As we travel further into the twenty-first century, the effects of decolonization and globalization are felt in ever more complex and contradictory ways, and debates about “race,” nation, and ethnicity have become increasingly central. In the past (with some notable exceptions) readers and critics have paid less attention to Doris Lessing’s continued engagement with such ideas than to reading her work in relation to Marxism and feminism. Lessing’s work has also been discussed comparatively rarely in relation to postcolonial theory and criticism, as Anthony Chennells suggests.

Doris Lessing’s late-twentieth-century fiction, specifically *The Fifth Child* (1988), its sequel *Ben, In the World* (2000), and Lessing’s 1999 novel *Mara and Dann*, have been controversial precisely because of the way she writes about “race” and nation. Readers have been disturbed by her appropriation of racially marked stereotypes of the animal, the primitive, and the atavistic in each text. A secondary and related concern surrounds the success of Lessing’s choices of genre and narrative technique; Lessing deploys in unfamiliar and disturbing ways what might be termed the “minor” genres of urban gothic, picaresque, and disaster narrative in her late-twentieth-century work. Certainly, genre and “race” are connected issues in Lessing’s work, and it is only when those connections are understood that we can make an assessment of this fiction and understand Lessing’s attack on dominant cultural and ideological formations in the late twentieth century. This attack is a clear response to the cultural climate of the period in which the novels were written, a climate in
which “race” issues were of increasing concern. In the twenty-first century, issues of “race” and nation are, of course, even more to the fore, and Lessing’s prescience in dealing with such questions is evident.

In analyzing Lessing’s late-twentieth-century “fabular” fictions in relation to ideas about genre and “race,” Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s discussion of “minor” literature proves instructive. Deleuze and Guattari define minor literature as exhibiting three main characteristics: “the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation.” Thus, minor literature has a partial relation to nationality both linguistically and, I will argue, generically. The “social milieu” (18) is not merely background or context for the individual protagonist or author; rather, her relation to that context is directly, explicitly political. The concept of the author as “master” of the text or gifted individual is replaced by a “collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation” (17). Of particular relevance to Lessing’s late-twentieth-century fiction is the conception of “becoming animal,” which constitutes an “absolute deterritorialization . . . an immobile voyage” (35). Deleuze and Guattari suggest that in Kafka’s work the “becoming-human of the animal and the becoming-animal of the human” are part of a “single circuit” (35) that deliberately resists metaphoricity, symbolism, and allegory. This attempt to block the impulse to read the human/animal metaphorically is clearly related to the resistance of the territoriality of genre in Lessing’s late-twentieth-century fiction. When reading this work, we are unable to secure or anchor our response to identity in terms of the well-worn distinction between the animal and the human; we are equally unable to find a safe home in familiar genres.

Although its disturbing qualities were often noted, The Fifth Child was far better received than Ben, In the World and Mara and Dann. Lessing’s blend of elements of fantasy, horror, fable, and fairy tale within the realist fabric and framework of the text was generally seen as successful and as an explanation for “the visceral response the novel has engendered.” Those who admired the play with generic convention also appreciated the text’s ambiguous treatment of Ben’s “difference.” Throughout the text, Harriet, Ben’s mother, seeks to explain his behavior in terms of the animal, the primitive, and the atavistic, suggesting that he may be an alien, goblin, troll, or monstrous changeling. Most significantly, Harriet repeatedly returns to the interpretation of Ben as a Neanderthal genetic throwback.

Despite praise for the novel, many critics saw its message as profoundly conservative and potentially racist. Louise Yelin, for example, argues that in representing Ben as a throwback Lessing evokes the threat of the “enemy within” or racial “other.” She links this process of racial “othering” to con-
temporary British politics, particularly to the increasingly racist elements of British Conservative Party ideology during Margaret Thatcher’s governments of the 1980s, which made use, she suggests, of the figure of “the enemy within.” Yelin concludes that Ben’s attacks on Harriet represent an alien invasion of the white British motherland by black people: “[i]n the national narrative that unfolds in The Fifth Child, the alien invader, a version of the enemy within, is Ben—that is, the discursive construction of Ben’s difference reproduces the discursive construction of racial difference common to Powellite ‘new racism’ and ‘Thatcherite ideology’” (104). Enoch Powell was a Conservative Member of Parliament famous for his “rivers of blood” speech of 1968, in which he argued that infiltration of white British culture by non-white peoples in the post–World War II period would inevitably produce social tension and ultimately violence. Enoch Powell gave his speech on April 20, 1968, to the Annual General Meeting of the West Midlands Area Conservative Association. Shoring up his remarks with classical allusions, Powell spoke of the future of “race-relations” in Britain thus: “As I look ahead, I am filled with foreboding; like the Roman, I seem to see ‘the River Tiber foaming with much blood.’” The speech was substantially quoted in the Birmingham Post on April 22, 1968. Powell subsequently lost his position as shadow cabinet minister under the leadership of Edward Heath. Although Yelin conflates two very different periods in Conservative Party politics and ideology (the 1960s and the 1980s), it is the case that in the 1980s many commentators saw rioting and social unrest in inner-city areas of London, Bristol, Liverpool, and Birmingham as evidence of the accuracy of Powell’s prophecy rather than a legitimate response to deindustrialization, escalating unemployment, and social deprivation.

Yelin’s argument constructs The Fifth Child as one of a number of texts that establish Lessing’s “exclusionary concept of national identity.” Yet this reading of the novel as profoundly racist is possible only because she ignores the generic complexity and ambivalence of narrative perspective in the text. In this respect, Yelin’s negative assessment of The Fifth Child more closely resembles critical opinion about Lessing’s sequel, Ben, In the World, which is more often seen as inferior. Michiko Kakutani argues that whereas the first novel worked because it “created a perfect balance between naturalistic detail and fablelike allegory,” the sequel is an artistic failure because it “reads entirely like a fairy-tale, and a not very compelling one at that.” Other reviewers have commented negatively on the novel’s fabular, allegorical, and picaresque qualities and have doubted the wisdom of switching the point of view to Ben himself. Kakutani describes the novel as exhibiting a “primitive, knee-jerk brand of story-telling.”
The negative response to Lessing’s choices of genre, style, and narrative technique in *Ben, In the World* corresponds with judgments about the novel’s treatment of issues of “race.” Alex Clark writes: “We are given to understand, over and over again, that Ben does in fact belong to a branch of the species that has long since died out.” Kakutani suggests that the novel’s animalistic descriptions of Ben “make him out to be some sort of generic creature, endowed with only the most instinctual reactions and responses, and Ms. Lessing does nothing to give him a discernible personality.” The concern here is that Lessing’s style, technique, and generic choices encourage readers to objectify Ben and position him as animal, nonhuman, and unfathomably “other” in ways that are subtly and disturbingly racially coded.

Responses to *Mara and Dann*, published the year before *Ben, In the World*, suggest similar anxieties about both form and content. Many reviewers note the fairy-tale or fabular plot of orphaned siblings who make a long journey to safety through trials and tribulations. The consensus seems to be that the novel is a failure as science fiction, either because of its “iffy technology” or because of its “clichéd” message of industrialized culture’s dependence on technology and indifference to global warming. The suggestion persists that Lessing never quite manages to jettison her realist roots, which remain as unhappy traces of unrealized characters and unfortunately clumsy style. She would have been better off, as Michael Upchurch suggests, sticking to “her greatest strength as a writer: her ability to dissect the vacillations and delusions of 20th-century people living in a 20th-century world.”

The “tribal” treatment of character in the novel and its implicit racial marking of physical difference also provoke comment. Kakutani points out that “virtually all the bad people Mara and Dann meet are short, thick and ugly; virtually all the good people they meet are tall, thin and gracious . . . the minor characters in the novels are crude types, not individuals.” Erica Wagner also remarks on the “tribal” nature of difference in the world of Ifrik: “Mara and Dann, dark-haired, brown-skinned Mahondis, move northwards, encountering different tribes along the way; the controlling, sybaritic Hadrons; the clone-like, sinister Hennes; the pale-skinned Albs, who claim their origin in the frozen continent of Yerrup.” At its most extreme, a tribe of look-alikes represents, according to Upchurch, one of a number of “menacing racial varieties.” This apparently “lazy” characterization is most apparent in what is believed to be the swift recourse to the idea of the tribe as a way of grouping and naming people in the novel.

The ease with which some readers have made these three texts occupy racist positions results from a failure to appreciate what Lessing has attempted in each case in terms of genre and narrative perspective. These novels make
much more sense if they are seen as “minor” genres that ultimately critique racist narrative. As Deleuze and Guattari suggest, “A minor literature doesn’t come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language” or, to rephrase, “what a minor genre constructs within the territory of a major one” (16). Lessing utilizes characteristics of urban gothic in *The Fifth Child*; she uses the picaresque tradition in *Ben, In the World*; and she works in the subgenre of the disaster narrative in *Mara and Dann*. Thus, Lessing uses these minor narratives to call attention to the racial implications that underlie the narratives of family values and evolutionary progress and then, in doing so, works toward dislodging them.

The representation of Ben in *The Fifth Child* is, as Yelin suggests, intimately related to the decade of the 1980s and what it signified in British culture. However, rather than evoking a white British motherland threatened by “the enemy within” in order to construct an “exclusionary concept of national identity,” Lessing attempts something rather different: something that closely resembles what has come to be known as the urban gothic. According to Roger Luckhurst, in his account of “London gothic,” British gothic fiction in the late 1980s and 1990s began to respond in new ways to ideas of the metropolitan and the urban, creating “a newly Gothicized apprehension of London.” Gothic fiction of the last two decades of the twentieth century, he argues, responds to debates over how best to govern contemporary London. During the 1980s the abolition of ILEA (the Inner London Education Authority) and the GLC (Greater London Council), the principal local authority for London, was a key part of a Conservative ideological agenda that sought to remove conflict with central government and eradicate challenges from implicitly subversive (and left-leaning) local government. Luckhurst claims that we can witness the “deliberate evisceration of London’s democratic public sphere marked out on the physical landscape of the city” (539) and also read it in the period’s gothic fiction. Placing *The Fifth Child* in this context allows us to interpret it as a family “romance” in which the gothic convention of the return of the repressed is deliberately deployed in order to generate a critique of 1980s Conservative Britain and its defensive focus on family values and fear of inner-city social unrest. Margaret Thatcher famously denied the existence of such a thing as “society,” suggesting that there were no larger social groups than the family. In this way, she rejected any larger-scale explanation for social problems that sought to find answers in the consequences of unemployment and inner-city deprivation rather than in individual and family breakdown.

At the opening of the novel we are told that when Harriet and David met, they both recognized something familiar in the other: “conservative, old-fash-
ioned, not to say obsolescent; timid, hard to please . . . they defended a stub- 
bornly held view of themselves, which was that they were ordinary and in the 
right of it, should not be criticized for emotional fastidiousness, abstemious-
ness, just because these were unfashionable qualities.”

The use of the word “conservative” here primarily suggests a fundamental timidity and tradition-
alism rather than any specific political position, but the core values of the 
couple are, more importantly, positioned as defensive. Specifically, they are 
defensive of their normality and typicality in their adherence to family values 
and traditional sexual propriety during the 1960s (when the novel opens), a 
decade in which such values were being challenged. The couple feel similarly 
“abstemious” about establishing their home in London: “Not possible to find 
the kind of house they wanted, for the life they wanted, in London. Anyway, 
they were not sure London was what they needed—no, it wasn’t, they would 
prefer a smallish town with an atmosphere of its own” (13). Given that the 
couple represent family and suburban commuter values, it is not surprising 
(since this is a gothic novel) that their fifth child is born with the opposite 
inclinations: he has an aggressively animalistic, violent, and physical nature, 
coupled with, as he gets older, an affiliation to youthful gang or street culture 
that represents an antifamily and stereotypically urban stance: “These days 
the local newspapers were full of news of muggings, hold-ups, break-ins. 
Sometimes this gang, Ben among them, did not come into the Lovatts’ house 
for a whole day, two days, three” (147). Ben represents everything the couple 
repudiates in their rejection of the urban: sexuality, violence, the city, the 
gang, and the animal.

The reader necessarily shares Harriet’s fear of Ben and her near inability 
to define him as human, but identification with Harriet is only ever partial. 
The text encourages readers to reach beyond surface meanings and construct allegorical ones, but it then deconstructs those allegories so that, as Collins 
and Wilson suggest, “the novella actually undermines its own legitimizing allegorical dimension and that of other legitimizing narratives.” This happens partly as a consequence of what Collins and Wilson term “genre-boundary 
trespass” and partly through the clever use of narrative perspective. In other 
words, if readers are encouraged by Harriet to interpret Ben as a genetic throwback to a more “primitive race,” they are also encouraged to question this interpretation by the novel’s textual and generic strategies of “deterri-
torialization” of genre. Although the narration is in the third person, the 
point of view is closely but not exclusively aligned with Harriet’s; this shift-
ing focalization both encourages and resists the complete identification of 
the reader with Harriet. Throughout the text we see the explanations that 
various characters offer for Ben’s “difference” as powerful but ultimately
insufficient. This involvement of our most as well as our least reactionary responses is, I believe, one of the strengths of Lessing’s use of genre and one of the ways in which the novel makes very uncomfortable reading. Luckhurst argues that the fiction he terms London or urban gothic cannot be described as a “coherent political analysis of London ills”; it can just as easily create “nostalgia for those very spaces of unregulated violence or disorderly conduct.” In other words we might feel an almost pleasurable revulsion when Ben is found eating raw meat because we feel (temporarily at least) able to position him as securely “other” and animal. The serious engagement with deeply disturbing beliefs is characteristic of the genre and explains why critics such as Yelin can interpret *The Fifth Child* as endorsing a racist agenda.

As David Punter remarks when discussing *The Good Terrorist*: “What is not shirked . . . is that parts of ourselves, as readers, as social beings, as terrorists, may be bound up in these liminal depictions. It is this admission of involvement which saves Lessing’s text from . . . the inevitability of complicity, the feeling of voyeurism, the colouring of the salacious.” He continues: “It is, seemingly paradoxically, the case that while we continue to depict the terrorist as uncompromisingly ‘out there’ . . . we remain at the mercy of our own projections, always running the risk of revelling in a fear which we can justify as representative of a State legal system ‘in terror.’” In other words, because we have been forced to share Harriet’s response to Ben we are unable to repudiate it prematurely. We have to acknowledge how we are implicated in fear of difference and thus come to understand this fear and question it.

Harriet’s decision to rescue Ben from the institution where he has been incarcerated (after an unspoken family agreement made without her knowledge) demonstrates that she is unable literally to expel Ben from the family, the human, and the suburban: she is unable to make him “become animal.” At the point where she decides to take him home, she thinks that “he looked more ordinary [read “human”] than she had ever seen him” (100). Becoming human–becoming animal is, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest, a “single circuit” (35). In returning him to the family she takes his place as scapegoat and endures the resentment and blame (but also the pity) of her husband and children (and the reader). This mobility in the figure of the “other” within the family unit is more disturbing than the simple fear of Ben. Who might be rejected next? The text’s strategies thus involve a more complex critique of family values and the place of the mother within them.

Like many writers before her, Lessing uses Ben, her picaro figure, as a way to comment on a society experiencing intense social upheaval. As Angela Hague remarks, the critical consensus is that “picaresque literature flourishes when a society is in a state of flux.” Her article analyzes a number of 1950s
novelists who have been retrospectively grouped with the “angry young men” movement and notes that their use of features of the picaresque novel is important in establishing their critical, “outsider” stance on 1950s Britain. According to Hague, the typical hero of these novels and those of the picaresque tradition is a marginal figure, critical of society but unable to find a space outside it. Other important features are the emphasis on “the material level of existence[,] . . . where existence and subsistence are discussed in terms of ‘sordid facts, hunger, money’ and a profusion of objects and details,” all of which project contemptuous attitudes toward art.\(^{31}\) In the 1950s Lessing was aligned with many of the writers Hague discusses; she contributed her well-known essay “A Small Personal Voice” to the 1957 volume Declaration, which was associated with the “angry” stance,\(^{32}\) so perhaps it is not surprising that she might exhibit an interest in the possibilities of the picaresque, even if decades later.

The picaro is a semi-outsider figure, but Ben’s isolation is far more severe, and his ability to survive by his wits and turn a series of exploitative situations to his advantage (another feature of the genre) are far more in doubt. The emphasis on the material becomes, in this novel, a frequent detailing of Ben’s animalistic urges for meat, violence, and sex. Contempt for elite art forms and the idea that the picaro’s own life is his art form are pushed to extremes when Ben is taken up by a film director, Alex, who imagines making a film about a Neanderthal in which Ben will star as himself: “Alex was saying quietly to himself that Ben was not human, even if most of the time he behaved like one. And he was not animal. He was a throwback of some kind. If the company of ancient men were only a kind of animal how was it that Ben could live the life of human beings—well, for most of the time?”\(^{33}\) The aim of Ben, In the World is satirical. Lessing uses Ben as a device to question how we define humanity and how we separate ourselves from the animal and the atavistic. Some, such as Alex or the director of the research institute in which Ben is imprisoned for the purpose of scientific experiment with other animals, attempt to quantify the difference between themselves and Ben as that between the primitive and the cultured or the animal and the human. This taxonomic attitude, Lessing implies, intensifies the racist attitudes that lie not far beneath the lip service paid to diversity in contemporary Western industrialized cultures. The distinction between animal and human makes use of pseudo-Darwinian hierarchies or distinctions that position white masculinity at the apex of an evolutionary chain ascending from the apes to Africans (often figured as “gorillas” and “apes” or with ancient human ancestors, particularly Neanderthals) and finally to white European peoples. In collapsing such distinctions, Lessing also challenges the late-nineteenth-century positivist narrative that sanctioned col-
onization. As Brickman suggests: “the idea of ‘the primitive’ and its network of associated meanings played a critical role as a central trope of colonialist discourse and its evolutionary approach to racial and cultural difference. The colonialist designation of conquered peoples as ‘primitive’ was an attempt to cloak as scientifically respectable the domination of human beings considered as Europe’s racial others.”34 Indeed, it might be argued that the evolutionary thinking implicit within such distinctions between “the primitive” and “the evolved” is still in play in the United States’ various efforts to export its traditional narrative of democracy around the world.

If it is a feature of the picaresque novel to negotiate the opposition between nature and civilization, Ben, In the World resembles other contemporary “neo-picaresque” texts that exaggerate and parody the very opposition between nature and culture in order to demonstrate the fully cultural, indeed linguistic, construction of ideas of the natural, the animal, and the freakish.35 It is for this reason that, though often aligned with Ben’s, the point of view in Ben, In the World is not confined to his first-person narration as in many early picaresque texts. The narrator is thus able to demonstrate how those around Ben develop their perceptions of him and to show how Ben acquires an understanding of himself through the responses of others. Indeed, the questionable reliability of perception in the novel extends to the “objectivity” of the narrator’s own voice, which is parodied through the humorous device of prolepsis.36 To take just one example, we are told that Alfredo and Teresa had a strong understanding that “ended in their marrying, some months in the future. So their story at least has a happy ending: things turned out well for them” (134). Lessing is here exaggerating to the point of ridicule the device of omniscience, associating our naïve belief in what the narrator tells us with the acceptance of “common sense” judgments about Ben’s difference from others and questioning both.

In Mara and Dann, Lessing returns to science fiction, a genre that Luckhurst argues underwent resurgence in the late 1990s. At this specific historical moment, he suggests, governmental rhetoric was focused on incorporating previously oppositional cultural industries such as avant-garde fine art and popular music into the work of the New Labour government. Science fiction was one of the few genres (others are gothic and fantasy) that “could still find spaces outside the general de-differentiation or ‘mainstreaming’ effect sought by the strategy of cultural governance.”37 One specific SF subgenre he considers is the disaster narrative, which has always formed a significant part of the British SF tradition. Critics such as Fredric Jameson and Peter Nicholls have claimed that such narratives are often concerned with “imperial anxiety.”38 What is striking about Mara and Dann is the way it attempts to rewrite the
construction of an embattled but surviving England that is key to such texts as The Day of the Triffids (1951) and The Midwich Cuckoos (1957). In this novel the ice age that has completely redrawn the map of the world has obscured Europe, or Yerrup (and presumably the rest of the industrialized West). The action takes place in Ifrik (Africa), where drought is threatening all but the northern parts of the continent. In many disaster narratives there is a reversion to a folkloric, pastoral idyll associated by implication with reactionary class and race formations, or as Luckhurst suggests, a return to “conservative narratives of belonging to some ancient tradition inhering in the land.” Lessing alludes to this tradition at the novel’s opening, where Mara and Dann are forced, as children, hurriedly to leave home with changed identities, for their own (and, it is strongly implied, their tribe’s) protection. At this time Mara’s main sense of the world around her is tribal—her sense of her (superior) Mahondi People as opposed to the (inferior) Rock People. We are encouraged to believe throughout the novel that Mara and Dann are special, “chosen” and being watched and kept for a unique destiny. Toward the end Mara and Dann’s “true” identities as Mahondi royalty are revealed. However, when urged to marry her brother Dann and form a new dynasty capable of ruling Ifrik when the ice finally retreats, Mara responds, “I don’t know why you are so anxious to rule Ifrik. . . . It is a desert of dust and death below the River Towns.” Instead of gracefully and gratefully accepting their future, she and Dann run away and continue their journey north. The novel ends with them forming a small self-sufficient farm on the temperate northern coast, joined by several others from a number of different tribes or “races.” Suggestively, Dann asks Mara a question that concludes the novel: “Mara, tell me honestly, no truthfully, the real truth: when you wake up in the morning, isn’t it the first thing you think of—how far you’re going to go up today, one foot after another, another little bit of the way up Ifrik?” Mara admits that this is true. The novel’s final emphasis on process rather than conclusions refuses a mythic narrative trajectory that should conclude with racial and class difference confirmed as absolute, hierarchical, and bound up with a notion of nation and land. Equally, the focus on Mara’s point of view, on the details of sexuality and reproduction, which she contends with during her journey, and on her relationship with her brother, serves to challenge the patriarchal focus and structure of such narratives.

In deploying and disrupting the features of a number of what Deleuze and Guattari might term “minor” literary genres, Lessing aims to challenge the implicitly racist cultural constructs of the animal, the primitive, and the tribe that were becoming significant in late-twentieth-century Britain. It is obvious that Lessing’s long career as a writer has not merely echoed or provided a
commentary on, but often initiated, developments in British fiction. What is noticeable about her writing is the progressive challenge she offers to realism as the century progresses, accompanied by her “eternal (partial) return” to it. As Gasiorek suggests, “Lessing disrupts realist narrative modes from within and turns to other genres in her search for ways to mediate contemporary social life.” As Alice Ridout notes in her essay “‘What Is the Function of the Storyteller?’: The Relationship between Why and How Lessing Writes,” Lessing’s initial attachment to realism was a political one, as is suggested in “The Small Personal Voice,” but as her enthusiasm for Communist politics waned so did her belief in the realist mode as necessarily progressive. As early as 1987 Hanson sees her work as typically postmodernist in its challenge to “the authority of identity and the identity of the author” and in its rough, unresolved style, what Deleuze and Guattari term “sobriety of language” rather than “intensities, reversals and thickenings of it” (58). I would also argue that her periodic and deliberate choice of minor genres suggests a growing awareness that the formal strategies of “expressive realism” can be aligned with reactionary positions that have attempted to silence and exclude the feminine and the minority ethnic. Lessing’s movement in and out of realism (what Gasiorek terms an experimental realism rather than an outright rejection of it) is an attempt not merely to raise issues about form, style, and technique, but also to explore the political implications of certain generic and stylistic choices, particularly in relation to those issues that have dominated the late twentieth century and continue to dominate the twenty-first: “race,” nation, and ethnicity.

NOTES


3. See also Phyllis Sternberg Perrakis’s discussion of species crossing in “The Porous Border between Fact and Fiction, Empathy and Identification in Doris Lessing’s The Cleft” in Part Two of this collection [editors’ note].

4. See Pat Louw’s “Domestic Spaces: Houses and Huts in Doris Lessing’s African Stories” in Part Four of this collection for additional commentary on Lessing’s concerns with race [editors’ note].

18. Further references are to this edition and appear in the text.


8. The full text of the speech is available on several Web sites, including http://www.sterlingtimes.org/powell_speech.doc (accessed April 23, 2004).


12. Kakutani, “‘His Weirdness Attracts Types Even More Weird.’


14. Kakutani, “‘His Weirdness Attracts Types Even More Weird.’


17. Among those to use this term about the novel were Brian Aldiss, “My Sort of Fairy Tale,” *The Guardian*, April 17, 1999, 8; and Erica Wagner, “Good on Science,” *The Times*, March 25, 1999, 42.

18. Upchurch, “Back to Ifrik.”


22. Yelin, *From the Margins of Empire*, 106.


Fact and Fiction, Empathy and Identification in Doris Lessing’s The Cleft” in Part Two of this collection [editors’ note].


29. See Phyllis Sternberg Perrakis’s discussion of how integrating the narrative of the Other changes discourse in “The Porous Border between Fact and Fiction, Empathy and Identification in Doris Lessing’s The Cleft” in Part Two of this collection [editors’ note].


31. Ibid., 213, 216.


33. Lessing, Ben, In the World (London: Flamingo, 2000), 82. Further references are to this edition and will appear in the text.


36. This use of prolepsis was commented on negatively by many reviewers. See, for example, Kakutani, “His Weirdness Attracts Types Even More Weird”; and Pye, “The Creature Walks among Us.”


42. Andrzej Gaśiorek, Post-War British Fiction: Realism and After (London: Edward Arnold, 1995), 93.

43. Clare Hanson, “Doris Lessing in Pursuit of the English; or, No Small, Personal Voice,” PN Review 14.4 (1987): 42. See also Alice Ridout’s essay in Part Two of this collection, “What Is the Function of the Storyteller?: The Relationship between Why and How Lessing Writes,” where she discusses the political implications of Lessing’s turn from realism to utopian and science fiction genres [editors’ note].