

Tracing the 'Other' in Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*

فكرة " الآخر " في رواية العشب يغني

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المستخلص :

تعد الكاتبة دوريس ليسينج مؤلفة روايات معاصرة، تخوض في اعماق مسائل التاريخ والنظرية الاستعمارية فضلا عن ما بعد الاستعمار والاستعمار الجديد. حيث تحقق في آثار الاستعمار على مجتمع اجني من وجهات نظر داخلية وخارجية في عملها الرائد للخيال الإبداعي (العشب يغني).

تكافح ليسينج في روايتها (العشب يغني) لترسيخ إحساس قوي بالذات ومقاومة اللغة الاستعمارية التي تنكر استقلاليتهم. وهذا بدوره يعيق قدرتهم على تكوين روابط عميقة مع الآخرين. يلقي هذا البحث نظرة ما بعد الاستعمار على رواية العشب يغني. يحظى أبطال الرواية وخصومها بمعظم اهتمام الرواية جنبا إلى جنب مع المحيط الذي تستخدمه الكاتبة لإثارة أجواء استعمارية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاستشراق، ما بعد الاستعمار، العشب يغني (رواية)، بها، سعيد، قانون.

Abstract:

Doris Lessing, an author of novels written in the present day, delves into questions of colonial history and theory, as well as post- and neo-colonialism. She investigates the effects of colonialism on a foreign society from both inside and

outer viewpoints in her groundbreaking work of creative nonfiction, *The Grass is Singing* (1950). In Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing*, the narrator struggles to establish a solid sense of self and to resist the colonial language that denies their autonomy. In turn, this hinders their ability to form deep connections with others. This paper takes a postcolonial look at the novel *The Grass is Singing*. The novel's protagonists and antagonists are given the bulk of the novel's attention, along with the setting the author uses to evoke a colonial ambiance.

Keywords: *Orientalism, postcolonialism, The Grass is Singing, Bhabha, Said, Fanon.*

Introduction:

From the perspective of European colonizers, Africa has alternately been seen as the cradle of civilization and the origin of all life on Earth, and as a relic of antiquity. *The Grass is Singing* is a mystery novel by Doris Lessing that features several different perspectives on Africa.

The Grass is Singing, written in 1950 by Doris Lessing (1919-2013), is set against the historical context of British colonialism in Southern Rhodesia. The Nobel laureate Lessing tackles the racial tensions of the 1940s head-on in her first novel. Its origins can be traced back to 1923, according to archival documents. The British South Africa Company had previously managed the area. European colonists have profited from the government's tight grip on the indigenous population, which is dominated by white nationalists. Lessing argues that the indigenous characters are portrayed as colonized outsiders or submissive others due to their low socioeconomic level (Rajendra, 2013, p. 16).

Questions of the Study:

1. How is the theme of otherness portrayed in *The Grass is Singing*?
2. What are the different forms of otherness that are represented in the novel?
3. How does Lessing use the character of Mary Turner to explore the theme of otherness?

Objectives of the Study:

1. To analyze the representation of otherness in *The Grass is Singing*.
2. To identify the different forms of otherness present in the novel and how they are portrayed.
3. To explore the character of Mary Turner as a representation of the other.

Problem statement:

The study examines the ways in which Mary Turner's relationships with her African servants are shaped by power dynamics and hierarchies of race and class. The author argues that the novel portrays these relationships as ambiguous and fraught, with moments of genuine connection and empathy tempered by moments of violence and exploitation.

The study also discusses the ways in which Lessing challenges colonial stereotypes of "the other," particularly in her portrayal of the African characters as fully realized individuals with their own desires, motivations, and agency. The author argues that Lessing's depiction of the African characters challenges the racist assumptions that underpinned colonialism and highlights the ways in which these assumptions continue to shape contemporary society.

Tracing the Other in *The Grass is Singing*

A notable white master named Charlie Slatter was an advocate of using the sjambok or the whip on his black servants. The terrible treatment Indians get is epitomized by the practice of capturing them and selling them as "property" to European farmers. Fundamental human rights seemed like a pipe dream after they were treated like garbage because of their scavenging past. They had to work day and night, in the fields and the residences, until the day they died. The situation was even more stressful for the contract workers. For a while, white farmers paid three to four pounds for each. They could not escape in the time provided, and the white farmers on the other side would be in touch with the government officials to make sure they were safe. Temporary shelters made of grass in designated compounds are dark and crowded. All machines and souls of ruthlessness are regarded as though they might explode at any moment. White farmers are blind to the fact that their opulent lifestyles are funded by the gold they use to enslave and exploit locals. The dominating English viewed the natives as barbaric primitives as a way to justify their rule and "colonial descent" (Guénif-Souilamas, 2006, p. 2)

The plot of *The Grass is Singing* is rather simple. Mary Turner, the farmer's wife, was brutally murdered by a houseboy, and the reader is promptly informed of the assassin's capture and subsequent confession. Lessing then shifts his focus to the reactions of two other characters, Tony Marston, a twenty-year-old English idealist who had recently arrived in Turner Plantation and was working there for a brief period, and Charlie Slatter. He does this after describing Dick's distress and nervous breakdown in detail.

Doris Lessing seems to conclude from her depiction of the murder of a white woman named Mary Turner at the hands of her black servant that the oppressed can be

aggressive and violent at times. Fanon provides insight into this violent concept by explaining how the native is always on guard since he cannot tell whether he has crossed the boundary because he can only vaguely pick out the numerous emblems of the colonial civilization. In a world run by colonizers, it is natural to blame the indigenous person (Fanon, *Black skin, white masks*, 2008, p. 41). However, the native never admits guilt; rather, from his core, he categorically rejects any suggestion of wrongdoing.

Mary Turner's early life is explored in the novel's first chapter, wherein the author reveals that Mary Turner became accustomed to single life, eventually gave in to marriage out of desperation when she was thirty, settled into a life on a remote and unsuccessful farm, and brutally treated the locals. With her sights set on the future, the novelist writes, "time, during which she had been living half-consciously," lengthened in front of her (Lessing, 1976, p. 146) .

A vague promise of "next year" can only spell doom for the future. The best case scenario would be a moderate improvement at best. That miraculous respite was not going to happen. There was no hope for change because nothing ever did (Lessing, 1976, p. 164). How Mary and her husband both went insane and spent all their money, how they sold the family business, and how she committed herself.

Race is a central theme in *The Grass is Singing*, as is Mary Turner's struggle to see black people as humans rather than objects of contempt. In order to achieve this purpose, the book relies heavily on the unspoken norms of colonial Africa, which serve to legitimize an elitist kind of exclusivism (referred to as "the damage done by colonialism and racism") (Frosh, 2013, p. 3) There were so many limitations on interactions between blacks and whites that a black person could not even ride in the same car as a dead white person. A black person was not allowed to approach the white woman's body, regardless of his guilt in the murder.

The thought that no black person could approach Turner's body alludes to the fact that black people are responsible for his death. Nonetheless, this brings Said's concept of the other into debate. Black people are not worthy of approaching the body of Turner, *The Self*, according to Said's (1978) argument that colonized people are perceived as others, making them less equal to the colonizer.

Throughout colonialism, the white man played a role in the oppression of indigenous people in every colonized country (Bhabha, 1994, p. 22) . Many novelists, intellectuals, and historians have presented vastly different versions of this event. Doris Lessing gives a scenario in which she tries to paint a magnificent picture of a tense interaction between the binaries of self and other, or colonizers and colonized. Mary,

the protagonist, and Moses, her African American servant, form a complex and sometimes contradictory relationship throughout the story. Sadly, Mary's treatment of Moses and her other black slaves is typical.

Mary's pastoral idyll served as a powerful distraction for her staff so that she could maintain control. She would always say they were stealing because of how lazy and disobedient they were. She is always looking over their shoulders, analyzing what they've done, and making them start again on projects they've already finished. Slaves of color are denied even the ability to breathe freely, driving many of them to run away from home on false pretenses and severely impacting their mental well-being.

The black servants are the clear downtrodden party, with Mary playing the role of the oppressor. According to Fanon, a person's skin tone indicates whether he is the oppressor or the oppressed (Lessing, 1976, p. 86) Mary is given carte blanche to mistreat her black employees due of their skin color.

Yet Dick and Mary were perpetually at odds, and Mary frequently exhibited explosive behavior. Mary's propensity to forsake the children makes Dick increasingly irritated, despite the fact that they have done nothing wrong. Because of this, they occasionally ran out of babysitters. Mary leaves the room, her expression harsh, as the reader notes. At some point, the wives of men like Dick realize that they may, either "drive themselves wild," shattering themselves in storms of pointless rage and revolt, or "hold themselves tight and go bitter" (Lessing, 1976, p. 98) As a result of numerous disagreements, the husband and wife's relationship begins to suffer. From *The Grass Is Singing* ahead, Lessing's heroines (Mary Turner's sexuality, Martha Quest's "self-hater," Anna Wulf's "joy-indestruction," etc.) are forced to confront aspects of themselves that they have previously ignored. (Whittaker, 1988b, p. 10) .

African-Americans were consistently used to symbolize evil ideologies and heinous, unjustifiable criminality. According to Lessing (1976), due to the white majority's control over the legal system, indigenous people have no choice except to remain silent and wait (Lessing, 1976, p. 29). In the book, the black police officers behave and dress just like their white counterparts. Bhabha argues that the novel's depiction of such actions and settings can offer light on the colonial history of the practice of mimicry. The colonized sometimes look and act like the colonizers, but they still consider them to be inferior to those who oppress them, as Bhabha explains in his examination of mimicry. The black officers, on the other hand, hold a position of authority inside the administration. However in the course of their duties, they are not permitted to make any sort of physical contact with a white man (Lessing, 1976, p. 13).

Mary, a white woman, is killed because white people as a whole detest the natives so much that it makes them mad (lessing, 1976, p. 92)).

White Rhodesians are so convinced that their racist treatment of black citizens is justified that visitors to their country are quick to notice how different it is from England. According to Doris (1950), p. Fanon's final work, "The White Cosmonauts," is predicated on the idea that white people have a superiority complex and view themselves as better than black people. As white people are clearly the best in this world, their treatment of black people is always acceptable. That's according to (Fanon, Black skin, white masks, 2008, p. 193).

Initially, Fanon focused only on these conceptualizations, sharing the "progressive" worldview of the novel's protagonist, an idealist whose "progress" is only skin deep and who rarely survives a collision with "self-interest" (lessing, 1976, p. 226).

Hence, he continuously brought up miscegenation under the existing white colonists, which resulted in progressivism being nicely complimented through the proof of supremacy and control of white class dishonesty (Lessing, 1950, p. 230). He was struggling to find closure after Mary's death so that he could move on with his life, but he couldn't just shut out the reminders of the racism he'd grown up with (lessing, 1976, p. 30).

Just justice should be served as Moses murdered Mary. That is why they came up with the slogan, "He would be executed under any case"; after all, what kind of covert war was he preparing to wage in the service of a principal that warranted such a harsh punishment? Did he really want to keep fighting in the dark over principle? If so, what rule would you say applies? And if he had come forward then, as he almost did" (lessing, 1976, p. 31). It's not shocking that Marston is a broken man. With Lessing's return from Africa, the reader may begin to recall her vivid depiction of the continent, even if Marston's future actions remain a mystery.

But, Mary Turner, a native Southern Rhodesian, knows nothing about this nuanced topic. When she moved to Dick Turner's farm, she had never met a native person face to face, but she had developed her own set of rules for interacting with them, much like the one the native had established with her. That the inhabitants have developed such a strict set of norms says a lot about their character. Mary was aware that the locals were becoming increasingly rude, but she chose to ignore it. While she tries to teach the natives about the value of work, she is disgusted by their physical vitality and notions of natural fertility and virility (lessing, 1976, p. 140).

Mary is subjugated because she is terrified of Moses, the neighborhood house boy. The subjugation of the feminine self occurs when, over time, Moses learns to govern Mary in ways she is reluctant to admit even to herself. After an emotional breakdown, she comes to terms with Moses' existence and eventually begins dating him (lessing, 1976, p. 174) .

Moses is known for his harsh treatment of women in the black community and in patriarchal society, but he was never disrespectful to Mary. Instead, he had her treat him like a real person for a change (lessing, 1976, p. 192) .

There is a new bond forming between them and the malice of the power it represents only increases. Moses's suspicious and violent behavior in the novel's last pages causes fear in Charlie, Dick, and especially Tony. Moses is well aware that he is not allowed to fight any whites other than Tony because Dick has been consistently defeated. Once Mary is killed, Moses stays at home and thinks about it.

Thus, Moses has an opportunity for revenge. Mary represents the white race to him. At the same time he was railing about the mistreatment of whites and colonists, he was treating someone of the same sex to the same treatment. He takes the risk of falling for a man, and the fallout is felt most keenly by Mary. He choose Mary not only because of her skin color but also because he assumes she will be easier to manipulate due of her gender. As a result, Moses gives the whites in power permission to use him to demonstrate how black people, if given the chance, will steal, rape, and kill. Their arrival became a problem due to prejudice, not variety .

Mary was mentally drained from her constant dealings with the houseboys. She held racist views about her African slaves. Even when she was a child, her town mother strictly prohibited her to interact with her black servants. She couldn't go out on her alone because the natives were thought to be dirty and savage. Her dislike of natives was instilled in her at a young age. It made her queasy to interact with the natives for the first time as a married woman. She had no concept that she would be surrounded by indigenous people at all times, whether she was working on the farm, in the store, or at home.

Fanon (1986) claims that white colonizers' racist views of black indigenous people stem from the latter's subconscious: "Deep down in the European mind has been hollowed out an extremely black hole where the most immoral inclinations and unmentionable wants slumber," he says of Mary (p.190).

The fact that her spouse treats her the same way shows that their marriage is over. Occasionally, she can't take the fact that he recognizes how much she means to

Dick: "You expect a lot from me, don't you?" 86 (Lessing, 1976) Mary was on the verge of collapse in her final days when she tried to wean Dick off her but failed. You have such lofty expectations! In this tiny apartment of yours, you expect me to live like a poor white person. Lessing (1976), page 95. She occasionally engages in protest, like any self-respecting woman would, in an uncertain bid to establish her own identity in the world. She realizes that her only chance of evading Dick is to adopt a voice she has never used before. She would not put up with that when she wanted to show her spouse (lessing, 1976, p. 96).

Mary has spent her entire life in this solitary state, which she prefers to call freedom. She has lost any sense of empathy and has cut all ties with the people around her. Mary Turner's conception of freedom is less realistic and well-reasoned than that of other fictional characters, such as those created by the feminist movement or by Lessing herself, so it has nothing to do with how this word is used in their and other authors' later works. Her parents' deaths marked the beginning of her adulthood, when she was finally able to pursue her passions without interference from anyone else; nonetheless, she still has a natural reluctance to getting involved in the lives of those around her.

In the past, society has placed a premium on women getting married. As opposed to Martha from the Children of Violence Series. Although Mary is virtually pressured into marriage by society, she is not subject to many limitations from her parents. Her drunken father often humiliated and abused her mother. The turning point in her life was when she overheard her best friends talking about her age and marriage. She had a privileged upbringing at a boarding school and never had to bow to authority. Disgusted that she is still a spinster at the age of 30, she has heard people suggest that she is missing "something someplace" (lessing, 1976, p. 42).

Because of this, the postcolonial themes of *The Grass is Singing* are exemplified by the fact that, only a few years after her marriage, Mary finds herself in the midst of a black African community. As she arrives there at night, she is frightened by the openness of the sky, the rows of tents, the shady trees, and the strange sounds of the nighttime creatures. She begins to tremble, and her unease increases as she enters and sees the shoddily built and finished home. Her wrath increases as she hears Dick, blissfully unaware of her stress, boast about how he built everything from scratch.

Samson, an elderly black native, is the first person she meets in the morning. The faces of their white masters and mistresses are hidden from these natives. Thus, when Samson meets his new white mistress for the first time, he keeps his feet firmly planted on the earth. Yet, Samson seemed to have earned the respect of the black

community. This is consistent with Fanon's claim that black people are alienated because they are unable to attain white standards of success while also being unable to find safety and solace within their own race (lessing, 1976, p. 43).

Despite these unfair advantages, Dick develops a wonderful friendship with the neighborhood kid, Samson, who becomes quite depressed following Mary's arrival. It becomes evident that Dick and Samson had previously had a relationship as Samson proceeds to relate the story: "With Samson and Dick there existed a perfect understanding. Dick secured all the valuables, but allowed out a third more than was necessary for Samson's consumption (lessing, 1976, p. 64).

Samson continues by saying, "This woman never laughed," revealing something significant about Mary and their developing friendship. She prepared "such much supper" and "so much sweets" and kept a close eye on the leftovers, remembering "every cold potato and every piece of bread, asking for them if they are missing" with a remarkable and humbling capacity.

When Mary suspects Samson of taking the raisins she had added to the dessert, the story comes to an end. As Samson is only paid two shillings per month, she falsely accused him of stealing the raisins and sentenced him to pound a mouth in exchange for his salary.

Mary was thus present at Samson's farewell from Dick's home, which took place in the yard of the latter's residence. She was stunned and amazed by what she saw. Learning that Samson would have to stay upset Dick deeply. She could not fathom the anger that could be aroused by the knowledge that a white person had such deep feelings for a native. This episode illustrates the difference between Mary's treatment of the natives and Dick's. With its notions and practices, postcolonial criticism rewrites the cultural links between socially antagonistic domains. Postcolonial theories on cultural difference, political discrimination, and social authority shed light on the unfriendly and conflicting periods within the "rationalization" of modernity. At a more fundamental level, one may argue that postcolonial research is interested in exploring social ills like meaninglessness and anarchy, which "break apart into widely scattered historical circumstances" (Bhabha, 1994, p. 9).

When Dick took Mary to her veldt property, Mary discovered a world completely foreign to her. The cramped quarters, the strange people that lived there, Dick, the oppressive heat, and the feeling of being all alone were things she strongly disliked. While the piercing chirping of cicadas accompanied her realization that she and Dick would never achieve the stability and happiness they craved, she remained on the farm after an abortive attempt to return to her life in the city. The years have slowly

worked their corrosive venom. Later, on a hot day, Mary Turner lit the fuse that set off an explosion of violence and misery without realizing the consequences of her actions.

Samson, a longstanding employee of Dick's, welcomed Mary's marriage to him with open arms. Mary counted everything in the house and removed Samson's keys, in contrast to Dick's careless practice of leaving the groceries out because there was nothing to hide. It wasn't long before Samson's new mistress became a bother at work, and he eventually retired to avoid her. From now on, she'll have an endless supply of slaves to torment and harass. She became known as one of the region's most brutal employers, and residents avoided working for her out of fear. There was good cause for public outcry after it was revealed that Moses, the houseboy, had murdered Mary. Mary Turner, wife of Richard Turner, a farmer at Ngesi, was found killed on the front porch of their homestead yesterday morning, the newspaper reported as soon as possible. The houseboy who was apprehended and charged with the crime has given a full confession. There appears to be no explanation. (Lessing, 1976). The Europeans' characterization of the inhabitants as natives angered the Indians, who countered that a native might murder someone for no reason other than to seize something. The black community was similarly brainwashed into thinking its members were criminals and that their actions were always beneath them. Those in power use this to portray the subaltern as a thief, a sexual predator, and a barbaric savage.

As a black man, Fanon argues, "in my own instance I knew these statements are incorrect," referring to the concept that black people hold the image of the savage on the same level as an animal (Fanon, *Black skin, white masks*, 2008, p. 118)). According to Fanon, "the black attempts to penetrate the white world, but the white men are rude to him." For example, consider Samson, who, in an effort to fit in with the whites, is harshly confronted by Mary, who falsely accuses him of her accusations only because she believes he is attempting to conform to the whites' ways: "A native stood there outside the home. She covered her mouth with her palm as if to prevent a scream from coming out. And then she recognized another local, this one with a sheet of paper in his hand. He clutched it in his hands the way ignorant locals always clutch written paper: as if it were going to explode in their faces. She advanced forward him and accepted it. 'Shall not be back for lunch,' it read. Sorry, we've been too busy cleaning up the mess. Bring down tea and sandwiches; this token from the outside world hardly roused her. According to Lessing (1976), page 151.

Doris Lessing's novel is a remarkable work of art. As rough and unforgiving as the veldt's brown terrain and vast sky. An impenetrable spell is woven by *The Grass is Singing*, and it does so with brutal precision and piercing clarity. There are also times when it boils over with anger over the persistent black-white divide that rumbles over

the area like thunder. In any case, it relates the story of Mary Turner, who suffers from inner turmoil due to some careless, overheard statements. As another boy joins in on "Mary, Did You Know?" while she is singing in the grass, Lessing makes the distinction clear. He stands out from the crowd because of his extensive experience with white women in positions of power. He is pretty polite, always responding to questions or requests with "Yes missus: Yes, Missus." (lessing, 1976, p. 50) When Mary is talking, that kid never looks at her face. That has really irritated her. One day Mary gives that boy a task: clean the restroom. The bathroom floor is his responsibility and he must clean it thoroughly so that it sparkles. Following this, Mary is asked to take a break for lunch when her shift is over. He decides to help with the cleanup after all. So, naturally, when Dick gets back, he starts complaining about Mary. Mary puts an end to the kid's life the following day after he shakily spills a dish.

Mary's lack of politeness toward the niggers in Dick's fields is a direct result of her interactions with them. After being upset by her husband's incompetence as the farm's administrator, Mary chooses to take charge when Dick becomes ill and is out of commission for a while. Mary sees the farm as a means to an end in terms of financial gain, whereas Dick sees it in the opposite light. Mary is only one of the many Rhodesian women who develops a cold attitude against the indigenous population. Her decision to visit the labor camp where Dick keeps his employees is prompted by his worsening health. It is difficult for her to make sense of that chemical's structure.

Between the shacks and all over their walls, the reader can make out a swarm of insects. A cloud humming with Mary's motion (lessing, 1976, p. 133) . It is clear from Mary's description of the niggers' unclean and repulsive surroundings that she is irritated by the time she finally confronts them.

According to Said, the Orient has a fundamental bias against the West since it always views the Other and its home as beneath it. This is true of the novel's depiction of black characters, who are associated with squalor. Mary, a white person, views blacks in the same way as the colonized regard the Other in Said's description: as dirty, ugly, and unfit. (Said, 1978, p. 57).

Then Lessing describes how the sneers react to Mary: the local women peered and laughed; the unclean, underfed children flocked about, mumbling to one another; the starving dogs slithered in the background among the vines and mealies (lessing, 1976, p. 134). Mary, in her capacity as farm supervisor, displays an air of authoritarianism that was rarely seen throughout Dick's tenure. Yet, the naysayers had a major problem. That their leader will be a woman named Mary. As a result, they get increasingly frustrated and angry.

Oneness, not uniformity, is the new world's ultimate aim. So, it is important to seek out novelty. The outcome is highly dependent on random choice, as are the methods used to achieve it. Because of this, modern civilization is incredibly diverse. Pluralism is not an aspiration but a fact of life. Every culture, like every language, has the potential to provide for its members, and it is through the meeting of these mutual needs that cultures and their members find fulfillment in one another. The domination of any one culture, like the hegemony of a single political entity, will ultimately spell the end for all cultures. They can flourish and replenish the globe when they work together, but globalization and the abandonment of regional innovation can render them barren and unproductive.

Mary Turner's (the novel's protagonist) racist attitudes about the town's African-American citizens are grounded in her childhood. The events of Mary's childhood serve as evidence of this throughout the narrative. She describes her relationship with her parents, particularly how she was raised in the shadow of her alcoholic father and her angry, resentful mother. Turner demanded that her staff do as she instructed, not as they saw fit.

The colonizer's speech, as argued by Bhabha, seeks to make the colonized into a replica or an equal of the colonizer. On the other hand, if they are treated as equals, it could be easy to forget the ideas behind colonial control. That one group can subjugate another is based on the underlying premise of these teachings, which establishes a hierarchy of superiors and inferiors. Homi Bhabha argued that ambiguity and mimicry were dishonest. That runs counter to the heroic humanist and enlightened tales told to justify colonialism. He writes, "Moses vaulted over the verandah wall, alighting squarely on his feet in the squelch of rain which sluiced off his shoulders, soaking him in an instant." He then goes on to argue that there is a disconnect between the material effects of colonialism and the intellectual and moral dominance narratives that justify it. With water up to his thighs, he set forth in the pitch black towards the Englishman's hut (p. 158).

She recounts in her autobiography that she was afraid and appalled by local shops as a child because they were identical no matter where she lived. Disgusted and humiliated by her friends after overhearing an ugly joke about her spinsterhood at a party, she acts impatiently and offensively toward the niggers in the story. With the past showing such a persistent, trickster-like inclination to return at the earliest moments and in the most perfect disguises, one has to wonder if it is even possible to completely shed one's political history in the transformation process. Those who think the term "American" primarily refers to the politically and socially dominant Euro-

Americans may have an issue with a person who refuses to accept his or her Asian background.

Doris Lessing's writing is at its most compelling when it delves into the inner turmoil of its protagonists and antagonists. Knowing that Moses committed the murder leaves the reader baffled as to his motivations. Her dogged interrogation of Mary Turner elucidates the murder's motivation for the reader. Lessing documents the inhabitants' humiliation, dehumanization, and injustice, and ultimately sees an entire culture stripped bare of its irrational beliefs.

Conclusion:

Differences between whites and blacks are portrayed by Lessing in *The Grass is Singing*. White characters are shown as superior to their black counterparts. The story heavily draws on the unspoken norms of colonial Africa to defend an elitist form of exclusivism. Strict rules meant that a black person could not even ride in the same car as a white person's body after they died. According to Said, who discusses this concept, the colonized are viewed as an Other. This point is driven home in Lessing when, after Turner's death, all the white cops gather around her body. While the white ones are free to investigate the scene of the murder, the black ones are barred from doing so after Turner's death.

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