

New World Order—indeed, for this political action he deserves praise; rather, his analysis points to the limitations of self-critique for domestic subjects of empire.

These limitations, however, should be qualified. They are not the faults of the author, but the necessary conditions in which he writes. *Late Imperial Romance* maps important connections between imperial contexts and literary form in ways that will provide theoretical paradigms and strategies of political critique for subsequent scholars to explore in more detail.

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Earl G. Ingersoll, ed. *Doris Lessing: Conversations*. Princeton: Ontario Review Press, 1994. pp. xv, 248. \$17.95 pb.

Margaret Moan Rowe. *Doris Lessing*. New York: St. Martin's, 1994. pp. xii, 137. \$37.50.

Ruth Saxton and Jean Tobin, eds. *Woolf and Lessing: Breaking the Mold*. New York: St. Martin's, 1994. pp. xvi, 208. \$58.00.

Interest in Doris Lessing's work was renewed with the publication in 1994 of *Under My Skin: Volume One of My Autobiography, to 1949*. The three critical works under review also appeared in 1994.

Saxton's and Tobin's volume, *Woolf and Lessing: Breaking the Mold*, is a well-organized, theoretically informed collection of essays that compare the fiction of Lessing and Virginia Woolf. Part One is titled "Constitution of a Female Subject." Claire Sprague muses over a perception many readers of Woolf and Lessing share: "I have always imagined a deep and visible connection between Lessing and Woolf. But that connection was elusive. . . . Woolf's name never appears in Lessing's criticism, and verifiable allusions to Woolf in Lessing's work are almost nonexistent" (3). Sprague, a prolific contributor to Lessing scholarship, demonstrates her Auerbachian and Bakhtinian approach to the multipersonal and dialogic modes in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Golden Notebook*. Roberta Rubenstein considers yearning and nostalgia in Lessing's and Woolf's production; her exposition focuses on the "recurrent . . . emotionally saturated meanings . . . of place (*home*) and of person (*mother*)" (15). In "Woolf's *Between the Acts* and Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*: from Modern to Postmodern Subjectivity," Magali Cornier

Michael analyses the novels as "transitional" texts. Michael argues that modernist texts by women anticipate postmodern strategies in relationship to subjectivity, "because of their interest in finding ways to depict the consciousness of *women*" (53). According to Michael, women novelists' production diverges from canonical high modernism, while the postmodern impetus in feminist fiction can be traced back to the experimentation of women modernists such as Lessing and Woolf.

In Part Two, "Redefining Roles and Relationships," Christine W. Sizemore considers Woolf and Lessing as urban novelists in *Mrs. Dalloway* and *The Four-Gated City*: "Woolf and Lessing share an experience of being an outsider that allows each to observe the city from a different standpoint than someone who experiences the city from within the majority culture." Sizemore draws on the notion of the "outsider-within" developed by African-American sociologist Patricia Hill Collins: according to Sizemore, Collins explains that African-American women ghettoized in domestic work see "white power demystified," but they also know that they can never belong to their white "families." This "outsider-within" stance functions "to create a new angle of vision" (60). Lessing's and Woolf's protagonists are shown preserving two views of the city, the view from within and the differing perspective of the outsider. Clarissa Dalloway and Martha Quest "use alienation creatively to read the modern city," particularly change and the different movements of time in the city (71). In another essay, Lisa Tyler demonstrates the ways in which Woolf and Lessing use the Demeter myth to replace "the traditional heterosexual romance plot . . . with the cyclical story of the preoedipal bond, separation, and reunion" (74).

Ruth Saxton opens Part Three, "Creativity, Consciousness, and the Privileged Mind," with her astute essay entitled "The Female Body Veiled: from Crocus to Clitoris." Saxton writes that Woolf and Lessing share the mind/body split: "deep within each writer's work is a lurking suspicion that woman's biology may indeed be a trap for her brain" (122). Saxton maps the various, conflicted gendered pairings of protagonists in the fiction, concluding that neither Lessing nor Woolf pushes far enough the possibilities within "new social, cultural paradigms . . . lesbianism, onanism, newly defined heterosexuality, new family/maternal plots, new configurations of community" (122). Linda E. Chown's essay considers Lessing's and Woolf's dismissal of organized psychology. Chown discovers four parallels in their writing, parallels which serve to indicate alternatives to the limiting and formalized approaches of psychology: "transparencies . . . engagements with 'dark sense' . . . ludic playfulness, and . . . revised relations between wholeness and disorder" (124). According to Jean Tobin's concluding essay, "creativity is a normal, healthy human activity requiring deliberate choice and courage" (177). Tobin contrasts the Romantic view of "creativity" as passive genius and Freud's view of the ar-

tist as neurotic—unfulfilled or sick—with appreciation for these female writers' struggle to cross into the area of the unknown in order to write. None the less, Tobin allows for the ways writers invite difficult—some may say Freudian—material to emerge, including shifts in pronoun, shifts in gender, transposition, shuffling, and generalizing. Tobin values *The Waves* and *The Golden Notebook*, evidence of Woolf's and Lessing's determination to "break the mould" of the novel and to "break the form" of their lives (179).

Margaret Moan Rowe's *Doris Lessing* appears in the Women Writers Series. According to the General Editors, Eva Figes and Adele King, all the volumes in this Series "are written by women because we believe that men's understanding of feminist critique is only, at best, partial" (ix). But although Rowe discusses a range of feminist concerns that are treated in Lessing's fiction—issues such as domestic violence, sexual difference, and ageing—she argues that the "doctrinaire quality of so much contemporary feminism" would be "unappealing" to Lessing (29). Certainly Rowe's straightforward, jargon-free discourse serves as an implicit rebuke to the practice of many feminist critics. In the strong concluding chapter to *Doris Lessing*, Rowe summarizes Lessing's ongoing struggle with her critics: "Lessing's call for a 'serious criticism' in 'The Small Personal Voice' was the first important instance of what has become a cottage industry for her: admonishing critics (usually academic) and directing readers" (112).

This tendency is evident in *Doris Lessing: Conversations*. Earl Ingersoll has done an excellent job of editing these "literary" interviews, as he describes them, which were conducted in various countries, and which span the years 1964 to 1993. Ingersoll's volume complements the earlier, influential selection of interviews in Paul Schlueter's *A Small Personal Voice: Doris Lessing Essays, Reviews, Interviews* (1974), bringing us up to date on Lessing's recent preoccupations. In the later interviews, for example, Lessing discusses her (then-forthcoming) autobiography. She also describes her difficulty with the sixth volume she would like to write for her unfinished "Canopus in Argos: Archives" science-fiction series. Other projects she ponders are the film and opera versions of *The Marriages between Zones Three, Four, and Five*.

As Eve Bertelsen has explained in her essay on the persona developed by Lessing in interviews, Lessing's responses to direct questions often become distinct, wandering vignettes. Ingersoll seems content to let Lessing's musings stand, indeed perhaps to accentuate them by his attentive editing. Ingersoll's headings—for instance, "One Keeps Going," "Creating Your Own Demand," "The Need to Tell Stories," "A Writer is not a Professor"—are quotations or paraphrases from the interviews. It seems, fitting, then, that Lessing should be allowed to have the last word in this review. Although Ingersoll, Rowe, Saxton and Tobin have made significant contributions to Lessing criticism, it seems appropriate to conclude by quoting, from Ingersoll's volume, a re-

mark made by Lessing as she compared her own writing about Africa in *The Golden Notebook* and in her autobiographical prose: "fiction," she asserted, "has it over the [analytic] 'truth' every time" (236).

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Susan J. Warwick. *River of Now and Then: Margaret Laurence's "The Diviners"*. Toronto: ECW Press, 1993. pp. 87.

The question: how does one fit what Henry James called a "loose, baggy monster" of a novel like Margaret Laurence's *The Diviners* into the short, tidy package required for ECW's Canadian Fiction Studies? The answer is provided by Susan Warwick in her reader's guide, *River of Now and Then: Margaret Laurence's "The Diviners"*.

In the first section, entitled "The Importance of the Work," Warwick asserts that "[m]ultiplicity, plurality, inclusiveness" (11) are at the heart of this last novel in Laurence's Manawaka cycle: "Although Laurence's writing as a whole discloses her belief in the connectedness of all existence, it is in *The Diviners* that her commitment to a pluralistic vision of the world is most fully realized" (11). According to Warwick, "*The Diviners* is not a political tract, but it is deeply political in its attention to the plight of the dispossessed, the disadvantaged, and the environment"; it "addresses universal concerns around the issues of race, class, gender, and the environment" (12). Warwick also argues that *The Diviners* is important as a discussion of "the art and craft of fiction itself" (13).

In her brief introduction to the central section of the guide, "A Reading of the Text," Warwick explains that, since the central character, Morag, is a novelist writing a novel that is probably *The Diviners* itself, the text constitutes a metafiction: "all aspects of the novel—in particular its narrative structure, characterization, and patterns of imagery—serve to reinforce the direct statements made by Morag concerning the relation between fact and fiction, between experience and its recreation in words" (19). She adds:

In writing *The Diviners*, Laurence created her most complete, most complex vision of human existence. Here, her previous inquiries into the relations between past, present, and future, between men and women, between the