought?

LANDSCAPE AND THE ANTI-PASTORAL CRITIQUE IN LESSING'S AFRICAN STORIES

Pat Louw, University of Zululand

In *The Grass is Singing*, Lessing reverses the pastoral convention where the rural landscape represents an escape from the oppression of the modern city. In this paper I ask whether this anti-pastoral critique features in the same way in Lessing's African stories. The attitude towards the rural environment in *This was the Old Chief's Country* and *The Sun between their Feet* becomes more complex as the stories deal with characters from different cultural backgrounds, classes, race and age groups. In attempting to come to terms with the society into which they are being inducted, children experiment with both male and female roles, traversing the boundary between the home and the bush. For instance, Lessing demonstrates the way girls are socialized in the settler community by being oriented towards a more restrained, pictorial view of landscape rather than an exploratory, adventurous mode. Differences between English and Afrikaans-speaking settlers also broaden the concept of the anti-pastoral critique when applied to these subgroups of settler community. Racial differences add another dimension in the stories and serve to contribute to the complexity of race and gender issues in relation to the natural environment. In analyzing a selection of her African Stories I hope to extend and develop an understanding of the way in which landscape and the anti-pastoral critique are presented in Lessing's short African fiction.

LESSING'S MORAL VISION IN THE *CANOPUS IN ARGOS* SERIES

Eva Masilamony, South Texas College

This paper will focus on the moral vision of Doris Lessing's *Canopus in Argos* series. The series is composed of five volumes in which Lessing creates a fantasy world that allows her to diagnose the malaise of our society, to observe phenomena which cause disharmony and to suggest alternatives whereby wholesome living becomes possible.

In a way we can say that she explores in the *Canopus in Argos* series a secular alternative to the questions that religion had earlier addressed itself to and made sense of in its own way. But Lessing's cosmos does not include powerful cosmic forces of good and evil. The Canopeans who can be termed benevolent were not always so. They had evolved to their level because of certain conscious choices that they had made. The "good" qualities that the Canopeans have do not necessarily endear them to the people they meet or try to help. The Canopean agents sent to Shikasta (earth) are just as likely to "fall" or choose the other side. Just as there is nothing innately good in Canopus, there is nothing innately bad in Shammat and Sirius. Lessing's presentation of these empires is different from the melodramatic conflict found between good and evil in traditional science fiction and fantasy.

The same is true of human beings. True, human beings (in this series) are manipulated by the galactic empires but they retain their ability to choose. Thus in the end, humans play a major role in rebuilding planet earth. People are portrayed as responsible for all their actions and are not just pawns of cosmic beings. Lessing has always had unbounded faith in the ability of humans to cope with any circumstances and this faith remains unshaken in this series too.

READING *THE GRASS IS SINGING* AS DETECTIVE FICTION

Swaty Mitra, India

Among all other aspects of *The Grass is Singing* the cryptic preface, that quotes a newspaper report of a murder, has teased me since the first time I read it. In my paper I explore the relation between the newspaper report, which describes Mary Turner's death as a 'murder mystery' and the narrative that unfolds. The phrase 'murder mystery' becomes the entry point of my paper, which re-reads the novel as a fiction of detection. I am using Todorov's homology author: reader: murderer: detective, with a slight alteration, text: reader: murderer: detective.

The narrative begins in a shroud of mystery and the story takes place in the extremely closed, white colonial community. To solve the mystery of the crime and the setting it is necessary to be both discerning and objective. It would not do for the reader to participate consciously in any side-taking. The suggested reading would urge the reader to take an objective, analytic view of the events. The authorial intention to criticise the racial bigotry of the colonial whites is also not lost in the process, as the reader-detective would discover the conditions that forced Moses to murder Mary.

Such a reading of the novel would take into account the interesting structure of the novel and the use of double time within the narrative space. Though much has been written about the novel, I have not yet come across any critical writing that has commented upon Lessing's interesting plotting of the story. My reading of the novel would highlight this aspect. It would also foreground the fundamental point that Lessing makes in the novel 'the causes of the murder must be looked for a long way back, and that it was they which were important'. The mystery when finally unravelled makes two exposures: it exposes the psychology of the victim (Mary Turner) and a deep-seated social neurosis prevalent in the White society to which the victim belonged. At the same time both the detective fiction form and the reading-process are problematised. I hope my reading would be successful in approaching the novel from a new perspective and contribute to the existing readings of the text.

PERPETUATING OUR SECRETS: AGEING AND MEMORY IN DORIS LESSING'S *THE GRANDMOTHERS*

Maricel Oró Piqueras, Universitat de Lleida

Appearance and secrecy have been recurrent elements in both families and nations. Hidden love affairs, unsaid personal preferences, even illegitimate children have lead to important decisions, either for the good or for the bad. In the four short stories that conform *The Grandmothers*, Doris Lessing explores the perpetuating secrets that have marked families and nations at different points in history. In the collection, forbidden passion and unofficial love invade the lives of mothers and grandmothers who must keep them to themselves in order to be accepted within their communities.

In *The Grandmothers*, trauma is counterbalanced by the memory of the moments in which feeling outlanded social norms and restrictions. At the same time, those memories enlighten the process of ageing that scandalously makes the older person invisible within society. This paper aims to explore the complicated interconnection between emotion and norm, memory and trauma, ageing and society within *The Grandmothers*; topics which have long inhabited the fictional world of Doris Lessing.

CYCLICAL CHANGE AND INDIVIDIUAL TRANSFORMATION IN LESSING'S RECENT FABULAR FICTIONS

Phyllis Sternberg Perrakis, University of Ottawa

Doris Lessing in her ninth decade is a startling example of late age creativity. While several of Lessing's recent works of fiction revisit the thematic concerns of earlier works, they do so by casting them into a different generic frame and mood. Thus the concern with a planet overwhelmed by extreme weather conditions, first addressed by Lessing in *The Making of the Representative of Planet 8* (1982), has taken on a new life and very different ambience in *Mara and Dann* (1999) and *The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter, Griot and the Snow Dog* (2005). Similarly, the emphasis on memory and story-telling in recording and grasping the legendary events and figures connected with a culture's transformation told by the Zone Three chroniclers of *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four, and Five* (1981) and by Doeg, "the Memory Maker and Keeper of Records" of *The Making* (22), undergoes a sea change in the "life review" of Twelve, the late age narrator of the long short story "The Reason For It" (part of *The Grandmothers* 2003). This story also contains an extreme physical change to the earth, but it lies on the margins of Twelve's story, only hinted at towards the end of his retrospective narrative. Similarly, General Dann also contains its chronicler, Griot, the focalizer for the last two-thirds of General Dann.[i] Griot evolves into a story-teller/singer, capturing the legends of his beloved Genral Dann.

In the Afterward to Making, Lessing remarks that the inspiration for writing *The Making and the earlier Sirian Experiments* (1981) came from "nearly fifty years [in 1982] of being fascinated by the two British expeditions to the Antarctic led by Robert Falcon Scott" (123). She goes on to explain that "the key people were [engaged] . . . in an attempt to transcend themselves. This was the real driving force of the expedition from the very first" (134). Lessing's interest in memory, story-telling, and transformation (or self-transcendence) goes back to her own early midlife writing and is seen clearly in *The Golden Notebook* (1962). However, the framing of the evolution in a character's self-understanding due to extreme circumstances in the form of a fictional autobiography or a long reminiscence is most clearly seen in *Memoirs of a Survivor* (1974) and given an interesting further development in *Shikasta* (1979). In an essay in a forthcoming collection, I explore the evolution of Lessing's use of the retrospective narrative in these two works, moving from the first estatic awareness of individual spiritual transcendence in *Memoirs* to the evocation of the spiritual transformation of an entire world in *Shikasta* (see "Navigating the Spiritual Cycle"). Her more recent fictions, however, while still portraying the pattern of retrospective narratives that grow out of the response to extreme circumstances, tend to use male focalizers or narrators whose inner growth or self-transcendence is more limited and circumscribed. The fictions themselves are less celebratory and apocalyptic, and more tentative about the final fate of their worlds. Lessing in her late years seems to place more emphasis on the ongoing, cyclic nature of cultural change. Characters may achieve a new vision that leads to personal transformation, but their worlds rise, flourish under a particular leader or set of circumstances, and then begin to decline. Just outside the margin of her characters's vision, the invading force is building up or the rumblings of the earthquake are being felt. Thus while Lessing in late life has again turned away from realism, it is not to the broad sweeping apocalyptic space fiction of *Shikasta, Marriages*, and *Making*, but rather to the more limited fabular visions of *General Dann* and "The Reason For It.".

This paper will examine more closely the link between retrospective narratives, story-telling, and personal and cultural transformation. In doing so, it will also trace the evolution in Lessing's narrative vision from the earlier space fiction novels to these more recent fabular fictions.

DORIS LESSING AS A "THIRD CULTURE KID"

Alice Ridout, Leeds Metropolitan University

The term "Third Culture Kid" was first used by Ruth Hill Unseem in the 1960's. It refers to a child who grew up outside the parents' culture. They are often taught by their parents that their real "home" is elsewhere. However, when a "Third Culture Kid" finally returns to their parents' "home" culture they do not always find it easy to belong. The expectation that the child will make this return is what differentiates the Third Culture Kid from other immigrants. Doris Lessing certainly seems to fit these defining characteristics of an adult "Third Culture Kid."

There was a great deal of research into Third Culture Kids during the 1990's by researchers who often resisted situating themselves within the academy. Many of these researchers wrote up their findings in the genre of the self-help guide. Several websites and chat groups have sprung up around the term which is frequently abbreviated to "TCK" or alternatively, one of the largest websites uses the phrase "global nomad" instead. Due to the fact that this concept has generally been explored in non-academic spaces and genres, it has not received a great deal of attention at academic conferences such as this one.

This paper will briefly outline some of the main characteristics of TCK's as discovered in the scholarship of the last decade. I will then proceed to explore how relevant or provocative this concept is in relation to Doris Lessing's work. Postcolonial theory has offered Lessing scholars a helpful way of exploring her African experiences more fully. TCK's are often children with military or missionary parents so the history of this social group is intimately and interestingly related to the history of colonialism and postcolonialism. I hope this paper will offer another theoretical framework through which it will prove fruitful to explore the place of Africa in Lessing's work.

IDEALS AND INSTITUTIONS: REMAKING THE MATERNAL IN *THE FIFTH CHILD* AND OTHER TEXTS

Ruth Robbins, Leeds Metropolitan University

Not in entire forgetfulness
And not in utter nakedness,
But trailing clouds of glory do we come
From God, who is our home.
William Wordsworth, "Ode: Intimations of Immortality"
from *Recollections of early Childhood*

It is, of course, a man's view of birth: it represses the gory details – less clouds of glory, more trails of mucous and blood, less transcendent and more grossly material, if the real truth be told. This image is a cultural ideal that is enmeshed in our representations, literary and visual, of the moment and consequences of birth: child as cherub, not monster or parasite. It distorts the real experience of women and places them at the service of a masculine view in which men (God the father, the child who is father to the man, the poet) are permitted to be central in a scene from which they have traditionally been absent (no girl child, no mother in this birthing room). This aesthetic ideal, cleaned up of all the gross materiality of motherhood, is at the heart of the institution of motherhood.

My title, then, comes, adapted, from the subtitle Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born: Motherhood as Experience and Institution* (1977), in which Rich argued there was a destructively dishonest gap between the ideals of maternity which women are fed (with their mother's milk, perhaps) by their culture and the actual experience of pregnancy, parturition and its aftermath. It is an insight taken up with poetic force by Julia Kristeva, with poetic force, in her essay 'Stabat Mater' in which she explores in both form and content the tensions and contradictions in the image of the Madonna and the experience of the mother.

This paper investigates the negotiations that contemporary women writers and artists make in literary texts and visual culture with the ideal mediation of their experience. It takes a particular interest in Doris Lessing's novel *The Fifth Child* with its focus on the disruption of the ideal and insistent questioning of the concept of maternal instinct as natural rather than culturally constructed, and it juxtaposes its reading of the text with images, both literary and visual, which raise the same questions.

THE CRISIS OF HERSTORY IN *THE SUMMER BEFORE THE DARK*

Aaron Rosenfeld, Iona College, New York

This paper on *The Summer Before the Dark* examines Lessing's association of personal crisis with social/urban crisis. I am particularly interested in exploring the dimensions of Lessing's juxtaposition of the personal crisis of the main character with the threat of fascism. The "dark" of the title has multiple meanings in multiple registers, and it is this flexibility in Lessing's "language of crisis" that I believe is worthy of attention. Lessing's knack for using the tools of naturalism for allegorical ends, and the tools of allegory for naturalistic, character-driven ends affords her a unique place among post-WWII writers; the city becomes a character in its own right, an emblem of tensions among authority, community, and the individual that she locates both within and without.

LESSING’S FABULOUS CHILDREN

Roberta Rubenstein, America University

Doris Lessing’s fiction includes juvenile characters who fall into two groups—roughly, realistic and fabulous children. Fabulous children are those whose very existence advances a given narrative’s fable-like or fantastic elements: from the psychically-gifted Joseph who appears in the Appendix to *The Four-Gated City*; to Emily, the forlorn child who materializes from a mysterious domain beyond the wall of the Narrator’s flat in *Memoirs of a Survivor*; to Ben, the wild child of *The Fifth Child*, who radically disrupts his family’s tranquility virtually from the moment of his conception; to the early-orphaned Mara and Dann of the eponymous novel, who undertake an extended quest in post-lapsarian Ifrik. Like children in many fables and fairy tales, at least some of Lessing’s fabulous children are literally parentless. In most instances, they challenge not only the values of their elders but the realistic dimension of the narratives in which they appear. This paper considers Lessing’s fabulous children as vehicles for her fables of social disintegration and collapse or--less often--of the potentiality for renewal signified by the their exceptional qualities.

LESSING’S CHALLENGE TO NATIONAL IDENTITY

Kayoko Saito, Waseda University, Japan

As she herself declares in “A Small Personal Voice”, Lessing has been trying to explore the relationship between the individual and the collective. Nowadays, however, that relationship often takes a particular modern form, such as that between the nation-state and the national.

Where the modern state monopolizes “legal violence”, as Max Weber pointed out, by development of the money economy and firearms, it needs a territory where it can achieve hegemony, and thus exploit its homogenous citizenry, or rather, the population. The territory is itself an exclusive space, made visible by a boundary that is also itself an exclusive line, representing spatially the monopolized right to violence and wealth.

National identity is indispensable for securing this territory. For, through national identity as an ideological core the state reconstructs its past and establishes a fiction, that is, historical continuity of the state. Naturally exclusion is inherent both in the reconstruction of the state’s past and in the establishment of national identity.

Lessing has challenged the conception of national identity from various points of view. In *Memoirs of a Survivor* she reveals, by juxtaposing so-called reality and an imaginary world, the fictitiousness of the state, suggesting the possibility of a community which could include multiple and hybrid culture. In *The Fifth Child* she inserts amidst the Victorian style family a yeti-like child, Ben, who, bearing complete otherness, forces people around him to disclose their tacit understanding: we are “us” and not “them” – others. Shifting between human behaviour and beastliness, Ben transgresses actually and emblematically the national boundaries in *Ben, in the World*.

Thus Lessing utilizes narrative and expression in order to destabilize the boundaries which divide one state or one national identity from others, calling national identity, or in a wider sense human nature into question. I would like to consider Lessing’s exploration of national identity, focusing on its meaning in the present, when nationalism has been reinforced against globalism in a post-colonial situation.

LEAVING CAROLINE: THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MOTHERHOOD IN *A PROPER MARRIAGE*

Linda Seidel, Truman State University

Although *A Proper Marriage* precedes the work of Nancy Chodorow and Ann Oakley by twenty years, their theories about the social construction of motherhood may illuminate Martha Quest Knowell's responses to motherhood and her ultimate rejection of the form it takes among the white middle classes of "Zambesia" at mid-century. Chodorow's claim in The Reproduction of Mothering (1978), that "[f]or children of both genders, mothers represent regression and lack of autonomy" can be used to explain not only why Martha rejects the interference of her own mother into her affairs but also why Martha believes she must leave Caroline in order to set her free. Chodorow is careful to point out that the sort of mothering that produces this reaction results from particular social arrangements that need not be perpetuated. Nonetheless, as long as Martha stays with Douglas, her role as bourgeois mother, disciplined by a patriarchal medical regime, remains largely fixed.

Martha's disaffection from bourgeois family planning and motherhood is underscored by her attraction to the "native woman" surrounded by her children: "Martha felt her as something simple, accepting—whole. Then she understood that she was in the process of romanticizing poverty . . . ." Yet Oakley, in *Woman's Work: The Housewife Past and Present* (1974), agrees that women in industrialized societies have become alienated from their own "bodily sensations, [both] reproductive [and] sexual," which produces "an ambivalent attitude to children." At the same time, Oakley refutes the existence of a "maternal instinct" and notes that mothering is learned. In *A Proper Marriage*, the kind of mothering enforced upon Martha becomes a way of controlling her actions and her ideological commitments, so that the only way for Martha to gain individual autonomy is to leave. Furthermore, since the mother under this regime is an agent of white patriarchy, Martha imagines that the only way to secure the freedom of her daughter is to refuse the role of mother altogether.

STILL SEARCHING FOR THE "GOOD" TERRORIST: TRANSCONTINENTAL LITERARY RESPONSES TO TERRORISM

Marilyn Dallman Seymour, Lenoir-Rhyne College

Sixteen years after Doris Lessing's *The Good Terrorist* debuted to American readers, the United States was the target of the worst terrorist attack in its history. Long believing themselves immune to such an attack, Americans were shocked—not only at the viciousness of the deed but also at the incomprehensible idea that Americans could be attacked on their own soil. Yet for many years, Great Britain—and much of the rest of the world—has lived with terrorism in its many forms. Lessing responded to the political climate and upheaval in 1980s London with the publication of *The Good Terrorist*, and 2006 saw the publication of *Terrorist* by the American author John Updike. On the surface, these two books are radically different: Lessing's good terrorist is a young woman, Updike's is a teenage boy; Lessing's terrorist lives in community, Updike's terrorist lives mainly in isolation. Yet Lessing's terrorist is enthralled with leftist politics in much the same way as Updike's terrorist is captivated by Islam. Updike's Ahmed is the angry young man to Lessing's Alice, the angry young woman. Lessing and Updike appear to be as different as their two protagonists: Lessing's work encompasses a wide range of visionary, cutting-edge novels, while Updike's novels tend toward introspection and middle-class angst. Yet at critical points in their respective country's political climate, these authors tackle a subject that is both immediate and incomprehensible. Diverging slightly from Hannah Arendt's description of the banality of evil, Lessing's and Updike's terrorists stumble down the slippery slope to become pawns in someone else's game. This paper explores the commonalities and differences between these two novels and their presentation of "good terrorists," noting particularly the intersections of idealism and realism inherent in each terrorist.

IN PURSUIT OF THE ENGLISH: HYBRIDITY AND THE LOCAL IN LESSING'S FIRST URBAN TEXT

Christine W. Sizemore, Spelman College

Jed Esty describes Lessing's first urban text, *In Pursuit of the English*, as a "mock-ethnological quest for the real England" (212). If Lessing functions as an anthropologist in this semi-autobiographical work, it is as an anthropologist of space, one who brings to her study Gupta and Ferguson's requirements of an experience of border crossing and "colonial encounter" and an awareness of "cultural differences within a locality" (7). As a "colonial-in-exile," Lessing has the unique standpoint of being "simultaneously [an] . . . inheritor and [an] . . . antagonist . . . to imperialism" (Gardiner 13). Lessing reads London with the eyes of Africa, particularly in her imagery; living on the top floor of a house, for instance, is compared to being on the top of a large anthill (77). This hybrid standpoint is an early example of the postcoloniality that inhabits all of Lessing's work (Chennells & Raschke 3). Homi Bhabha situates this viewpoint within "the intersticies" (2) where "colonial space is played out in the imaginative geography of metropolitan space" (168). Lessing's focus is not on the metropolitan city center, however, but rather on a specific locality, a neighborhood within the city. Geographer Jane M. Jacobs explains "that it is through the local, rendered in detail, that the complex variability of the (post)colonial politics of identity and place can be known" (6). Lessing thus prefigures a "local" or "vernacular" cosmopolitanism (Cheah and Robbins 1) as she searches for the English in a specific locality. It is "localist discourse," Ian Baucom explains, that identifies "English place, rather than English blood . . . as the one thing that could secure England's continuous national identity" (16). Although in the story's initial African setting, Englishness is defined by blood, having "an English grandparent" (8), Lessing herself sticks to a concept of place: "England . . . would not actually begin until the moment I set foot on its golden soil" (20). Lessing's dream of golden soil is soon replaced by a neighborhood of grey damp houses that still have bomb damage, but she learns to see the neighborhood through the eyes of Rose and Flo, adding a feminist perspective to her hybrid colonial one. Sociologist Rob Shields says: "Without attention to gender there is a tendency to represent the city as a generally public space, that is to focus on its street life, leaving out the home life within the tenements, flats, dwellings and backyards" (236). Lessing may not finally find the English, but she does find the Londoners whose lives and setting will echo throughout the rest of her fiction. It is in this text, Claire Sprague argues, that the London setting is first "fully realized" (38). Flo's many- layered boarding house, full of strangers and evolving over time, becomes the model for the house imagery that pervades her novels from *The Four-Gated City* to *The Sweetest Dream*. The street "full of old ladies . . . [that] haunt of some species of gaunt and spectral bird" (156) sets up a vision developed in *The Diaries of Jane Somers*. London, as Lessing later says in *The Four-Gated City*, exists in "women's brains" which contain a "six-dimensional map . . . the histories and lives and loves of people, London—a section map in depth" (10). Lessing focuses on the local, a section map, but her hybrid and feminist viewpoint makes it a six-dimensional map.

‘A LARGER RHYTHM’: DORIS LESSING’S SONG AND DANCE

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This paper takes a fresh look at how Doris Lessing’s work explores the relationship between the individual and (various forms of) the collective and offers a re-assessment of her literary style. The focus is on responses to music and song, especially through dance, in Lessing's novels and autobiographical writings. Dancing is suggestive for understanding Lessing’s interest in personal freedom and social or group activity, but also for appreciating her (later) acknowledgement of wider patterns shaping individual behaviour. Examples are taken from the *Children of Violence* and *Canopus in Argos* sequences; particular attention is given to *Under My Skin* and *The Marriages Between Zones Three, Four and Five*. Edward T. Hall’s book *The Dance of Life* (quoted in the epigraph to *Under My Skin* and in the title of this paper) is seen as an important influence. The paper considers both the re-shaping of Lessing’s thought from *Shikasta* forwards and the unifying presence of certain pre-occupations throughout her career, including an uneasy relationship to how meaning is established in words. Lessing’s attentiveness to rhythm is used to explore her prose style and the influence on her work of oral storytelling. The challenges in Lessing’s writings to accepted ideas of reading are considered and an explanation is offered for why her work has been resisted by (or proved resistant to) certain modes of literary criticism.

FOR WHOM THE GRASS SINGS

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In Doris Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing* (1950) nature is shown to thwart human efforts to domesticate it, and, indeed, ultimately to supplant the human altogether. But what does it mean for a text—as expression of human culture—to suggest such a triumph? Can the non- or extra-human be presented in language without being subordinated to the human? What, we might ask, does it mean to say that the grass is singing?

For T. S. Eliot, from whom Lessing takes her title, nature is quite straightforwardly a sign of human frailty and sterility. For Lessing, more ambivalently, nature is a force that has meaning in and of itself—this meaning, moreover, threatens the human. Whereas human characters are always figured as types, forever at the mercy of forces beyond their control and thus without agency, nature is figured as an inhuman and indeed anti-human force that is nonetheless granted agency,

We cannot, however, conclude that nature here is the real character; the inversion is not seamless. For the domination of the natural world can be represented only in human terms. The novel thus agonizes over prosopopeia—seeking a way of figuring nature beyond the figuration of a (human) face.

I argue, therefore, that the text is forced into a double bind: its avowal of nature is possible only on the basis of a figuration that relies on a notion of the human that the book has cast aside in its own representations of human beings. This difficulty, as I explain, is exemplified in a resonant moment at the end of the novel, in which the mad Mary Turner imagines the destruction of her South African farm. In Mary’s vivid and hallucinatory fantasy, rats, beetles, and other creatures invade the homestead. In so doing, they prepare the way for the still-more destructive invasion of plants and trees. The text’s fascination with the natural world is thus shown to be a function of its struggle to understand—and to challenge—the limits of representation, by questioning the possibility of a meaningful non-human form.

“ARABIAN NIGHTS FAIRY-TALE TURNED POSTCOLONIAL FABLE: NARRATIVE GAMES IN DORIS LESSING’S *MARA AND DANN*”

Lamia Tayeb, University of Tunis

In *Mara and Dann*, Lessing makes a powerful critique of western hegemony through the projection of a post-historical landscape that maps survival within the confines of European, western peripheries, mainly Africa. The spatial journey of Mara and Dann from the South to the North is placed in a post-historical time and post-apocalyptic geography. Emphasis is laid on deluvian images of death, destruction and transformation to highlight the ephemereality and relativity of the archetypal geographies of the modern world and project a postcolonial critique of western civilisation and Eurocentrism. Lessing thus manages to make her post-historical landscape and marvellous atmosphere shadow forth contemporary reality: the marvellous journey of Mara and Dann progresses within a postcolonial paradigm where the South/North binaristic logic, the racialist principle, and the violence and bigotism of contemporary international conflicts prevail.

The journey and the personal growth of the characters is another central theme that Lessing adjusts to postcolonial paradigms: the grail-searching propensity of Mara and Dann is an autobiographical reference to the exiled author’s own early longing for the North of the homeland. However, Mara and Dann’s journey develops from a longing for the North and water to a restless hankering after movement. The logic of the destination is lost somewhere in the middle of the journey while the migrant spirit settles inside the characters’ consciousnesses. Lessing makes her narrative slide from the postcolonial framework of modern geographies to the framelessness of postmodern migrancies.

"'A HOUSE FIT FOR FREE TERRORISTS?' DORIS LESSING, TRADITION, AND THE REALIST NOVEL"

Nick Turner, University of Manchester

One of the most fascinating and complicating factors of Lessing's long career is her refusal to be categorised: her unhappiness at feminist readings of *The Golden Notebook* is a prime example. Although often credited with, in that work, kick-starting feminist fiction and experimentation, and later using futuristic fictions, dystopias and 'space fiction', Lessing never abandoned the realist novel, and the form and content of *The Grass is Singing* will recur. Works like *The Good Terrorist* and the more recent *The Sweetest Dream* complicate Lessing's place in the canon. Not only do they appear reactionary and anti-feminist – it seems that all Lessing's old ideals are gone – they show a desire to use 'safe' fictional forms to provide, in the former, what Gayle Greene (1992) has likened to a Condition of England novel; and, in the latter, a survey of late twentieth-century social, political and historical change. Lessing's apparent aims in these books see her compared to Margaret Drabble, a writer whom many would view as an outdated liberal, where Lessing has pushed towards the radical. Earlier, in fact, for Rebecca West, Lessing, Drabble and Murdoch formed the triumvirate of leading women novelists in English.

Using Greene's article as a springboard, and adding to this the many favourable reviews of *The Sweetest Dream*, some of which likened Lessing to Balzac and Dickens, this paper will argue that the author's refusal to always follow trends frees her imagination and makes her a much more significant writer. I will demonstrate that Lessing uses the realist novel, and portrayal of consciousness and social relationships, to communicate her literary and political aims. Her abandonment of autobiography by writing *The Sweetest Dream* can be read as an assertion of the value of fiction over biography. It is the fact that Lessing writes both realist and non-realist novels, fiction, fictional diaries and 'true' autobiography that cements her place in the canon for the future, while too obviously feminist novelists like Emma Tennant, Sara Maitland and Joanna Russ lack the variety and complication to survive.
I will conclude by asserting that it is both possible and valuable to read Doris Lessing as a novelist who is able to work within established traditions, and who may be happily compared to Balzac, Dickens, George Eliot and Margaret Drabble. She is part of a conservative canon of which Harold Bloom would approve. She is also, however, an innovator who disrupts canons and throws us into literary complexity, nuclear disaster, and outer space. In an era of canonical multiplicity – not one canon but many for all – Lessing embraces the old and the new, and thus cements her place in the canon in the twenty-first century.

THE GRASS IS STILL SINGING: LESSING'S INFLUENCE ON ZIMBABWEAN WRITING

Robin Visel, Furman University

Given her continued engagement with the subject of Rhodesia-Zimbabwe in her fiction, memoirs, essays, and reviews, it is no surprise that Lessing's writing is cited in a variety of social histories and alluded to in contemporary novels and memoirs. From Lawrence Vambe's work on the colonial period, to Elizabeth Schmidt's history of Shona women, and Martin Meredith's account of the Mugabe regime, for example, historians have taken Lessing's fictional and autobiographical accounts of white settler life as representative descriptions of Rhodesian myths and mores. Whereas white Zimbabwean writers such as Alexandra Fuller, Peter Godwin, and Ian Holding clearly owe a debt to Lessing's earlier work, her influence on black writers is also striking: in the fiction of Tsitsi Dangarembga, Yvonne Vera, and Alexander Kanengoni can be read traces or echoes of *The Grass is Singing*, *Martha Quest*, and *African Stories*. On one hand, the allusions to Lessing's mid-twentieth-century fiction in the work of these postcolonial Zimbabwean authors are evidence of the veracity and power of her anti-colonial vision. On the other hand, Lessing's early fiction, which represented the lives of Africans through the myopic lens of white-settler experience, is enriched by being re-presented through the critical lens of the African perspective. Kanengoni's *When the Rainbird Cries*, for instance, employs similar natural imagery of rains as symbolic of violence to *The Grass is Singing* (which itself of course recasts T. S. Eliot) in the context of the Chimurenga, or liberation war. Thus he gives voice and direction to the aspirations and anger of Lessing's character Moses, who, in *The Grass is Singing* is an inchoate, incomprehensible figure of colonial fantasy and fear.

THE ‘JANE SOMERS’ HOAX: DORIS LESSING, GENDER, AGING AND THE CULT OF THE (YOUNG) CELEBRITY WOMAN WRITER

Susan Watkins, Leeds Metropolitan University

In 1983 and 1984 Doris Lessing published two novels, *The Diary of a Good Neighbour* and *If the Old Could* using the name ‘Jane Somers’, which purported on the book-jacket to be ‘the pseudonym of a well-known woman journalist’. She submitted the manuscripts of these novels pseudonymously to her usual publisher, who rejected them. They eventually appeared without fanfare but to moderate critical acclaim and were then republished in 1984 in one volume as *The Diaries of Jane Somers* with a new preface by the ‘real’ author.

What has become known as the ‘Jane Somers hoax’ is among the most well-known cases of literary imposture. Lessing’s ‘play’ with the literary establishment raises a number of issues about authorship and celebrity, canonicity and the marketing of literary fiction. What has been critically neglected is the integral relationship between the gendered issues raised by the hoax and the concerns of the two novels themselves. In 1983 Doris Lessing was aged 64. She had been writing and publishing since 1950 and had just completed her sequence of five science fiction novels, *Canopus in Argos: Archives*. Her move away from realism into science fiction had been controversial at best and unpopular at worst. The hoax she instituted at this point in her literary career generates discussion not just about authorship and literary production generally but specifically about the expectations of and ‘proper’ role for women authors of a certain age.

Thematically, the two novels focus on women, aging and the body. Janna, the heroine of both, is an ambitious, confident and well-dressed career woman who is 49 in the first novel and in her fifties in the second. The novels force her to encounter a number of intrusions into her complacency, from the aging, physically dependent and decrepit figure of her neighbour Maudie to the death of her husband and a new relationship. Formally, the novels mark a return to realism, yet the anonymity of this return for Lessing may seem ironic given the opprobrium attached to her venture into science fiction. It may also appear to be a curious choice given the emerging popularity of magic realism, gothic and postmodernist play in women’s writing of this period.

This paper will explore how the novels address issues of gender, genre, aging and anonymity both in their thematic content and formal concerns. It will also examine the links between these concerns and those raised by the device of the hoax itself. The suggestive relationship between the novels and their putative author allows Lessing to ask important questions about, amongst other things, the prominence of youth and beauty in the marketing of the woman writer.

RE-MAPPING CENTER AND PERIPHERY: LESSING'S *IN PURSUIT OF THE ENGLISH*

Linda Weinhouse, The Community College of Baltimore County

The persona that Doris Lessing creates in *In Pursuit of the English* (l950) is a white colonial newly arrived in London from Southern Rhodesia in l950. She is a hybrid character in many ways: she is a white colonial whose whiteness confers upon her certain privileges that were being denied South Asians, Black and Indians arriving from the Commonwealth during the late 1940's, l950's and l960's, and yet as a colonial, a woman and a writer she faces discrimination particularly in the housing market. She is a woman with a child and thus dependent on other women for her domestic arrangements, and yet she is described as a flaneuse, a wanderer within the metropolitan landscape observing the city and all its inhabitants with a keen outsider's gaze. She is a middle-class character who is in pursuit of the working class; but though she lives in a working class neighborhood for her first year in London, her satiric portrait and her mobility sets her apart from them. What Lessing is able to reveal though, given her ironic distance from the other characters, is that there is no mythic norm of pure Englishness or pure English womanhood against which she represents one of the "others." She finds the "true English as elusive as the vanishing tribes of the South African desert: like Bushman in the Kalahari, that doomed race, they vanish into camouflage at the first sign of a stranger" (7). What *In Pursuit of the English*, Lessing's autobiographical account of her first year in London, demonstrates are the ways in which the binaries that Inderpal Grewal describes: home and exile, center and margin, power and passivity, dominant and dominated, personal and political and public and private histories" (236) continually overlap in the society being reconstructed in Post World War II London. Most significantly what the wanderings of Lessing's character, Doris, reveals is that the center of the declining British empire that the colonialist arriving in England encountered in those years was not a unified whole that became decentered and diversified by the influx of immigrants from the colonies, but rather that the center was no more pure than the periphery. Doris of *In Pursuit of the English* is a post modern flaneuse, an independent solitary wanderer in the streets of London who in the process of her wanderings strips away the modernist, grand narratives of pure, uncontaminated nationhood as well as the gendered myths that accompanied the construction of Empire.

SOCIAL CONFINES AND SEXUAL ROLES OF MARRIAGE AND MARITAL SEX: ADRIENNE RICH'S COMPULSORY HETEROSEXUALITY IN THE MARRIAGES OF DORIS LESSING'S *THE GRASS IS SINGING* AND *A PROPER MARRIAGE*

Shaunna Wilkinson, Truman State University

Doris Lessing critiques traditional female roles through a portrayal of women in unhappy marriages in *The Grass Is Singing* and *A Proper Marriage* from her *Children of Violence* series. Adrienne Rich's 1980 article, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence" has unveiled the unsavory effects of compulsory heterosexuality on people, particularly women. Through a feminist approach towards the lives of Mary Turner and Martha Knowell, the application of their social confines, the social projection onto the women's lives and the many consequences of their unhappy marriage, Rich's compulsory heterosexuality illuminates the detrimental structure of marriage. A comparison of the characters' rather different class positions, social pressures, environment, and importantly sexual satisfaction demonstrates the potency of compulsory heterosexuality as a social ideal. Lessing's images of women entrapped in a dissatisfied marital prison where they must play the roles of perfect wife, mother, and finally woman exhibit the validity of Rich's work.

The emphasis on the women's role as self sacrificing females, both in the feminine sphere and the bedroom really characterizes the darkest side of compulsory heterosexuality. By giving up their pleasure for the men's pleasure, Martha and Mary are further conforming themselves into the mold of the heterosexual female. The first submission of their pleasure in the marital bed dictates the further unhappiness and eventual end of their marriages. Submission in the bedroom projects itself onto their daily lives.

The social attitudes of the minor characters reinforce the important proliferation of compulsory heterosexuality, through their own examples of marriage. Martha and Mary's social forces push for their conformity to the marital institution and are relentless to any dissension. Their place as deviants from the social order, with Martha's desertion of Douglas and Mary's relationship with Moses, show the means these women were willing to take to escape the social voice in their head.

POSTCOLONIAL IDENTITIES IN THE GOLDEN NOTEBOOK

Sharon R. Wilson, University of Northern Colorado

Doris Lessing has actively opposed colonialism, imperialism, and institutionalized racism throughout her career. Nearly all of her work (including the *Martha Quest* and the *Canopus* series, *The Grass is Singing*, *Memoirs of a Survivor, Mara and Dann, The Story of General Dann and Mara's Daughter Griot and the Snow Dog*) is explicitly or implicitly critical of both literal and secondary or metaphorical colonialism. Nevertheless, as Anthony Chennells notes, Doris Lessing is generally excluded from the canon of postcolonial writers (6). Although she shares the privileges of "whiteness" and is usually perceived as a member of the colonial elite or even as English rather than one of the colonized, between the ages of six and thirty, she was still "a colonial" living in Southern Rhodesia rather than the "home" country and thus a representative of the supposedly second-rate culture intrinsic to colonies As Margaret Atwood, among others, has described, colonials are conditioned to feel low self-esteem and have an inferiority complex (*Survival* 35-36), including the kind of failure complex Lessing's Martha Quest and Mary Turner represent, about being colonial rather than truly "English." Although critics generally blame gender and racial conditioning or mental illness for Martha and Mary's difficulties, the colonial conditioning of Lessing's characters needs to be addressed in order to examine Lessing's contribution to a postcolonial canon. If Anna Wulf and other Lessing characters do indeed begin as unassertive females, failed Marxists, narcissists, or watchers of a greedy, materialist culture to finally "break through" walls of consciousness (to borrow Rubenstein's phrase) to what has usually been characterized as healing and wholeness, their colonial status is often an unrecognized factor in their journeys. Like earlier and later protagonists, Anna of *The Golden Notebook* must begin a postcolonial quest in order to construct what Homi Bhabha calls an in-between or hybrid space.

According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin, most post-colonial writing has concerned itself with the hybridised nature of post-colonial culture as a strength, rather than a weakness. It emphasizes how hybridity and the power it releases may well be seen to be the characteristic feature and contribution of the post-colonial, allowing a means of evading the replication of the binary categories of the past, and developing new anti-monolithic models of cultural exchange and growth (183).

The Anna at the center of the labyrinthian structure of *The Golden Notebook*—the novel that consists of overlapping diaries, fictions, autobiographies, and "realities" that she tries hard to separate--finally has to recognize that, like the mythical Daedalus, she traps herself in old compartments and categories that can no longer order the chaos. According to Homi Bhabha, "It is in the emergence of the interstices—the overlap and displacement of domains of difference—that the intersubjective and collective experience of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (2). For readers of *The Golden Notebook*, this means that, rather than seeing the novel as a modernist project in which Anna unifies the strands of her life to create an organic whole, we must recognize the text's radical postmodern and postcolonial break with nineteenth-century realistic novel tradition and epistemologies to create a hybrid space.