

■ Dislocation, Relocation, and the Position of the In-Between: Doris Lessing's *In Pursuit of the English**

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Abstract

Doris Lessing's *In Pursuit of the English* (1960) offers a view of the changing map of postwar London from the author's arrival in 1949. It describes the emotions Lessing experienced during the process of dislocation and relocation throughout her journey from South Africa to the United Kingdom. As a white immigrant, Lessing is both an insider and outsider. Her personal spatial experience and reconception of the history of London provide routes through which Lessing can resituate her identity as an English national and as a woman. Lessing conveys the ambiguity of her position through the narrator's embodied subject and spatial positioning throughout the journey. In *In Pursuit*, the narrator is situated in an "in-between position": a status of uncertainty or otherness. Elizabeth Grosz develops the concept of the in-between further and proposes that to reinvestigate the space of the in-between is to make culture more dynamic and move into the future. In this book, the narrator explores individuals with similar situations. They transit themselves from being the other to their own becoming through the reconstruction of relations. Lessing's characters regain a sense of being and recover

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from feeling dislocated in a devastated London through their memories and the stories that they tell. Williem Frijhoff and Susan Stanford Friedman have proposed that storytelling is crucial in the reconstruction of cultural memory. Lessing's life writing pieces together lost memories of the city and the everyday lives of locals. Even more, Lessing's depiction of women's community leads to the emergence of those women's new identity through their shared living experience and unique voices. Through an understanding of the relationships between insiders and outsiders, both Lessing and the people she meets in London are involved in the city's changing and progression.

Keywords: position of the in-between, Doris Lessing, postwar London, *In Pursuit of the English*

In Pursuit of the English, first published in 1960, is a work in which Doris Lessing both examines her younger self and narrates the discovery of her own self and her emotional ties to English people. In her “pursuit” of “the English,” Lessing develops a perception of English values and forms an emotional bond with those around her. Her capacity to appreciate shared feelings characterizes her journey toward her identity as a member of postwar English society. At the beginning of the book, Lessing narrates her exile and arrival in London:

It is, then, because of my early and thorough grounding in the subject of the English character that I have undertaken to write about this business of being an exile. First one has to understand what one is an exile from. And unfortunately I have not again succeeded in getting to know an Englishman. That is not because, as the canard goes, they are hard to know, but because they are hard to meet. (6)

In Pursuit is one of Lessing's few works that addresses the experience of an exile from the perspective of a descendant of white settlers in a colony of the British Empire: South Africa. For the English settlers from whom she descended, the word “English” was a source of emotional conflict representing the culture of their home country, which they may have regretted leaving. In 1949, the British Commonwealth of Nations was renamed The Commonwealth of Nations. Before the London Declaration of 1949, the British Empire entered a new era as it began decolonization and acknowledged republics and other countries that had once been British colonies. In the same year, Lessing left for London with her son after her second marriage ended. Lessing states that “England was at its dingiest, my personal fortunes were at their lowest, and my morale was at zero,” making the experience “admirably deplorable” (14-15). Her personal situation is compared with the national condition of the UK. She feels a sense of exile during an unpredictable trip where she has few choices. Meanwhile, through continual self-questioning, she re-examines her identity by linking herself to those she is unfamiliar with, including the English she has met in Africa and England. She feels dislocated from her environment and becomes both an insider and an outsider. She also encounters challenges because England for her is the “grail” (13) and she is going to pursue an ideal world. She attributes this trait to her parents, who have “a spirit of risking everything and damning the cost” (13).

In Pursuit embodies the “instability of identity” through the ambiguous voices between the author Lessing and the narrator Doris since it is “generically rather indeterminate” according to Susan Watkins (1).¹ Lessing even demonstrates

¹ According to Susan Watkins, *In Pursuit* is “originally subtitled ‘a documentary,’” and “the text is part memoir, part autobiographical essay and part fiction” (1). Therefore, “Doris” in this essay is used

this sense of uncertainty via the position of the in-between throughout Doris's journey in South Africa and the UK. Her status as an insider and outsider makes her and her readers to consider the experience of being dislocated and relocated both in a British settlement and London, which are also undergoing transition. Her ambiguous position and lack of a fundamental identity bring to mind a concept developed by Elizabeth Grosz in *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*. Grosz notes that numerous theorists have developed concepts of in-betweenness² and Grosz's concept of the space of the in-between stems from Plato's chora, "which is not a space, a space without boundaries of its own" (*Architecture* 91). The in-between is mutable, undefined, and full of possibility. Grosz therefore deems it a critical space "around identities, between identities—where becoming, openness to futurity, outstrips the conservational impetus to retain cohesion and unity" (92). It is a position or situation that is neither named nor categorized. One's identity is thus not static, and it can be reinterpreted. Grosz's concept of the in-between does not blend the dichotomous concepts of culture and nature. Furthermore, Grosz aims to re-explore "the nature" that is often "produced, inscribed, and contained by the frame of the symbolic and the imaginary, that is, the frame of culture" (97). For Grosz, in the vague position of the in-between, "the nature" may break through the consistency of the symbolic order of language within a culture. This implies the possibility of interrupting long-standing hierarchy. Although Lessing was raised in English culture, she is determined to venture beyond the heritage of her mother country, the UK.

In Pursuit depicts nature as the narrator's sense of embodiment and as the situating of bodies throughout her journey. According to Grosz, "nature is the domain of bodies, the domain of materiality" (*Architecture* 98). The exploration of bodies is also a method of investigating nature in every aspect of the world. Lessing's works often convey the body's lived experiences as central to social reciprocity, as is described by Maurice Merleau-Ponty.³ Dorothea Olkowski explains that Merleau-Ponty's "phenomenological idea of situated embodiment" reflects "what it means to be a spatially situated and embodied subject," and it is crucial "for our individual and our intersubjective lives" (7). The spatial

to refer to the narrator rather the author Lessing herself.

² "The model of an in-betweenness" has been proposed by "contemporary philosophers, including Deleuze, Derrida, Serres, and Irigaray" (Grosz, *Architecture* 93).

³ Merleau-Ponty's concept of intersubjectivity is based on embodied experience: "Reciprocally I know that the gestures I make myself can be the objects of another's intention. It is this transfer of my intentions to the other's body and of his intentions to my own . . . that makes possible the perception of others" (118).

experiences of bodies are closely connected to both the self and others. In *Space, Time and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies*, Grosz emphasizes “the exploration of conceptions of space and time as necessary correlates of with the exploration of corporeality” (84). Bodies are understood within the context of their temporal and spatial backgrounds, and how bodies are perceived may serve as a representation of time and space. Lessing’s journey is a process of becoming aware of her true feelings through involvement in others’ lives and hearing their voices. Lessing’s exploration of female bodies indicates that women can come to understand their nature by resisting “forms of power to fix or freeze” and transitioning “towards the future” (Grosz, *Architecture* 105).

Lessing also presents the female perspective of time and space in postwar London through her depiction of the circumstances of female bodies in living-spaces and in cities. *In Pursuit* serves as an investigation similar to that of several female feminist writers of the relationships among bodies, time, and space. In *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, Lucy Irigaray proposes that “the transition to a new age requires a change in our perception and conception of *space-time*, the *inhabiting of places*, and of *containers*, or *envelopes of identity*” (7). Irigaray stresses that men and women position themselves differently within domestic and public spaces. In addition, male and female identities are influenced by how such spaces are conceptualized and how men and women situate themselves within these spaces. Grosz asserts that “conceptions of spatiality and temporality” have rarely been discussed from the perspective of “more mundane concerns of day-by-day politics”; therefore, she contends that Irigaray’s “reconceptualization of the representations of space and time” warrants investigation because it is related to the “reconceptualization of the relations between men and women” (*Space* 120). Lessing’s journey not only represents her own situation but also those of other women whose bodies are confined within the context of everyday life. She also reassesses the concept of the English from the perspectives of the local people of London.

Lessing’s characters regain a sense of being and recover from their feelings of dislocation through their memories and the stories that they tell. In an article discussing the reconstruction of the memory of a city, Williem Frijhoff notes that “the destruction of physical space is vital for city memory because it involves not only a terrible wartime episode, but also a strong element of urban memory” (38).⁴ He indicates that the concepts of memory, episodes (storytelling), and space are intimately interwoven. Similarly, Susan Stanford Friedman proposes that memory

⁴ In the article, Frijhoff analyzes the process of reconstructing the memory of Rotterdam after World War II. He discusses memories of the city in terms of its physical space, urban space, and civic space.

and reflection are crucial to storytelling (*Mappings* 153). After becoming acquainted with London through the voices of locals, Lessing realizes that Londoners have a sense of dislocation and anxiety because of the tremendous changes brought on by World War II. Lessing even performs a type of personal spatialization through her semi-autobiographical writing and her recounting of the personal stories of London residents. According to Susan Green, life writing involves “self-spatialization” in the process of observing life and writing as well as observing self and others (50). Lessing’s narrative presents London as a multicultural environment in which community and togetherness are made possible through empathy. The autobiographical form provides a personal experience but the parallel use of fiction blurs the boundary between fact and imagination. Lessing’s journey thus includes her pursuit of an imagined Englishness and her confrontations with English people in real life. Louise Yelin suggests that the mixture of “memoir, travel writing, satire, and ethnography” is Lessing’s method of “scrutinizing binary oppositions such as those between home and exile [and] Englishness and foreignness, in which Englishness is constructed” (57-58). By involving herself in the lives of locals as well as recording her own observations, Lessing perceives their anxiety and even comforts them. Through life writing, Lessing remaps insignificant corners and neglected spaces. According to Christine W. Sizemore, Lessing, like Virginia Woolf, depicts “the fragmentation in space, in interpersonal relationships, and in time that is an integral part of living in a modern city” (60). These fragmentary descriptions form a map of London depicting the everyday routes of Lessing and her friends. London is pieced together from the perception of those local women, whose voices convey values neglected in traditional English society.

I. Dislocation in the Wilderness

In Pursuit begins with the narrator, Doris, remembering her childhood in South Africa, and through the narration, readers understand that Doris associates a feeling of dislocation with the first Englishman she meets, namely her father. The notion of “the English” is illusory and contradictory for her father, who has followed government policy of developing farming in Africa but fails. In *Under My Skin: Volume One of My Autobiography, to 1949*, Lessing recounts her life from her childhood up to the time she leaves for London. She mentions that her parents “were lost in daydreams and imaginings” and that her father immersed himself in “planning for gold, sinking shafts and digging trenches looking for reefs” (156-57). He has dreams about the

wilderness and the land in Africa but struggles in his rural reality. However, his failure leads to manic behavior, such as staring out at the wilderness and yelling, "Mad! Mad! Everyone! Everywhere Mad" (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 5). Although far from their country of origin, they "listened to the News from London on the radio every night, introduced by the sonorous notes of Big Ben" (Lessing, *Under My Skin* 157). Doris's father identifies himself as an Englishman and firmly upholds the principles that he believes to be befitting of a civilized English person. He harbors stereotypes of Black individuals as unhygienic and feels uneasy at belonging to the White minority in the colony (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 6). Through his story, Lessing reveals the complexities of pursuing and defining Englishness. She indicates that her father lives in a colony where the word "English" conveys various meanings. That is, "the word *English* is tricky and elusive enough in England" whereas it is even more complicated in South Africa (6). When the British Empire is losing power in Africa, Lessing perceives her father's rejection of the changing politics of the United Kingdom. When he reads the newspaper, he feels a sense of bitterness, betrayal, and injury upon seeing the word "English" (6).

In her autobiography, Lessing describes the anxiety she experiences as a young fourteen-year-old female adolescent. She finds herself crying out "mad, mad, mad" in response to her parents' unreasonable expectations and demands (*Under My Skin* 156). Her mother tries to force her to wear clothes of her cousin mailed from London even though those "well-brought-up little girls' clothes" are too small for her and too restrictive for the country life that she is living (155). She feels that the natural world outside of her home provides her with a space in which she can escape from feelings of hopelessness. She rebels against her mother's principles by walking into the bush, which her mother deems dangerous. Reading becomes part of the self-education Lessing undergoes starting from the age of fourteen and it assists her in daydreaming about the "glamorous futures" (160). Young Lessing's awareness of her body as a girl is reflected in her sympathy for the eponymous rebellious heroine of the novel *Clarissa*, who fights for her freedom and to preserve her virginity by escaping a marriage arranged by her family and a trap laid by a sinister assailant (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 14). This sympathy reflects Lessing's anxiety regarding her female body within the context of the conservative moral standards of the English. Lessing has an erotic dream in which her nude body symbolizes her desire to fight against the values of old-world England. Nevertheless, the young Lessing maintains the expectation that she will encounter an authoritative male figure who will lead her to a new future. She imagines a father figure, who would be like Abraham Lincoln and would help her save those imprisoned in England (14).

For her, Lincoln is an icon, a new-world leader who freed slaves and could help her combat old England and pursue freedom.

In Pursuit uses the dwelling to symbolize the situations of individuals in the world.⁵ This symbol is crucial throughout Lessing's work because it reflects psychological circumstances and is a medium between inner and outer worlds.⁶ According to Grosz, architecture is a medium between the cultural and the natural and helps negotiate "between a nature that poses itself as resistance and a culture that represents itself as limit" (*Architecture* 100). People inside a house exert their desire and originality through its architecture. However, those individuals might also be confined within this constructed space. Doris's journey to England begins with uncertainty in Cape Town. Her sense of dislocation is symbolized by her difficulty in securing accommodation, which foreshadows her subsequent conflicts related to her identity as a colonial English individual. Doris first moves to Cape Town because she believes it to have a liberal, English atmosphere (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 15). However, she loses this naïve belief when her ex-communist acquaintances refuse to provide her with accommodation since they no longer believe in Communism and communist members. She sets off on an adventure in which she struggles to find a hotel in Cape Town, which is a busy transportation hub linking South Africa to England. She meets an Afrikaner taxi driver who is so kind to Doris and her son and finds her a hotel; however, his political identity as a Nationalist is an enemy to her as an English descendent (16). She is sent to his aunt's hotel, which is "filthy, unpainted, decaying," and "full of English people. That is, English, not South African British" (16). The situation in the boarding house is similar to that of the British Empire, which is in its final stages, but continues to accommodate the dreams of English individuals such as Doris's father. The years 1949 and 1950 marked "a period of changes in the composition of Britain's cities and in what remained of the British empire" (Watkins 4). The political tension between the English and the White people in South Africa, especially Afrikaner, manifests in the boarding house in a personal manner. During her stay, strangers are sent into Doris's bedroom by the Afrikaner hostess. She feels insecure and anxious because the hostess does not respect her privacy. Due to having an unknown male guest in her room, Doris becomes the subject of moral

⁵ According to Martin Heidegger, humans' sense of being-in-the world is closely related to "dwelling" which is "the basic character of Being in keeping with which mortals exist" (158).

⁶ Roberta Rubenstein indicates that in Lessing's *The Four-Gated City*, "the psychic microcosm is conceptualized through the stratification of the house itself" (136). Clair Sprague suggests that *The Four-Gated City* is notable because in this work, "the walls, rooms, the houses people inhabit become living extensions of their bodily selves" (8).

accusations from other English women at the boarding house. Their prejudice toward Doris, a mother with a child, intensifies when her male Afrikaner friend, who is a painter, visits her and brings raw fish. The smell of the fish arouses other inhabitants' fear of and distaste for uncleanness. They become even less willing to tolerate Doris when her friend boasts about his experiences in a brothel and leaves a nude painting in her room. As a result, she is expelled by the hostess, who reaches a similar conclusion with the other English lodgers regarding Doris.

II. Dislocation in Postwar London

Doris's sense of dislocation remains even when she arrives in London because she is considered a foreigner, a new arrival associated with "reverse immigration" from Africa (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 13). The ostracism and distrust of Londoners reflect the closed-off and paranoid political atmosphere of the Cold War in the 1950s and the national policy of austerity. Before arriving in London, Doris dreams of meeting people in London and leading a new life. Inside a house with decent furniture and names on the doors, she imagines "vistas of passageways, opening on to yet more rooms, more lives" (38). However, she is warned by a female landlord that a foreigner would not be accepted. When Doris reveals her African background, she is asked, "You're not a black? . . . We're not having blacks . . . We don't take Jews either" (40). John McLeod and Watkins explain that in the social context of postwar London, racial and national conflict emerged because of new immigration. The new immigrants included both white and black individuals from Africa. Numerous black individuals from the Caribbean immigrated to England to join the workforce after the war (Watkins 4). McLeod proposes that "black newcomers in London appear to be assigned a position previously occupied primarily by Jews in a racializing narrative of national identity" (79). Doris depicts racial and socioeconomic problems from her own perspective, that is, from the perspective of a newcomer with an ambiguous identity.

Her status in the United Kingdom is symbolized by the room she is eventually offered, which is a small attic in a house "full of rubble and mess from the bombing," and her feelings of "sitting on top of an anthill" demonstrate her anxiety and insecurity in this social position (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 79). Grosz mentions that "[it] is our positioning within space, both as the point of perspectival access to space, and also as an object for others in space, that gives the subject a coherent identity" (*Space* 92). Therefore, one's identity in a place is related to how they are perceived and considered by others. At this time in

Doris's life, her room resembles a "little box," which symbolizes her feeling of captivity that she hopes to break free from (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 80). Her sense of rootlessness makes her eager to connect with the outside world. She only feels connected with the city through the sounds passing through her building and coming from the streets as though "the solid wall ha[s] the fluidity of dancing atoms" and the house belongs to a "weightless structure, as if this city h[angs] on water, or on sound" (79-80). This image of the house and city eliminates the longstanding confinement and solid structure that have been around her. As McLeod proposes, "the London landscape of *In Pursuit of the English* is figurative of the book's advocacy of the possibility of confusion and transience" (80). Eventually, when Lessing moves from the attic into a bigger room, she finally feels "in the heart of the house" and secure due to being surrounded by friends (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 81).

Doris's difficulty in finding the English reflects her ambivalence toward Englishness and the equivocality of local citizens' identity. Numerous individuals reject English identity because of their birthplace or ancestors. The concept of the English is influenced by the power struggle between England and its territories. Englishness entails a cultural hierarchy and is considered "authentic cultural content" according to Paul Gilroy (75). The concept of descendants being "authentic" is a recurring theme among the English people Doris encounters during her journey. At the beginning of the book, Lessing describes her mother, "who referred to herself as Scottish or Irish according to what mood she was in," but never called herself English (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 5-6). Even those whom Doris meets in London hesitate to admit that they are English. Rose is confused when asked about her identity: "I wouldn't say I was English so much, as a Londoner, see? It's different" (58). Rose also attempts to excuse Flo's utilitarianism by explaining to Doris that it is due to Flo's Italian background, restaurateur family, and husband's negative influence (58). Meanwhile, because Flo's husband is from Newcastle, far from London, Rose remarks, "Oh no, he's not English, not properly speaking" (58). Even though Flo has spent her whole life in London and her husband is from North England, Rose does not consider them or herself legitimately English and concludes that for her, her grandparents are the English: "That's English. The country. They were quite different from us—I mean my mother and me" (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 107). Here, "the country" evokes a pastoral image of England. According to McLeod, the "English countryside" epitomizes "the unspoiled essence of Englishness," which "has made a pastoral vision of

England a major aspect of English national culture" (17).⁷ This pastoral image bearing so much ideology is similar to Grosz's interpretation of the power struggle between nature and culture, and nature is reinterpreted by the frame of culture (*Architecture* 97). In consequence, the ambivalence toward the English illustrates Peter J. Kalliney's point that Lessing was "fictionally deconstructing Englishness" (147). This ambiguity also allows Lessing to break the boundary between so-called insiders and outsiders. Although the city is where the characters spend their lives, their everyday life is more important than how they are defined or define themselves.

Doris's in-betweenness enables her to interact with residents of the ever-changing London while observing the city as an outsider. The city, after it is destroyed in the war, becomes a space in-between, as described by Grosz; it becomes "the space in which things are undone, . . . which is the space of subversion and fraying, the edges of any identity's limits" (*Architecture* 93). When she arrives in London, Doris meets Mr. Bobby Brent, who disguises himself under the aliases of Andrew MacNamara and Raymond Ponsonby, and his anonymity and mystery make the city seem more precarious. Mr. Brent frequently wanders around the city, which symbolizes his exploration of "the space 'between' or before the juxtaposition and coincidence of the urban, the architectural, and the cultural" (Grosz, *Architecture* 98). Mr. Brent demonstrates his natural instinct through his various identities and changing attitudes toward people. His unconstrained personality is reminiscent of Grosz's concept of nature that falls into the space of the in-between; without the definitive identity, he searches for his "possibility and the impetus for [his] self-overcoming" (Grosz, *Architecture* 98). For Mr. Brent, the bombed site of London is a battlefield upon which he tricks others by any means possible. Initially, Doris feels as though London is a maze because every street resembles "all the main streets in London," with "the same names recurring at regular intervals, the same patterns of brick and plaster" (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 44). Mr. Brent takes advantage of this feeling the outsiders of London experience, as demonstrated by his continually asking Doris "now do you know where you are?" and even taking her on a long route home (61, 64). He is used to forcing individuals "under his will," manipulating women, and seizing any chance to exploit others (48). His appropriation of the city is ambitious and places him in a position of domination. Grosz explains that for Irigaray, men's goals regarding space are "to colonize, to appropriate, to measure,

⁷ McLeod mentions that this image of Englishness "has a long history and—coupled with postwar initiatives in the so-called 'heritage industry'—has made a pastoral vision of England a major aspect of English national culture which has continued to the present day" (17).

to control, to instrumentalize all that they survey” (*Space* 122). Mr. Brent’s wandering around London symbolizes his attempts to expand his territory. Mr. Brent exploits everyone he meets throughout *In Pursuit*. At the end of the story, he builds a slum-like dormitory for new immigrants with Dan, who subsequently becomes Doris’s landlord, and amasses a fortune by smuggling nylons and stealing from destroyed houses. Both Dan and Mr. Brent symbolize a form of occupation in London at the time that is reminiscent of English colonization.

III. Memory and Storytelling as Paths to Self-Spatialization and Reconstructing Collective Memory

Lessing synthesizes the history and context of postwar London through personal perspectives provided in oral storytelling; these biographical stories serve as a form of self-spatialization. Doris’s sense of dislocation is also associated with the gap between her imagination of England and the London that Rose shows her. Throughout the book, Rose is a witness retracing a story interwoven with the demolished city and waiting to be reconstructed. Doris’s feeling of alienation toward the city changes because she cares for Rose. When Doris is led to the street where Rose spent her childhood, she is invited to Rose’s home, which is “a different country from the street, not fifteen minutes’ walk away” (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 69). Under Rose’s guidance, Doris can more closely and intimately observe another side of the city, which looks “dingy and grey and dirty” (68). At first, she is shocked by the locals she had not anticipated seeing in the United Kingdom. Unlike “a colonial, used to broad, filled-in, sunburn faces,” the faces of Londoners are “not pale so much as drained, peaked rather than thin, with an unfinished look, a jut in the bones of the jaw or the forehead” (68). This description of their sickly appearance reveals Doris’s surprise regarding the difficulty of their lives. Doris realizes that her “colonial attitude to class” makes her aware of the poor living conditions Rose experienced during the war among “square miles full of deprived people” (68-69). Before arriving in England, Doris is aware of the government’s policy of austerity and believes that “the British people were suffering” after the war (116). However, she is disillusioned with the center of the empire. Kalliney suggests that the chaos of postwar London reflects “England’s political and cultural vulnerability,” which is closely related to its “postwar austerity and imminent imperial dissolution” (151). Because London is dilapidated after the war, Doris is able to see beyond the façade of the empire and understand its reality. Doris remains a communist idealist when she arrives in London. She used to believe that the word “slum” should have

“a literary and fanciful quality” because working class individuals are the main concern of socialist ideology (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 69). In this part of the book, London is presented in a new light. Upon her arrival, Doris perceives London to be a city characterized by a “decaying, down-at-heel respectability”; however, she subsequently describes the street on which Rose grew up as “hard and battling, raw and tough” and “showing itself in the skepticism of the watchful assessing glances from the shopmen and women” directed at outsiders (69). Doris’s exhibition of clear compassion toward these people prompts Rose to say, “you didn’t know nothing about anything, and you didn’t even know you were ignorant” (69). Rose’s trip to her home is her means of revealing the reality of London as well as her past life to Doris.

In *In Pursuit*, personal stories are an essential medium through which locals and new arrivals connect with the city and others. Doris’s identification with London develops with Rose’s sharing of stories. Friedman proposes that when crossing boundaries and borderlands, “individuals develop a sense of self through acts of memory, reflectivity, and engagement with others, all of which requires forms of storytelling to come into being” (*Mappings* 153). Storytelling is therefore a means to connect through personal history with others and entire communities. When Rose and Doris pass a house, Rose asks Doris to sit on a wall where a bomb once exploded. The wall originally belonged to a teahouse selling tea and a bun for a penny. However, the owner died in the war (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 70). When they walk to the house in which she was born, Rose recalls her childhood, particularly her memories of her violent stepfather (70). Rose’s memories, although mundane, are authentic and shared by others who have experienced the war. Additionally, when Rose introduces her old acquaintances and the vendors, Doris becomes a part of the community and is protected by Rose. When Rose passes through places she knows and that therefore seem to know her, “acknowledging her by a gleam from a lit window or the slant of a wall,” Rose is reinstated “as a human being with right of possession in the world” (70). Rose’s neighbors approve of her because of their collective memory and mutual trust; the people living within these places who know her are members of a community.

When Rose and Doris leave the neighborhood where Rose grew up, Rose’s sense of belonging disappears, too, and she becomes “all prim and tight-faced,” suspicious and perceiving others to be enemies (71). The bombed areas of the city convey a sense of unknown danger because they appear less friendly than the areas Rose is familiar with. The collective memory of war time trauma is revealed through the often overlooked and hidden corners of this city. Frijhoff explains the importance of this wartime trauma as follows:

The diversification of the war trauma is proof of the gradual rise of a more balanced cultural memory beyond the extremes of hitherto predominant communicative memory, and of the victory of the civic dimension in urban memory. (38)

The personal stories Doris hears in the novel replace the collective memories English people have about the grand history of the empire. Doris realizes that Londoners' distrust of outsiders is in self-defense: they aim to protect their friends and family from harm. Although the area that Rose is familiar with in the city is like a "tunnel" and is only restricted to "the half-mile of streets where she had been born and brought up, populated by people she trusted," she secures her position in this city by knowing every face she sees in the area she lives in (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 95). Because of Rose's nostalgia and defensiveness with regard to London, Doris begins to understand the place beyond its decayed buildings and widespread poverty and starts discovering its history through the everyday lives of ordinary individuals.

The stories of these ordinary individuals that are presented in the media are often distorted, however, and do not necessarily reflect reality; this phenomenon exemplifies the social class disparity and power relations in London. The depictions of the working class in movies and on the radio offend Rose and cause her to feel threatened and like an outsider. According to Friedman, storytelling is related to the formation of cultural memory and the construction of power relations in a community. She notes that asymmetry between the individual and the collective contributes to and results from the "cultural narratives of domination, resistance, desire, and their complex interplay" (*Mappings* 153). This indicates that how a story is told is crucial because it is strongly influenced by the power structures within a society. Furthermore, the imbalanced power relations of the upper and working classes are dramatized through the distorted portrayal. Rose perceives this imbalance in British films and media, which "make fun" of those who use "wrong grammar" and those stereotyped cockneys (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 112-13). Rose eventually realizes that she is considered different from other English people. Rose believes that the makers of British films wish to make "the upper-class people laugh" and perceive the working-class to be "dragged up and ignorant and talking vulgar-ugly" (113). Rose indicates that she prefers to save money to watch American films because she feels that in the United States, people "don't laugh at people with different voices" because "America is all foreigners" and "they can't laugh at each other" (113). The perceptions in the public media are difficult to avoid and hurtful. Therefore, personal narratives are crucial because they provide people with an opportunity to convey authentic feelings without prejudice.

The body's lived experience is essential in social reciprocity, as is reflected

in Rose's wartime memories. From the perspective of phenomenology, Gail Weiss explains that flesh "unifies, weaving together disparate gestures, movements, bodies, and situations into a dynamic fabric of meaning that must be continually reworked, made and unmade" (148). According to Weiss, flesh in the city is mutable because it holds various meanings and is formed through various interactions. The memory of a city can differ because of friendly gestures among individuals. Unlike middle-class Doris, Rose feels little hope with regard to change in the social hierarchy, even under socialism. Rose does not expect any revolution to occur during her lifetime: "In the newspapers they're always talking about a new this and new that. Well, there's one thing I know, my mother worked all her life, and I'm no better off than she was" (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 110). However, Rose's wartime experiences lead her to form an emotional connection with the city. She reminisces that at that time "people liked each other" and individuals could "talk to people . . . even upper-class people, and no one could think the worse" (114). The cruelty of war forces people to escape from their houses, which are microcosms of societal structure. Although undergoing "six years of hardship" during the war, she is impressed by the "warmth, comradeship, a feeling of belonging and being wanted, a feeling she had never been given before or since" (113). Olkowski explains, "It is flesh that provides human beings with a general atmosphere of intersubjective communication prior to cognition and therefore prior to social or gender stratification" (7). A sense of closeness is created through the closeness of bodies and the care exhibited by people toward each other. During the War, Rose would offer help to strangers with small gestures such as sharing a blanket or providing company:

You could talk to the man sitting next to you in the Underground at night, and share your blanket with him if he hadn't got one, and he never thought the worse. You'd say good-bye in the morning and you'd know you'd never see him again, but you'd feel nice all day, because he was friendly, and you was friendly, too. (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 114)

Rose's small acts of kindness are a reflection of her hope for a world without social classes and a society in which she feels included and accepted. This episode of Rose's memory echoes Doris's description of the "mirage of English," when she sees Mrs. Coetzee's boarding house in Africa: "the foundation of this dream was now a group of loving friends, all above any of the minor and more petty human emotions, such as envy, jealousy, spite, etc." (16). Because of her political ideals and her pursuit of humanism, Doris envisions a world where people can live "communally, with such warmth, brilliance, generosity of spirit and so on that we would be an example to everyone" (16).

IV. Self-Spatialization as a Space for Care

In Flo and Dan's house, Doris engages in self-spatialization, exhibiting concern for and observing herself and others. Lessing's life writing becomes a site to demonstrate those personal and private concerns of and towards female characters. According to Clare Hemmings, feminist theorists "theoriz[e] empathy as a mode of linking to others and as promoting intersubjective relations over and above individual status in relation to knowledge and practice" (197). Care and empathy are important elements for Doris to integrate herself into the life in the house and in the city. The strength Doris develops through her journey helps her identify anxiety in different families. In Flo and Dan's house, the kitchen becomes an essential room for the inhabitants and landlord to develop connections but also to experience complex power relationships. Before arriving in England, Doris assembles "pounds of tinned food" to prepare for the poor living conditions of the British reported by the newspapers in Africa (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 116). However, the house is "perfumed with the smells of feasting every evening," and she is welcomed to a Sunday meal, her "emotional climax of the week" (116). For Doris, dining with Flo's family and Rose becomes a vital ritual as a member of the household; emotions transcend cultural barriers. Sarah Sceats argues that "connection through sharing food" is of "vital importance"; through this "unspoken communication," people reach "mutuality in shared sensuousness" (78). Nevertheless, a power struggle is also involved in this process of sharing. Flo takes rations of meat from Rose and Doris in lieu of rent, symbolizing her superior economic status. At first, Doris does not understand Flo's intentions, but she realizes that "a complicated ritual governed what went on in the house" (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 87). The meals balance Flo's exploitation of her tenants and her eagerness for friendship and recognition from them. After realizing that Rose must help Flo with the housework after meals, Doris becomes aware of her own "middle-class hypocrisy" exhibited in her ignorance of "the value of money, the value of time" (87). Within the common spaces of the kitchen, these individuals observe their positions in the house and in society through their embodied experiences.

Doris notes a sense of anxiety toward motherhood, which reflects the sense of "homelessness" experienced by the women who are living in a house that is not built for them. Irigaray's interpretation of space can be used to explain the imbalanced relationship between men and women in terms of their positions in space: within dwellings built by men, women are usually considered "the guardians of the private and the interpersonal, while men build conceptual and material worlds" (Grosz, *Space* 121); women eventually become homeless in the

home because “it becomes the space of duty, of endless and infinitely repeatable chores” (122). Although Flo has a favorable economic situation, the burden of caring prevents her from escaping from the house: “Flo’s life was spent in the basement. She and Aurora were confined there, with the doors and windows shut” and they are like a “pair of prisoners” (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 123-24). The traditional role of motherhood is even reinforced by the government social welfare policy. When Flo applies to join the council nursery, her application is rejected because of her comfortable living condition. The officer replies that “it was better for small children to be with their mothers” and that “women marry to have children” (126). Juliet Flower MacCannell describes the idealization of the maternal role during the 1950s, arguing that the Cold War atmosphere created an “imaginary identifications with the stable family” through the image of women (157). Flo therefore reminisces about the war, when the role of every woman was considered vital in the war effort. She remarks, “sometimes I wish there was another war, I do really. All sugar and spice then, they don’t talk about *women* then” (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 126).

Self-spatialization is also enacted through shared body experiences, in which individuals’ private experiences are entwined with those of others, especially among the female tenants. They develop a sense of mutuality through their female and maternal bodies. They encounter similar predicaments in their maternal roles and gain shared understanding afterward. The tension within each family is transmitted from one room to another through sounds. Domestic violence, including that involving mothers and daughters, is revealed to be a common occurrence because the women of the novel are trapped in highly oppressive marital situations. For example, Doris often hears hysterical crying and screaming from both Mrs. Skeffington and her fifteen-month-old daughter Rosemary, because Mrs. Skeffington is exhausted from caring for her child and meeting her husband’s sexual demands and physical abuse. Meanwhile, the women in the novel also encounter challenges in managing their pregnancies. To escape her entrapment, Mrs. Skeffington attempts to terminate her pregnancy by throwing herself from a ladder several times because abortion is illegal. Flo also experiences similar struggles and is found by Doris “rolling in agony on the floor of the kitchen exclaiming between groans” after she swallows “half a bottle” of medicine that she bought from a pharmacy (150-51). These women protect Mrs. Skeffington when she has a near-death experience of her own. Through care and protection, they recognize the similar physical difficulties that women confront and create a sense of “common intercorporeality” as described by Greg Johnson (179). Although the women have different economic and marital conditions, their similar physical circumstances enable them to empathize

with each other. David Michael Levin explains that corporeal interaction creates the mutuality and understanding that constitute “a more mature social world, a moral and political community” (42). The cooperation among the women of the novel also enables each to examine their own conscience and society’s moral judgments of women, which it passes despite the women simply wishing to create an environment in which they and their children can survive.

V. Confrontations between Insiders and Outsiders: The Past, the Present, and the Future

The boundary between insiders and outsiders eventually becomes blurred as the secret tenants on the ground floor are revealed. The hidden truth of an older couple embodies the neglected aspects of postwar London. The sense of their dislocation climaxes when their poor living conditions are shown. They represent more than seventy thousand London buildings destroyed during the war and the poverty caused by this devastation. The older couple had moved into the house before the war and refused to move out after Dan and Flo purchased it. They survive the war but struggle to retain their place of residence because of a national policy based on the Rent Act. Their room, once characterized by middle-class aesthetics, is now overrun by fungus and mosses; “all the surfaces were in movement,” and “damp paper hung in strips and shreds from above, stirring and writhing” (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 188). They cling to the house, which provides them shelter. Their shabby room on the ground floor symbolizes the gradual breakdown of hierarchy and the change in the social classes; the owner of the house, Dan and Flo, live in the basement, which implies their lower social status, and intend to evict the older couple so that they can charge more for rent. When Rose tells Doris about the older couple, Doris is also reminded to “keep [her] eyes open along the streets”; at this time, she realizes that “the street was full of old ladies,” discovering that “every house, almost every layer of windows, held its vigilant spectator, peering sharply down over the knitting needles” (155-56). Serving as guardians of their households, these old ladies keep a tense and antagonistic relationship with their neighbors, and they are suspicious of the outer world, acting out of “pure hatred” (155). Doris learns that numerous older people live around her but conceal themselves in the dark corners of the neighborhood. The older couple epitomizes an older English generation that is victimized as a new era begins. They cannot adapt to their new environment or adjust to their roles in a city undergoing restoration. When the old woman meets Flo and Dan for the first time, she asks, “What

are you bloody foreigners doing in my house?" (159). For the older couple, the newcomers to the house are intruders in their shelter and in their country. Dislocation and relocation are portrayed ironically, with both sides feeling unsettled and uncomfortable during this transitional stage. With its new immigrants, London begins to be populated with individuals of various nationalities and ethnicities, which its residents are unready to accept. Watkins proposes that a similar theme is discussed in Lessing's *The Golden Notebook*, which also addresses conflict between "homely domestic space and foreign 'other,'" reflecting the tension "between the home and the world in cosmopolitanism" (72).

This question of how to solve the rising antagonism between Dan and Flo and the old couple in the house reflects the challenge facing the United Kingdom with respect to conflicts between insiders and outsiders. According to Olkowski, the "spatial situatedness of prepersonal existence" is important because it "grounds the experience of other human beings as other and resituates them as related to the perceiving subject in the midst of their multiple differences, their profound otherness and separateness" (7). Recognizing the existence and circumstances of others, realizing their differences, and learning to respect these differences are essential in intersubjectivity. Dan, Flo, and the old couple refuse to confront the other's situation and they can only go to court to secure the right of residency. However, the events that occur in the courtroom reveal the gap between these working-class people and the people presiding over the legal proceedings. Throughout the trial, Dan and Flo must suppress their natural inclinations. To demonstrate their adherence to court etiquette, Dan and Flo force their daughter to wear a thick, formal coat despite the weather being hot. The officers of the court have little patience for their habits. Their informal mannerisms, such as addressing the counsels as "dear" or referring to the old woman as "the old witch," are a continual source of annoyance to the judge (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 180). Dan must wrestle with his conscience with respect to lying to ensure his testimony matches Flo's; he feels confused because their counsel and lawyer "attacked Dan, in an attempt to make him lie consistently" (168). Dan discovers that "these guardians of morality" not only overlook the truth but also "encourage[e] a good lie," causing him to feel that he is "their equal" (171). Those everyday conflicts appear trifling and slight to the court. When the poor living conditions of the older couple are described in court, the judge presiding over the case becomes outraged after hearing the descriptions of "emptied slop bowls," "dirty lavatories," and "filth thrown downstairs" (177). The judge does not factor the residents' antagonistic behaviors into their judgment. All parties involved in the case feel that they have not been respected or understood by the judge because he gazes at them critically as if to

say, “*Must* you behave like this?” (182). Eventually, the old woman loses her temper and accuses her opponents of lying, pointing at the “various legal gentlemen around her” and screaming: “He—that one—look! Lies! Lies! Lies! Justice, British justice, it’s all Jews and foreigners, it’s a plot, it’s a conspiracy . . .” (183). This outburst reveals that she feels wronged by “British justice” because no representative of this justice understands and sympathizes with her situation, and therefore she can only blame foreigners and people of other ethnicities. Her racist speech prompts the judge to adjourn the court. The couple are evicted from the house and relocated to a new “Home” by a welfare agency (185). The older people are forced to confront a new situation, a new world, and a new era.

The relocation of the tenants in the house also symbolizes the shuffle of social classes in postwar London. Dan and Flo’s success reflects the utilitarianism of the postwar capitalistic society. Dan and Flo increase the rent, and new tenants with higher spending power and non-English origins arrive. For example, several college students from Australia and Miss Privet, a woman who speaks English with a pronounced French accent, arrive. The influx of new tenants into the boarding house symbolizes the changes occurring in London society. While London is being rebuilt, the social system changes, and entrepreneurs, such as Dan, appear. However, Dan is required to handle conflict within his family. Flo’s son runs away from home because he can no longer tolerate being expected to work for Dan for free. Furthermore, Dan and Flo’s daughter begins to exhibit symptoms of anorexia, and her doctor warns that she may be sent to a sanatorium because of her poor health. This physical illness symbolizes that Aurora does not feel love from her parents because of their anxiety, greed, and arguments about money. Her name, meaning the light of sunrise, conveys hope for England. Aurora refuses to be emotionally blackmailed by her parents during their routine fights with each other, automatically murmuring “No, I don’t love you, I don’t love you, I don’t love you” whenever either parent approaches her (202). Flo and Dan finally reconcile because of her, and love is eventually the crucial element to the progress of the city.

The house undergoes a “revolution” because the female tenants confront new situations for the reconstruction of the house (189). The walls of the house, which create a deceptive sense of protection for the women inside, are slated to be torn down. Mrs. Skeffington is left alone by her husband and escapes from her unpleasant marriage and the house. Miss Powell is abandoned by Raymond Ponsonby, who is Bobby Brent in disguise and who breaks his promise of marriage. Although Rose even changes her mind on premarital sex, she still thinks the new tenant, Miss Privet, is immoral. Miss Privet pursues freedom and wealth by becoming a mistress and having relationships

with men on her own accord. Miss Privet is in a state of in-betweenness similar to that experienced by Doris because she cannot identify with the life of most women. In the final part of the story, Miss Privet and Doris's exploration of London reflects how they increasingly understand the city through their own perspectives. Miss Privet guides Doris in observing London by adopting the personal perspectives of various writers and artists. Miss Privet walks the streets described by the English writer Samuel Pepys in his *Diary* and observes the gray waters that inspired Monet's paintings. She integrates "private and public cultural forms" by projecting her personal imagination, which also incorporates the perspectives of the writer and the painter, onto the city (Watkins 25-26). She and Doris create an intersubjective perception spanning the history of London. Grosz agrees with Irigaray's "disruptive 'logic'" regarding women's space and states, "The project ahead, or one of them, is to return women to those places from which they have been dis- or re-placed or expelled, to occupy those positions" (*Space* 124). Miss Privet and Doris's exploration in this city is also to search for the position that women are usually excluded from through telling their own stories. They arrive at the steps outside the National Gallery one early morning. As the sun rises, the historic city is illuminated with a veil of light, becoming both "a city of light" and "a city of bright phantoms" (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 214) and concealing the hardships of everyday life. However, Miss Privet is not satisfied with this scene and they wait while the light changes and the "thin clouds overhead sif[t] a soft, drenching golden atmosphere" (214). A city veiled in gold is revealed, symbolizing a clear and shining future. A metaphorical connection between culture and nature can transcend the constraints of civilization and humanity. Then, London is full of hope and the possibility of transformation: the process of becoming.

Searching for possibilities from the position of the in-between is a manner of proceeding toward a new world. Through Doris's description of the embodied emotions and spatial experiences that mark her journey from Africa to London, she experiences a sense of dislocation and relocation and depicts a world awakening from the trauma of war and moving toward the future. Her journey in the city starts with her exploring London with Bobby Brent, who guides her through the city using a male perspective. Therefore, she first experiences the city from a perspective of dominance and colonization, which leads her to view the city as having a more complex and ominous atmosphere. However, Doris also eventually understands the city from Rose's perspective. Rose's memories of the city reveal its hidden corners, and her personal stories help Doris uncover previously unknown aspects of the city's history. Doris is therefore able to view the city from these personal perspectives, which enables her to engage

in self-spatialization and overcome her feeling of alienation from the city. Self-spatialization is also demonstrated through the concern and care that Doris exhibits toward the female tenants of the house. She even gains an understanding of the city from the perspective of an outsider through her tour with the newcomer, Miss Privet. While Lessing represents London from those personal stories of local women, her female community also projects onto history “a new identity” that “merges the shared and the unique” according to Friedman’s illustration of life writing in “Women’s Autobiographical Selves” (40). These women share similar experience but also voice their own stories. The undefined and vague nature of the English indicates possibility because of its in-betweenness. The English people, especially the working class portrayed by Lessing, reveal their natural instincts and obtain their positions in the city, in accordance with their own ways. They are searching for time and space that is recognizable as their own and tolerant of them. When the workers of the War Damage Scheme start the task of repair in Doris’s room, they find putty filled in the cracks and paper covering across the ceiling. The worker points out that in this city, there are hundreds of precarious houses that are likely to collapse easily. However, “they keep on standing out of sheer force of habit, as far as I can see” (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 209). The house again represents the situation of the English people, striving to find their way out in a city full of cracks, in the space of the in-between. The postwar reconstruction of the city includes both the rebuilding of its physical form and reconnection of its people through mutual recognition of each other’s circumstances. Consequently, London’s collective memories comprise not only past trauma but also care and understanding from individual citizens. In the final chapter of the book, a new vision of the world is imagined through the two young men, “a new generation” who arrive to repair the house. Doris and other tenants don’t understand them (219). At the same time, the arrival of a new television in the house symbolizes the arrival of a new era. These young men discuss animal mutations caused by the aftermath of atomic bombing and invent that in the Himalayas: “each mink has to live inside a magic circle all its life,” which they say is drawn by spirits (220-21). The destruction of the earth caused by civilization might lead to the evolution of creatures. Humans can navigate their way through struggles within the confines of culture or against the backdrop of human-induced destruction, exploring all possibilities. Grosz also concludes that “this force of futurity . . . is that debt to or reliance on the natural that neither contemporary cultural studies nor architectural discourses are capable of acknowledging” (*Architecture* 104-05). The unpredictability of nature is a factor that contributes to cultural dynamism and progress. In Lessing’s later work, *The Four-Gated City* (1964), which is a fictional work based

on Lessing's early life in London, she shares her vision of a constantly changing future in which people refine their evolutionary and physical functions. Her vision indicates that transcending material reality and searching for love in interpersonal relationships are paths to a future away from dislocation, relocation, and in-betweenness. At the end of *In Pursuit*, the theme of mutual compassion and concern is prevalent. The jokes exchanged between two young people end casually with the statement "'They're sad, too. Need sympathy.' 'Plenty of sympathy'" (Lessing, *In Pursuit* 222). When Doris is moving out of Flo's house, Flo feels somewhat sorry for making her leave and attempts to confirm that Doris does not resent her and appreciates having stayed in her house. Flo remarks, "if we was all kind to each other all over the world it would be different, wouldn't it now?" (223). For Lessing, kindness toward and love for each other are the enduring means of being preserved in memories and brought into the future.

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無處安置、重新安置與居間位置： 多麗絲·萊辛的《尋找英國人》

摘要

多麗絲·萊辛的作品《尋找英國人》在1960年出版，呈現作者1949年抵達戰後倫敦的轉變面貌。這本書描述萊辛從南非到英國旅途中，所經歷的無處安置以及不斷遷移的過程。身為一個白人移民非洲者的後代，萊辛是本國人但也是外來者。她個人的空間經歷，以及對倫敦歷史的重新認識，讓她對自己身為一個英國國民以及女性的身份重新定位。萊辛藉由敘事者旅途中主體的具體感受以及所處的空間，陳述了她處境的曖昧。在移動過程中，敘事者位於一種居間的位置：一種不明確以及他者的狀態。伊莉莎白·果茲發展了這個居間性的概念，並且提出應該要重新探索此空間，讓文化得以不斷發展並往未來邁進。書中的敘事者透過身體的處境，與類似狀況的人們相連結，他們於是從他者的狀態轉移到一個轉變中的狀態。另一方面，在毀壞的倫敦中，萊辛的角色們透過訴說故事，從錯置感中恢復並找回存在感。威廉·弗瑞傑霍夫還有蘇珊·史丹夫德·傅利曼都提出，說故事是重建文化記憶很重要的部分。萊辛的生命敘事，將城市裡失落的記憶以及當地人的每日生活拼湊在一起，呈現一個自我空間的倫敦。而藉由原來居民以及新來居民之間的互相理解，不管是萊辛或者她遇到的人，都在這個城市的前進中重新安置。

關鍵字：居間性、多麗絲·萊辛、戰後倫敦、《尋找英國人》