

Ecological Criticism Based On Gender Prejudice: The Elements Of Social Ecofeminism In The Novel The Grass Is Singing

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Abstract

The investigation began with a social ecofeminist examination of Doris Lessing's 1950 novel *The Grass is Singing*. Social ecofeminism investigates human and environmental resource challenges while advocating for a more civilized world. In order to shed light on the colonists' hidden motives in South Africa, the research intends to analyse social eco-feminist aspects as they are portrayed in the book. The researcher views the black-white connection, the destruction of the environment, racial dominance, and gender bullying, and forced labor as the primary social eco-feminist components. The study, which used analysis and interpretation of the selected novel, is qualitative in nature. It is important to interpret *The Grass is Singing* (1950) as a synchronous story, but it dared to reveal how the colonizers' and colonizer's lives in South Africa related to the environment. Both the colonizers and the colonized are victims of colonialism, which caused a number of social, environmental, and feminist issues for both of them. The study suggests that future research should take into account applying social eco-feminism as a theory to the analysis of fiction from various African nations, or even other literary works, applying social eco-feminism to genocidal literature; applying social eco-feminism to other literary genres such as poetry, drama, and media literature; and fusing social eco-feminism with other theories in the analysis of different literary fictions.

Keywords: eco-feminism, white master, black slaves, racial supremacy, colonialism

Introduction

The sociological interpretation of ecofeminism known as social ecofeminism focuses on social issues such as racial discrimination, gender oppression, and the deterioration of nature and women in society as a result of male dominance. *The Grass is Singing* by Doris Lessing explores a variety of ideas and issues. However, it remained untouched by researchers from social eco-feminist perspective, therefore the researcher's focuses on social oppression and racism. Although Eco-feminism is anticipated in

the 1970s, however it became an important thought and movement in the 1980s. Eco-feminism is both the product of ecological movement and women's movement, therefore, it is directly affected by both feminism and ecologies. With the acceleration of modernization and industrialization process, ecological crisis have become global issues. Before the 1960s, ecological and women's problems are studied separately, but when eco-feminism has been proposed, both of these problems came under the jurisdiction of eco-feminism. Eco-feminism is also known as

ecological feminism. According to the definition of Britannica “Eco-feminism uses the basic feminist tenets of equality between genders, a revaluing of non-patriarchal or nonlinear structures, and a view of the world that respects organic processes, holistic connections, and the merits of intuition and collaboration. To these notions eco-feminism adds both a commitment to the environment and an awareness of the associations made between women and nature. According to Maria Mies view, “eco-feminism is man’s domination over women parallels that of man’s domination over nature.”

“Eco-feminism is an ideology and movement that sees climate change, gender equality and social injustice more broadly as intrinsically related issues; all tied to masculine domination in society.” (Regan, 2020)

Eco-Feminism

Eco-Feminism is a broad and an umbrella term. It is a social, political, and environmental movement against patriarchal system and male domination over both women and nature. Eco-feminist thinkers deeply study humans’ relations with natural world. Eco-feminism believes that the patriarchal system and the male domination have been greatly affected the nature and the women.” Eco-feminists focus on inter connections between the dominance/oppression of women and the domination\oppression of nature” (Kemmerer, 2011). From the very beginning man has been utilized women and nature for his own purposes. Centuries ago, man has been started the destruction of nature in the form of deforestation, mining, urbanization and industrialization. It emerged in the mid-1970s alongside second-wave feminism and the green movement. It brings together elements of feminism and the green movement. The green movement is a diverse scientific, social, conservation and political movement that is broadly addressed the concern of

environmentalism. Ecofeminism became popular only in the context of numerous protests and activities against environmental destruction, however it has been emerged from several ecological and women activist movements. First conference was held in USA “women and life on earth” in regard to ecofeminism in March 1980. King (1980) one of the conference organizers, wrote, “Eco-feminism is about connectedness and wholesome of theory and practice. It proclaims the special strength and integrity of every living thing. We see the destruction of the earth and her beings by the corporate warriors, and the threat of nuclear annihilation by the military warriors, as feminist concerns.” (King, 1980)

Social Eco-Feminism

Eco-Feminism has further two sub-schools. The one is Social eco-feminism and the other is Cultural eco-feminism. Social eco-feminism is the sociology of eco-feminism which mostly deals with social problems like suppression, oppression and the degradation of nature and women in society by the male domination. Social eco-feminism gives emphasis on all kind of oppressions (race, class, gender, and environment) are linked and need to be fought together. Social eco-feminism is the complete study of Social Connections of the Oppression of Women and the Domination of Nature by male segment of society. Social eco-feminism acknowledges natural domination and gender domination, emphasizing the economic and political roots of domination and advocating political and economic changes to achieve the liberation of nature and women. Socialist ecofeminism stems from materialist feminism (Marxist and socialist feminism), and like it, based upon a constructionist position that views both knowledge and nature as historically and socially produced, resulting from the conditions and circumstances in which they exist (Merchant

1992, p. 269)

Ecology

Ecology is the study of the entire ecosystem of an area or the scientific study of the processes and influencing the distribution and abundance of organism. Harte (1995) expresses his views about ecology. It is often suggested in a related sustainability literature that natural capital should remain intact if possible. Ecosystem play a key role in the balance of an area, as we know that an ecosystem contains a large number of different living organisms which belongs to different kingdoms and phylum. These organisms have a close relation with each other, e.g., symbiotic relationship of humans and trees. But there are also some threats to the balance of ecosystem which can greatly affect the entire region. According to some scientists and analysts' humans are considered as great threat to the ecosystem because they are responsible for deforestation. Deforestation leads a region to destruction by reducing oxygen level. It also affects the rare and endangered species. It is reported that man segment of society is responsible for destruction of ecosystem. Because men are domination constructions of buildings, mines, factories, land cutting, dams and roads which leads to deforestation. Patriarchal system has been dominated both the women and nature. Men are constantly destructing the nature, which in response leads toward global warming and climate change. Ecologists are trying to protect the natural resources and to play a key role in economic system of a country.

Problem Statement

Many researchers have been done their works on Doris Lessing's novel *The Grass is Singing* (1950) from feminist, eco-feminist, ecological and racial oppression perspectives, however it

has been remained unnoticed by researchers which can be interpreted from socialist eco-feminist perspective. The novel unveils the brutal ecological degradation and the oppression and suppression of the black population by the white colonizers in South Africa. The researcher will critically analyze Doris Lessing's novel *The Grass is Singing* (1950) from socialist eco-feminist perspective to disclose the inhuman treatment of the white colonizers with black people of South Africa and their vile behavior towards nature's destruction.

Research Objective

1. To draw attention to the social eco-feminist components that describe the gender prejudice against South Africa's black population.

Research Question

1. What social ecofeminist components contributed to the sense of community among black South Africans today?

Significance of the Study

This research study critically analyze the novel *The Grass is Singing* (1950) through socialist eco-feminist perspective to examine the socio-political essence of the novel. The most common justification for colonialism is the argument that the colonizers are bringing "civilization" to an aboriginal, ruthless, and savage population. The study's aim is to expose the ignominious treatment of the white colonizers with black people of South Africa and their vicious damage to the ecosystem of South Africa. The researcher tries to analyze the novel from the view point of social eco-feminism to highlight its ecological meaning and feminist consciousness.

Literature Review

Researchers have been analyzed Doris Lessing's novel *The Grass is Singing* from different perspectives such as feminism, social feminism, colonialism, Post-colonialism, modernism, eco-criticism, thematic analysis and also from Freudian perspective, but however it has remained unexplained by researchers from the perspective of social eco-feminism, to dig out the core meaning of social eco-feminism from the novel.

Yahya (2010) gives description on a socialist feminist reading of Doris Lessing's *The Grass is Singing*. This study examines how the society shapes and re-defines women's identity through capitalist patriarchal economy in Doris Lessing's novel *The Grass is Singing*. It was a challenge for social feminist to highlight women's suppression and oppression in society and to give a positive output to make the lives of women happier and privileged. In Doris Lessing's novel *The Grass is Singing*, this research looks at how society moulds and re-defines women's identities through a capitalist patriarchal economy. It was difficult for social feminists to draw attention to women's oppression and oppression in society while still producing a beneficial outcome. This novel relates the story of Mary who loses her economic independence and her status as a successful young woman after her marriage to Dick. Capitalist society and patriarchy lead the life of Mary toward economic dependency and take away her status as she was an economically independent young woman. His finding shows that Mary's identity goes under a new definition according to the patriarchal capitalist ideology and that this society determines the lives of the people. (Yahya 2010)

Mutekwa (2009) shares his idea about gendered beings, gendered discourse; the gendering of race' colonialism and anti-colonialism in three Zimbabwean novels. This study aims to explore the gendering of race, colonialism and anti-

colonial nationalism in selected novels from the Zimbabwean literature. *A Son of the Soil* by Wilson Katiyo, *The Grass is Singing* by Doris Lessing, and *Bones* by Chenjerai Hove, cover the colonial period from the movement of contact to the early post-independence period. This study links the gendered nature of colonialism to the gendered aspects of anti-colonial nationalism and shows how the two existed in an oppositional yet uncertain relationship. *The grass is singing* is a post-colonial novel unveiling the brutal aspects of colonialization and gives insights to those notions and sociological terminologies like gendering racism of which the black people were facing their consequences. (Mutekwa, 2009)

Wang (2009) plains his view about white Post-postcolonial guilt in Doris Lessing's novel *The Grass is Singing*; this study examines illustration of historical guilt, agency and transformation in Doris Lessing's novel. In particular, this study argues that the damaged interracial relationship between the novels white female protagonist, Mary Turner, and her black servant Moses, become the vehicle for a purifying and redeeming easing of white post-colonial guilt. The allegorical violence that infuses this narrative of punishment is historicized within the context of the black exposure in South Africa and the heightened observation of feelings under apartheid. Mary's experience of guilt is analyzed according to Judith Butler's argument that subject formation relies paradoxically upon the twin experiences of both despair and agency. Even as Mary's sense of historical guilt becomes a devastating form of distress. (Wang, 2009)

Collins (1983) focuses on Architectural imagery in the works of Doris Lessing (Zimbabwe); Architectural imagery in Doris Lessing's fiction is a vibrant metaphor which reveals the artist's complex relationship to enclosure and mystical release. Lessing's use of architectural images points to a consistent artistic movement away from protective enclosing structures--social, psychic and artistic--which create dependence and twists the personality, towards a free

structure which permits the fullest development of human potential. A study of the rooms, walls and houses which enclose Lessing's characters initially reveals a highly negative social and psychological environment. Rooms and houses symbolize social environments which allow no freedom of movement for the characters; walls continually block character movement and communication. Thus the women of *The Grass is Singing*, "To Room Nineteen" and *The Summer Before the Dark* dwell an imprisoning environment. Even the artistic structures of the fictions themselves are closed in by architectural imagery. (Collins, 1983)

Johansson (2013) focuses on *No way to live*, a post-colonial Analysis of Doris Lessing *The Grass is Singing*; this study is postcolonial reading of Doris Lessing *The Grass is Singing*. The study focus on the discussion that build the alienated southern Rhodesian society. The discourse does not only make life impossible for the oppressed black majority but also ruins the lives for the British colonizers that cannot support it. It is contended that the pressure the discussion puts on the colonizers is so strong that it destroys the people who cannot live according to it. Lessing's novel draws on the idea that a weak colonizer poses a threat to the separated laws and color-bar system by acting against the discourse of the southern Rhodesian society. What the study dug out that the discourse of the British ruling society in southern Rhodesia restricts how the white population can live and act. The discourse and its way of controlling not only the black population but also the colonizers who were making life impossible for the Turners. Being poor, the Turners do not socialize with any of the other British colonizers, an act that is seen as they turn away from being British and opposing the British rule. (Johansson, 2013)

Cuomo (2002) expresses his views on eco-feminist philosophy. He writes that imperialism, women's suppression, ecological degradation, exploitation of workers is panickingly vivid to all

the movement eco-feminism gets popularity for its crucial and important role. In the book eco-feminist philosophy Warren (2000) shares her thoughts about eco-feminism that the notion of eco-feminism is enclosed in a single phrase "it is all connected." Eco-feminism in short stresses on a good relationship between ecology and human beings and that we are composed off the relationship of physique and mental wit. A massive collection of eco-feminist poetry, fiction and non-fiction has been written in the seventies and early eighties of twentieth century, before "feminism and ecology" appeared on the page to support and enhance the lives of vulnerable and oppressed people as well as the nature. (Cuomo, 2002)

Mary Phillips (2015) argues on contemporary perspectives on eco-feminism why is ecofeminism still needed to address the environmental emergency and challenges of the current times? Ecofeminism has a checked history in terms of the popularity and its observed value in conceptualizing the relationship between gender and nature that confront the environmental challenges of the moment. This book provides a much-needed comprehensive overview of the significance and value of using eco-feminist theories. It gives a broad coverage of traditional and emerging eco-feminist theories and explores, across a range of chapter, their various contribution and matchlessly span various stands of eco-feminist thinking. The origins of credible eco-feminist theories are discussed including key themes and some of its leading figures and outlines its influences on hoe scholar might come to a more reproductive understanding of the natural environments .the books examines eco-feminisms potential role for advancing currents discussions and research on the relationship between the humans and other then humans that shear our world. This timely volume makes a distinguishing scholarly contributions and is a valuable resource for students and academics in the field of

environmentalism, political ecology, sustainability and nature resource management. (Mary Phillips, 2015)

Ling (2014) argues about ecological criticism based on social gender: the basic principles of eco-feminism; through analysis of the main schools and theories of ecofeminism, this study discloses its basic principles. The study finds that ecofeminism is the feminism leaning on ecology and that up-to-date development of feminist theory. Women held a movement called ecological movement, ecofeminism has experienced a process from artlessness to consciousness of practice; as a feminist school, ecofeminism contains numerous sub-branches and sub-schools. However ecofeminism observes a basic theory that the patriarchy is the origin of natural domination and gender domination. It is necessary to adhere to the unity of feminism and ecological principles for the opposition to the patriarchy. As a feminist school, ecofeminism has sub-branches but it finds the basic reason for nature and gender domination by the patriarchal system of society as men have dominated these both of them and treat them as their subjects. Women and nature wants liberation from the tenet of that boundless and master-servant relation. Ecofeminism connects these two problems of natural and women's suppression. This view focuses on ecological criticism from the perspective of gender, tries to reconstruct the relationship between women and nature, and demonstrates the basic characteristics of ecological feminism to be female principle and ecological principle. (Ling, 2014)

Fennel (2013) reveals his thoughts in his article ecofeminism in the tourism context: a discussion of the use of other-than-human animal as food in tourism; uses of animals in tourism range widely, including their eating as food. This paper explores the use of animals as food in tourism, drawing on the work of eco-feminist theorists for insights into the issue. It begins by identifying some core doctrine of eco-feminist philosophy. It

then reveals its relevance to the tourism context particularly to the use of animals as food in tourism. By discussing several examples from the industry and drawing on existing theoretical applications of ecofeminism to animal food production and intake. The primary aim of this study is to encourage the amalgamation of this rich and texture theory into tourism discourse to help us reflects on what we currently consider to be acceptable behavior. Although animal rights theory appears to be used in greater detail in tourism, what is missing is the comprehensive overview of the theory and meaning of animal rights, and how or if it fits in tourism. (Fennel, 2013)

Research Methodology

Qualitative research aims to understand surroundings, capture experiences and make sense out of it. The nature of the study is qualitative because it does not require any statistical data to interpret the novel from social eco-feminist perspective. This research is a literature-based descriptive research. The researcher has used social eco-feminism as a framework, to Doris Lessing's novel *The Grass is Singing* (1950) highlight those social eco-feminist elements from the novel, which disclose the dark side of the white colonizers in South Africa. The term eco-feminism was first coined by Francoise d'Eaubonne in her work *Le Féminisme ou la mort* (1974) means feminism or death. In her work she clearly explained that the main reason behind women oppression and the existence of racism is the result of patriarchal system of society. Eco-feminists believe that women and nature have very close relation with each other, such as food providers and nurturing, that is why eco-feminists consider nature as a feminine entity. According to eco-feminists, both women and nature are dominated by the male segment of society. Eco-feminism is a broad social activist movement and ideology that works

for social and environmental issues like oppression, sub-ordination, racism, climate change and global warming respectively. According to social eco-feminists, capitalism and male domination is the cause for aforementioned terms in society. In a combination eco-feminism studies and works for both the problems of women and the problems of environment as well, that is why it is also known as feminism of ecology. Eco-feminism is an umbrella term and it has several aspects or sub-branches like social eco-feminism, cultural eco-feminism, vegetarian eco-feminism, spiritual eco-feminism and materialistic eco-feminism. The researcher's area of interest is social eco-feminism to conduct his research on Doris Lessing's novel *The Grass is Singing* (1950).

Social eco-feminism treats patriarchy and capitalism as one system because they are of the view that capitalism and male domination leads women towards degradation and oppression. Social eco-feminists struggle for the liberation of women and nature from the grip of patriarchal capitalist society. All social injustice and social problems in society like racial oppression, women's suppression, forced labor, gender discrimination and racial supremacy come under the study of social eco-feminism.

Social Eco-Feminist description towards gender bias against the black

White and Black Relationship in The Grass is Singing (1950)

The account for Moses and Mary the leading characters of the novel and the native black policemen's interactions with the white people acknowledges the complementarity that exists between white and black people in the novel. This black-white relationship is so intense that even the black cannot touch the white as evident from the novel when the police discovered the body of

Mary Turner, there they found Moses the murderer too in the same house while Dick Turner was off his head, talking crazily to himself wandering in and out of the house with his hands full of leaves and earth "...They let him be, while keeping an eye on him, for he was a white man, though mad, and black men, even when policemen, do not lay hands on white flesh" (Doris Lessing p. 4). The hatred which the white people bestowed toward the black people was enormously strained. They consider them worse than animal rather than human beings. The very psyche of the white people was made of such an illusion and bad misapprehension that possesses the only one thought that the native's sole deed is to steal, murder, or rap that is the feeling white people had. The blood of the natives was so cheap for them even they could not hesitate to kill one or several of the natives without any proper reason, when Shaer said "You shall not mind killing if it is necessary. He had once killed a native in a fit of temper. He was fined thirty pounds." (Doris Lessing p. 5)

The British were arrived to South Africa with the intention to take over the political and economic system of South Africa in their hands, for that purpose they have made a solid reason to come there that they are only here to civilized the barbarians. Each and every native was a half or uncivilized for them, that's why they treated them as animals. But there was no such reality behind their stance. All the high ranked government posts were occupied by the British colonizers, and the less ranked posts were left for the black natives when;

"Charlie walked up to the policemen, who saluted him. They were in fezes; and their rather fancy-dress uniform. This last thought did not occur to Charlie, who liked his native either one way or the other, properly dressed according to their station, or in loincloths. He

could not bear the half-civilized native.” (Doris Lessing p. 6)

Mary the protagonist of the novel is excessively a racist person. As we know from the references of the novel that black people were only allowed to do hard labor work or to work as a houseboy. Whenever her husband Dick hires a new houseboy at their house, Mary treated him beyond human boundaries and harshly. As she was a young, slim, and white lady, she could not bear black people around her. She got extra work from her houseboys, and once her houseboy did a work at her home, she were calling for doing it again and again and that’s way at the end, the houseboy left her house. Once Mary blamed her houseboy for stealing their meal when they were in the fields and the boy was at home alone but the boy denied stealing the meal, “But I know he took them,” sobbed Mary. I am going to take it out of his wages”. (Doris Lessing p. 43) The main reason for this act was her white supremacy and her hater for the natives. She was from the beginning of the same nature as obvious from the text of the novel that she never mingled with the blacks in any parties or mid-night clubs, and when was walking in the street she never mind the blacks, she even did not feel their existence as human beings walking around her. There was a huge gap between her and the natives. The relation between her and the natives was far away from building. Making any kind of acquaintance or contact with the natives was a dilemma for her. She was of the view that white are most superior to black that’s why she was very harsh in the form of a mistress to her black servants. When Tony and Sergeant Denham were discussing Mary Turner, the angry Tony said;

“Yes, she treated him badly, I thought. Though on the other hand... nagged at him, eh? Oh well, women are pretty bad that way, in this country, very often. Aren’t they, Slatter? The voice was easy, intimate, and informal.

My old woman drives me mad_ it’s something about this country. They have no idea how to deal with niggers.” (Doris Lessing p.12)

“And the amorphous mass of natives in the streets, whom she hardly noticed. She knew (the phrase was in the air) that the natives were getting ‘cheeky’. But she had nothing to do with them. They were outside her orbit.” (Doris Lessing p. 21)

When Mary Turner was found dead in her house, the police came to take her dead body to the camp. There was no car with the police as they came by bicycles, and there was only Charlie’s car. Now the police had a problem which was the Moses, the black murderer. There was already Dick in the car and the dead body of Mary Turner was also lying inside it, they could not put Moses with him in the car because blacks were not allowed to set with whites. For that reason Moses had to walk up to the camp. The novel highlights the relation between white and black people with realistic and expanded references which clearly identifies the envy of colonizers toward colonized. The writer wants here to disclose those factors and elements that created bias toward the people of South Africa. If even a native could not set near a white man or woman because of race and color, it must generate hat between white and blacks. In this regard Lessing wrote as;

“And then there was another problem: they could not put a black man close to a white woman, even though she were dead, and murdered by him. And there was only Charlie’s car, and mad Dick Turner was in that, sitting staring in the back. There seemed to be a feeling that Moses, having committed a

murder, deserved to be taken by car; but there was no help for it, he would have to walk, guarded by the policemen, wheeling their bicycles to the camp.” (Doris Lessing p.13)

Degradation of Nature

As the colonizers arrived and settled in South Africa, they took the political and economic system of South Africa in their hands and after that started farming there on the lands of natives as well as they begun certain developmental projects such as the railway and the small industries. By this way they were cutting the trees and the soil for building shops and roads. This novel vividly elucidates those factors and elements which caused enormous degradation to South African’s nature and environment. From the text of the novel it is clear that the colonizers were digging mines in their lands and soil, they have started mining for expensive and useful elements, which they were then carried to the Great Britain as well as they were using them there themselves. Mining caused a huge destruction to the ecology of South Africa, for that purpose that would have to cut down the trees in large scales as evident from the novel, “years before he brought the farm, some mining company had cut out every tree on the place, leaving nothing but coarse scrub and waste of grass.” (Doris Lessing p. 60)

Apart from this, the railway line has hugely affected the environment of the country. For this, they have cut the trees as well as the land, which caused the climate change and the air pollution at large scale. Every mines had its own shops which were built on such land what were abundant with trees, they removed them and build the mines and the railway’s stations.

“As the railway lines spread and knotted and ramified all over

Southern Africa, along them, at short distances of a few miles, sprang up little drops that to a traveler as insignificant clusters of ugly buildings, but which are the centers of farming districts perhaps a couple of hundred miles across. They contain the station building, the post office, sometimes a hotel but always a store.” (Doris Lessing p. 18)

The impacts of colonialism and modernism were enormously destructive. The most important thing in the nature is trees, by destructing them one can easily destroy the nature. The colonizers in South Africa were doing the same. They have completely dominated the nature along with the natives by building the farms, the stores and the mines, as the writer elucidates; “there was nothing to be seen but stunted second growth: short ugly little trees from mutilated trunks. There was not a good tree left on the farm” (Doris Lessing p. 61). In the beginning of chapter two the writer is telling about the old South Africa and the recent Africa in a sad tone, she adds that it is not remained that South Africa which were created by the old missionaries and explorers they will be horrified if they see it in the stores, every mine has its stores and many farms. The store is everywhere. Drive ten miles from one and you come on the next- poke your head out of the railway carriage. (Doris Lessing p.18)

Gendering of Race, Racial Supremacy and Gender Bullying

The novel sheds light upon gendering of race, racial supremacy and gender bullying from the very first page of the novel, the writer unearths the very inner psyche of the whites against the blacks and their wrong self-made perception about the blacks. Gendering of race is to give certain specific characteristics to a race and to have that belief that these characteristics are their

innate traits (Wikipedia), and that is how the writer elucidates. “When natives steal, murder or rape, that is the feeling white people have” (Doris Lessing p .1). The colonizers regarded themselves far much superior to Africans, in this regard (Haile Selassie) states that “until the philosophy of which holds one race superior and another inferior is finally and permanently discredited and abandoned... until the color of a man’s skin is of no more significance than the color of his eyes; until the basic human rights are guaranteed to all, without regard to race... the African continent will not know peace”. The main character Mary the protagonist of the novel is widely a racist character and believing herself and her race a superior one that is why she could not bear any contact with the black flesh. When Dick became ill and could not run his kaffir shop, therefore he assigned his shop to Marry to be run up by her. By first she insisted not to run the shop but eventually she agreed to it. The writer has been described in a pretty much detailed that what kind of temper Mary had about the black humans. She had the feeling that it will be a scornful act for her to sell her goods to the black people and will have such kind of relation with them, she could not see herself embarrassed. One day by ten in the morning half a dozen native women and their children were sitting under the tree. They all were waiting for her store to be opened.

”If she disliked native men, she loathed the 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.” (Doris Lessing p. 67)

In the book *The Heart of Whiteness: Confronting Race, Racism and White Privilege*, Robert Jensen criticized the white supremacy and white privilege and gave emphasis on that no race is a superior and there is no supremacy in white race.

“I propose that we white people admit that we are mostly all fools within a white-supremacist society. It is crucial that we be able to laugh at ourselves. By that I do not mean laugh about the issue; there is nothing funny about white supremacy, and the struggle for racial justice is not a joke, but we are often fools.” (Doris Lessing p. 72)

Mary was given all the responsibilities of running the store and looking after Dick’s farm. There the natives working boys were working on the farm, all of them were black natives who Dick was handling them firmly, but when it comes to Mary she could not bear facing them at all. She could not hear their voices, could not see their black faces and could not bear their existence at all. She was of the view that white flesh is not made for the purpose to endeavor filthy savages. One day when she got to the farm she saw that “the man slouched and stooped in the sun shine, resenting her presence; the native women stared and laughed; the filthy, underfed children crowded around whispering to each other; the starved dogs slunk in the background among the vines and mealies, she hated the place, which she had never entered before” (Doris Lessing p. 79). The novel mainly talks about racial discrimination and white supremacy in relationship with black natives of South Africa and the white colonizers. From the perspective of white colonizers, they do not want to acknowledge the black natives’ presence as human being just like them. “When it came to the point, one never had contact with natives, except in the master-servant relationship. One never knew them in their own lives, as human beings.” (Doris Lessing p .12)

Those harsh labels and associations which were given to the black native of South Africa, that were vanished with the unending efforts of the black leaders. Like Nelson Mandela, president of South Africa, who was an anti-apartheid activist, fought against those apartheid policy, white supremacy, racial discrimination, master-servant relation and forced labor. On apartheid rule he

once said in his public speech in Pretoria that, “we are extricating ourselves from a system that insulted our common humanity by dividing us from one another on the basis of race and setting us against each other an oppressed and oppressor, that system committed a crime against humanity.” (Nelson Mandela 2005)

Forced Laboring, and Forced Slavery

“Work, he reckoned, was the best medicine of all. Work is what horses die of. Everybody should know that” (Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn). The aforementioned quotation talks about forced labor, hardworking and forced slavery. By 1910, the Witwatersrand mine had created a forced-labor system which delivered hundreds of thousands of black laborers of Africa from hinterland towards the mines, and till now after the rapid economic growth in Africa, forced labor is existed when white masters colonized South Africa they made the natives their slaves by force. They consider the natives as a machine which does not want any food or rest. They were not allowed to take rest or even to go for their sole need of excretion in the mid of the work. If they are given two or three minutes for their rest or for their needs to fulfilled in the given time, then they were limited to abide by, if they exceed the given time then they would be beaten harshly and there would be decreases in their salaries. “The biggest grievance of the white farmers is that he is not allowed to strike his natives and that if he does, they may- but seldom do - complained to the police” (Doris Lessing p. 86). The natives were compellingly doing their works either in houses of the white masters or in the fields. The white masters were feeling boss likely while having the natives under their command, “The sensation of being boss over perhaps 80 black workers gave her new confidence, it was a good feeling keeping them under her will, making them do as she wanted” (Lessing p. 80). No one has the right to keep someone else as a slave as per law of

universal declaration of human rights article 34 “all forms of forced labor are prohibited and any contravention of this provision shall be an offence punishable in accordance with law” (Udhr 1972). The white master had snatched this basic human right of being free from the native people of South Africa. The British colonizers were forcibly catching the natives and then they were selling them abroad or to the white farmers inside the country, on the basis of year’s contract. They would conceive the natives by false promises that they would give them good employment and jobs, and when the natives come in their hold then they would sell them. In which law of the world, it is permissible to sell human beings like sheep and goat, as the white masters were doing to Africans, as evident from the novel;

“These had been recruited by what is the South African equivalent of the old press gang: white men who lie in wait for the migrating bands of natives on their way along the roads to look for work, gather them into large lorries, often against their will (sometimes chasing them through the bush for miles if they try to escape), lure them by fine promises of good employment and finally sell them to the white farmers at five pounds or more per head for a year’s contract” (Doris Lessing p. 82)

Mary, the protagonist of the novel, the misanthropist of black natives, is the prominent character in the novel who could do every malicious thing to the black natives of Africa and had done too, accept their murdering. When they could not go according to her will, she used to strike them as well. When Dick became ill, she was given the supervision of the farm for some days. Those days were a kind of battle for her, that how to win that battle again the savage natives. She would not permit them to drink

water, pee or to take rest in the mid of the work. She had tightened them twice as Dick could do. She argued with Dick that this is the way to handle the natives. She had no mercy over them at all. She even did not consider them as human being at all. This way the whole novel is describing her pitiless character. "And she knew her task was finished, because tomorrow Dick would be here, she felt as if she had won a battle. It was a victory over these natives, over herself and her repugnance of them." (Doris Lessing p. 87)

The white master had not only made slaves of native black men, but had made the women and children of their slaves as well. They would get hard working in their fields and farms from the native children as they would get from the older men and boys. Though the white master had left the continent, there is still child labor existed. The 2016 Global Estimates of Child Labor indicates that one-fifth of all African children are child laborers. Nine percent of African children are working in hazardous jobs. Both figures are more than twice as high as any other region. If they have come to civilize the Africans, then why they haven't given proper education to native children of Africa? Why they did not provide them basic needs of food and health? If they have to civilize them, would they had to make them laborers in their fields and farms? The European were giving them small amount of money and were taking hard work of them in result as evident from the novel. "she hated them all, every one of them, from the head boy whose subservience irritated her, to the smallest child; there were some children working among the others who could be no more than seven or eight years old." (Doris Lessing p. 82)

Conclusion and Recommendation

Reading *The Grass is Singing* (1950) probably providing a coherent shape of the realistic

operation of British colonialism in South Africa, as well as the impacts of colonialism on the people of Africa. May be the text of *The Grass is Singing* is a story and an anecdote that dare explore that harsh reality and dark face of British colonization. The text of the novel clearly highlights the social eco-feminist elements and the situation of native people of South Africa who were severely degraded by the white farmers. The researcher has clearly identified and highlighted the social eco-feminist elements from the novel and then critically analyzed it in such a way that the reader can easily get the true picture of South African society of that time.

The study confirms that social eco-feminist elements exist in the novel. Through literary text of *The Grass is Singing* (1950) one gets to learn that artificial but powerful force like colonialism may be destructive to both humans and environment, as the British colonialism had done to the people of South Africa. The consequence of colonialism was that much harsh, that moved African society toward deep degradation, oppression and destruction by snatching their independence and sovereignty, in which the women of South Africa were twice suppressed. The researcher therefore recommends the following:

- The use of social eco-feminism as a theory in the analysis of novels from different African countries or other novels from Zimbabwe
- Using social eco-feminism in genocidal literature
- Application of social eco-feminism in other genres of literature such as poetry, dramas, short stories and media literature
- Merging of social eco-feminism with other theories in the analysis of different literary works

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