



Power Dynamics and Cultural Clashes in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*: Decolonising the Discourse of Differences

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Abstract

This paper examines the power dynamics and cultural clashes in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*, focusing on the interactions between the white protagonist, Mary Turner, and her black servants Samson and Moses, as well as a white servant Tony. Set in colonial Southern Rhodesia (today Zimbabwe), the novel portrays the pervasive racism and superiority complex of the white colonialists. Mary's negative perceptions of black culture highlight the colonialists' failure to appreciate indigenous traditions, reinforcing unequal power structures. Drawing attention to theoretical frameworks such as Franz Fanon's concept of anti-racism and Ngugi wa Thiong'o's theory of decolonisation, this paper examines Moses's resistance to oppression and his quest for decolonisation as manifestations of individual agency within imperialism. Moses' journey toward decolonisation symbolises a broader struggle for psychological, cultural, and economic liberation from colonial oppression. This analysis underscores the complexities of authority and resistance, illustrating how Mary's attitudes inadvertently trigger Moses's decolonisation process. This paper contributes to a deeper understanding of Lessing's exploration of colonial authority, cultural differences, and the necessity of decolonisation.

Keywords: Cultural difference, anti-racism, decolonisation, power dynamics

Introduction

In *The Grass Is Singing* (1950), Doris Lessing (1919-2013), a British short story writer, novelist, critic, and essayist, portrays racial relations between blacks and whites and an imbalance in the socio-cultural structures in African countries during the apartheid period. This analytical research explores the complex power relations between the cultures of black and white people in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe) where black people subconsciously carry the memories of their ancestors. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon states, "A normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world" (111). Lessing

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vividly portrays the tension between the colonists and the colonised during the height of British colonialism in the mid-twentieth century. In *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o writes about "... the ceaseless struggles of African people to liberate their economy, politics and culture from that Euro-American-based stranglehold to usher in a new era of true communal self-regulation and self-determination" (4). The study explores diverse cultures of colonialists and natives who struggle for the recognition of their identity in their lands. It also delves into a discourse of power dynamics, racial prejudices, class divisions, and the psychological division within the colonial framework.

Southern Rhodesia is a vast, but dry and desolate land that Mary Turner and Dick Turner desperately try to cultivate their farmland in the name of cultivating lands and civilising Africans. Thiong'o critically notes, "Africa actually enriches Europe: but Africa is made to believe that it needs Europe to rescue it from poverty" (28). Both the land and the culture of the natives are suffocating for the white people. Thiong'o emphasises that Europe received many things from Africa to enrich them. This paper provides a comprehensive analysis of the domination of dark colonialism for the race-conscious lady, Mary's marginalised status through the lenses of anti-racism and the imperative decolonising of Moses's mind.

Lessing addresses differences in language, culture, identity, and history of colonialists and native people and contributes to the broader discourse on postcolonial studies. This paper poses some research questions: First, how do Mary Turner's interactions with the black servants reflect colonial power dynamics and cultural clashes? Second, what do Mary's attitudes towards black culture reveal about colonial prejudices? Third, how does Moses's character represent resistance and the quest for decolonisation? Fourth, what are the broader implications of Moses's journey towards decolonisation for understanding the complexities of authority and resistance in postcolonial literature?

The main objective of this research is to analyze power dynamics between Mary and her black servants. It investigates Mary's attitudes towards black culture, examines Moses's resistance as a form of agency, contextualises Moses's decolonisation within anti-racism and decolonisation theory, and contributes to the discourse on colonial authority and resistance in postcolonial literature. This study is limited by its focus on a single novel and the specific historical and geographical context of colonial Southern Rhodesia. Moreover, this study relies on textual analysis and theoretical interpretation which is subjective.

Following analytical methods, this paper highlights the concepts of cultural differences and decolonising the mind of the primary source, *The Grass Is Singing* by Lessing. The narratives of this novel show black-white relations in African Rhodesia. The secondary sources of information are gathered from the works of other researchers and books based on cultural encounters, and decolonising the mind. This research provides techniques and methods that are interdisciplinary and qualitative in nature. This paper aims to provide a concise and critical analysis of power dynamics, cultural clashes, and decolonisation in Lessing's novel, enhancing the understanding of colonial authority and resistance.

Cultural Diversity and Decolonisation: A Theoretical Perspective

Central to this research is the integration of cultural encounters and their repercussions on individual and collective identities. Postcolonial theory, particularly the concept of cultural differences, explores the impact of colonialism on various cultures and societies in colonial countries. This framework examines the dynamics of power, resistance, and identity in the context of colonial and postcolonial settings. The key

concepts of this paper are cultural differences and decolonisation of postcolonial theory, which addresses the effects of colonialism on the identities and cultures of both the colonisers and the colonised. Europeans' attitudes towards racial differences and dichotomy between black and white form the central issue. These attitudes shape and continue to influence social structures, identities, and inter-racial relations. Decolonisation refers to the process through which formerly colonised societies reclaim and reassert their cultural, political and economic independence. It involves a critical re-evaluation of colonial histories and the re-establishment of natives' identities and cultural practices.

The key theorists of postcolonial studies are Frantz Fanon and Ngugi wa Thiong'o from Africa, Edward Said, a Palestine-American critic, Homi K. Bhabha, an Indian-British and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, an Indian-American. Fanon and Wa Thiong'o's concept of decolonisation are milestones in African postcolonial readings. They have given rigorous analysis of the phenomenon of conquest, domination and resistance in previously colonised African societies enhancing the process of decolonisation.

Black Skin, White Masks and *The Wretched of the Earth* by Franz Fanon provide the psychological and social impacts of colonisation on both the colonised and the coloniser. Fanon's analysis of decolonisation highlights the necessity of a violent struggle to overthrow the colonial rule and restore dignity to the oppressed. Colonial racism defines colonised people who were inferior to those Europeans who assumed Africans as slaves. His concept of identity politics and postcolonial theory - cultural differences and decoloniality - show that native people and their culture and values were inferior. He mentions the Jungian concept, *collective unconscious*, that human beings are related to each other and their ancestry through a shared set of experiences. Jung thinks that human beings subconsciously carry the memories of their ancestors. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon states, "Sin is Negro as virtue is white. All those white men in a group, guns in their hands, cannot be wrong. I am guilty. I do not know of what, but I know that I am no good" (139) and "The Negro is in every sense of the word a victim of white civilisation" (192), which can be considered the major insights that colonial power devalued the colonised culture and identity. The white culture infiltrated the natives' culture in such a way that negroes feel psychologically abnormal without any interaction with them. This happens as a part of the psyche which is known as the collective unconscious.

Colonialists imposed their culture, values, and norms on the colonised people and created a sense of cultural inferiority among the natives. Fanon writes, "A normal Negro child, having grown up within a normal family, will become abnormal on the slightest contact with the white world" (143). He states, "Was my freedom not given to me then in order to build the world of the you?" and "I want the world to recognise, with me, the open door of every consciousness" (232). The concept of decolonization is a violent event, and fighting with a colonising power by using sole politics will not be effective. He prays, "Oh my body, make of me always a man who questions" (232). Fanon emphasises colour-coded racism which creates an inferiority complex in the black-skinned people who cannot change the discriminatory situation of the society.

Fanon points out that white dominators push black subjects into the internalisation of the negative approaches of their skin colour which represents black as a symbol of evil. Some colonised individuals internally believe that their culture is inferior to the culture of colonialists. This internalisation of inferiority leads to the sense of self-hatred as in *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon states, "Decolonisation is the meeting of two forces, opposed to each other by their very nature" (28). In that case, natives resist

and try to decolonise culturally and psychologically to get freedom. Fanon also emphasises that in the post-independent situation the nationalist leader simply replaced the colonial elite and continued the exploitation of the masses.

Edward Said's concept of decolonisation is discussed in *Orientalism*, an intellectual and cultural project, which plays a pivotal role in postcolonial cultural studies. It highlights the advancement and superiority of Western culture and serves the construction of binary opposition between the colonialists and colonised people. In *Orientalism*, Said writes, "the Orient was almost a European invention" (1) and points out, "... a Western style for dominating, reconstructing, and having authority over the Orient" (3). Said draws attention to Michel Foucault's theories of power and knowledge and focuses on the concepts of power politics and resistance which enhance the process of decolonisation in colonised societies.

Said has given the concept of Self and Other and Orientalism an ontological and epistemological distinction between 'the Orient' and 'the Occident'. He emphasises, "knowledge of the Orient . . . in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental, and the World" (40). Colonialists tried to highlight the superiority through the analysis of African culture to control and enslave through ideology, culture and cultural hegemony. Cultural exchange helps to influence African and European cultures. Said's critique extends to the broader cultural implications and explores the concept of hybridity. He thinks that colonial encounters create complex cultural hybrid identities. Decolonisation embraces hybrid identities, and challenges rigid notions of culture and identity that have been imposed by colonial discourse. Resistance, as the crucial component of decolonisation, is an ongoing process and Said asserts that, "to be a European in the Orient always involves being a consciousness set apart from the 'Others'" (157). Decolonisation involves revitalizing indigenous cultures, histories and epistemologies that have been marginalised by the colonial power and challenges Western hegemony.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o's perception of decolonisation is deeply rooted in the reclamation of African identity. In *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, Thiong'o refers to 'decolonisation,' as an anti-imperialist perspective. He shows the importance of the decolonisation process of African culture:

Culture is a product of the history which it in turn reflects. Culture in other words is a product and a reflection of human beings communicating with one another in the very struggle to create wealth and to control it. But culture does not merely reflect that history, or rather it does so by actually forming images or pictures of the world of nature and nurture. (15)

Thiong'o suggests that culture is both a product of history and a reflection of it. It emerges from historical events, economic struggles and human interactions, forming shared images and perceptions of the world.

Thiong'o wanted freedom for his nation from the colonial legacy as Europe continued to exploit Africa economically, intellectually and culturally. He claims the necessity of the construction of their own economic systems and political structures, cultural practices, languages and intellectual output. He writes,

I am lamenting a neo-colonial situation which has meant the European bourgeoisie once again stealing our talents and geniuses as they have stolen our economies. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries Europe stole art treasures from Africa to decorate their houses and museums; in the twentieth century Europe is stealing the treasures of the mind to enrich their languages and cultures. Africa needs back its economy, its politics, its culture, its languages and all its patriotic writers. (xii)

Thiang'o focuses on the ongoing impact of colonial and neo-colonial practices on Africa by former colonial powers and shows a sentiment of resistance against the continued exploitation and a call for a holistic restoration of African dignity and independence. He advocates the retention and celebration of African languages, literature and cultures as central to the decolonising process. In an essay titled "Decolonising the Mind," Casper Anderson writes, "Decolonization . . . is not merely (or indeed primarily) an *event* that took place when and where formal colonial rule came to an end, but rather a *process* of challenging the cultural and epistemic legacies of colonialism in broader fields of history, aesthetics and culture" (1). Decolonisation extends beyond the formal end of colonial rule to encompass the ongoing process of confronting the cultural and intellectual impacts of colonialism. It underscores the idea that the legacies of colonialism are deeply embedded in various aspects of society, including history, aesthetics, and culture. This process challenges how colonial ideologies have shaped knowledge production, cultural representations, and historical narratives. Decolonisation is not confined to political independence but requires a continuous effort to recognise and rectify the enduring influences of colonial power structures. It, as an ongoing process of challenging and transforming the cultural, intellectual and aesthetic legacies of colonialism, helps to transform society at multiple levels.

Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*: Critical Analysis ***A Story of Cultural Division***

In *The Grass Is Singing*, Lessing shows imperialism which "continues to control the economy, politics, and cultures of Africa" (Thiang'o 4). The novel vividly portrays the cultural division between the white colonialists and the black African population. It is the root cause of many problems in Africa and it examines the colonial context which shows that "there was certainly a race division" (11). British colonial powers and their imposition of cultural norms, values, and systems of governance greatly impact colonised territories. Lessing shows her anti-racial approaches against the oppressive white Britishers who ignore the small community of Africaners. Africans were uprooted and remained minorities as Western culture has replaced the original culture. The hegemonic dominance of Western culture by Mary Turner happens when she interacts with her African servants, Samson and Moses, in all aspects of life. Her perspective of the traditional power dynamics of master-slave relationships of the colonial canon shows racial struggles in white-ruled South Africa where the white masters maintain the racial hierarchy by spreading negative stereotypes about black people who are treated as savage, vulgar, slow and unfaithful. This analysis critically explores Mary's treatment of Samson, Moses, and Tony, highlighting how these interactions reflect broader sociocultural and political issues.

Mary is a white woman living in colonial Rhodesia and her interactions with black characters such as Samson and Moses and a white character, Tony embedded in the racial hierarchies and tensions of the time. Her behaviour and attitudes reflect the entrenched racism and power dynamics of the colonial society she inhabits. She grew up in an environment where she never had any direct contact with the natives who are mysterious creatures to her. In *The Grass Is Singing*, Lessing shows that Mary's mother used to say that the natives "were nasty and might do horrible things to her" (70). Her psychological stand regarding black people was inherited by the white community. Fanon in *Black Skin, White Masks* shows that white people psychologically feel black people as "the Wolf, the Devil, the Evil Spirit, the Bad Man, the Savages are always symbolised by Negroes . . ." (113) and they had "the danger of being eaten by the wicked Negroes" (113). Negroes are normally treated as evil and their culture is simple,

primitive, and underdeveloped to the white community. The common perception of colonisers is that Anglo-Europeans are well-educated and sophisticated and their culture is noblest. Mary's colonial psyche struggles to accept blacks as human beings or equals or merely human. Lessing shows, "When it came to the point, one never had contact with natives, except in the master-slave relationship. One never knew them in their own lives, as human beings" (20). Race is defined by cultural differences and white masters do not want to accept black natives as human beings.

In the canon of white colonialists' settings, she develops a code of behaviour towards the blacks just as natives had towards her. Lessing shows, "a black man could not even ride the same car as the corpse of a white man: one could not put a black man close to white woman, even though she was dead, and murdered by him" (28-29). Even a black policeman is not allowed to touch on "white flesh" (13) in the pursuit of their duties. The whites detested the black community "to a point neurosis" (92) which ultimately causes the murder of Mary. Mary grew up in the town and believes that she has the right to control the world. Her identity changes after marrying a farmer Dick, and she becomes frustrated discovering the lower standard of life at the farm. Her suffocation grows and becomes unbearable when she directly comes into contact with the natives. Her negative attitude towards black Africans makes her paranoid and gradually disturbed. She becomes more addicted to control over the servants. She forgets that black slaves are human beings - they have the right to get food, to rest and to forget weariness.

Treatment to Samson

Mary's treatment for Samson is indicative of dehumanising racism. She perceives and treats Samson as an inferior being, demonstrating a lack of empathy and a sense of entitlement that is typical of the colonial mindset. Their relationships exemplify the dehumanisation and exploitation of black workers by white settlers, which is a cornerstone of colonial oppression. When Mary meets the native Samson, she treats natives as "Filthy savages!" (Lessing 135). Her inability to understand Samson's culture underscores the cultural differences and Samson bears all kinds of tortures of Mary.

European writers normally show Africa as a dark place and natives are uncivilised and savages. Lessing writes about the Eurocentric discourse of white people who make black segregation and prioritise Western facial features and skin complexions. They think that black people do not have any rights to raise their voices and to feel oppressed. Mary gets confidence after becoming the boss of eighty black workers who are dissatisfied with her regarding monthly dues. Dick tries to convince Mary to treat black people softly, but she scornfully states, "I don't believe in treating them soft. If I had my way, I'd keep them in order with the whip" (142). Colonial racism is preserved in her and she never shares her negative treatment towards natives with her husband. She only wants her husband to be successful and to live a civilised life.

The imposition of European agriculture techniques displaces the indigenous practices. Lessing shows that Dick Turner is materialistic and he works hard on the lands with black savages and fights to get some work out of them. He tries to behave properly with the black slaves to make them work for him to increase his capital. He advises Mary not to fight with her servant and he states, "If you want to get work out of them you have to know how to manage them" (95). He also says, "This boy will stay now. Now treat him properly and don't make a fool of yourself again" (96). He teaches Mary how to treat black slaves properly, otherwise, she "will never get any servants. They soon learn the women who don't know how to treat their boys" (96). Dick thinks that black people will ask questions if they realise colonial racism. He assimilated with black culture to survive and he uses a blanket over his head which Mary negatively compares and states

“just like a nigger!” (132). Dick understands that if they want to live in Africa, they have to depend on Africans and they have to know how to use them politely.

Mary remains busy ordering him to clean the house and she deprives him the basic rights. Lessing writes, “She had forgotten completely about his need to eat; she had never thought of natives as needing to eat at all” (53). Seeing the black colour white people thought that black people had no culture. They don't know how to keep the house and the body clean. She thinks that the culture of white supremacy towards the black natives is very relevant. Sometimes tired animals have the right to rest, but black slaves do not have rights to take a breath. Mary does not give time to Samson to sit, cuts his wages, and does not give him meals properly. Lessing writes, “She had forgotten completely about his need to eat; she had never thought of natives as needing to eat at all” (53). Her tendency to control blacks refers to the reimposition of slavery. In *The Highest Stage of White Supremacy: The Origins of Segregation and the American South*, John W. Cell writes, “Yet racism would account for a wide range of conceivable alternatives - extermination, the re-imposition of slavery, deportation - that were not in fact undertaken” (4). Cell highlights the multifaceted nature of racism and suggests that while racism was a powerful force, other factors - politics, economics and social norms - also influenced decisions.

Treatment to Moses

Mary has to take over the supervision of the native workers on the farm during the sickness of Dick. The natives don't like how she treats them and they show anti-racial attitudes by laughing at her. Mary, being laughed at by the natives, becomes confused and scared. She feels that they do not treat her as a person from a higher status. When she does very ruthless behaviour, as a form of white supremacy, towards her servants, her husband Dick proposes to her to choose another boy Moses at home.

Moses, an educated native man, was employed as a farm worker by a progressive colonialist Dick, who liked to adjust with and utilise the black workers. She feels psychologically superior and empathizes with the Africans due to her upbringing and socialisation within the colonial system. In *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon claims, “The black man is the symbol of Evil and Ugliness” (139). Mary represents the impact of colonialism in the minds of white settlers. She first masterly orders the black men in the farm showing her conflict with Moses “Involuntarily she lifted her whip and brought it down across his face in a vicious swinging blow” (146). Her attitudes towards her domestic worker and the local community represent the dehumanising effects of cultural hegemony, which reinforces the concept of ‘other’. Moses expresses his idleness in broken English: “I . . . want . . . water” (146) in a ludicrous manner. Moses's English is an act of mimicry that ridicules the white race. Natives' mimicry to the colonisers is unexpected to the white race as Bill Ashcroft et al. think that such “fluctuating relationship between mimicry and mockery” (13) unsettles and undermines colonial dominance what Ania Loomba states “colonisers' authority” (149). A tension grows between the natives and Mary; because black people cannot accept a master who is a woman.

The sense of decolonisation happens by getting a proper understanding of self and culture and the goal can be attained by interactions with others. Lessing portrays the clash of cultures between the white settlers and the indigenous Africans. According to Fanon, colonialists think that “all natives are the same” (72) and colonised people think that “all settlers are the same” (72). Fanon focuses on the psychic injury of the black Natives who are forced to feel a contrast between European culture and traditional African cultures. The idea of decolonisation of natives causes violent actions by both

settlers and natives. Lessing shows conflict, tension, and misunderstandings between two worlds where the natives feel an unending contest as “They are saying, ‘Learn our ideas, or otherwise get out: we don’t want you’” (Lessing 20). The farm of Turner’s family is a microcosm of the broader cultural clash in Southern Rhodesia where the most difficult situation for Africans was their constant interaction with the people who claimed superiority. European colonialism is the disruption of the African natural landscape.

The complex relationships between Mary and Moses reflect the intersection of race, power and gender. Moses was once lashed in the field by Mary who is so conscious of her culture. Dick was unaware of the incident and he brought Moses without discussing Mary. Though Dick tells her to adjust with Moses, she thinks that she should not lower her standard. She primarily treats Moses as a black rather than an individual with his feelings and desire. Lessing writes, “She cleaned and polished tables and chairs and plates, as if she were scrubbing skin off a black face” (82). It reflects her internal racist mentality and the conflicting nature of colonial relationships. She feels the usual anger within her in front of Moses who “was never disrespectful, he forced her, now, to treat him as human being; it was impossible for her to thrust him out of her mind like something unclean, as she had done with all the others in the past” (192). Mary is afraid and fascinated as well with Moses and “she felt helplessly in his power. Yet there was no reason why she should” (190). Mary feels attracted seeing the strong body and calm nature of Moses.

Lessing shows that though the new slave, Moses, is “silent, dogged and patient” (175), Mary feels uneasy in the presence of him. The differences in cultural identities create tensions between Mary and Moses. Lessing writes, “A white person may look at a native, who is no better than a dog” (176). It is a domination of the mental area of black people who feel colonised and controlled through culture. Mary treats her servants as “a machine without a soul” (188) and she becomes very angry when Moses forgets to clean her bedroom. She cries for the whole evening out of his nervousness. There is always a tension between herself and her servant. She feels both uneasy and happy in the presence of Moses and allows him to stay.

Lessing explores the clash of religious and spiritual beliefs between whites and blacks. Mary rejects African rituals and shows her colonial attitude of superiority by dismissing the local religion. Ethnocentrism is inherent in colonialism and it questions the validity of imposing one’s beliefs on others. The interaction between Mary and Moses highlights the profound cultural differences and the power imbalance inherent in the colonial system. In *Culture and Imperialism*, Said rightly states, “the relationship between the ‘West’ and its dominated cultural ‘others’ is not only a way of understanding an unequal relationship between unequal interlocutors, but also a point of entry . . . the formation and meaning of Western cultural practices themselves” (230). The dominant colonial culture underestimates the weaker or subordinate colonised culture.

Moses helps Mary to lie down in her sickness and she feels “nausea” (186) when Moses touches her shoulders. This incident represents white women’s “colonial fears” of rape by Negroes (Loomba 139). Lessing states, “It was like a nightmare where one is powerless against horror: the touch of this black man’s hand on her shoulder filled her with nausea: she had never, not once in her whole life, touched the flesh of a native” (Lessing 186). In her weak stage, she helplessly follows the black man’s command. She again makes sarcastic comments on the native’s works. Moses’s mind is grappling with his own identity in a colonised society. He is in between his Indigenous African heritage and the influence of white colonial culture.

Language, a focal aspect in postcolonial studies, is integral to self-reflection and social interaction. It plays roles as both a human faculty and a culturally specific system. A colonial child has to face an imposed cultural state where he has to adopt many things to overcome a stage of alienation. As Thiong'o states,

Language as communication and as culture are then products of each other. Communication creates culture: culture is a means of communication. Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world. (15-16)

The native language is humiliated and subjugated and natives practice English in speaking and writing to communicate as Moses speaks English using a word of short sentence like “‘Drink,’ ‘Madame lie down on the bed,’” (Lessing 186). “Madame ate no breakfast, she must eat” (190). Moses tries to speak English and calls her ‘madame’ to please her; but Moses’s English annoys and irritates her. Language bridges inner thoughts, social interactions and understanding between the black and white people in Africa. Each language has unique sounds, vocabulary, and grammar that reflects its history and culture. Black cultures blend with English, creating unique linguistic and cultural forms. The English language offers advantages to different colonised people and it challenges the preservation of ethnic languages and cultures. Moses carries a tray with a handleless cup with yellow, pink and red flowers. Though any new relationship does not grow between them, Mary feels helpless in Moses’s power.

Moses experiences problems in the process of negritude, and it happens because of his encounter with Mary as “White women and black men are regarded as paradigms of white and black races respectively” (178). The transformation and self-awareness happens in Moses in the face of cultural differences. Moses represents subalterns and marginalised within the colonial power structure. He studied in a missionary school like Thiong'o and he realized the necessity of decolonising his mind when he came into contact with Dick family. Mary feels frightened when Dick is asleep and Moses intentionally asks, “Madame afraid of me, yes?” (204) and again, “Why is Madame afraid of me?” (205). Mary nervously answers, “Don’t be ridiculous. I am not afraid of you” (205). Though Moses is a black native, he refuses to follow the conventional relationships between white colonists and native people. White women feel uneasy about keeping black men at home. Charlie states, “No woman knows how to handle niggers” (216). It was a nightmare for Mary that the black man was present in the house with her. Mary’s tension is that Moses is not only a black man but also a man.

Mary’s mental state deteriorates and her madness metaphorically represents the disintegration of the colonial mindset. Her rigidity and inability to interact, adapt and adjust to her surroundings leads to her ultimate downfall. In her sickness Moses “came near and put his hand on her arm. It was the voice of the African she heard” (203). But Moses becomes a powerful critique of colonialism. His thoughts, observation and eventual rebellion against Mary’s oppressive authority symbolize the resistance of colonised people against cultural subjugation.

Mary’s attitudes towards natives are very negative. She whips a black slave and becomes frightened knowing that “. . . this black animal had the right to complain against her, against the behaviour of a white woman” (147). She thinks that the police must be European and she will be able to convince them. More importantly, she thinks that white masters should have the right to treat their labours as he pleases. Moses embodies both blackness and patriarchy, instilling fear and horror in Mary, a white woman. Lessing describes their dynamic: “They were like two antagonists, silently sparring. Only he was powerful and sure of himself, and she was undermined with fear by her terrible dream-

filled nights, her obsession" (207). Mary attempts to avoid him and his eye contact just to escape his overpowering masculinity.

Treatment for Tony Marston

Tony Marston, a young and idealistic young English man, comes to work on the Turners' farm and wants to adapt to the country and its culture. He represents a newer generation of white settlers who are somewhat more liberal, but still fundamentally part of the colonial system. Mary's interactions with Tony highlight the generational and ideological shifts within the white community. Tony's presence and his reactions to the power dynamics of the farm offer a glimpse into the internal contradictions and eventual disintegration of colonial ideology. He shows discomfort with the racial injustice he witnesses at the growing awareness and critique of colonial practices that would eventually lead to decolonisation efforts. Tony's interactions with Moses and Mary reflect his gradual disillusionment and ambivalence with the colonial system. His sympathy towards Moses sharply contrasts with the traditional attitudes of other white settlers. Lessing states, "He felt a sudden shame for his race" (212) and it reflects his internal conflict and the potential for change within the colonial framework.

Tony's entrance and interactions with Mary break the relationship between Mary and Moses. Though Mary is in between reason and emotion and spiritual dilemmas due to social pressures, she abandons Moses and accepts Tony. This thought hampers the dignity of Moses who kills Mary as revenge. The tragic consequence to Mary's life happens because of colonial racism in cultural differences and the decolonising mentality of a native. Moses's movement refers to the need to decolonise not only institutions but also the mind. His awareness of the oppressive nature of colonialism and his resistance against Mary's domination demonstrate the potential for individuals to get freedom from the shackles of cultural hegemony. Decolonisation as a critical discourse of postcolonialism refers to psychological, cultural and economic freedom of oppressed groups. Moses represents the colonising of the mind as a process of self-discovery and liberation.

Conclusion

Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* delves into the cultural politics and the discourse of decolonisation of the mind, focusing on the character Moses. The novel highlights the tension between Southern Rhodesian black culture and white colonial culture, showing how white settlers deem black culture inferior while resisting integration. Thiong'o's postcolonial theory and critical reading 'decolonising the mind' refers to an anti-imperialist approach and Lessing shows the decolonising state of mind of Moses who speaks. Lessing writes about Mary Turner's treatment of Samson, Moses and Tony serves as a lens through which we can examine the cultural differences and decolonisation discourse and her relationships with these characters highlight the pervasive racism and power imbalance inherent in colonial society. Through Mary's interactions, Lessing exposes the dehumanising effects of colonialism and the complex, often violent process of decolonisation, white settlers who do not like the culture of natives and who do not live in the same manner as the whites. Colonialism helps to intermingle the distinct white and black cultures. Black subjects adopt the white culture, but the white people cannot easily adjust to the black community. Despite the cultural differences, the Turners' family likes to cope with the primitive conditions of life. Turners' ambivalent relationships with the black community marked by exploitation and cultural disdain, underscores these dynamics. Lessing shows the unequal situation between white and black cultures and the ambivalent relationship between Mary and

Moses happens. He resists against white oppression and plays the role of an oppressor internally. Mary fails to preserve the superiority of culture through the discourse of race. Moses's resistance against white oppression illustrates the complex power struggles of colonialism. Lessing's novel underscores the instability of colonial power and the necessity of decolonising the mind to reclaim cultural identity.

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