

Fragments of Belongingness: Migrant Experiences in Ali Smith's *Spring*

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Abstract

Spring is the third installment of Ali Smith's Seasonal Quartet, which, like the other three installments, explores social issues in the UK following the Brexit referendum. Among these issues, migration is a recurring theme in the quartet. In *Spring*, Smith interweaves three storylines featuring five characters to present diverse perspectives on migrant experiences in the UK. These storylines converge at the end of the novel with Florence's narration of her dilemma in UK society. As the child of an illegal migrant parent, Florence lives as an outsider in the UK. Florence's presence challenges the conventional understanding of inclusiveness within Englishness and its connection to British identity. This paper will use Derrida's notion of hospitality to argue that Florence represents a resistance to the exclusiveness of Englishness, providing a new perspective on the migrant issues in the UK.

Keywords: Brexit novels, migrant issues, hospitality, Englishness, Derrida

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(Received 5 September 2023; Accepted 1 July 2024)

Introduction

Ali Smith's Seasonal Quartet has garnered praise for its honest and immediate portrayal of post-Brexit society, both within the UK and beyond. Although the four installments are standalone novels, the quartet focuses on the worsening migrant crisis, the abuse of social media, climate change, the fracturing of public consensus, the rise of Donald Trump, the spread of Covid-19, and other global social events following the Brexit vote. The quartet is set in the UK, where the characters from different corners of the world gather contingently. This border-crossing arrangement of the novels showcases Smith as an "outward-looking cosmopolitan" writer (Tunnska). Smith's scope for writing goes beyond other first-wave Brexit Literary works¹ that mainly emphasize "British society and its isolation from the continent" (Kristian Shaw qtd. in Cubas 72). As a novelist, Smith believes that the novel is not merely fictional; instead, the novel is about what happened or is happening around us. She believes that "a novel always reflects its time, the time it's written in. It can't not" ("Novel"). A novelist should represent what happens in the real world through his or her words to make the invisible visible and draw people's attention to the social problems we face today. To Smith, novels "help us get to the truth," for they invite people to "take part in their making, be creative in response to them, and in being part, be the opposite of excluded, be active, be alive to them and them, in turn, alive to the reader" ("Novel"). Novels should integrate "words" and "the world."

Brexit novels function as a platform for displaying diverse opinions on the underlying causes of the division. The migrant crisis is one of the pivotal issues most Brexit novelists attempt to focus on. Smith's Seasonal Quartet and even her enthusiastic engagement in refugee-related activities showcase her concerns about migrant issues. Her response to the rise of the global refugee crisis and the UK government's hostile migrant policy demonstrates her humanitarian attitude toward the migrant issues. She advises nations worldwide to rethink the concept of boundaries and to deal with migrant issues more humanely and inclusively. She expresses her stance on the migrant issue eagerly and clearly to *The Guardian* in 2015: "We need to stop thinking exclusively. We need to start thinking on an international level and addressing injustices on such a level . . . we have to help the people *crossing* the world, and we have to take seriously and to heart the ancient *responsibilities of hospitality and sanctuary*" ("The Turmoil"; emphases added). Smith's cherishing for hospitality and her attempt to give an authentic voice to migrants are substantially embodied in *Spring*, primarily through the two characters in the novel, Florence and Paddy.

Spring (2018), as the third installment of the quartet, is considered “the angriest, the most cathartic and despairing” among the four (Makkai). This novel explores and investigates the public’s reactions and responses to the post-Brexit era’s prevailing social and political conflicts (Butter). The migrant crisis and the rise of nationalism are the two recurring subjects in Smith’s Seasonal Quartet. *Spring* puts much weight on the convoluted relationship between the two issues. Through the lens of the characters in the novel, *Spring* lays bare the real difficulties that most migrants in the UK are undergoing: they are deprived of the right to live, education, and work; they seem to be invisible and are treated unjustly in the UK’s social, political, and juridical systems. The novel is interwoven with three storylines, including the encounter of Brittany Hall (an officer in the Immigration Removal Center) with Florence Smith (a mysterious illegal mixed-race immigrant child), the transgenerational friendship between Richard Lease (an unsuccessful and suicidal filmmaker) and Patricia Hardiman (a screenwriter), and the contingent gathering of Brittany, Florence, Richard, and Alda Lyon (both a librarian and a post-Brexit era’s activist in Scotland) in a Scottish town. The conjuncture of these storylines puts on stage the issues of the migrant crisis, the abuse of social media, political tyranny, the rise of Trumpism, and ecological issues.² However, this paper will focus mainly on how Smith deals with the migrant crisis in the novel by re-evaluating the relationship between “Englishness” and British identity in light of the concept of “hospitality.” The novel’s main protagonist is Florence: her mysterious existence and her interactions and conversations with Brittany and other characters reveal the dilemmas many UK migrants are undergoing. Viewing the migrant issue through Florence’s eyes propels readers to reframe their understanding of Englishness and British identity. In doing so, the migrant crisis could be understood more comprehensively. This paper argues that Florence, as a rootless and illegitimate immigrant kid, is a “breaking point” in UK society. Florence’s unique existence arrests and reshapes the monolithic discourse of Englishness and exposes the limitation of hospitality held by Western culture. The paper will begin with a brief introduction to the ongoing migrant crisis in the UK. It will then analyze how Florence embodies a form of resistance that

2 The novel consists of three sections. The first section describes the friendship between Paddy and Richard. Several contemporary social issues are laid in front of the readers via their conversations and recollections. The second section talks about the predicaments that migrants/refugees have been facing in the UK. The detention center is the focus. It is where Florence and Brittany develop their unexpected friendship. In this section, Florence brilliantly subverts the UK citizens’ general understanding of the migrant/refugee crisis. The third section is about Florence’s escape attempt, and the reflections on the migrant/refugee issues in the UK.

challenges conventional notions of English identity. Lastly, the paper will rethink how to deal with the UK's migrant crisis in terms of Derrida's perspective on hospitality and what hope and reflection Derrida's "city of refuge" can give to the world.

Englishness or Britishness?

The definition of English identity has undergone fluctuations because of the pull-and-tug relationship between Englishness and Britishness. The entangled relationship between the two terms implies the unresolved national identity question in the UK. Englishness, unlike Britishness, is more regional in nature and poses a greater challenge to define. In contrast, Britishness embraces the diverse ethnicities and cultures across the entire Kingdom, embodying the collective spirit of the nation. In the eighteenth century, Britishness was promoted by the Anglican Church to unite the people of England, Scotland, and Wales under the name of the Christian Kingdom, forming the basis of British national identity and maintaining the sovereignty of the Kingdom. The concept of Britishness is a comprehensive political umbrella term embracing the cultural, political, social, and economic domains, unifying them under one national identity. It provides a cohesive political framework to legitimize the political union's sovereignty within the Kingdom. For a long time, Englishness and Britishness had no obvious distinction (Reviron-Piegay 1-2). However, the divergence of the two terms has gradually emerged due to a series of historical events which endanger the totality of the UK political establishment. The events include the dissolution of the Empire (the independence of former colonies), the devolution of the UK (the rise of nationalism in Scotland), and the massive influx of foreign immigrants after joining the EU. To maintain the unity of the UK, the notion of Englishness has increasingly leaned towards an "Anglocentric" perspective, fueling the rise of "English" nationalism (Kenny, "Many Faces" 158). The separation of Englishness from Britishness implies the internal and external political, cultural, and ethnic diversities within the Kingdom. However, despite the current perception of Englishness as predominantly Anglocentric, Englishness embodies a broader, more inclusive cultural significance.

The definition of Englishness has evolved along with the significant changes in the UK's history. Due to its indefinite nature, scholars have held different understandings of Englishness. Some scholars believe that Englishness has a permanent essential nature; other scholars argue that Englishness is an

“artificial” concept (Reviron-Piegay 4-5). It is inherently “insular” and “parochial” (Kenny, “Return” 36). The paradoxical definitions of Englishness suggest that the concept is “multiple” and “protean” (Reviron-Piegay 7). In history, Englishness, England, and Britain are not identical but interrelated. Englishness refers to a sense of cultural and political identification with the nation. It refers to a particular communal cultural ethos that unites all people across the UK territories. England, as a region of the UK, is the political and economic center of the country; Britain is the overall name of the geographical-political entity, also called the UK. Before the 1990s, Englishness and Britishness were seen to be “symbiotic” and “constitutive” (Kuma 103). However, Englishness began to diverge from Britishness by the end of the 1990s due to the devolution of the United Kingdom, marked by Northern Ireland’s and Scotland’s separate efforts to gain more autonomy from the UK. A series of independence movements have urged citizens in these regions to question the homogenized and standardized national identity imposed by Englishness. Even the small group of citizens in Cornwall (the southwest region of England) begins to differentiate their culture and identity from the dominant discourse of Englishness (Deacon 9-29).³ These resistant forces challenge the equivalence of Englishness and Britishness in the UK and they also steer Englishness towards a more region-based concept. Englishness has gradually aligned with a concept characterized by exclusiveness, reinforcing UK citizens’ growing awareness of cultural diversities and ethnicities within the framework of the UK.

In response to the exclusiveness associated with Englishness after the 1990s, some scholars turn to emphasize the inherent inclusive nature of Englishness. Mary Hickman reminds people to recall the inclusive nature of Englishness. She argues, “The English constructed themselves as the backbone of a more inclusive sense of British nationhood that was able to assimilate all differences within an overriding principle of identity,” which might be able to include other “non-white” ethnic groups in Britain (qtd. in Kuma 102). Hickman’s synthesis of the two terms highlights the inclusiveness of Englishness. Also, Robert Young proposes that Englishness is formed by “outsiders” and “foreigners” outside of the British Empire, and it has become “applicable” and “de-localized” without a “cultural essence” after the expansion of the British

3 Cornwall is the region with ancient Celtic roots. The Celtic culture in this area was suppressed after the intrusion of Anglo-Saxon influences. At present, the Cornish people actively maintain their Cornish traditions and language, and resist total assimilation into English identity and culture. Cornishness is seen as a resisting force against Englishness. Bernard Deacon’s “Cornishness and Englishness: Nested Independence or Incompatible Ideologies?” analyzes the ambivalent relationship between Cornishness and Englishness in detail (9-29).

Empire. Englishness has already incorporated different ethnic groups within the Empire (qtd. in Kuma 89). Accordingly, Englishness does not belong to a single ethnic group living in England/Britain, but it involves other ethnicities governed by the Empire. The inclusiveness of Englishness has enlarged the scope of Englishness and urges the UK to turn its eyes to its relationships with other countries instead of the racial conflicts within the nation itself. Although conflicts within white and non-white ethnic groups keep occurring every day under the shelter of this term, the concept of the cosmopolitan ethnicity reminds the UK citizens of the inclusiveness of Englishness and offers them a new way to deal with the deepening migrant crisis they are facing in the post-Brexit era. Although Englishness and Britishness carry different cultural and political implications, the boundary between them is not clear-cut. Fundamentally, they involve broader UK identity and historical contexts.

Resonating Stories: Understanding the Migrant Crisis in the UK

The migrant crisis is the most crucial issue that *Spring* intends to address. The novel explores the nuanced meaning of the word “migrant” and presents the shared difficulties migrants in the UK have experienced. Paddy (a voluntary Irish immigrant) and Florence (an involuntary immigrant) are two representatives. In the definition given by the European Parliament, a migrant, in a broader sense, refers to a person who moves from one place to another in search of a better life or job, involuntarily or voluntarily. Voluntary migrants are migrant workers, while involuntary migrants are asylum seekers or refugees. Therefore, a migrant is a *comprehensive* term that refers to individuals who leave their home countries to seek better living conditions in another nation. Although voluntary migrants and refugees are distinct groups and should not be conflated in all contexts, Smith strategically unites them under a comprehensive concept of migrants. Smith uses this approach to highlight the shared experiences of migrants in the UK, and to strengthen the advocacy for their better and more humanitarian treatment.

Historically, owing to its unique geographic location and deep-rooted spirit of hospitality, Europe has become a hub for migrants. Politically, Europe is facing the most significant movement of refugees since the Second World War due to several wars that have occurred during these years, including the wars in Syria, Africa, and even Ukraine. Millions have been forced to flee their homes for safer places to live or survive. Economically, migrant workers, legal or illegal, seek better job opportunities in Europe. According to the European

Commission's statistics, 1.92 million people immigrated to the EU in 2022, 9 percent of whom were asylum seekers or refugees applying for resettlement in Europe. However, the actual number of refugees or asylum seekers is much higher than the official statistics show, and the number is still increasing. Compared with other EU member countries, the UK has welcomed fewer refugees, but the yearly increase in the refugee population has evoked growing panic and uncertainty among UK citizens (Garrett).⁴ The influx of refugees and working migrants from other EU countries with lower socio-economic performances has been seen as gradually squeezing the opportunities of UK citizens for social welfare, employment, housing, and education. These imminent crises have sparked concerns among UK citizens, elicited intense conflicts between citizens and migrants, and even produced divided opinions among them (Chen 12). To quench the anger and uncertainty among UK citizens, the UK's former prime minister, David Cameron, in a speech delivered in Vietnam, declared his determination and promised to tackle these knotty migrant issues to keep the Conservative Party in power. In his remarks, he relegated the migrants to "a *swarm* of people" who transgressed the UK borders to search for a better and safer place to live. He swore, "[E]verything that can be done will be done to make sure *our* borders are secure and make sure that British holidaymakers are able to go on their holidays" (qtd. in Mukherjee 74; emphases added). Cameron's remark not only shows his implicit xenophobic attitude toward migrants but reflects the limited understanding of the "inclusiveness" of Englishness that many UK citizens withhold. This limited understanding of Englishness and xenophobic attitude has worried many writers. Smith, as one of these writers, urges readers to adopt a more comprehensive perspective to probe into the issues of the migrant crisis by questioning the notion of exclusiveness inherent in the traditional concept of Englishness. To portray genuine migrant experiences in the UK, Smith effectively addresses migrant challenges through the narratives of Florence and Paddy.

In addition to showing her concern for the migrant crisis in the Seasonal Quartet, Smith has advocated the rights of migrants for years. Smith joined the Refugee Tales Project in 2015 to advocate the rights of detainees (immigrants imprisoned in the Immigrant Removal Centers) in the UK. In this project, a

4 According to "How Many Migrants Cross the English Channel in Small Boats?" reported on November 14, 2022 by *BBC News*, the number of illegal migrants in the UK is increasing yearly. In 2022, there were more than 40,000 migrants crossing the English Channel by boats (28,526 in 2021) and only 49% of them gained the right to stay in the UK for asylum or to leave for other countries. More than half of these refugees were detained in refugee detention centers or hotels without being given any follow-up information on the resettlement in the future.

group of volunteers assist the detainees (the migrants granted no permission to reside in the UK) in retelling and creating their own stories to voice out what they have felt and experienced in the detention period. Smith believes that storytelling will reflect the genuine conditions these migrants are experiencing (“Welcome”).

Spring not only presents varied perspectives on the UK’s migrant crisis but also reveals the country’s unjust and inhumane treatment of detainees. The novel is composed of two sections: the first section starts with the use of the collective first-person pronoun “we” to convey the anger behind a wave of anti-migrant protests, and the second section starts with a first-person monologue. The narrator “I” conveys the subjective inner voice of migrants. Smith juxtaposes the two sections to represent the voices of the anti-migrant public and the migrants in the UK.

The novel commences with a series of non-stop statements delivered by the collective first-person pronoun, “we,” to show readers a chaotic and apocalyptic scene in the Brexit period. The disturbing and unsettling opening scene conveys a strong sense of xenophobia, violence, anger, and racism prevailing in the UK. A series of protest slogans are shouted on the street by the roaring public: “We want the people we call foreign to feel foreign we need to make it clear they can’t have rights unless we say so,” “we want fury we want outrage we want words at their most emotive antisemite is good nazi is great we want gut reaction we want Age Test For ‘Child Migrants’ 98% Demand Ban New Migrants Gunships To Stop Migrants” and “We need to get to them we need them to think we can get to them get the word *lynching* to anyone not white” (3-4). Against this solid anti-migrant background, the novel portrays the genuine hardships migrants have encountered in the UK through the narratives of its characters. Paddy’s and Florence’s migrant experiences are examples.

The first storyline begins with Paddy’s friendship with Richard. Paddy’s experience of being an Irish migrant in the UK shows that the anti-immigrant sentiment in Britain is not a recent phenomenon. Paddy’s experience reminds readers of the history of Irish immigration between the 1950s and the 1970s, which parallels the xenophobic attitudes occurring in the Brexit era. The similar historical situations imply the ingrained hostility toward migrants within UK society. Paddy is a talented screenwriter emigrating from Ireland and a fan of Katherine Mansfield. She sees herself as a global citizen caring about climate change, migrant crises, and the political position of Northern Ireland. Her intimate friend, Richard, is a famous filmmaker who collaborates with Paddy to make good films. Paddy always guides Richard toward the truth, just as she encourages Richard to make an authentic film about Mansfield instead of

unthinkingly accepting Terp's script just for financial gain. (Terp's script mainly focuses on the imaginary sexual relationship between Mansfield and Rainer Maria Rilke.) Besides, Paddy often argues with Richard about the current social issues in the UK, such as the migrant crisis, media abuse, the political whirl of Donald Trump, and climate change (66-68). Among these issues, the migrant crisis is what Paddy most pays attention to. In one conversation with Richard, Paddy shows her rage against racism pervading the UK. She and Richard express their worry about the UK government's "compassion fatigue" toward migrants and the loss of the fundamental spirits of democracy and commonwealth in the UK due to the proliferation of media on the internet, which propagates and "legitimize[s]" the concept of "British racism"(67). Even though Paddy has lived a "sheltered life" in the UK for decades, she perceives persistent racial discrimination and unfavorable stereotypes of Irish people as still ingrained in UK society. She recalls her personal immigration history and says, "I'm Irish. I was Irish in the 1950s. I was Irish when being Irish in London was like being black *and* being a dog. I know the British people inside out. I was Irish in the 1970s" (67).⁵ Paddy's experience reflects the crisis of identity suffered by migrants in the UK. Even though Paddy immigrated to the UK decades ago, she still feels excluded from this country as an outsider. Paddy's sense of "exclusiveness" reflects the deep-seated concepts of Englishness and white supremacy in the UK. She therefore declines to use the phrase "the migrant crisis" to address the matter of migration, for she considers "migrant" as a term of racial prejudice that aims to divide ordinary people from migrants, who are born with fundamental human rights such as equality and freedom. She tells her son why migrants have to cross the borders and move to another country: "Don't be calling it migrant crisis. . . . It's *people*. It's an individual person crossing the world against the odds. Multiplied by 60 million, all individual people, all crossing the world, against odds that worsen by the day. Migrant crisis. And you the son of a migrant" (68).

Paddy's situation as an outsider in the UK resonates partly with Hannah Arendt's predicament regarding her identity as a Jewish refugee. This parallel also aligns with the plight of migrants, who often find themselves stateless and "rightless." Arendt foresees the refugee crisis as the crisis of the "political and moral authority of the European nation-state" in the contemporary era (Stonebridge 4). She states, "A refugee used to be a person driven to seek refuge

5 During the 1970s and 1980s, Irish-born immigrants were the largest immigrant population in the UK. They were subject to strict policing under the laws of deportation and immigration restrictions. The unfriendly and inhospitable environment in the UK led to insecurity and disquiet among Irish people at that time.

because of some act committed or some political opinion held. . . . Now ‘refugees’ are those of us who have been so unfortunate as to arrive in a new country without means and have to be helped by refugee committees” (“We Refugees” 264). This change in the meaning of “refugees” manifests the term as “an epistemic object in construction” and has an implicit meaning of “a bureaucratic and international humanitarian realm.” Refugees have turned into a collective image of a swarm of “innocent” and “bewildered” people” (Hackl 59) who are “rightless” and “stateless” (Arendt qtd. in Bradley).⁶ Arendt explains why the host country excludes refugees:

The unpopularity of refugees has little to do with their behavior and much to do with *the ambiguous legal status*. . . . These new refugees emerge from *a no-man’s land*, from which they can neither be legally expelled nor deported. . . . Because they exist outside of the laws of nation-states, which recognize *statelessness* only as a limiting case and exception, they *imperil* the normal legal order of any land that admits them. (“Guests” 212; emphases added)

In this complex situation, refugees tend to identify themselves as “immigrants” or “newcomers” in order to avoid being perceived as intruders, “enemy aliens,” or individuals requiring help and support in unfamiliar territories. Their goal for life is to “rebuild [their] lives” (Arendt, “We Refugees” 264, 266). While Arendt’s account of refugees focused on the plight of Jews during World War II, the predicament of statelessness and rightlessness experienced by Jews and other refugees then is still shared by many migrants worldwide today.

The Unheard Voice of Migrants

The voice of migrants is often silenced, for the host country overlooks their anger and hardships. *Spring* uses a first-person monologue at the beginning of its second part to express the authentic anger and plights of the migrants in the UK. In a bitter and sardonic tone, the first-person narrator laments his/her condition of being stateless, rightless, illegal, and dehumanized upon arriving in the UK. For example, the narrator says, “Here, take it. Take my face . . . on this A4 photocopy, the proof I exist” (125). The remark satirizes his/her invisibility in the UK due to the UK officials’ violation and neglect of the fundamental

⁶ Refugees are “rightless” because of their lack of “civil” or “human” rights, which is due to their living in foreign countries, in a state of “statelessness,” without any protection from those governments. Arendt proposes that refugees should have “the right to have rights” (qtd. in Bradley 105). Based on Arendt’s idea, Megan Bradley further points out the ways for refugees to regain their agency in foreign countries and in their homelands (101-23).

human rights that migrants should have. The UK government must grant official approval to a migrant's identity; otherwise, they face the deprivation of essential rights like mobility, education, and other fundamental privileges enjoyed by citizens of the UK: "Without it I officially don't. Even though I'm bodily here, without this piece of paper I'm not. If I lose it, wherever I am I won't be anywhere" (125). However, admission does not guarantee their rights to action, work, and education. The narrator complains, "But I'm here. I exist because this piece of paper with my face on it proves I'm *not* able to study here or work here or live here without permission or earn any money here" (125; emphasis added). Migrants are always the outsiders that "make you [the UK citizens] all the more eligible" and let you know "[w]hat my face means is not your face." Migrants are faceless nobody, invisible among the crowd (126-27). Their foreign faces are taken as the image of the other to reassure and reinforce the stability of UK citizens' cultural identity. At the same time, they endanger the legitimacy of such an imaginary identity as well.

Rosi Braidotti maintains that the presence of non-white others, such as immigrants from southern and eastern Europe or Africa, debunks the myth of "European cultural hegemony" and destroys the dream of "European nationalism" (81). Whiteness is "our [Europeans'] universalist fantasy, disembodied and disembedded, 'we' actually thought we had no colour" (83). The non-white others denaturalize a "colourless multicolouredness" (82)⁷ and help Europeans to form their cultural identity (83). The unnamed narrator in *Spring* is aware of his or her otherness in the UK. He has to conform to this cultural hegemony to maintain his place in the UK: "It's nothing. My pleasure. My face is all about you. . . . What my face means is not your face. By all means. You're *welcome*" (126-27; emphasis added). Here, the narrator's tone changes from anger, resignation, and ambivalence to sarcasm in "You're welcome" (127). The final phrase echoes Braidotti's statement of the non-white others as a resisting force that agitates and reveals the fragile foundation of the "European culture hegemony" established by the void of the white. Florence's ambivalent identity, behaviors, and expressions embody this resisting force. She, as a non-white refugee in the UK, is like a "breaking point" (126) that challenges the legitimacy and stability of the

7 "A colourless multicolouredness" refers to how the colour of white "contains all other colours." The colour of white "is the void that lies at the heart of a system, defining the contours of both social and symbolic visibility in regimes of colonial domination" (Braidotti 82). The void of the center of political power draws a demarcation between the oppressor and the oppressed, the self and the other. It is only when the oppositional forces emerge to reflect its voidness that the established unfair system may be changed.

European cultural hegemony. She represents the authentic voice of the migrants in the UK. Her existence and her inquiries about UK immigration regulations reveal the unfair treatment and the prejudice imposed on the displaced people.

“My face is a breaking point”: Questions of Invisibility and Border-Crossing

As a mixed-raced migrant kid in the UK, Florence’s cultural and national identity is hard to pin down. Because of the indistinguishability of her identity, Florence can be a key figure in exposing the weakness of European cultural hegemony and the unreasonable immigration regulations in the UK. Florence first appears in the novel while Richard is going to commit suicide by lying on the rails due to his poor job prospects. Richard describes his impression of Florence as a “mixed-race” girl in a school uniform accompanied by a white woman, Brittany (110). As the train is approaching Richard, Florence rescues his life in a close call by telling Richard, “I really need you not to do that” (112). The event manifests Florence as a brilliant kid with an unusual power and wisdom to change people’s opinions and mindsets. Florence is portrayed by the detainees in IRC as a mysterious twelve-to-thirteen-year-old girl with an enigmatic power to go into and out of the Immigration Removal Center (IRC) at her will to “g[e]t management to clean up the toilets” (129-30) and to enlighten some detainees suffering from depression (138-42). Brittany, a Detainees Center Officer (DCO) employed by SA4A company, knows Florence’s name and deeds via her colleagues’ and other detainees’ descriptions at IRC (133). IRC is a specifically designed prison-like place to detain illegal immigrants in the UK. The detainees there are subject to verbal abuse (149-52; 223-24), psychological torment, and unreasonable detention. They are called “DEETS” (the name of the insect repellent) instead of detainees or their real names. They have no right to ask for anything, even a blanket for warmth, only because they are identified as illegal immigrants (166). Brittany recalls her impressions and feelings on the IRC:

There was laughing from deets that sounded like something had broken, and the laughing at deets from certain DCOs, laughter closer to the bone, threat-laughter . . . there were people in here, in a place designed when it was first built for 72-hour detention at the most, who’d been for years, years, and years. (135)

Brittany remembers once hearing a Kurdish woman at the IRC crying about her unfair and irrational treatment for “the crime of being a migrant” (159). These

migrants flee to the UK to “ask for help” but are detained in detention centers (160-61). The scene reflects Paddy’s frustration with the common perception of immigrants as perpetually estranged in an unfamiliar country instead of being recognized as individuals.

Unlike Paddy and Florence, Brittany, like most British citizens, feels paralyzed about the mistreatment of the detainees and continues to do her job because of the decent salary. Her numbness to the predicaments of these people irritates Josh, her ex-boyfriend, a humanitarian. Josh harshly criticizes the UK government for forcing migrants out of the country and he complains about how this is a revival of the pride in Englishness. He says angrily, “That keeping people out is what it’s all about. . . . Being British. . . . English. . . . Wall ourselves in. . . . Shoot ourselves in the foot. Great nation. Great country” (158). Josh’s anger corresponds to Paddy’s cosmopolitan view of the inclusiveness of Englishness. The value of ethnic diversities and cultural differences embraced by the inclusiveness of Englishness is opposed to the idea of the purity of whiteness. Being “English” is not limited to being white, nor is it a sign of British nationalism.⁸ Brittany struggles to be a DCO while refusing to admit her conflicting feelings in front of Josh. She feels so lonely that she can only express her true feelings by ritually saying goodbye to the hedges outside of the IRC after work. It is not until she meets and travels with Florence on the train to Scotland that she begins to gain a new understanding of herself and to pay attention to the unjust treatment of detainees and other migrant issues in the UK.

The encounter between Brittany and Florence seems to be a coincidence, but Florence has planned the event beforehand in order to reunite with her mother, an illegal runaway refugee, in Scotland. As Brittany first meets this girl, Florence manifests her invisibility (being ignored) among people (179). She refuses to tell Brittany either her personal history or her family background and even lies to Brittany that she has been ordered to join her foster family in Scotland (175). Actually, she is to reunite with her mother with the help of Alda (the pseudonym of the Auld Alliance, which helps refugees voluntarily escape the detention center) (271). Florence’s philosophical and witty conversations with Brittany on their journey to Scotland inspire Brittany to see things from alternative perspectives. Florence highlights that the majority of migrants have encountered comparable situations in the UK, akin to her own experiences: in-

8 European nationalism is a general term under European cultural hegemony. However, other emerging nationalisms are covered by this significant term. British nationalism is one of the examples, which is the reason for Brexit. The other EU members hold their unique nationalisms as well. It complicates the European cultural identity and makes it open to future change (Braidotti 85-86).

visibility. Florence tells Brittany, “Sometimes, I was *invisible* . . . even [in] places when I’m actually speaking out loud, like asking for information or something. People can look *through* me. Certain white people, in particular, can look right through young people and also black and mixed-race people like we *aren’t* here” (192-93; emphases added). Her invisibility is not just metaphorical but empirical. The invisibility of Florence at the DCO is one of the examples. It is not due to her supernatural power but people’s ignorance of her existence that makes her able to go in and out of the DCO freely. Florence’s explanation of her invisibility at the DCO makes Brittany realize that this girl “outwitted the system” and arouses her sympathy with the dilemmas of migrants as well (194). The more Brittany understands what Florence has experienced, the more she feels “protective” of this “legendary child.” Florence leads her to “see through a lot of what’s happening in the world right now” (199).

Besides Florence, the experience of invisibility is also mentioned in Richard’s interview with one of the members of the Auld Alliance. Richard journeys to Scotland alone to retrieve his purpose in life. On his journey, Richard meets Alda, a librarian who later turns into an activist to help detained immigrants at risk, gives him a free ride to the Highlands of Scotland with Florence and Brittany. The unexpected encounter of the four people allows them to interrogate the issues of humanity and politics beyond the distinctions between races, occupations, and political views (Grimes). After the journey is over, Richard makes a documentary film about the Auld Alliance. In the interview of the film, one of the members of the Auld Alliance shares her experience of invisibility, statelessness, and rightlessness in the UK. She tells Richard about her experiences as a migrant. She says:

We move from invisibility to another. I had no rights. I still have no rights. I carried fear on my shoulders all the way across the world to this country you call yours. . . . Fear is one of my belongingness. Fear will always be part of any belonging, anywhere, that I ever do, for the rest of my life. I fought hard, to get here to your country. And the first thing you did when I arrived was hand me a letter saying, *Welcome to a country in which you are not welcome. You are now a designated unwelcome person with whom we will do as we please.* (271-72)

The problematic situations described in her remarks echo the shared dilemma experienced by many migrants, like Paddy and Florence in the UK. They have no place to settle; they will be despised, expelled, or excluded from UK society. To rebuild a new life is just an illusion for them.

Besides the invisibility of migrants, the border crossing is another issue Florence attempts to address. Brittany and Florence talk about crossing borders on their journey from England to Scotland, pointing out the fictionality of

borders between countries. First, Florence poses a question about the border between England and Scotland. She claims that the imaginary border on the map differentiates the two countries, even though there is no natural line between the two places, whereas Florence proposes that “this border *unites* these places. This border holds together these two really interesting places where . . . you yourself became *doubly* possible” (196; emphasis added). Florence’s vision ironically criticizes the narrowly designated definition of borderlines and brilliantly endows borders with a new possibility. Borders are the contact zones that will create a space for the hybridization of a different cultural identity and ethos. Florence’s vision reminds Brittany of her father, who remembers the good old days of travelling without a passport. Traveling and finding shelter was possible without official permission during the pre-Brexit days. Florence and Brittany’s conversation about borderlines draws a closer connection between them and implies the unreasonable demarcation between the self and the other induced by the imaginary borderlines.

If border-crossings do not guarantee migrants the right to resettle in the foreign nation successfully, and if the problem of invisibility is not solved, how do migrants appeal to and reclaim their fundamental human rights? Arendt answers that only when they “take back control of their own hegemony,” they might regain their fundamental human rights. As Arendt advocates, these migrants should ask for “the right to have right” (qtd. in Bradley 105) and “act together” to form a new collective political power (qtd. in Haker 35), which is the way for them to regain the fundamental human rights. What the Auld Alliance does in the novel—the refugees/immigrants who received help get together with local humanitarian activists to rescue other detainees from the DCOs in the UK—represents the actualization of Arendt’s concept of power.⁹ This action is an act of empowerment. In the novel, Florence gains assistance from the Auld Alliance and collaborates with this organization to question the unreasonable policies implemented at the IRC. It happens when Florence goes into the IRC and meets up with SA4A’s IRC Manager, Bernard Oates, to address a cluster of crucial questions: “Why do you handcuff the people who come here when they’re being brought here or taken out of here, when they aren’t actually criminals?” (203-4), “Why is it the Prison and Probation department and the people who work for it who are dealing with people who are refugees and have come to this country from other countries they can’t stay in because of things like being tortured or wars or not having enough to eat?” (204), and “Mr. Oates, did you know you’re breaking the law? It says in law that you can only legally detain someone in this country for seventy-two hours

before you have to charge them with a crime” (204-05). The cluster of inquiries points an arrow to the fundamental question about the migrant crisis: “Is immigrating to another country because you need help actually a crime?” (205). Florence taps into such a humanitarian question due to her “personal experience” of being a migrant (206). To the UK, Florence is a “breaking point,” whose presence underscores the weakness of the white cultural hegemony, especially Englishness, and the presence of the other in UK society. Her inquiries about the unjust juridical policies imposed on the migrants arouse the public attention to the sufferings experienced by the migrants in the UK and, at the same time, propel people to rethink what hospitality is.

The UK as a Place of Sanctuary?

“Hospitality” has attracted the attention of a camp of scholars since the 1990s. *The Oxford Dictionary* defines “hospitality” as “friendly and generous behavior towards guests.” Simply put, a host welcomes a guest to his or her home. The definition points to a clear distinction between the self and the other and reinforces the image of borders or territories. The territory owner has the right to decide who is welcomed or unwelcomed. However, the definition overlooks the complicated relationship between the self (host) and the other (guest). The meaning of hospitality has been expanded by Derrida’s redefining “hospitality” by turning back to the etymological origin of *hospitatat* in Latin and *hospitalité* in French. The prefix of “hospī (hosti)” refers to both “host” and “guest.” The dual meanings of the prefix reveal “hospitality” as an oxymoron that challenges the taken-for-granted demarcation between the self and the other, that is, the host and the guest (Derrida, “Hospitality” 3; Fu 92). For Derrida, the value of hospitality rests on the fact that a stranger has the right “not to be treated with hostility when he arrives on someone else’s territory” (“Hospitality” 4).

However, the law of hospitality implemented today is “the law of the household,” for hospitality is “a right, a duty, an obligation, the greeting of the foreign other as a friend” only when the host acts as a “patron” to welcome, to receive, or “to give asylum” to a stranger (4). Because of this narrow-scoped understanding of hospitality, Derrida sharply asserts, “We do not know what hospitality is” (6). He discusses two types of hospitality: the “conditional” and “unconditional” hospitality. Conditional hospitality emphasizes the supreme power of the host: “The host remains the master in the house, the country, the nation, he controls the threshold, he controls the borders, and when he wel-

comes the guest, he wants to keep the mastery." The host welcomes the guest and hopes that the guest will keep intact the host's sovereignty reciprocally. The conditional hospitality is "the conditionality of the gift as exchange" (Derrida, "Hospitality, Justice" 69). On the other hand, unconditional hospitality is "pure hospitality" that "does not seek to identify the newcomer, even if he is not a citizen." The guest is visiting the host, but has not been invited by the host. The arrival of this unexpected visitor may involve risks for the host or even for the nation, but the host still welcomes him ("Hospitality, Justice" 70; "Hospitality" 14). Due to these two contradictory conditions, hospitality is related to the issue of threshold and ethics. Derrida's two types of hospitality imply that hospitality itself is an act of boundary-crossing (threshold) and negotiation between the host and the guest (ethics). Hospitality erases the line between the self and the other, the public and the private, and the inside and the outside. However, the melting boundary of these binary oppositions shows a dynamic inter-relationship between these binary categories, which unfolds the unstable structure of hospitality itself (Still 11).

Derrida points out that the ideal hospitality should be unconditional even though the guest's visit will violate the host's sovereignty. He explains that when the guest affirms the sovereignty of the host by emphasizing the existence of a borderline or a "threshold," this act is not hospitality at all: "But if there is a threshold, there is no longer hospitality. This is the difference, the gap, between the hospitality of *invitation* and the hospitality of *visitation*" ("Hospitality" 14; emphases added). The hospitality of visitation sets no threshold; the guest is unexpected and welcomed whenever he/she comes. Conversely, the hospitality of an invitation draws a clear line between the host and the guest, who will be checked by "customs" and "police" when the invited person is going to cross the threshold; "Hospitality thus becomes the threshold or the door" (conditional hospitality) (14). As a result, hospitality is about "responsibility" and "decision." Who is responsible for the security of the territory? Moreover, who can determine who is welcomed to the territory? These questions are related to the relationship between the self and the other. They are the questions of ethics, not just politics. Therefore, the migration issue is ethical.

The intricate relationship between the self and the other complicates the concept of hospitality. Hospitality is about negotiations and power struggles among groups. Hospitality is not only granted to the guest by the host, but also the host affirms his/her sovereignty from the guest's recognition of his/her absolute power. As the guest arrives at the host's home, it unveils the imbalanced power dynamic between them, posing a threat to the host's authority and legitimacy (Still 12). Derrida proposes two types of hospitality to help people to re-

configure the concept of hospitality more comprehensively. Derrida believes that the philanthropic act of wholeheartedly welcoming the arrival of the guest at the host's home or country is pragmatically difficult in the real world. "Unconditional hospitality" is an ideal concept without acknowledging its practical impediments. It oversimplifies the diverse methods and degrees of enacting hospitality as well. Consequently, he further states that hospitality has no homogeneous definition and standardized ways of enactment. On the contrary, he emphasizes how and where hospitality is enacted, for it reflects power struggles between different social and racial classes in the real world.

Judith Still more clearly elucidates the asymmetrical relationship between the host and the guest in the enactment of hospitality, offering insights that prompt a reevaluation of migrant issues. She states that Derrida's two hospitalities include both the relationship of "reciprocity" and "non-reciprocity" between the host and the guest (14-15). The former is the equivalent interaction and resource exchange between friends or peers. The guest can give back what the host has given. At the same time, the host's sovereignty will not be challenged through reciprocal hospitality. For example, economic immigrants are more welcomed than political or illegal immigrants because their professions and skills could benefit the host country. However, political or domestic immigrants are relatively socially disadvantaged. Their arrival in the host country is perceived as a threat that might deplete the social welfare resources its citizens should have. Moreover, the massive influx of these migrants may even alter the demographic structure of the host country, which may topple the incumbent political governing system. Consequently, the non-reciprocal relationship between the host and the guest restricts the feasibility of unconditional hospitality, prompting the host country to measure the extent to which hospitality could be enacted without inciting unrest within its borders. Nevertheless, the asymmetrical relationship between the host and the guest is not always tilted on the side of the host country. It can be reversed due to the civic movement advocating migrant (refugee) rights or criticism of the unhumanitarian migrant policy implemented by the government. These civic movements contribute to the acceleration of the law-making process, advocating protecting and advancing the rights of migrants, giving them a legitimate and equal status to dwell in the host country. For example, Irish immigrants in the 1950s were severely discriminated and excluded by UK society because of their inferior socioeconomic status and detachment from the British political entity. After years of civic movements within the UK, Irish immigrants have attained greater fundamental human rights in the country through the enactment of new laws. Paddy's case in *Spring* serves as an example of the negotiation between the

economic immigrants and the host country.¹⁰

In discussing the migrant question, Derrida disagrees with “the unconditional law of unlimited hospitality” even though it is ideal and philanthropic. Instead, he suggests “the double law of hospitality: to calculate the risks, yes, but without closing the door on the incalculable, that is, on the future and the foreigner” (“Principle” 6). In “Cosmopolitanism,” to fulfill the duty of hospitality and to deal with the problem of migrants, Derrida echoes Arendt’s “the right to asylum” by proposing the idea of “a city of refuge” (8).¹¹ “A city of refuge” is a place of expediency to protect the rights and lives of migrants. Derrida concedes that implementing pure or unconditional hospitality is overly idealistic and challenging in practice. However, conditional hospitality makes it difficult to provide migrants with substantial help because of the intervention of the police power and teletechnologies used to protect the sovereignty, interests, and security of the nation-states and their citizens (“Cosmopolitanism” 14). To overcome the tug-of-war between these two hospitalities, Derrida suggests that building a “city of refuge” would be an expedient way to shelter the displaced and persecuted, for “a city of refuge” is a practice of “cultivat[ing] an ‘ethic of hospitality’” (16). Derrida explains, “Hospitality is culture itself and not simply one ethic amongst others...it is a manner of being there, the manner in which we relate to ourselves and to others, to others as our own or as foreigners, *ethics is hospitality*” (16-17). Hospitality is a matter of crossing thresholds. “A city of refuge” is an ideal place to embody the ambivalent and inseparable relationship between the self and the other. The focus is not the threshold of the home but the convoluted relations that mutually influence and construct the concept of the self and the other. It gives us a new way to perceive the migrant crisis.

Besides creating or eliminating conditions for the reception of migrants, Derrida also advises the authorities to constantly modify the laws to solve the on-site refugee problems on the ground. The prospect of “a new order of law and a democracy to come” (23) is based on properly implementing the ideal of the city of refuge. Derrida’s “city of refuge” offers an ideal place where migrants

¹⁰ Smith in *Spring* does not present a concrete negotiation between the UK and the immigrants but Paddy’s case could serve as a model for the improvement of the migrant conditions in the UK. Initially discriminated as an Irish immigrant, Paddy later achieves recognition in her career and attains the same rights as other UK citizens. Her journey reflects a modest advancement in migrant rights within the UK. Hospitality will continue to evolve alongside varying political and judicial developments.

¹¹ “A city of refuge” comes from an ancient concept first appearing in the Old Testament. It was a place offering shelter to those who committed unforgivable sins or were displaced runaways. It was a place of exception and forgiveness outside the governance of any nation-state’s common laws. Derrida borrows this concept to illustrate his vision of an ideal form of future democracy.

could be treated fairly without being persecuted, where political controversies regarding national borders could potentially find resolution, and where the policies and practices of hospitality could be improved. Despite such an optimistic vision, Derrida never claims that the migrant crisis will end one day. Nevertheless, he argues that the crisis will be ameliorated if people continue to care about it and deal with it ethically.

Paddy and Florence are victims who have been excluded from the mainstream of UK culture and society.¹² They are outsiders even though they attempt to rebuild their lives in the UK. As one of the largest cosmopolitan cities, London has attracted millions of foreigners from other countries in search of better jobs or a safer place to live. It is a dreamland of freedom and opportunity. Nevertheless, these foreigners are like a “breaking point” that challenges the illusion of the UK as a nation of hospitality. Florence’s depiction of the UK government’s unfair treatment of the migrants manifests the UK’s failure to implement its hospitality. It is remote from the ideal of being “a city of refuge” in Derrida’s sense. For example, Florence describes the unfriendly governmental measures to migrants, such as the police checks, the DCOs’ illegal overtime detention of refugees, SA4A’s secret midnight arrest of “illegal” migrants, and even the deprivation of migrants’ fundamental human rights to education, mobility, and work. What is particularly troubling is the harsh severance of the parent-child bond, as exemplified by the separation of Florence from her mother.

Hope for the Future?

Florence’s personal history remains enigmatic until the very end of the novel. Although she wears a uniform, carries a schoolbag, and acquires much knowledge beyond her age, the novel does not tell the reader about her life. The reader can only piece together who Florence is from the fragmented descriptions throughout the novel. Florence’s enigmatic and fragmented identity mirrors that of many migrants, whose sense of self is often ambiguous or diminished by the lack of acceptance in their unfamiliar surroundings. Their sufferings and unfair treatment even go unnoticed or unaddressed. They are invisible, for

¹² Unlike Florence, who is an illegal immigrant in the UK, Paddy and her sons (Irish immigrants) have been granted UK citizenship and have the same rights as any other UK citizen. It is due to Ireland’s entry into the EU in 1973 and the implementation of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998. Paddy’s migrant experience manifests the UK’s efforts to improve and deal with migrant issues. Although the improvement is insufficient, as Derrida expects, the host country should keep adjusting its laws and ways to protect the basic human rights of migrants and maintain the safety of its citizens.

they are not welcomed or permitted to live in the country where they dream of rebuilding their lives. Florence's proposition to invite Brittany on a journey to Scotland compels Brittany to perceive and comprehend migrants from an entirely fresh standpoint. Simultaneously, this action prompts readers to pause and reconsider the migrant crisis in the UK. Florence's original plan is to befriend Brittany, who can protect her from the surveillance of other SA4A officers during her trip to Scotland for a reunion with her mother. However, they develop a special affectionate bond on the trip, which helps Brittany begin to understand the dilemmas faced by the migrants. On the trip, Florence reveals her reason for choosing Brittany as her companion. She criticizes the SA4A guards for being like machines without humanity. In order to "humanize the machine," Florence invites Brittany into her life so that she can learn more about the life and mindset of refugees (*Spring* 309). Florence even makes fun of Brittany, claiming that if Brittany can protect her, she will "respect" her because that is "Your dues. Our debt to society" (310). Whether Florence is joking or not, this teenage girl points out British society's lack of hospitality to migrants. Florence reveals her stateless and insecure condition to Brittany when she asks what "refugee chic" in the newspaper means. She tells Brittany that the "refugee chic" image makes her think about her miserable situation as a migrant child. She states:

And I was thinking about it because, considering that I am already worrying about getting up tomorrow morning with no clean change of underwear, I have begun to wonder what it would be like to never know what was going to happen to you next, or to have no way of getting yourself clean or of knowing whether you'd have a clean place to rest, before it all started again the next day. (308)

This expression shows migrants' helplessness and sense of non-belongingness in a foreign country. Through Brittany's company and care, and by sharing their personal life experiences, they become emotionally closer. Their newfound friendship blurs the boundaries between the host and the guest, British and non-British. Although Florence betrays Brittany and runs away with Alda to meet her mother, their contingent encounter shows the prospect of peace and compromise between the host country and the migrant through transformations of conditional hospitality into unconditional one.

Toward the end of this paper, the reader may wonder what happens to Florence and her mother after their reunion. Smith uses this scene as the climax of the novel. It deepens the reader's knowledge of the inescapable fate and inhumane treatment experienced by most migrants in Britain. The tragic end of their reunion makes the reader aware of the necessity of universal humanitarian

appeal for love, peace, and equality ignored by the UK government's refugee bills and the legal institutions. The parent-child reunion scene at the end of the novel disappoints the reader, although their reunion is the most exciting and touching moment, full of hope and affection.

Florence and her mother meet at a historic site in the Scottish Highlands, an ancient battlefield now a famous shooting range and tourist site. At the site of their reunion, several actors in period costumes are re-enacting ancient war scenes. The merging of the past and present war scenes blurs the line between the real and the fictional, suggesting that a temporary mother-daughter reunion is nothing more than a fleeting dream. "Here's today's battlefield: a child runs across the grass over the bones of the dead and leaps into the arms of a young woman. Can you imagine seeing a heart leap? That's what it looks like. . . . They stand there like that and it's like the world can't coalesce around it" (332). Unfortunately, a "small mob of people" rushes up to them and tears them apart (332). The mother is handcuffed, and both she and the child are loaded into a van. The police arrest them. At the sight of this cruel scene, the actors and visitors near the place use their cell phones to record what is happening and shout at the car to stop while they are threatened by a man who asks them to stop recording the event. But all is in vain: "Story over. Well, almost:" (334). What happens to Florence and her mother is not mentioned at the end of the novel. Like most of the migrants, their future is unpredictable and unknown.

After a state of agitation, everything returns to normal. Nothing seems to have happened, but something is going on. The violent separation of mother and daughter points to the dismaying future of Florence and her mother and, indeed, foreshadows the dark future of all migrants. Smith brilliantly juxtaposes the bloody and violent battle scenes of the past and the present (Highlanders vs. English/ non-English vs. English) to convey the message that the conflicts between the self and the other at the borders will continue and that the imperatives that the UK must scrupulously address are the practice of hospitality and the proper focus on the inclusiveness of Englishness. Although the novel ends on a somber note, the final chapter leaves the reader with a new sense of possibility and hope for the reader. The narrator portrays spring as a season "to open, to uncover, to make accessible, or remove whatever stops something from being accessible" (335). It is a season of "the great connective" with "hopeless hope" (336). The flow of time is where possibilities and hopes dwell: "Pass any flowering bush or tree and you can't not hear it, the buzz of the engine, the new life already at work in it, time's factory" (336).

Conclusion

Spring spends plenty of pages exploring the migrant issue. As the most political novel among Smith's Seasonal Quartet, *Spring* questions the long-standing value of Englishness and the value of hospitality. How the UK and the world deal with the irresistible wave of migrant movements in a more humanitarian way has become an ineluctable global responsibility. Florence uses her wits in the novel to challenge the unreasonable and unjust detention system. Also, she shows her outstanding intelligence in resisting the opinionated image imposed on migrants. Florence embodies the experience of migrants, whose identities are undefinable and unique. She is mysterious, for the border between the self and the other is always uncertain. Florence's friendship with Brittany sparks the possibility of a fresh ethical connection between the self and the other. Her presence fosters mutual understanding between migrants and citizens of the UK. On the other hand, the heart-breaking tragedy of Florence and her mother highlights the urgent need for genuine hospitality. *Spring* shows that even in an age of darkness, there is still a light, just as spring is the season for welcoming the burgeoning of life.

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破碎的歸屬感：阿里·史密斯《春》 中的移民經驗

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摘要

《春》是阿里·史密斯季節四部曲中的第三部作品。與其他三部小說相同，這本小說聚焦於英國脫歐公投後的社會議題，其中移民問題是整個四部曲中反覆探討的主題之一。在《春》中，史密斯通過三條交織的故事線軸，從五位人物的視角來呈現移民在英國的生活經驗。這些故事情節最終在小說的結尾匯聚，集中展現移民孩童—福倫斯—的困境。作為非法移民父母的孩子，福倫斯在英國社會中過著局外人的生活。她的存在挑戰了傳統對英國包容性的認知，也重新審視了英國身份與排他性之間的關係。本文將運用德里達的好客概念，論證福倫斯如何象徵對英國身份排他性的反抗，並為英國的移民問題提供新的理解視角。

關鍵字：英國脫歐、移民問題、好客、英國身份、德里達