

Racial Discrimination in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Harper Lee's *to Kill a Mockingbird*: A Comparative Study

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Racial Discrimination in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*: A Comparative Study

Abstract:

Racial discrimination is one of the public problems that emerges in multicultural countries. The aim of the current research is to study racial discrimination in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The process of analysis is confined to the analysis of the racial practices exercised by white people against black people in both novels. The research method is descriptive, analytical, and quantitative using a content analysis approach. The findings show that there is a similarity between the two established systems of racism: the system of racism in Africa, and the racial system in America. Some established rules and principles are to be respected in order to keep the white supremacy hegemonic. On the other hand, in *The Grass Is Singing*, Lessing portrays black people as criminals and rapists, who have to be punished for their crimes. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Lee describes black people as victims of crimes they have never committed. Moreover, the offensive racial words in *To Kill a Mockingbird* outnumber the offensive racial words in *The Grass Is Singing*. It can be said that the blacks are seen as victims of racial discrimination and racial stereotypes in both novels.

Keywords: *racial discrimination, supremacy, The Grass Is Singing, To Kill a Mockingbird, Doris Lessing, Harper Lee .*

التمييز العنصري في رواية العشب يغني للكاتبه البريطانية دورس ليسنج ورواية أن تقتل طائرا محاكيا للكاتبه الامريكية هاربر لي: دراسة مقارنة

د. عبد الحميد احمد ناصر المدري⁽¹⁾

الملخص:

التمييز العنصري هو أحد المشاكل الشائعة التي تظهر في البلدان متعددة الأعراق. يهدف البحث الحالي إلى دراسة التمييز العنصري في روايتي "العشب يغني" لدوريس ليسنج، و"أن تقتل طائرا محاكيا" لهاربر لي. حيث يسعى البحث إلى مقارنة ونقد التمييز العنصري في هاتين الروايتين. تقتصر عملية التحليل على تحليل الممارسات العنصرية التي يمارسها أصحاب البشرة البيضاء ضد الزوج في كلتا الروايتين. يستخدم البحث المنهج التحليلي الوصفي الكمي من خلال تحليل المحتوى. وتظهر النتائج أن هناك تشابها كبيرا بين النظامين العنصريين الراسخين؛ نظام العنصرية في إفريقيا، والنظام العنصري في أمريكا. أي أن هناك بعض القواعد والمبادئ التي أسسها أصحاب البشرة البيضاء والتي يجب أن تحترم من قبل الزوج من أجل الحفاظ على هيمنة أصحاب البشرة البيضاء وتفوقهم، ومن الناحية الأخرى، تصور دوريس ليسنج في روايتها "العشب يغني" الزوج كمجرمين ومغتصبين، وأنه يجب معاقبتهم على جرائمهم. وفي رواية "أن تقتل طائرا محاكيا"، تصف هاربر لي الزوج بأنهم ضحايا لجرائم لم يرتكبوها أبدا. أضيف إلى ذلك، أن الكلمات العنصرية الجارحة في رواية "أن تقتل طائرا محاكيا" أكثر منها في رواية "العشب يغني". ويمكن القول أن الزوج هم ضحايا التمييز العنصري والصور النمطية العنصرية في كلتا الروايتين.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التمييز العنصري، السيادة، العشب يغني، أن تقتل طائرا محاكيا، دوريس ليسنج، هاربر لي

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Introduction

Racism is one of the problems which exists in multi-ethnic communities. It is "the belief that people of different races have different qualities and abilities, and that some races are inherently superior or inferior" (Microsoft® Student, 2009). It occurs through individual or cultural practices of people, and political or institutional practices of official sectors. It clearly originates from the belief that one race is superior to another; this belief makes the superior race exercises an inhuman treatment on the inferior race. In this regard, Jones (1972) writes about one of the types of racism, "Individual racism is closest to race prejudice and suggests a belief in the superiority of one's own race over another" (p. 5).

Racial discrimination refers to the way in which some people are treated less favorably than others on the basis of race, gender, descent, color, and ethnic group. For example, when someone decides who receives a job or promotion in view of race and color is considered a form of racial discrimination. Different forms of racial discrimination are exercised by white Americans against African Americans in America, and by white European people against African people in Africa. Racism can be divided into three kinds: individual, institutional, and cultural. The former is a form of racial discrimination that is based on personal factors in which one race believes that they are better than another one. Institutional racism occurs in the form of the racial laws adopted by authorized organizations. The last kind is cultural racism. It occurs when one group of people exerts cultural domination over another group.

Many writers have reflected and portrayed the issues of racism in their literary works, including Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The former is about the racial politics between white people and black people in Zimbabwe during the forties of the twentieth century, and the latter is about racial issues such as rape and racial inequality.

Objectives of the Study

The current study aims to comparatively analyze racial discrimination in Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* with reference to post-colonial notions. It is also intended to examine the social conflicts between whites and blacks in both novels.

Significance of the Study

The study is significant in a way that there are some previous studies that discussed racial discrimination in these novels not in relation to each other, but separately. The current study attempts to comparatively and critically study racial discrimination in these novels with reference to post-colonial notions.

Methodology

The process of analysis is confined to the analysis of the racial practices exercised by white people against black people in both novels. The method of this research is descriptive and analytical using a content analysis approach. The descriptive-analytical method is quantitative. Using the quantitative method, the researcher counted the racial words used by the characters in the two novels, and classified them in a table.

Literature Review

Many writers and critics approach *The Grass Is Singing* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* from different perspectives. What is concerned here is their investigations and analysis of the racial issues depicted in these novels. Concerning *The Grass Is Singing*, Gindin (2003, p. 20) argues that the novel maps out the fear that results from the connection between whites and blacks in colonial African communities. Additionally, Mary who marries the inapt farmer Dick Turner in her thirties is smashed by her failure to resolve her emotions with her commitment to the strict racial rules that draw a separate line between whites and blacks. In the same concern, Roberts (2003) makes a comparison between Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Nadine Gordmire's *July's People*. Roberts states that

Mary Turner of *The Grass is Singing* and Maureen Smales of *July's People* are white South African women in their late-thirties when a time of life-threatening crisis emerges. The causes of the crises are different, yet both unsettling moments are compounded by the disadvantages the women share: they are trapped in colonial preconceptions . . . As married women they have both come to rely on what they perceive as a special relationship with a black man. (pp. 127-128)

Obviously, white women cannot successfully contact with the black people in these colonial societies because of the rigid beliefs of racism.

In her discussion about the themes of *The Grass Is Singing*, Whittaker (1988) denotes that Doris Lessing repeated the themes that were used in her first novel in her later works. Here, Whittaker writes that

These include the relationship between dominant and dominated races, the taboos which operate and the methods by which the *status quo* is maintained. We see the effect of the African landscape and climate on the whites, and the ways in which white aspirations are defeated. (pp. 21-22)

Similarly, Peterson (1990) writes that "One of the basic themes of her work is the cultural life of the Negro population of Southern Rhodesia under the oppression of the white colonialists" (p. 144). In a related way, Rowe (1994) points out that *The Grass Is Singing* is a description of the colonial life in Southern Africa: "The Africans on the Native Reserves - the real exiles in the narrative of colonisation - were

virtually invisible to the settlers, a fact of colonial life that would form the dramatic basis of Lessing's first novel *The Grass is Singing*" (p. 3).

Das (2019), in an article about racism in Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, states that the core of the problem "lies in the belief that there are superior races, usually the whites, which should be obeyed and served by the other races which are considered inferior" (p. 19). He adds: "*The Grass is Singing* analyzes some of the racist attitudes toward Rhodesian people adopted by their masters, the men and women, because they are considered inferior to their white masters. This is further evidence that racism cannot be limited to a specific time or place" (p. 18).

In her discussion of Doris Lessing's life, Rubenstein (2014) refers to *The Grass Is Singing* as the story of Mary Turner who gets married to a weak white African man.

As she struggles not only against life in the bush but against her husband's emotional and economic inadequacies, her only satisfaction in life becomes her cruel power over her African houseboy, who ultimately rises up to murder her. (pp. 192-93)

Fahim (1994), in her explication of *The Grass Is Singing*, states that "The book shows the appalling nature of the South African society which imposes its dogma and suffocates individual life, forcing people to succumb to the collective at the expense of their individual fulfilment" (p. 19), adding that the tragedy in *The Grass is Singing* is developed according to the lack of balanced connection between the individual and the society.

On the other hand, in an interview by Roy Newquist (as cited in Earl G. Ingersoll, 1994, p. 12), who asks Doris Lessing about the time when she started writing, Lessing refers to her first novel *The Grass Is Singing*, saying that

It focused upon white people in Southern Rhodesia, but it could have been about white people anywhere south of the Zambezi, white people who were not up to what is expected of them in a society where there is very heavy competition from the black people coming up.

Concerning the novel *To Kill a Mockingbird*, a lot of writers and critics argue about its racial issues. In his discussion of the novel, Cusatis (2010) writes that "Perhaps another indication of the continued relevance of the novel is its regular appearance on proposed banned-books lists owing to its racial and sexual themes, language, and imagery" (p. 141). Cusatis also adds that

Race and racism are perhaps the most commonly encountered topics of discussion concerning this novel. The most blatant instance of racism in the novel is, of course, Tom Robinson's unjust trial, conviction, and death, but racist language, attitudes, and actions occur throughout the work. (p. 142)

Similarly, Cerrito and DiMauro (1999) point out that Harper Lee, in her first novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, makes a combination between two themes dominant in the

contemporary southern literature, which are "the recollection of childhood among village eccentrics and the spirit-corroding shame of the civilized white Southerner in the treatment of the Negro" (p. 161).

In the same concern, Armstrong (1987) discusses the most important themes and issues that are handled in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Armstrong here writes that

Within the novel we live for a while in Maycomb and get to know its inhabitants, some of them intimately. We begin to understand the moral tone of the town with its hypocrisies, its self-interest, its fear of change. Most importantly, we come to understand its prejudices. Many ideas - about courage, racial prejudice, religious bigotry, family life, democracy, education, childhood - can be combed out to be looked at separately. (p. 42)

Likewise, Watkin (2012) writes about the most broadly deliberated themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird*:

The best-known and most widely discussed themes in *To Kill a Mockingbird* center on some aspect of race. The novel is often viewed as championing civil rights, written before the civil rights movement had found its strongest voices. Certainly the book covers race-related themes: tolerance, victimization, education, civic duty, and others. (p. 50)

On the other hand, Johnson (2007) explains that censors brings many objections about *To Kill a Mockingbird*. They can be summarized as follows:

(1) references to the sex act, (2) slang and ungrammatical speech, (3) curse words and obscene words, (4) racial slurs, (5) descriptions of rebelliousness or challenges to authority, (6) unfavorable portrayals of the establishment, including organized religion and the government, (7) questioning of absolutes, and (8) the imposition of values. (p. 3)

Moreover, Johnson (2007) writes that the novel "does indeed contain racial slurs, spoken from the mouths of some of its characters. But those who would censor it on these grounds should consider the alternative: Would we want a novel about race relations in the South of the 1930s to ignore the language used at the time" (p. 6)?

In the same connection, in his introduction to the book he edited about Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Bloom (2007) argues that the novel "is already a period piece . . . partly suggests that we find in it a study of the nostalgias. Yet nostalgia itself dates; the reader becomes alienated from it, when nothing restores a sense of its relevance" (p. 2).

From another perspective, Haggerty (2010) states that *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a description of the nature of the law in the United States during the 1930, adding:

To Kill a Mockingbird is a plea for the genuine application of the core liberal value upon which the United States was, theoretically, founded: the equality of all before the law, regardless of inherited status, innate abilities, or race, as Atticus explicitly argues in his closing statement to Tom Robinson's jury.

Atticus's failure indicates that the law is nothing more than an abstraction. (p. 56)

In brief, most of the previous studies about these two novels denote that the most important issues these novels discuss are the issues of racism, domination, and social inequality. Additionally, the rigid racial rules depicted in both novels draw a line of separation between the whites and the blacks. The racial practices, in Zimbabwe and Alabama, reflect the severe hatred of white people toward black people.

About the Two Texts

Doris Lessing (1919-2013) was one of the most prominent English writers in the post-war period. She was granted the Nobel Prize for literature in 2007. Her literary writings concentrated on an extensive range of issues and concerns in the twentieth century. She discusses, particularly in her novels, the issues of racism and gender, and the role of people in society. Among her famous novels are *The Grass Is Singing* (1950), *The Golden Notebook* (1962), *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* (1971), and *The Good Terrorist* (1985). Lessing wrote more than 30 literary works.

The Grass Is Singing is one of the greatest novels by Lessing. It was her first novel. The events of the novel take place in Southern Africa, in a country called Southern Rhodesia (now known as Zimbabwe). The events are about the racial issues between the whites and the blacks in that country. In other words, it is about the consequences of racial discrimination. Obviously, the main theme of the novel is racial discrimination, but it is not only about it. It also deals with issues such as revenge, frustration, humiliation, hatred and hopelessness. After its publication, *The Grass Is Singing* gained immense popularity and great success in Europe and the United States.

Harper Lee (1926-2016) was one of the best American novelists. She studied at the University of Alabama, and at Oxford University in England. Later, she became a full-time writer, and she wrote stories, essays, and novels. Her famous novels are *To Kill a Mockingbird* (1960) and *Go Set a Watchman* (2015). In 2007, she was granted the Presidential Medal of Freedom by the American president George W. Bush for her contribution in the field of literature.

To Kill a Mockingbird is Lee's famous novel. After its publication, the novel became a great success. It has become one of the best novels in modern American literature. The novel won the Pulitzer Prize for fiction in 1961, and in 1962 it was made into an award-winning motion picture. In this respect, Cusatis (2010) denotes that the novel became popular and "A year after its publication, it had sold half a million copies, been translated into ten languages, and been awarded the Pulitzer Prize . . . had sold more than thirty million copies and been translated into forty languages by 2009" (p. 141).

Analysis of Racial Discrimination

Racial discrimination is one of the most important topics that are discussed by many writers in their literary writings. It has become a recurrent theme in many works of literature. Among those writers is the British novelist Doris Lessing and the American novelist Harper Lee, who are the main focus of this research.

Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* was published in the very beginning of the sixth decade of the twentieth century, and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in the very beginning of the seventh decade of the twentieth century. Doris Lessing is a British novelist, and Harper Lee is an American novelist. Both novels discuss the issues of racial discrimination and social inequality during approximately the same period but in different places. *The Grass Is Singing* tells a story that happened in southern Africa during the 1940s, and the story in *To Kill a Mockingbird* is about events happened in a small town in Alabama, during the 1930s.

In her novel, *The Grass Is Singing*, Doris Lessing portrays the nature of social interaction between the white settlers and the native black people in Zimbabwe. The whole story is about Mary and her hatred for the African natives. She draws an ugly portrait in her mind about the black people. She believes that they are deceivers, thieves, and lawbreakers. Based on these beliefs, she begins to treat them in an inhumane way. She has developed a feeling of hatred against them. She hates their voices, their faces, and the way they behave. As a woman belonging to the white race, Mary treats black people poorly. This is a sign of hegemony in which white people stand on the position of leadership, and black people compulsorily accept the position of subordination.

Similarly, to a certain extent, *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel that deals with racial injustice. The novel centers on a white family: two children, Scout and Jem, and their father Atticus Finch, a middle-aged lawyer. Atticus volunteered to defend a black man named Tom Robinson, who has been accused of raping a white girl, Mayella Ewell. In other words, Tom has been jailed for a crime he never committed. By defending Tom, Atticus exposes himself and his family to the anger of white people in his community. As a result, he pays the price for being someone who believes in racial equality.

In *The Grass Is Singing*, white women are forbidden from talking to the servants or walking alone in order not to be raped or murdered. With such fixed ideas, Mary treats the servants poorly. For example, during her husband's sickness, she takes responsibility for the farm. As the boss, she shows hatred towards them, finding that they are animal-like creatures or rather black animals. Her hatred brings about whipping the face of one of the servants, named Moses, who asks for water in English. She hates black men and women: "She hated the exposed fleshiness of them, their soft brown bodies and soft bashful faces that were also insolent and

inquisitive, and their chattering voices that held a brazen fleshy undertone" (Lessing, p. 99). Such harsh treatment springs from the racial system that the whites established in South Africa and the white supremacy that they tried to impose there.

Similarly, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, black people are accused of criminal acts such as rape and murder. For example, Tom Robinson is accused of raping a white woman, named Mayella Ewell, whose father is a poor, drunken man filled with racial prejudice. But unlike Moses, in *The Grass Is Singing*, who commits the crime of raping and murdering a white woman, Tom Robinson is accused of a crime he never committed. Therefore, the white lawyer Atticus, who believes in racial equality, agrees to be his lawyer and defends him before the court. He knows that Robinson is innocent, and he also knows that he will expose himself to the resentment of the whites, but he devotes his effort to prove to everyone that Robinson is not guilty. It is nothing more than an unfair accusation. He states that Mayella approaches Robinson for sex, and her father saw them together; then beats her and wrongfully accuses Robinson of raping her. He adds that Robinson is not physically able to attack Mayella because his left hand is paralysed.

In *The Grass Is Singing*, Moses is taken to represent the oppressed black class throughout the novel. He is badly treated by Mary. She treats him as if he were an animal. She beats him in the face. By doing so, she proves that she is clearly racist. In fact, this animalistic treatment is the result of the fear she has in her heart of the black people. She also believes if white people do not control black people, they will become uncontrollable monsters. Like his wife, Dick treats his servants like animals. He gets used to address them as 'old swine.' Charlie Slatter is accustomed to using a heavy leather whip to beat natives. He once killed one of the natives, and he was only fined thirty pounds. The life of a black man cost thirty pounds. On the contrary, Moses kills Mary, and he is sentenced to death by hanging. The two are murderers, but the white man was fined, and the black man is hanged. Obviously, Moses killed Mary to take revenge on the whites, whose inhuman treatment of black people had become unbearable. Thus, Mary becomes a victim of racism. This incident demonstrates the sense of racism and its consequences in a multicultural community dominated by white supremacy.

Similarly, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, black people have to be punished even for actions they did not do. For example, Tom Robinson is shot and killed while trying to escape from prison. Here, Atticus tells Aunt Alexandra: "They shot him," while he "was running. It was during their exercise period. They said he just broke into a blind raving charge at the fence and started climbing over. Right in front of them—" (Lee, p. 228). Furthermore, white people punish other white people who sympathise with black people. For instance, the white community shows their hatred towards Atticus for his support of Robinson. Ewell spits in Atticus's face after the trial, and swears to

revenge from him. As a result, Ewell attacks Atticus's children. In the struggle, Jem's arm is broken, and he loses consciousness. Fortunately, they are saved by Boo Radley.

Additionally, white children taunt Jem and Scout for their father's actions, describing him as a lover of niggers. Scout makes a conflict, at school, with a classmate named Cecil Jacob because he says that Scout's father supports black people. For Scout, this is a racially offensive insult. Later, her father saw that she was angry. He asked what the matter with her was. She asked him angrily, "Do you defend niggers, Atticus" (Lee, p. 77)? Atticus responds that it is a case he does not wish to win. He only takes it to uphold justice and respect. Atticus is one of the few people in Maycomb, who feels obligated to racial equality.

Likewise, Francis tells Scout that her father sympathizes with black people. He tries to belittle her father by saying that he is "nothin' but a nigger-lover" (Lee, p. 84)! Therefore, Scout hits Francis, who goes to Jack and Alexandra and tells them that Scout beats him. Jack strikes Scout without hearing the other part of the story. When they came back to Maycomb, Scout told Jack the rest of the story, so he becomes very angry. Scout makes him promise not tell her father, who had ordered her not to fight anyone insulting him. Jack kept his word.

Mary, in *The Grass Is Singing*, later seems to treat Moses with respect or even admiration after a long period of hatred towards him. When Charlie visits, the Turners ask him to stay for dinner, and he agrees. After dinner, Mary orders Moses to take for them some oranges from the farm as dessert. Charlie perceives that Mary treats Moses as she treats him and objects to the way Moses talks to Mary. Observing their behaviour, Charlie assumes that the two have a sexual relationship. However, Doris Lessing, in response to a question by Stephen Gray (1983) about her opinion of the movie adaptation of *The Grass Is Singing* (as cited in Earl G. Ingersoll, 1994, p. 117), declares that "Karen Black was wrong; she's one of the sexiest women in the world , . . and there's my poor Mary Turner, who doesn't understand anything about sex or life. But I don't see many moviemakers being honest enough to cast Mary Turner." Depending on his unproven statement, Charlie requests Dick to kick Moses out of the farm. But Dick declares that Mary will not agree. Then Charlie urges them to buy him their farm. Such urgency is based on the idea that such unproven sexual relationship will threaten the whole racial hierarchy the whites established at that country. For Charlie, a black person does not deserve such kind treatment, and a white woman is not allowed to make love with a black man, because they belong to different cultures. He looks from a post-colonial lens: the colonial culture is central.

In both novels the blacks do not stay quiet. They have established their system of resistance. In *The Grass Is Singing*, the natives do not yield to Mary's supremacy. They protest against her bad treatment. They do not agree to make her constantly master them in that harsh manner. They have revolted against her centrality, and they no longer accept to be marginalized. They defend themselves in their own ways. For example, one of the servants is angry of her bad treatment, so he has dropped a plate and she dismisses him for this act. Another example, Moses is humiliated repeatedly by Mary. But he does not allow such humiliation to last. Therefore, he has murdered Mary and does not escape from that place. Instead, he celebrates the moment of his success:

a moment so perfect and complete that it took the urgency from thoughts of escape, leaving him indifferent . . . Though what thoughts of regret, or pity, or perhaps even wounded human affection were compounded with the satisfaction of his completed revenge. (Lessing, p. 218)

He does not care about the consequences of the crime he has committed though he knows that he is going to be hung. He is satisfied that he has taken his revenge. This is what pleases him. He proves that what is felt to be marginalized has revolted against what is regarded as central: marginalization versus centrality.

In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the jury accuses Tom Robinson of raping Mayella, depending on the testimonies of two white men, Mr. Heck Tate, the sheriff of Maycomb, and Mr. Bob Ewell, Mayella's father, and ignoring the medical proof. These white men, in a hegemonic way, exploit their power, leadership, and social authority over the subordinate black man, Tom Robinson. Believing that the jury is unfair, Tom tries to escape from the prison after the trial in order to protect himself from their unfairness, but he is shot to death. He escapes because he does not find impartiality even in the law. Therefore, he tries to run away when he comes to the conclusion that the law there does not protect the guiltless. That is to say, he does not surrender to the white supremacy. Instead, he establishes his own strategy of defense in his own way. Similarly, Atticus, the white man who works as a lawyer, agrees to defend the the black man, Tom, despite the menace from the white community. He is a man who believes in social equality. He establishes his system of defense against injustice, and he is aware of the price that he will pay or the threats that he will face in return. In this concern, Haggerty (2010, p. 72) points out that Atticus declares his conception of the law in his final argument before the jury, telling them that "there is one law for all men, black or white. The jury proves him wrong. The rule of law does not extend to all the inhabitants in the world of *To Kill a Mockingbird*." Unlike Atticus, many characters in the novel, from a post-colonial perspective, are seen not promoting equality between the whites and the blacks.

The bad treatment for the black people in both novels is the result of the false stereotypes: blacks are dirty and oversexed. In *The Grass Is Singing*, the black people are portrayed as thieves, rapists, and murderers. Similarly, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus reminds the jury of the false stereotypes about the blacks: "The evil assumption—that *all* Negroes lie, that *all* Negroes are basically immoral beings, that *all* Negro men are not to be trusted around our women, an assumption one associates with minds of their caliber" (Lee, p. 199); adding that

You know the truth, and the truth is this: some Negroes lie, some Negroes are immoral, some Negro men are not to be trusted around women—black or white. But this is a truth that applies to the human race and to no particular race of men. There is not a person in this courtroom who has never told a lie, who has never done an immoral thing, and there is no man living who has never looked upon a woman without desire. (Lee, p. 199)

As shown in table 1, the researcher counted the racial words in both novels. It is seen that racial words and expressions, both highly offensive such as (Nigger, Negro, coloured) and less offensive such as (black, African, white), in *To Kill a Mockingbird* are more in number than in *The Grass Is Singing*, 163 and 123 respectively. Moreover, the highly offensive racial words in *To Kill a Mockingbird* outnumber the highly offensive racial words in *The Grass Is Singing*, 105 and 19 respectively. On the other hand, the less offensive racial words in *The Grass Is Singing* are more than the less offensive racial words in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, 108 and 59 respectively. The use of this kind of language in both novels represents the colonial discourse that the colonizers get used to use with the colonized. It also reflects the aspects of post-colonialism: domination versus subordination, superiority versus inferiority, and sameness versus difference.

Table 1: Racial Words in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *The Grass Is Singing*

Racial Words		<i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i>	<i>The Grass Is Singing</i>
Highly Offensive	Less Offensive		
Nigger		36	7
Niggers		10	7
Negro		29	0
Negroes		25	0
colored		4	5
	African	1	14
	Africans	0	2
	White	35	56
	Black	23	36
Total		163	127

Conclusion

Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Harper Lee's *To Kill a Mockingbird* were published approximately in the same period of time by different novelists, British and American, about two different regions, in Zimbabwe (southern Africa) and in Alabama (America) respectively.

Both novels show that there is a racial system established by the whites. This system has its own rules and principles, which are to be respected by both races: the whites and the blacks. Such racial rules promote separation between the two races, and that is something good particularly for the whites because they believe that separate people are not equal people. From a post-colonial perspective, this racial system in both novels, is not seen promoting equality. It promotes superiority over inferiority, domination over subordination, centrality over marginalization. In *The Grass Is Singing* Mary keeps a gap between her and the so-called servants because she is learned to respect the fixed racial rules and principles, and breaking these rules means breaking the established racial system and demolishing the white supremacy. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Atticus who devoted himself to defending Robinson, knows that he works against the rules of the racial system, and he will expose himself to the fury of the whites. In fact this action makes him the object of contempt in Maycomb. Even after the trial, white people, in that community, are still angry with him.

In *The Grass Is Singing*, Doris Lessing describes black people as criminals, wild men, and rapists. Dissimilarly, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Harper Lee describes black people as victims of the racial laws. For example, Tom Robinson is one of the mockingbirds in the novel, whose innocence is destroyed by evil. In both novels, white people use offensive and hurtful words against black people, but the offensive racial words in *To Kill a Mockingbird* are more than the offensive racial words in *The Grass Is Singing*.

In brief, in both novels, white people build their relationship with black people on certain stereotypes: the blacks are dirty, oversexed, dangerous criminals, uncivilized and uneducated. They believe that the blacks are to be controlled and put under their scrutiny in order not to disturb the system established by the whites. Therefore, they do humiliate the blacks whether verbally or physically. And the blacks resist in their own ways. Moses, in *The Grass Is Singing*, kills Mary, and Tom Robinson, in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, tries to run away from the prison, but he could not succeed. He is shot and killed.

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