

Hybridity as a Rhetorical Strategy
in Doris Lessing's Narration

多丽丝·莱辛

叙事中的杂糅修辞策略研究

黄春燕 著

Doris Lessing

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序

祝贺黄春燕博士的新作《多丽丝·莱辛叙事中的杂糅修辞策略研究》问世！春燕是北京物资学院副教授，多年来潜心研究莱辛，发表的成果得到同行的赞许。这部新作是春燕博士多年研究成果的集中展示，特表祝贺！

多丽丝·莱辛是英国当代女作家，2007年诺贝尔文学奖得主，诺奖官方主页宣布获奖消息时，称其为“以女性体验创作史诗的作家”，赞其特有的“怀疑、激情和远见”，对“一个分裂的文明进行了审视”。莱辛是小说家，她审视西方世界的工具便是其独特的叙事手法。春燕多年前就开始研究莱辛的一个重要的叙事特征——杂糅性，而这个修辞手法似乎尚未引起足够的重视。这部新著便结合米哈伊尔·巴赫金和霍米·巴巴的杂糅理论，集中探讨了莱辛在小说叙事中如何匠心独具地运用杂糅策略。

作者首先证明，杂糅性是莱辛小说创作的一个主要修辞策略。她在文本中呈现多种声音间的平等对话；在叙事中构建出作者、文本以及读者三者之间的互动关系；她与其他作家和理论家有多种呼应与对话；哪怕对自己的创作理念及手法她也不断修正，体现出自身的矛盾性，这些都可以看作是莱辛在文本内外唤起不同的声音、创立对话机制的结果。正是这种对话机制，使文本由单一话语变为混合了多种社会语言的载体，而莱辛是促成这种转换的好手。

这种转换看似魔术师的一个戏法，但不要小看了这种“戏法”，因为它产生的效果是革命性的。巴巴把这种由“混杂”而产生的杂糅称之为“一种颠覆性策略”，无中生有地产生出一个“第三空间”，使貌似的一致与和谐发生质变，产生出作家所期待的变化。“第三空间”貌似多余之地，可有可无，实际上却是一块是非之地，为各种新生力量、复调话语或“异质”文化提供了栖身之地，使它们从压抑中得到释放，在排斥中得到展现，无论这样的“释放”与“展现”是多么的微不足道。无论是出于创新或突破意识，还是纯粹的无心所致，莱辛借助在小说叙事的不

同层面安插“异质”，为自己的小说开拓出一个个“第三空间”，其中的对话与互动呈现出一种与众不同的丰富性、包容性以及审美性。

春燕认为，莱辛的杂糅不仅体现在具体的叙事技巧和写作手法上，她在自传、访谈以及文学评论中，就文学创作做过长达几十年的探究与阐述，在创作思想上也体现出混杂性与发展性。她对莱辛杂糅性的论证从其文本中的杂糅策略逐步推进，一直延伸到作家精神上的丰富性。

莱辛是“混杂”叙事要素的高手，这种“混杂”看上去十分自然，说明莱辛做得得心应手，对“混杂”有极好的驾驭能力。借助于多重叙述声音、多样化的叙事者以及混杂的视角，莱辛创造出一个个双声或多声的场景。无论是回顾型和体验型视角的并存、黑白视角有意无意的混杂、还是女性作家投射出外在或内化的父权视角，都是莱辛在叙事层面摆脱“单一话语”的体现。此外，她在虚构作品中呈现出繁杂与多变，这与她在各种访谈和文学评论文章中的阐释和自我辩护并非总是互为观照，而是在写作理念与实践之间常常存在错位。她在叙事技巧上变化频繁，不仅增加了文本意义的含混，也给读者造成了一定的阅读障碍。不过，如此不确定恰好导致作者—文本—读者之间的互动增加，用伊瑟尔的话说，增强了作品的审美性，也为巴赫金所谓的“无限的”意义阐释提供了基础，莱辛倚靠这种后现代手法，使自己小说的含义变得更为开放，呼唤着巴巴所预期的那种对意义的不断“再阐释”。

莱辛还极善于融会贯通批评流派和写作手法，创新与发展不同体裁，混杂使用不同主题。即使采用某种特定的风格写作，她也并非墨守成规，而是不断尝试融入新的风格元素。她在处理虚构和非虚构作品时刻意模糊虚与实的界限，把现实主义手法融入科幻小说。她热衷于科幻小说，不是为了逃避现实，而是期望藉此为自己的表现手法发掘更多的灵活性，从而能更真实地反映现实。她创作的半传记式小说，她就真实性与虚构性所做的连篇累牍的陈述，都表明她对体裁与风格问题的关注。批评家们常说，早期的莱辛倾向现实主义，之后转向现代主义和后现代主义，最终又回归了现实主义，但这里的“倾向”、“转向”和“回归”都只是批评家的整体把握，其实莱辛的“主义”间不乏混杂，你中有我，我中有你，很难找到符合某种定义的写法。莱辛作品的主题也极其丰富，涵盖她对多种文化、思想、族裔、人群以及社会热点的关注。

莱辛对杂糅策略情有独钟，其根源可以归结到莱辛本人博大的人文

主义关怀。她旗帜鲜明地反对同时期英国文学中的狭隘思维，指出这种思维“受限于英国人自身最直接的经验和评判标准”，因此常常流露出“欧洲中心”视角。她提倡开放的态度，鼓励跨界意识，也因为如此，她反对别人将自己简单地归类为某种形式的现实主义、现代派或女权主义作家。尽管她的作品对性别问题尤其关注，《金色笔记》等一批作品也确实在第二次女性主义浪潮中颇具影响力，但莱辛始终否认自己是“女权主义”作家，而宁愿做一名被“三重”流放的边缘作家。

即使对自己提出的创作理念，莱辛也一再修正，甚至体现出思想上的不确定性和矛盾性。例如关于作者功能，她从深信其肩负说教和改造的职责，到逐渐对作者的职责失去信心，甚至一度将其等同于普通读者，经历了一个由信心满满到怀疑甚至否定的过程。同样，她对文本是否应该反映道德也由立场坚定过渡到模棱两可，导致她的作者可以是凌驾于读者之上的全知全能式的人物，也可以是冷静抽离的旁观者，摇摆于两者之间，更增加了叙事的复杂性。

作者春燕试图告诉我们，由于以上的“杂糅”因素，莱辛一方面有意寻求边缘化及个性化，试图与主流话语保持距离；但同时她又常常不自觉地表现出与主流话语的认同，尽管这种认同最终仍然会表现出某种摇摆性。换句话说，莱辛消除界限的方式是首先突出对立，再模糊差异，最终谋求共存，但这样的共存仍然具有“和而不同”的性质。

莱辛在文本构建与精神本质上体现出的杂糅性，不仅使她的左翼知识分子形象更为突出，文本更加丰富多元，也为她的作品打上了鲜明的个人烙印。这是春燕对莱辛的解读，这样的解读也许存在一定的“误读”，但无疑为我们理解莱辛提供了新的视角。

是为序。

朱刚

2017年8月31日于仙林侨裕楼

Contents

| | |
|---|------------|
| Introduction..... | 1 |
| Chapter One Polyphonic Narrative out of Intentional or Unconscious Hybridity | 38 |
| 1.1 Multi-voiced Narration in <i>Love, again</i> | 42 |
| 1.2 Diversified Narrators in <i>The Diaries of Jane Somers</i> | 49 |
| 1.3 Mixed Perspectives in <i>The Diaries of Jane Somers, The Grass Is Singing</i> and <i>The Golden Notebook</i> | 58 |
| Chapter Two Heteroglossia Inside and Outside the Text | 81 |
| 2.1 From Realism to Post-Modernism: <i>The Grass Is Singing</i> and <i>The Summer Before the Dark</i> | 86 |
| 2.2 Experiments with Genres: <i>The Memoirs of a Survivor, Alfred and Emily</i> and <i>The Marriages Between Zone Three, Four, and Five</i> | 100 |
| 2.3 A Juxtaposition of Subject Matters: Travel Narrative and Female Narrative | 109 |
| 2.4 Difference and Sameness in a Simultaneity: Lessing, Forster, Woolf, Fanon, and hooks..... | 133 |
| Chapter Three A Hybrid Construction of Lessing's Hybridity..... | 154 |
| 3.1 Protest Against Philistinism and Labelling | 159 |
| 3.2 Rebelliousness Cultivated Through Lifelong Struggle | 166 |
| 3.3 Fluidity in Writing Philosophy | 171 |

| | |
|------------------------------|------------|
| Conclusion..... | 187 |
| Works Cited..... | 196 |
| Abbreviations..... | 209 |
| Acknowledgements..... | 210 |

Introduction

Doris Lessing (1919–2013) is a widely studied writer for her contribution to British literature. She began writing in the 1940s and has produced more than fifty books in almost every genre, including more than thirty novels, several collections of short stories, one play, a good number of critical essays, several autobiographies, and some other writing. In recent years, scholars have paid more attention to Lessing's narration. Yet up to now few critics have approached Lessing from the perspective of hybridity, which turns out to be a distinctive narrative feature of her writing. Therefore, this book focuses on the hybridized narration in Lessing in light of Mikhail Bakhtin and Homi Bhabha's concept of hybridity. It tries to argue that Lessing makes hybridity one of her rhetorical strategies by establishing a dialogic mechanism in her writing, a fact that can be demonstrated in the multi-voiced dialogue within the text, the interaction among the author, text and reader, her response to or inheritance of other writers and theorists, as well as the adjustments and occasional self-contradiction apparent in her writing philosophy. Thanks to this dialogism set up both inside and outside, her text, to quote Bakhtin, becomes "a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance" (Bakhtin 358), an effective strategy to replace the single-voice authority in the traditional fiction. In this sense, hybridity is reconstructive as well as subversive.

Bhabha regards hybridity as "a strategic reversal" (Bhabha *Location* 112) and highlights its significance in the Third Space enunciations. The Third Place is productive in that it embraces new power. This hybrid strategy opens up "a space of negotiation" which calls for neither "assimilation" nor "collaboration" (Bhabha "Culture's In-Between" 58), but a space open for reconstruction. Lessing is perseverant in making something anew to fight against the dominant discourse through a multi-dimensional dialogue in which different voices integrate into each other without losing their own distinctive features.

This kind of hybridity in Lessing not only manifests itself in her specific narrative skills, but also in her writing philosophy which turns out to be the outcome of her decades-long contemplation on novel writing in her autobiographies, interviews and literary essays. This book, then, delves into the following three aspects of her work: (1) the diversified voices, narrators, perspectives and the dynamic author-text-reader relationship; (2) the juxtaposition of styles, genres, and subject matters as well as the “dialogue” or “negotiation” between Lessing and other writers and theorists; and (3) the sources of her re-constructiveness and de-constructiveness as reflected in her protesting, adaptive and experimental spirit as well as her ever-evolving writing philosophy.

Firstly, by resorting to diversified voices, narrators and perspectives, Lessing manages to produce in her writing either a double- or multi-voiced dialogue. The co-existence of retrospective and experiencing perspectives, the white-and-black viewpoint and the internalized patriarchal perspective combined help to break the limits of the authoritative discourse, or of “a single utterance” (Bakhtin 358). A new space is thus created, characterized by “difference and sameness in an apparently impossible simultaneity” (Young *Colonial Desire* 25). This polyphonic narrative grows out of both her “unconscious, organic” hybridization and her “intentional” efforts (Bakhtin 358). Besides, the diversity as manifested in her fictional writing does not always keep in line with her views on literary production she presents in the non-fiction. This occasional incompatibility between her writing philosophy and writing gives rise to misreadings on the part of the reader and encounters unexpected reader responses. What’s more, the hybrid use of narrative skills not only brings more ambiguities to the text, but also makes the reading process a difficult one. Nevertheless, this unstable author-text-reader relationship best proves the nature of hybridity as explained by Bakhtin, namely, the “limitless” production of meaning, or the possibility of the “reinterpretation” of meaning.

Secondly, Lessing’s experiment with different styles, genres, and subject matters contributes to the hybridity in her writing. Rather than adhering to set principles, she constantly brings new elements into her texts even when she writes in conventional styles. When dealing with fiction and non-fiction,

for example, she purposely blurs the demarcation between the real and the imaginative and thus injects freshness into the two genres. In addition, her space fiction is not a break with realism but rather a kind of inheritance and development from it. Far from a gesture of escapism, her fondness for space fiction indicates an effort of getting rid of the provincialism of British literature by telling a more universal truth. The semi-fictional writing growing out of her own experience and that of her parents, and the lengthy statements she has made on the topic of fiction and non-fiction all show her concern for the issues of genre and style. Lessing in her earliest years of writing tends to be more realistic, then she turns to modernistic and post-modernistic ways of writing, and finally she seems to return to realism, although these “turns” and “returns” never indicate a complete break. In spite of all these turnings, namely, it is hard to put her into any one of these “-isms”, for she seldom sticks to any single way of writing. Apart from styles and genres, the hybridity of Lessing’s works also reveals itself in her choice of subject matters which cover a wide range of cultures, ideas, races and social issues. As she experiments with different styles, genres and subject matters, the hybrid construction in her work becomes more congenial to her social criticism than any conventional narrative she could ever attempt. It can be proved that she benefits as well as makes breakthroughs from the politics and poetics of the day. Apart from the dialogue with herself, Lessing, by “negotiating” with others, makes her contribution towards the construction of a heteroglossia in literature.

Thirdly, apart from the textual construction, the cutting edge of Lessing’s hybridity comes from her awareness of cultural legacies. Her educational, literary, and ideological background contributes as much to her hybridized way of writing. Lessing protests against the provincialism in British literature and the practice of labelling. Besides, her preference for an open stance and the practice of border-crossing is also held accountable for her strategic use of hybridity. Lessing blames contemporary British writers for their narrowness, declaring that their “horizons are bounded by their immediate experience of British life and standard” (Lessing *ASPV* 14), hence a Euro-centered perspective, a major concern of post-colonial theorists like Bhabha and Said.

Besides, Lessing is unhappy about the fact that she is often regarded as a realist or modernist, or in particular, a feminist writer. Although she cares much about gender issues, for some of her works such as *The Golden Notebook* do have some influence on the second-wave feminist movement, she always stands clear of the feminist group. Being one of the practitioners of border-crossing and the self-styled "thrice-exiled", Lessing protests against the practice of categorization and turns out to be highly hybridized both in writing and in mind. The frequent revision of her writing philosophy not only shows her fluidity and paradoxy, but also has a direct bearing on her choice of narrative skills. As for the author's function, she begins with a firm belief in the author's preaching and transforming power and ends as a disillusioned writer who does not see any superiority in the writer. Similarly, she gradually becomes doubtful about the necessity of integrating the moral issue into writing which she at the very beginning has strong faith in. Due to these changes in attitude, Lessing frequently modifies her role as an author, from an omniscient authority towards a cool-headed and more detached observer in the later years of her writing. No wonder there have been some backtracks and self-contradictions between her writing principles and practice, which all add up to the hybridized nature of her narration.

Bakhtin applies the theory of hybridity to the examination of language and pays more attention to the dismantlement of the single-voice utterance. Bhabha, by focusing on the cultural and post-colonial context, goes on to highlight the active role that hybridity plays in the construction of the Third Space. If the development of language tends to prioritize the independence and individuality of each utterance, the interpretation or translation of cultures calls for more attention towards common ground with differences. bakhtin points out that the tension caused by the contradiction or conflict between two discourses within one single utterance provides the text with productive power. Bhabha regards hybridity as an effective strategy in bringing forth negotiation and dialogue between different voices, a co-existence of difference and sameness on the margin or in a space "in-between" (Bhabha *Location* 38). Both of these ideas find resonance in Lessing, that is, the pursuit of

differentiation and individualization as well as the construction of a polyphonic narrative which is open to multi-voiced negotiations. This doubleness, however, gives rise to an inner contradiction which Lessing is not totally unaware of, namely, on the one hand she tries to speak out from the margin, in an effort to subvert the dominating discourse; on the other hand, she identifies herself, however reluctantly, with the voice from the center. She disagrees with the binary opposition while at the same time tends to turn it into a means of deconstructing the binary opposition. In other words, to blur the difference, she often foregrounds the disparities at first in a way to bring forth the ultimate reconciliation between different parties.

As it has been briefly introduced above, Lessing's hybridity contains de-constructive and re-constructive elements constantly supplementing each other, so that the text becomes highly polyphonic. To approach Lessing's narration from the perspective of hybridity helps to highlight her distinctive narrative features as well as best demonstrate her spirit of resistance and the will to experimentation.

Although acknowledged nowadays as one of the most significant British writers of the time, Lessing has nevertheless had controversial evaluations on her literary achievements especially during the earlier stage of Lessing criticism. In 1965, the first Lessing biography-writer Dorothy Brewster regarded her as "one of the most gifted of the younger group of English novelists" (Brewster 3). In 1978, Michael Thorpe praised her as "the most widely recognized and most seriously considered woman novelist writing in English since Virginia Woolf died in 1941" (Thorpe *Africa* 3). One year later, Roberta Rubenstein, a distinguished Lessing scholar and author of *The Novelistic Vision of Doris Lessing, Breaking the Forms of Consciousness* (1979), speculated that Lessing "will be remembered for the sheer scope, breadth, vividness, and depth of her endeavor as a chronicler of major strands of contemporary experience" (Rubenstein *Novelistic Vision* 26).

Despite these positive views, Lessing has been frequently criticized for her dry voice, the didactic tone of a moralist, aesthetic slackness, clumsy language and structure, one-sided politics, and limited conceptions. Some critics hold an

ambivalent attitude. They, on the one hand, praise Lessing for her distinctive features and, on the other hand, regard them as her shortcomings. Harold Bloom (2007), for one, expresses his dissent against Lessing's winning of Nobel Prize by declaring her works after 1990s quite unreadable and her science fiction fourth-rate¹. Bloom also regards Lessing's style and language as "a kind of drab shrug" (Bloom 6). Though critical of Lessing's weakness, Bloom nevertheless recognizes her strengths, claiming that she is the perfect spokeswoman of the time, for she "has the spirit, if not the style, of the age" (Bloom 7).

Unlike Bloom, James Gindin criticizes Lessing's intensity and steadfast conviction and commitment because he believes that "intense commitment can cut off a whole dimension of human experience" (Gindin 85). Similarly, Water Allen regards *The Golden Notebook* as a sociological work which is too honest to be attractive from an artistic perspective: "As a work of art, *The Golden Notebook* seems to fail. The structure is clumsy, complicated rather than complex" (Allen 276). However, he also admits that "it must also be said that it is essential reading for anyone interested in our times" (Allen 277) for its honesty and uniqueness. Nevertheless, due to the increasing influence of Lessing's writing, especially after she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 2007², her work has drawn more attention worldwide and there have been more and more positive responses to her works. Scholars have conducted research on her from multiple perspectives such as, among the most popular, the feminist, psychoanalytical, realist, deconstructive, formalist, and ecological. Critical studies of her work have mainly focused on her African settings, social-political issues, feminist concerns, Marxist and humanistic elements, treatments of time and space, and philosophical, religious, and mystical elements in her later works. It is not until recently that the narrative part of Lessing has aroused attention among Lessing critics.

1 For more details about Bloom's criticism on Lessing upon the awarding of the Nobel Prize to her, see Sarah Crown's essay "Doris Lessing wins Nobel Prize". *The Guardian*. Oct. 11, 2007. Apr. 15, 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/2007/oct/11/nobelprize.awardsandprizes>.

2 In 2007, 87-year-old Lessing was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature, which makes her the oldest woman to receive this award.

Lessing study in the West emerged in the 1960s, when responses to her work were not as positive as they would become in the following decades. Initially, Lessing scholars conducted textual analyses of several of her representative works, especially the earlier ones such as *The Grass Is Singing* (1950), *The Golden Notebook* (1962), and the five-volume *The Children of Violence* series, which extend from 1952 to 1969¹. These early works of Lessing criticism, introductory in nature, mainly focused on her life as a feminist and on African matters. In 1965, the first Lessing biography, written by Dorothy Brewster, was published, which, besides offering a biographical sketch of Lessing, elaborated on the theme and techniques of her early fiction and short stories.

In the 1970s, due to the influence of *The Golden Notebook*, there were more controversial responses to her work. In *A Literature of Their Own, British Women Novelists from Brontë to Lessing* (1977), a landmark monograph based on feminist literary criticism, Elaine Showalter praises *GN* as “such a monumental achievement that it is tempting to see it as Lessing’s ultimate statement about 20th-century women and the female tradition” (Showalter 308). Showalter is among the first to deal with feminine writing and sexual politics in this novel.

Along with feminism, early criticism also focused attention on African matters in Lessing, the most brilliant among these being Michael Thorpe’s *Doris Lessing’s Africa* (1978), a collection of essays addressing African materials in her early novels and short stories. More importantly, Thorpe is one of the earliest critics to notice Lessing’s shifting points of views although at that time it “may be simply a shifting of her Zambesian eye to new subjects” (Thorpe x).

1 In recent years, some of Lessing’s later works have added to the topics of discussion, in particular the *Canopus in Argos: Archives* series, her four-volume science fiction published continuously from 1979 to 1982, and *The Good Terrorist* (1985). In order to trace the trajectory of her writing, this book will integrate several significant yet less discussed works, including *The Summer Before the Dark* (1973), *The Memoirs of a Survivor* (1975), *Love, again* (1996), *The Diaries of Jane Somers* (1983), and *Alfred and Emily* (2008).

Ruberta Rubenstein pays attention to the presentations of consciousness in *The Novelistic Vision of Doris Lessing: Breaking the Forms of Consciousness* (1979). According to Rubenstein, "the common denominator in Lessing's fictional world is the mind: the mind discovering, interpreting, and ultimately shaping its own reality" (Rubenstein *Novelistic Vision* 7). Rubenstein's viewpoint was quite insightful for later Lessing critics, for Lessing has been known to be involved in consciousness and dreams in her later writings due to the influence of Jungian psychoanalysis and oriental mysticism, such as Sufism¹.

As critics became more concerned with Lessing and her writings, *Contemporary Literature*, an academic quarterly in the United States, published a special issue on her in 1973², followed by another special issue published by *Modern Fiction Studies* in 1980³. The decade also witnessed the appearance of several significant Lessing monographs that proved to be milestones in Lessing scholarship. For instance, *Notebooks, Memoirs, Archives: Reading and Rereading Doris Lessing* (1982) edited by Jenny Taylor, "is representative

1 Lessing has been heavily influenced by this Islamic mysticism in her later years. A more detailed analysis can be found in Muge Galin's *Between East and West: Sufism in the Novels of Doris Lessing* (1997).

2 In this special issue on Lessing, 11 critical essays plus 1 introductory article and 1 interview were collected, covering a wide range of topics, perspectives, and approaches for a study of Lessing's earlier works. This edition also offers a checklist of Lessing criticism with almost 80 critical essays starting from the 1960s. This collection of essays makes a good beginning in the study of Doris Lessing and calls for more diversified critical views in Lessing study. It not only touches upon the structural features of Lessing's work, but also discusses from such perspective as socialism, feminism and archetypal analysis, so as to further the understanding of Lessing's experimentalist way of writing and "encyclopedic range and complexity" (Pratt 416-417). In a sense, this special issue on Lessing is a critical initial step in Lessing studies.

3 The special issue on Lessing published by *Modern Fiction Studies* is composed of 13 critical essays plus 1 book review and a checklist, adding up to 176 pages. The checklist "is essentially an updated supplement to Selma Burkom's 1973 checklist" (King 167), consisting of criticism, interviews, biographical commentary, and bibliography.

in many respects of the sins and virtues of Lessing scholarship” (Knapp 182). A remarkable monograph in the early period of Lessing studies, this book, however, is criticized for its over-emphasis on the feminist elements in Lessing’s novels, a perspective which Lessing constantly complains about as a “sin” and which has been blamed for an “overly personal and emotional standpoint which interferes with the reader/text relationship” (Knapp 183). This so-called “sin” may result from the fact that all eight contributors to this book are female. Similarly, most Lessing criticism in this period puts emphasis on her early works in the 1950s and 1960s to the exclusion of her works of 1970s, such as *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971) and *The Summer Before the Dark* (1973).

In 1985, Eve Bertelsen published *Doris Lessing*, a selection of press reviews of Lessing from 1950 to 1982. Katherine Fishburn also published *The Unexpected Universe of Doris Lessing: A Study in Narrative Technique*, in which she addresses narrative technique in Lessing’s seven science fiction works. One year later, *Modern Critical Views: Doris Lessing* (1986), edited by Harold Bloom, was published and a second edition came out in 2003 enriched by new perspectives and viewpoints¹.

One of the most important monographs for Lessing studies is Claire Sprague’s 1987 *Rereading Doris Lessing, Narrative Patterns of Doubling and Repetition*, which provided an examination of the narrative patterns—in particular, the patterns of repetition—in Lessing’s work. Probing into Lessing’s separate and merging selves, as well as her dialectical use of name patterns and repetitive motifs, and tracing them back to her narrative adventures as a whole, Sprague concludes that it is with the help of the narrative patterns of doubling and repetition that Lessing is capable of presenting her major themes and concerns. Before Sprague, few Lessing scholars or critics had approached Lessing from the perspective of narrative patterns.

1 In 2003, Bloom published a new edition entitled *Bloom’s Modern Critical Views: Doris Lessing*, replacing the 9 essays with 8 new ones, with the intention to bring together what he judged to be “the most useful criticism yet published on the fiction of Doris Lessing” (Bloom 1986 vii).