A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SENSE OF BELONGING AS A PART OF IDENTITY OF THE COLONIZER AND THE COLONIZED IN *THE GRASS IS SINGING* AND *MY PLACE*

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I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of Arts.

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ABSTRACT

A COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF SENSE OF BELONGING AS A PART OF IDENTITY OF THE COLONIZER AND THE COLONIZED IN *THE GRASS IS SINGING* AND *MY PLACE*

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This thesis investigates how two loosely autobiographical works unveil the effects of colonization on their major characters in terms of their identities and senses of belonging. *The Grass Is Singing* by Doris Lessing, a second-generation member of the colonizer, and *My Place* by Sally Morgan, a third-generation hybrid Australian Aborigine, are selected because both novels essentially deal with colonial issues by depicting their major characters in a process of maturation within a colonial and post-colonial framework, the former using a semi-autobiographical narrative tone and the latter using an Aboriginal version of autobiography, which integrates oral tradition and storytelling. These two books reveal that a sense of identity is closely related to a sense of belonging and that both are fundamentally affected by the colonial situation. The effects of a sense of identity and a sense of belonging, which boil down to the demise or survival of the individual, interacts with family and society, physical environment, and race issues that the thesis investigates by dedicating a chapter to each. The method used in this point-by-point comparative analysis is to approach the issues of sense of belonging and identity in a colonial context with a close reading of the two works, to find out what the texts say for themselves regarding the effect of family and society, environment, and race as depicted in *The Grass Is Singing* and *My Place*. The theoretical background that is most relevant to this study is post-colonial literary theory, although here it is taken as secondary to the close reading that is the thesis's primary approach to these works.

Keywords: Doris Lessing *The Grass Is Singing*, Sally Morgan *My Place*, Colonial and Post-colonial Literature

ÖZ

THE GRASS IS SINGING VE *MY PLACE'*DE SÖMÜRGECİNİN VE SÖMÜRGELEŞTİRİLENİN KİMLİĞİNİN BİR PARÇASI OLARAK AİTLİK DUYGUSUNUN KIYASLAMALI BİR ANALİZİ

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Bu tez iki otobiyografik sayılabilecek eserdeki ana karakterlerin kimlik ve aitlik duyguları üzerinde kolonileşmenin etkilerini inceler. İkinci kuşak kolonici olan Doris Lessing'in yazdığı *The Grass Is Singing* ve üçüncü kuşak hybrid bir Avusturalya Aborijini olan Sally Morgan'ın yazdığı *My Place* seçilmiştir çünkü her iki eser de kolonileşmeyle ilgili sorunları ele alarak ana karakterleri bir olgunlaşma süreci içinde, kolonileşme dönemi ve kolonileşme sonrası bağlamlarında gözler önüne sererken ilk eser yarı-otobiyografik bir anlatım kullanır ve ikincisi ise sözlü edebiyatla öykü anlatımını bütünleştirerek otobiyografinin Aborijin bir versiyonunu kullanır. Eserler kimlik ve aitlik duygularının yakından ilişkili olduğunu ve her ikisinin de koloni durumundan temelden etkilendiğini gösterir. Bireyin ölümüne veya hayatta kalmasına yol açabilecek kimlik ve aitlik duygularının etkileri aile ve toplum, fiziksel çevre ve ırk meseleleriyle etkileşim içindedir ki, bu tezde bu etmenlerin her birine bir bölüm ayrılmıştır. Bu tezde, eserlerin neyi ortaya koyduğunu ve aile ve toplum, çevre ve ırkın *The Grass Is Singing* ve *My Place*'de yansıtıldığı biçimdeki etkilerini görebilmek için eserler detaylı okunarak kolonileşme durumunda aitlik duygusu ve kimlik konusuna yaklaşım olarak etmen bazında kıyaslamalı bir analiz metodu kullanılmıştır. Bu çalışmaya en uygun teorik altyapı kolonileşme sonrası edebiyat teorisidir, ancak bu teori burada tezin birincil yaklaşımı olan detaylı okuma yaklaşımına oranla ikincil bir öneme sahiptir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Doris Lessing *The Grass Is Singing*, Sally Morgan *My Place*, Kolonileşme Dönemi Edebiyatı ve Kolonileşme Sonrası Edebiyat

To my family and loved ones

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Post-colonialism, which "deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies" (Ashcroft et al. 2000:186), has become a popular issue first in literature and later, through literature, in the fields of international relations and sociology (Chowdhry and Nair 1-2). In order to gain an insight into the effects of colonialism on the colonizing and colonized cultures, studying literature becomes important as one of the most enlightening methods because literature is essentially focused on the human condition. Literary texts function as effective tools to represent the different standpoints of different cultures in a colonial context. In other words, literature can become a medium through which the subaltern, which refers to "those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes" (Ashcroft et al. 2000:215), asserts itself by means of the "complicity between violence and discourse" (Spivak 36).

In order to analyze literary works produced in colonial and post-colonial contexts, key concepts appearing in post-colonial literary criticism should be remembered. To add to the brief definition of subaltern given above, it can be said that subaltern is used for people "of inferior rank", for the ones who are "peasants, workers and other groups denied hegemonic power" (Ashcroft et al. 2000:215). Essentialism refers to the categorization of a group in terms of "one or several defining features exclusive to all members" of a specific group, category or classes of objects whereas in studies of culture, it is the "assumption that individuals share an essential cultural identity" (77).

Mimicry, which is "never far from mockery since it appears to parody whatever it mimics[,]" describes the colonized individual's behaviour of "adopting the colonizer's cultural habits, assumptions, institutions and values," but the outcome of this process is "never a simple reproduction of those traits" (139). The result of this is a "blurred copy" of the colonizer "which can be very threatening" from the point of view of the colonizer

because such a person might be perceived as a "crack in the certainty of the colonial dominance" (139). Hybridity refers to "the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization" (118). This term is mostly associated with Bhabha's analysis of the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, "which stresses their interdependence and mutual construction of their subjectivities" (118). According to Bhabha, "all cultural statements and systems are constructed" in a space which he calls "the Third Space of enunciation, which makes the structure of meaning and reference an ambivalent process" (Bhabha 1994:37). Once it is understood that cultural identity always emerges in this "contradictory and ambivalent space of enunciation," it becomes clear that "inherent originality or 'purity' of cultures are untenable" (37).

Ambivalence, as it is adapted to colonial discourse theory by Bhabha, refers to "the complex mix of attraction and repulsion that characterizes the relationship between colonizer and colonized" (Ashcroft et al. 2000:12). The ambivalence in the relationship results from the fact that the colonized subject is "never simply and completely opposed to the colonizer" (12). Therefore, it should not be assumed that "some colonized subjects are 'complicit' and some 'resistant'," but instead, as ambivalence suggests, it should be recognized that "complicity and resistance exist in a fluctuating relation within the colonial subject" (12-13). This term is also used to refer to the "way in which colonial discourse relates to the colonized subject" because it may be "both exploitative and nurturing, or represent itself as nurturing, at the same time" (13). According to Bhabha's theory, on the other hand, ambivalence is "an unwelcome aspect of colonial discourse for the colonizer" because it "disrupts the clear-cut authority of colonial domination" by means of disturbing "the simple relationship between colonizer and colonized" (13). Therefore, the ambivalent nature of the colonial relationship "generates the seeds of its own destruction[,]" which means that this relationship "is going to be disrupted regardless of any resistance or rebellion on the side of the colonizer" (13). Ambivalence is closely related to hybridity because, "just as ambivalence 'decentres' authority from

its position of power, so that authority may also become hybridized" when placed in a colonial and multicultural context (14).

Post-colonial literature further narrows down the focus on the individual and the human condition observed in colonial and post-colonial environments with respect to issues of identity and sense of belonging. There are various definitions of identity depending on how and in what context identity is formed, assumed by the individual, and perceived by the owner and the society. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that what is needed is not the definition of identity but of identities.

Identities are conceived "as social constructs – culturally and interactionally defined meanings and expectations – and as aspects of self-processes and structures that represent who or what a person or set of persons is believed to be" (Vryan 2007)[1]. There are three types to focus on. The first is social identity or role identity which "defines a person or set of persons in terms of the meanings and expectations associated with a socially constructed group or category of people, and locates a person within socially structured sets of relations". This type is mostly related to "sex/gender, family, race and ethnicity, nationality, religion, occupation, sexuality, age, and voluntary subcultural memberships", so it is possible for an individual to "possess many social identities, but those identities will vary in their importance, centrality, or salience within different contexts, in turn affecting behavior differentially". The second type is situational identity, which is "specific to a given type of social situation", and "participants must define the situation and the other participants in order to determine their own courses of action and to know how to interpret others' talk and other behaviours". Finally, a personal identity is "a set of meanings and expectations specific to a given individual". It makes the individual "unique", and it is related to "a personal name, a body and appearance (e.g., a clothing style), a biography and personal history (e.g., within a particular family network), a unique constellation of social identities, and a set of personality characteristics and traits". Due to the fact that all of these identities

[1] Web resources that do not contain page numbers will be cited as author surname and year of publication.

affect "self-conceptions and other intrapsychic structures and processes of the person believed to embody the identity as well as their actions, and affect how others will interpret, feel, and act in relation to the identified individual", they are significant in colonial and post-colonial studies in the contemporary world "characterized by geographic and cultural mobility, rapid social changes in social roles and the meanings and expectations attached to identities, and personal and cultural 'identity crises'". However, Vryan points out that "emphases on multiracial identity" have been made only recently (2007).

Vryan also draws attention to two important factors in his explanation of identity, key to "understanding motivation and hence behaviour": "the interactionist emphasis" and "self-narratives". Interactionists emphasize that "people's actions and interpretive activities both constitute society and are shaped by it in an iterative process"; therefore, "identities are seen as constituted by and within particular cultures and social situations that specify certain meanings, expectations, rights, and constraints for those who are seen to possess them, and also as actively created and managed by people". The second factor arises from the interactionist emphasis suggesting creating and managing identity. Vryan notes that Strauss[2] (Strauss 1995 quoted in Vryan 2007), an interactionist sociologist, "linked identity with self-narratives":

> We construct and reconstruct our various selves and identities by naming them, thus assigning meanings to them. Linking social structure to identity transformations, Strauss discussed "turning points" as signals to institutionalized identity transformations, such as those experienced when getting married, graduating school, or becoming a parent. As socially structured realities change, so do the identities of the people embedded within them. And as identities change, so do social structures (Vryan 2007).

[2] Strauss, A. L. (1995) Identity, Biography, History, and Symbolic Representations. *Social Psychology Quarterly* (58) 4–12.

These factors are extremely important for the analysis of the literary works chosen for this thesis because *The Grass Is Singing*, a semi-autobiographical novel, is a partial "self-narrative" and in *My Place*, the writer, the narrator and the protagonist are the same person, making it, also, a "self-narrative". To elaborate on the issue of "self-narratives", Vryan touches upon "self-verification theories that posit that people will select interactions and relationships that confirm their self-identifications regardless of what the identity is" (2007). In view of the definition above, "self-narratives" can be seen as a tool for "self-verification". In other words, by means of "self-narratives" the individual verifies the identities of his/her own choosing.

This situation can be conceived as identical with what Wasson mentions as "identity claiming", in which "an individual seeks to portray herself or himself as a certain kind of person, which portrayal may or may not be met with agreement from others". By contrast, "altercasting" takes place when "another or others attempt to impute an identity to an individual, which the individual may or may not embrace", which results in an imposed identity (Wasson 2007).

On the other hand, identity can also be understood in different terms as self/other, civilized/native, us/them binaries. In colonial contexts, "identity is based on a distinction of the self from what is believed to be not self" (Boehmer 76). To put it more clearly, "all post-colonial societies realize their identity in difference rather than in essence" (Ashcroft et al. 1989:167).

As for the definition of sense of belonging, according to Hagerty and associates, it is "a unique element of interpersonal relatedness" defined as "the experience of personal involvement in a system or environment so that persons feel themselves to be an integral part of that system or environment" (Hagerty et al. 794). These researchers determined two important components of sense of belonging: "(a) valued involvement or the experience of being valued and needed, and (b) fit, the person's perception that his or her characteristics articulate with or complement the system or environment" (794). It is also emphasized that sense of belonging has implications for "psychological, social,

spiritual, or physical involvement; attribution of meaningfulness; and the establishment of a foundation for emotional and behavioural responses" (794). Moreover, research reveals that certain experiences in early stages of development have a significant effect on a "lower" sense of belonging. Some of these factors are divorce, financial problems, incest, homosexuality, childhood sexual abuse, perception of parental caring and overprotection (798-799).

In addition to these views, it can be added that sense of belonging also has various types. An individual's sense of belonging can have criteria such as belonging to a racial, social or cultural group, belonging to the land and environment, and even belonging to an imposed identity, which might raise issues such as accepting the attributes imposed by others (especially considering the othering processes and colonial discourse), or rejecting the attributes and constructing an identity which the individual will feel more comfortable with. These issues are especially relevant to post-colonial literature which mostly deals with the human condition, identity and sense of belonging in colonial or post-colonial contexts. In fact, all of these factors are significant in the character analyses for *The Grass Is Singing* and *My Place* because these books bear elements of the Buildungsroman, giving details about the formative years of the protagonists, and both of the works are largely influenced by colonialism.

In view of the definitions above, it can be concluded that identity and sense of belonging are integral parts of an individual's positioning in relation to social constructs and his/her perception of who he/she is. It can also be added that identity and sense of belonging are interrelated, nurturing and reinforcing one another. These terms undeniably gain significance in colonial and post-colonial contexts, where the individual is exposed to a multi-cultural society that has limitations and fault lines. Therefore, studying literary texts to understand the human condition, especially the interactions between the dominant culture, the individual, and senses of belonging and identity, paves the path for a better understanding of how the colonizer and the colonized are affected by the impending contradiction that arises from the colonial situation.

Post-colonial theory has been shaped by the works of critics such as Fanon, Said, Spivak and Bhabha, who based their theories on the works of Derrida, Lacan and Foucault. In his mainly "psychoanalytical interpretation" of the black/white binary, Fanon establishes certain mandates or a set of axioms such as "the black man wants to be white", "the white man slaves to reach a human level", "the white man is sealed in his whiteness", "the black man in his blackness"; he also establishes two facts: "white men consider themselves superior to black men" and "black men want to prove to the white man, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect" (Fanon 3). By basing his analysis on these presumptions, he reveals his belief that "to a greater or lesser extent black people had internalized the racism of those who ran the society, and either accepted an inferior status or felt the necessity to prove themselves fully human and equal – but in the white man's terms" (Innes 6). Innes explains that Fanon's later work in the field of colonial relations focused on the psychology of the colonizer, which establishes that the colonized "classify the world of the 'native' as the opposite of everything the European supposedly represents: civilization, morality, cleanliness, law and order, wholesome masculinity" (8). This assertion depicts Fanon as the pioneer of the terms self, other and othering. Moreover, he discusses issues such as stereotyping, cross-racial sexuality, alienation, cultural imposition, inferiority and dependency complexes, overcompensation, resistance and language.

Said, on the other hand, is more conscious of how the western colonizer perceives the eastern colonized, and his "concern is the relationship between textual representations and social practice" (Griffiths 164). Basing his argument on "Michel Foucault's notion of a discourse", Said defines Orientalism/colonialism as "the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient [the colonized]" (Said 3). The methods used to do this are "making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, […] teaching it, settling it, [and] ruling over it", which are all achieved by the deployment of discourse (3). Said also reveals how "European culture gained in […] identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground itself" (3). Thus, he further explains the means of producing an identity through the other. According to

Boehmer, he does this in terms developed by Hegel and Sartre by identifying the west as an entity that "conceived of its superiority relative to the perceived lack of power, self-consciousness, or ability to think and rule, of colonized peoples" (Boehmer 21). In other words, due to the assumed and reinforced superiority of the colonizer, "the colonized could be literally moulded into whatever best served the economic and political purposes of the colonizer" (Griffiths 165). Nevertheless, his terminology immobilizes colonialism in the east and does not put enough emphasis on "economic and political contexts" (Innes 9).

At this point, Spivak comes into play to complement the shortcomings of Said's theory. Innes admits that Spivak "has taken on the difficult task of bringing Marxist, deconstructionist and feminist theory" in her analysis of subaltern studies (Innes 11). In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", she investigates the representation problem of the oppressed people by explaining that the subaltern historians' "text articulates the difficult task of rewriting its own conditions of impossibility as the conditions of possibility" due to the fact that "the object of the group's investigation […] is a *deviation* from an *ideal* – the people or the subaltern – which is itself defined as a difference from the elite" (Spivak 27). This can be clarified by saying that the subaltern that defines itself in oppositional terms regarding its position against the colonizer is distanced from its origins "because of the violence of imperialist epistemic, social, and disciplinary inscription" (27). Slemon underlines the importance of "the project of understanding the colonized peoples as genuinely historical subjects, as subjects of their own histories, and not as passive figures in the burgeoning history of others" (Slemon 192). Nonetheless, Spivak concludes that the subaltern "cannot speak, [and that] the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow [as she is doubly oppressed: by the colonizers and the colonized male]" (Spivak 28). This implies that "the silencing of the subaltern woman extends to the whole of the colonial world, and to the silencing and muting of all natives male or female" (Ashcroft et al. 1989:177-178).

This is exactly what Bhabha does not agree with. According to Innes, "by drawing on psychoanalytical theory with particular reference to Sigmund Freud and Lacan, Bhabha has elaborated the key concepts of mimicry and hybridity" (Innes 12). Bhabha establishes that the subaltern or hybrid colonized can speak by identifying the ambivalences in the colonial discourse to use them as "strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power" (Bhabha 1994:112). He observes that hybridity – as well as mimicry and parody – is unsettling for the colonizer because "it displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination" (112). As discrimination and domination are the premises of colonialism, their erosion could let the colonized realize that it is equal to the colonizer. Thus, Bhabha sees hybridity, mimicry and parody positively, for they are key to salvation from the impositions of the colonial discourse.

In spite of these critics' fundamental contributions to post-colonial literary theory, they have been subject to criticism, and not necessarily unfairly. Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin summarize Parry's objection to privileging discourse "as the primary form of social praxis"; she "questions whether or not the models which stress the inescapability of the discourse […] are not in fact only a sophisticated mask over the face of a continued, neo-colonial domination" (Ashcroft et al. 1989:178). Similarly, Aijaz Ahmad is "fiercely critical of poststructuralism and the abstractions which he sees as a feature of much postcolonial theory, especially the theories elaborated by Bhabha and Spivak" (Innes 12). Parry and Ahmad share "a commitment to Marxism" as a remedy against colonization (Innes 12).

Doris Lessing's first novel, *The Grass Is Singing* is a semi-autobiographical work set in Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. The white South African protagonist, Mary is in her thirties and alone in life "when a time of life-threatening crisis emerges", which is her friends' expectations that she will marry (Roberts 73). Lessing criticizes colonialism, apartheid and all the institutions (including the nuclear family and imperialistic state) through which colonial preconceptions manifest themselves, by depicting the patriarchal

and oppressive white society along with its destructive impact on Mary, a middle class woman. Mary develops a schizophrenic state of mind in her husband's farmhouse as a result of a complex interplay of various factors, which are mainly the formative and normative pressure from the white colonial society, a bruised childhood, an underdeveloped sense of femininity, loneliness, alienation, fear, harsh weather and physical conditions, an unhappy marriage embarked on due to desperation, and the clash between the desire for natural human contact and imposed racist ideas. "Mary's perceived powerlessness within patriarchy, and within the rigid patriarchal norms of colonialism, is of course exacerbated by her worsening ill-health" (78); thus driven helpless and unbalanced, she "venture[s] onto sites of the colonial forbidden and taboo" by coming to rely more and more on her black male house servant Moses, who finally kills her (73).With an emphasis on racial issues, Peter Ackroyd explains that the novel is

> an account of cultures which are so mutually uncomprehending that they can only be reconciled in fire and destruction, it is also an account of the personal and sexual relations which provide the tinder for that fire. Dick [Mary's husband] and Mary live in disharmony, subject to pressures which they scarcely acknowledge. They may be surrounded by a native life which they do not understand, but they have nothing of their own to put in its place. From second generation English stock, the nearest they come to their own native culture are pictures from glossy magazines stuck upon the walls, their own aspirations reduced to a half-distrustful, half-patronising attitude to the blacks who work for them. They have no roots: Mary is sexually repressed, just as Dick's attempts to fertilise the bleak landscape are doomed to failure (Ackroyd 28).

Such an ending, the black servant murdering the white mistress, "seems" to be "a fairly straightforward confirmation of colonial wisdom" asserting that any breach of apartheid will be destructive, so colonial preconceptions exist for a good reason (Bertelsen 1991:656). However, without careful reading and a critical distance, the easily attainable observations or conclusions prove to be wrong in this novel. This is because of Lessing's narrative technique and discreetness in the style that she uses when giving messages. In

fact, Lessing admits in an interview that what struck her in her childhood when she heard about a white woman "and her relations with a cook-boy and the unease of the white people discussing it" was that "no one would tell the truth about it, nor bring it out in the open"; all the white community did was to make "ambiguous and wrapped up" comments (Thorpe 99). Therefore, Lessing thinks that "the unsaid thing" in her colonial environment "is always interesting" (Bertelsen 1994:132). Taking root in this personal experience in colonized Africa, her purposefully indirect rather than straightforward manner in criticising colonialism reflects the accepted Victorian norms and manners of the white colonizer society. In so-doing, she is actually mimicking the Victorian and imperialistic Britishness, which underscores the irony and makes Lessing's criticism of society and colonialism unique and sophisticated, as "she is adept at exploring different ways of communicating" (Maslen 1996:122).

The narrative technique deployed in the novel is especially significant. Lessing avoids openly criticizing the characters and attitudes, but generally uses strong juxtapositions and insinuations that reveal a dry and striking irony laid bare for the careful reader. The novel is not about an innocent, sick white woman being murdered by a vindictive, evil and savage native looking for an opportunity to take revenge, but "because the narrative voice […] is directed from Mary's cognition, her confused sense of Moses as a menace becomes the reader's" (Roberts 79). In fact, the novel is mainly about how colonial society traps its shareholders in a state of existence that is characterized by insecurity, paranoia, fear, defence and ignorance. Moreover, any divergence from such a state of existence is harshly penalized by the invisible hand of colonial discourse working on both sides, black and white. Katherine Fishburn explains with her own emphases that Moses' "complete reversion [from caring and humane houseboy] to native 'type' is affirmed when he 'acts out' the role assigned to him [which is being wild, violent and savage], thus reinstating the absolute power of the colonizers' 'imaginary' discourse"; therefore, the reader is "struck by the efficiency of this [colonial] discourse, as the very act by which Moses asserts his dignity and his sense of self-worth functions to reinscribe him as archetypal native (savage/Other)" (Fishburn 11).

Lessing does not enter the minds of her characters except for Mary's. In other words, Lessing's narrative focalizes both on and through Mary, from the beginning almost up to the end, even when she has totally lost her sanity and is tormented with fear and paranoia. Thus, the narrator traps the reader within Mary's perception of reality and limits the reader's opinion of other characters and events to Mary's projections. This, indeed, is such an effective technique that Mary's pessimism, despair and helplessness are left with the reader even after the last page has been turned. Mary, who "has never taken the trouble to interrogate South African racism" (Roberts 74), is unable to "understand the cultural underpinnings of the rural communities" (73) and the effect of their colonial ideals on individuals like herself, so she becomes a tragic protagonist that Lessing sacrifices to give the message that "Mary and her apartheid society must pass away so that the new African order may be established" (Sarvan 537).

Therefore, the novel makes a political point. In fact, Lessing, as a member of the white colonizing society, reinforced the political message (that Africa should be left to its own devices) she gave in her first novel by leaving Zimbabwe and moving to Britain later in her life. As a writer who is aware of the strength of colonial discourse, Lessing preferred not to be a part of colonial ambitions and discourse, but to reveal and criticise the strength of colonial discourse by making Moses kill Mary. On the whole, colonialism is presented as destructive, for it victimizes not only the poor whites like Mary and Dick, but also the natives like Moses. Moreover, whether they be black or white, only the individuals who are dehumanized by colonial practices such as the ambitious farmer Charlie Slatter and the natives who are whipped, degraded and impoverished can survive in a colonial environment.

Sally Morgan's *My Place* is an autobiographical work in which the protagonist Sally, a half-caste Aboriginal woman, explores her lost family background and ties. She starts a spiritual journey to her past in order to find out who she is and where she belongs to. The writer embraces her newly-found heritage thanks to strong family ties and a

welcoming Aboriginal society despite the prejudiced, racist and pitying attitude of the white Australian colonizers. The autobiography itself serves as a means of finding out and learning more about her Aboriginal heritage because "Sally Morgan believes in the importance of knowing one's background in order to gain a fulfilling sense of identity" (De Groen 33). By choosing autobiography as the genre through which the writer's links with the past will be established, the writer complements her aim in writing the book with a very revealing and personal genre. Thus, Morgan has very cleverly drawn the reader to her side by limiting the narrative perspective only to her own subjective point of view. The element of tragedy experienced by the colonized individuals touches the narrative at certain points, which leaves the reader no choice but to identify with the characters in the book, breaching the critical distance. In fact, this is a major factor that makes the book very popular. That there is ongoing debate among critics about whether Morgan's book is a novel, an autobiography, or "life writing" (a term borrowed from Aileen Moreton-Robinson (1)), is possibly connected to the difficulty in establishing exactly how and where this critical distance is overcome in the book.

Thus, the first issue to deal with is the genre Morgan has used in order to define herself by establishing connections with other Aboriginals, regardless of time and space. Moreton-Robinson uses the term "life writing" because Aboriginal autobiography does not "fit the usual strict chronological narrative of autobiography", and because such a work is "the product of collaborative lives" (1). The structure of Morgan's book, which begins with one person's life story and incorporates the stories of immediate family members and others, involving more and more Aboriginal people like an expanding web, is also a representation of Morgan's actively establishing links between her own identity and those of other Aboriginal people. The genre that Morgan uses is an amalgamation of Western autobiography with its first person narrative and Aboriginal oral tradition based on story-telling, a major tool for passing down the culture to the next generation. Moreton-Robinson confirms this assertion by noting that "in these life writings experience is fundamentally social and relational" and that they "are based on collective memories of inter-generational relationships between predominantly

Indigenous women, extended families and communities" (1). Newman also sees "one's interdependence with others" as a "characteristic of Aboriginal autobiography in which the idea of joint ownership of a narrative is a more common understanding than ideas of single, originating authorship" (Newman 71). The emphasis on interdependence distinguishes Aboriginal autobiography from "Western European" autobiography, which is mostly written by males and from an individualistic point of view (68). On the other hand, according to Newman, autobiography promotes a sense of identity and selfhood, which "assumes an autonomous selfhood largely independent of others, whereas racial identity suggests a definition of selfhood which is tied to a larger group, a community or a nation" (68). Thus benefitting from the advantages of both genres, Morgan has actually appropriated a hybrid literary genre, through which she reinscribes an identity and sense of belonging that are dynamically maintained as the book finds audience. Moreton-Robinson elaborates on interdependence and relationality, both of which become tools for connecting with Aboriginality in Morgan's book.

> In each of the life writings all the Indigenous people are related by descent, country, place or shared experiences. Such relationality means that in their relationships with other Indigenous women, men and children they are inclusive rather than exclusive. That is, personal and intimate relations are extended beyond immediate kin and the boundaries between Indigenous women and other Indigenous people are negotiated on this basis. In Indigenous cultural domains relationality means that one experiences the self as part of others and that others are part of the self; this is learnt through reciprocity, obligation, shared experiences, coexistence, cooperation and social memory (Moreton-Robinson 16).

Therefore, autobiography serves the purpose of Sally Morgan in achieving selfhood and identity in both senses: individual and social. What is interesting here is that she does this on her own terms. That is to say, the identity and sense of belonging that she has desired since her awakening are made real not only through her investigation into the past, but also by writing a book about this experience. This is an open-ended process that

involves creating an identity and sense of belonging, and then confirming and enhancing their stability by materializing the process, by putting it into writing in a very personal and subjective genre. This assertion is substantiated in the following paragraphs.

The majority of critics agree that Morgan's book is an Aboriginal autobiography or life writing, but definitely not a novel. However, another important issue is raised: being an autobiography, Morgan's book is very subjective, although it is also a political book and act in Morgan's case; its self-presentation as a form of life writing provides privilege or immunity for the autobiographer, or at least a shield behind which the writer's political intent can be hidden. Like many other critics, Moreton-Robinson clearly states that "self-presentation by Indigenous women is a political act" (3). Broun agrees by indicating that "in delivering a blackened history which presents the injustices committed against Aboriginal people, *My Place* is a deeply political work" (Broun 26). Moreover, Brewster explains the reason why Morgan's is a political book by noting to its links with the oral tradition.

> Given that many Aboriginal women's autobiographical narratives are oral, it is necessary to examine the enunciative conditions of these texts; in the telling of Aboriginal life stories, the decision as to who tells what to whom is always a considered and inevitably a political choice. The discursive inscription of identity in Aboriginal women's narratives is thus politically strategic (Brewster 37).

De Groen, on the other hand, explains the how and why of the political assertion of Sally Morgan in writing the book and the general impact the book has on the reader.

> We are forced to confront the suffering and redemption of the Aboriginal characters from their own point of view. For those of us who are not Aboriginal this is an ambivalent experience. As human beings we identify with Arthur, Gladys and Daisy and feel the injustice and cruelty of their suffering. But at the same time we realise that through our history we are implicated in the root cause of

> that suffering: the imposition of our white civilisation on their land and culture. We stand accused and come to see Australian history, and hence contemporary Australian society, in a more critical way. *My Place* may not demand land rights in a noisy and vehement way. Nevertheless, through the critique of white injustice and inhumanity implicit in the life stories of its central characters, it forces white readers to see the vital importance of making reparations to heal the wounds of the past (De Groen 34).

In spite of all these assertions that identify *My Place* as a political act, Mudrooroo Narogin, an Aboriginal male critic, "argues that Indigenous women's life writings are not 'political' because the white editing of these texts makes their message one of understanding and tolerance" (Narogin 1990:162-163 quoted in Moreton-Robinson 2).

Because of the close relationship between the book's political and personal elements, the immunity of the autobiographer against criticism occurs. Newman explains that "Michaels has commented on the political difficulties reading the text as 'fact' presents, for any criticism of the text is likely to be interpreted as a criticism of people 'rather than [of] the constructed and interpreted characters which we know populate such narratives' (44)." (Newman 73). By employing the technique of making her relatives tell their stories in the first person, Morgan achieves immunity against criticism both for herself and for her elders. Indeed, this is the reason why Michaels criticizes Morgan (Brewster 36). The debate around this topic goes as far as questioning how original or authentic an Aboriginal Sally Morgan the writer, narrator and protagonist is, and what Aboriginality the critics should be basing their arguments on.

To begin with the immunity of the autobiographer issue, Trees recognizes the power of the autobiographer "to choose and affirm the reality that is of central concern; for Morgan this is the search for an Aboriginal identity that has been denied her" (Trees 57). This is to imply that Morgan's subjectivity in writing an autobiography equips her with the power to lie or distort the truth, or that her failing memory may prevent her from remembering and reconstructing the past truthfully. The flexibility that the genre

provides enables the writer to re-write the past and appropriate an identity with the qualities of her own choosing. Anne Brewster further explains this by quoting Eric Michaels, a critic of Morgan's work.

> Michaels complains that Morgan positions her text in such a way that 'no authority may supersede the autobiographical expert': she 'constructs criteria for evidence, history and truth which are self-referential' (Michaels, 1988: 44, 45). It is because of their privileged status as the racially oppressed, he continues, that Aboriginal writers do not have to submit to conventional standards of literary judgement, but instead are invested with a kind of hallowed sanctity, motivated by the pious belief that 'Aboriginals do not forget, do not lie, do not selectively interpret their memories, and so their stories are true' (ibid.:44). (Brewster 36).

What makes autobiography different from dry history, which is written by the dominant and oppressive authority, is that it can be the genre of the oppressed or "the battler genre" as Narogin[3] calls it, because it makes room for personal accounts and emotions (Narogin 149 quoted in Broun 24 and De Groen 36).

> Despite the privileged place of white, male, authority figures in [Western] autobiography, the historical, factual dimension of autobiography has caused it to be interpreted as 'the genre of the oppressed', the best medium by which personal testimony to injustice may be made (Marcus[4] 116 quoted in Newman 69).

[3] Narogin, Mudrooroo. *Writing from the Fringe: A Study of Modern Aboriginal Literature*. Sth Melbourne: Hyland House, 1990.

[4] Marcus, Jane. "Invisible Mediocrity: The Private Selves of Public Woman." *The Private Self: Theory and Practice of Woman's Autobiographical Writings*. Ed. Shari Benstock. London: Routledge, 1988. 114-146

Therefore, "autobiography as a genre would appear to have a special significance for minority people" (32) because of its "confessional discourse" (Muecke[5] 410 quoted in Brewster 30). The confessional, personal, and thus subjective nature of the genre makes it possible for Sally Morgan to create a political identity through her book. These qualities of autobiography also make the text draw empathy from and arouse sympathy in the reader, which renders the text popular yet uncriticizable for the masses. For literary critics, on the other hand, *My Place* is a highly manipulative text as the fictional identity created is incontrovertible due to the very nature of the genre.

It is true that autobiography makes room for human qualities and shortcomings such as selectively interpreting one's memories and repressing the unpleasant ones. In such a case, what the critics should ask is why the writer is doing this or keeping the reader in the dark in relation to certain aspects of her story. To put it more clearly, an investigation of what the writer cannot tell or why she cannot tell everything would be much more revealing of the human condition that is being put forward. Sally Morgan articulates not only the atrocities of the white Australian government, but also unpleasant yet private matters, such as the case of the family friend who tried to sexually harass her (Morgan 100), and carrying on, together with the reader, an investigation that would reveal hints that suggest her grandmother's having been raped by her own father for years (201, 417& 419). Yet, on the whole, what is put forward and kept as secret in the book serve to attract more readers to identify with the writer to actively participate in her appropriation of an identity and sense of belonging by means of writing in the hybrid genre, Aboriginal autobiography or life-writing, which Morgan uses.

Some critics like Muecke, who bases his arguments on dichotomies (Brewster 33), juxtapose the outspoken attitude of Morgan that is represented by an individualistic and hybrid genre with her grandmother's discreet attitude, represented by an oral tradition which focuses more on society. Such an approach comes to question the authenticity of

[5] Muecke, Stephen. "Aboriginal Literature and the Repressive Hypothesis." *Southerly: A Review of Australian Literature* 48(4) (1988): 405-418.

Morgan's Aboriginality as mentioned before. Brewster explains this as follows: "The implication here is that in speaking – in constructing her own and her families' [*sic*] life stories – Morgan is complicitous with white institutions, and thus represents a contaminated or 'inauthentic' Aboriginality" (33). However, such criticism positions "Morgan as an Aboriginal writer who, in the face of 'traditional Aboriginality', is revealed to be at best a failure in her pale imitation of Aboriginality or, at worst, an imposter or a traitor" (34). Although this is obviously a very essentialist point of view, at this point, how Aboriginality is defined becomes a major determiner in the investigation of Morgan's attainment of a sense of belonging and identity in writing *My Place*. Does her working class fight for survival overshadow Morgan's racial identity? Do middle class interests, values and education disqualify Morgan as an Aboriginal writer?

To answer these questions, Pettman refers to the classification developed by Keeffe: "Aboriginality-as-persistence and Aboriginality-as-resistance" (Pettman 109). The former "speaks of a unique identity, a fixed body of cultural knowledge which is genetically transmitted, stretching back over tens of thousands of years to secure a continuity of culture", and it is an essentialist approach to Aboriginality (109). This can be exemplified, to some extent, with Sally Morgan's grandmother Daisy, and her predecessors, who were pre-colonial inhabitants of Australia. Sally confesses in the book that she does not know what Aboriginality-as-persistence is because she has never lived as "a hunter and gatherer", "never participated in corroborees", gone walkabout or "heard stories of Dreamtime" (Morgan 178). Pettman's diagnosis of what it is like for people who try to rediscover what it means to be an Aboriginal is striking: "in these circumstances some Aboriginal people can be made to feel inadequate, somehow less than Aboriginal, because of their unfamiliarity with traditional culture" (Pettman 110). In the case of Morgan and others like her, who constitute the hybrid generations, culture gains a different meaning as it is "reclaimed and relearned [and sometimes idolised as a symbol of decolonization] as part of oppositional politics and the politics of identity" (110). Morgan's writing *My Place* is therefore a political act as mentioned earlier.

However, Michaels disregards the political choices Morgan makes in constructing the book and the identity she creates through the book, and criticizes Morgan for making her own white father seem like "an outsider" and thus for leaving out "the place of European ancestors", whereas both Gladys and Sally "married more respectful whitefellas" (Michaels 168), meaning that they maintained hybridity in the following generations. Michaels wishes that "the duality of cultural heritage and its consequences had been more frankly described" (168). In an interview, the writer admits that she "couldn't see any point putting in more personal details unless they reflected directly on what I [Morgan] was trying to examine" (Bird & Haskell 5). In other words, Morgan had a purpose in writing the book and she might have left out some events that did not suit her purposes. Indeed, her decision to base her story and background on her Aboriginal roots is such a conspicuous claim of racial identity as an Aboriginal woman that she sees her white background as expendable, which could be due to the racist and upper class attitudes of the white Australians or because she wants to reconcile with her Aboriginal side only; this issue will be dealt with in the last chapter. In any case, Morgan's construction of identity involved her "in a search for her Aboriginal heritage − a colonial heritage of dislocation, deculturation and violence", and she moves from "personal history to a reconstruction of the history of Aboriginal people" (Trees 57). Another approach would be that of Brewster's because she supports the view of "an American group investigating women's life histories, the Personal Narratives Group" that suggests the factuality of the text be determined by "the truth of our experiences" (Personal Narratives Group, 1989: 261 quoted in Brewster 36-37). That is the reason why we should "read Aboriginal women's life-histories not just as autobiography in the literary sense, but as evidence of knowledges shaped by gender and race" with all their implications (73).

The third issue that is debated by critics is whether Morgan betrays Aboriginality by preferring autobiography, an essentially European medium, over the oral tradition of Aboriginals, and whether Morgan's compliance with urban working class renders her a fake Aboriginal. Morgan incorporates the stories of her great uncle Arthur, her mother

Gladys and her grandmother Daisy, and this has another function, which is to verify or disprove what one (his)story-teller says, so the truthfulness of each story is ensured by the presence of other stories. In doing so, Morgan also negotiates "the genres of (Aboriginal) oral history and European autobiography" (Trees 59). Therefore, "the issue of the positioning of Aboriginal literature within white discourse" has been raised by many critics (Brewster 50). On the other hand, it should be kept in mind that the stories of Arthur, Gladys and Daisy are not presented in the form of interviews, so they reflect a vital tool for reaching out to and maintaining Aboriginal culture by means of oral tradition, which is the only way of passing down the culture in Aboriginal society "because Aborigines were traditionally non-literate" (Berndt[6], 1985:93 quoted in Brewster 51). Moreover, Newman completes the criticism of Michaels by pointing out that the Aboriginal women "are not locked in a time warp, unaffected by the culture they live in" (Newman 72), so they are also affected by "European influences" (Michaels 46), which can be seen "in the use of English, in systems of belief, in its narrative form" (Newman 72). Newman points out that it is interesting that Michaels, addressing Morgan's hybridity, does not approve of Morgan's ignoring "the problematics of claiming a distinctive Aboriginal identity within the language and modes of European culture", nor does he approve of her "lack of acknowledgement of the cultural influences of her white ancestry" (72). What Michaels disregards here is that both of these attitudes that he condemns are due to the colonial situation, including the fact that Aboriginals were prevented from using their native language by government authorities and that Morgan has a white father about whom she gives relatively little information, partly because he died young. The other reason which is indirectly related to colonization is that Morgan is trying "to redress the violence already done to Aboriginal people by white definitions of Aboriginality [which are invented in the post-colonial othering processes], to find a position, a place, from which they may speak and write their experience of being" (72). This is very much in line with the approach of verbalising the experience of the Personal Narratives Group mentioned earlier, but with a small

[6] Berndt, C. "Traditional Aboriginal Oral Literature." *Aboriginal Writing Today*. (Ed. J. Davis and B. Hodge) Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies, 1985. 91-103.

difference which is that Morgan is creating a fictional identity through the confessional discourse she chooses to write in. This fictional identity cannot be harmed by reading but only get stronger as more readers identify with the sufferings of Sally Morgan and her family. Thus, Morgan turns to the Aboriginal side in her as an anchor in her search for an identity and a sense of belonging.

This thesis, then, presents a study of how these two different works both show their protagonists' senses of identity and belonging (as defined above) to be deeply, if not entirely, affected by the colonial situations in which these characters find themselves. The works were carefully studied and every example of a sentence or incident that implied the impact of familial, social, environmental or racist forces upon the characters was noted. The analyses presented here are based upon all of the sentences and situations, as far as possible inclusively, although some few examples which merely repeated themselves are not included. The material is organized in the analytic chapters of this thesis as follows: Chapter Two, which follows this introduction, presents how sense of belonging and identity are influenced by family and society; Chapter Three analyzes sense of belonging and identity in relation to depictions of physical environment in the works; and Chapter Four focuses on how race issues influence sense of belonging and identity. These are followed by the conclusion which presents the results of each chapter's analysis as well as an overall assessment of the findings.

CHAPTER 2

SENSE OF BELONGING AND IDENTITY IN THE SOCIAL AND FAMILIAL CONTEXT

Post-colonial theories of literature "emerge from a view of language" that is based on "an assertion of the importance of practice over the code, the importance of the 'variant' over the 'standard'" (Ashcroft et al. 1988:181). When the reflection of this principle is analyzed in literary works, it is likely to associate "code" and "standard" with the colonial society, and "practice" and "variant" with the individual. The discrepancy between these pairs becomes more obvious in the books chosen for this study, for both works focus on the individual and the issue of survival in the face of coercive, authoritative, patriarchal and conservative societies. The individual, being the variable, reveals the fault lines of this colonial and post-colonial society by means of his/her perceptions, mental processes and reactions. In the vehement interaction between the individual and society, sense of belonging and identity provide a safe haven for the individual so that he/she finds meaning in his/her existence. If the individual is deprived of a sense of belonging and an enduring personal identity, his/her survival will be at stake. This picture fits Mary's profile which is that of an outcast, a victim and a tragic anti-heroine in *The Grass Is Singing*. On the other hand, Sally in *My Place* is depicted as a survivor who recovers her sense of belonging to a racial and social group, and claims a racial and social identity.

Sense of belonging with all its relevance to society, nation, history, culture and tradition is firmly rooted in the society and the family with which the individual has grown up interacting. In fact, one belongs to a group of people in the form of either a relatively large population with its history, culture and traditions or a smaller unit with its liabilities to change and adapt in accordance with and because of the drastic changes in the larger society. Sense of personal identity, on the other hand, can be considered as the

product of the immediate social structure the individual is surrounded by: the family. It is also strongly affected by the larger society, as the individual progresses in the process of maturation. However, in order to be in full command of an analysis of two books with major characters who walk their different paths of maturation, some basic terms, with their uses peculiar to post-colonial literary criticism, have to be remembered. The ones that have priority are mainly concerned with the senses of belonging and identity, namely subaltern, essentialism, hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence, as defined in the introduction.

According to these definitions the major characters in both novels can be classified as the members of the subaltern , because both Mary in *The Grass Is Singing* and Sally in *My Place* come from the working class and their immediate social circle is also constituted by the same group. Besides, essentialism is especially relevant to the two books being studied as Mary fails to fit into the essentialist features of the colonizing culture and cannot cope with her second alternative—which is hybridity— as she does not conform to the standards of the white community. On the other hand, Sally yearns for the essentialist characteristics or rather the roots of the colonized group to which she belongs and from which she has been drawn away by her family. By means of essentialist ideas the colonized are said to be able to "achieve a renewed sense of the value and dignity of their pre-colonial cultures" (Ashcroft et al. 2000:79), which is exactly what Sally Morgan is attempting in and by means of *My Place*. However, Mary in *The Grass Is Singing* can neither comprehend the essentialist features of Britishness, nor can she be accepted by the hybrid white Africans, which is the reason why Lessing refers to her as an outcast in the epigraph.

A perfect example of mimicry, on the other hand, is Moses, the houseboy, in *The Grass Is Singing* as he comes to dominate Mary, the mistress, to such an extent that he finally murders her for dismissing him. Mimicry is also obvious when he nonchalantly tells Mary that "oranges [are] finished" (Lessing 177). In *My Place*, Nan saying that she is going to tell the natives who are singing in the bush to go away is one of the many

examples of mimicry (Morgan 364). Gladys considers "Good Friday the saddest day of the year" (327), and she celebrates Guy Fawkes Night, which is an essentially British event, with her family (88). Arthur was "the only farmer to have a cheque book", meaning he thrived on the white man's capitalist system (252).

2.1 *The Grass Is Singing* and the Representation of Sense of Belonging and Identity in the Familial and Social Context

Being a Bildungsroman, *The Grass Is Singing* establishes a firm background for the major character by referring to her childhood. The novel "is set in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe)" (Maslen 1994:4). Mary belongs to the colonizing culture and comes from a middle class white family which is full of problems. Therefore, in the sections where Mary's childhood is described, a closer look can reveal many details affecting her sense of belonging and the issue of identity in adult life. Similarly, as the novel proceeds, Mary is depicted as a woman who leads "a happy single life in the town" (4). However, at the same time, the author indicates that Mary has a meaningless existence by saying that "she seemed immune" to any outside effects (Lessing 37) and she liked "the friendly impersonality of" a routine (35). These sections in the book provide an insight into the level of belonging Mary achieves and the identity issue she has to face. Thus, to fully explore these issues, this chapter will analyze the protagonist in relation to the familial and social context with selective references to the novel. Mary's relationships with her immediate family, people in the town and the country, and her husband will be analyzed respectively. In fact, there are certain black characters that Mary comes into contact with in a *somewhat* social context. Nevertheless, the servants, the black policemen and Mary's houseboys, the most important of whom is Moses, will be dealt with in the chapter that analyzes race issues in the novel, rather than here.

The major character in *The Grass Is Singing* comes from a poor white South African family in which the father is a drunkard and the mother a helpless complainer with three children, two of whom die of dysentery. Mary grows up as the "confidante" of her

mother, "hating her father" (33). She "inherited from her mother an arid feminism" though it is not of much use to her (35). The effects of growing up with an extreme resentment against her father are also reflected in Mary's adult life later in the novel. Such a troubled family, and its financial problems do not leave Mary much room for developing a healthy personal identity and sense of belonging to a family unit as she only feels important when comforting her mother: "Mary comforted her miserably, longing to get away, but feeling important too" (33). This shows that Mary's existence, in her childhood, found meaning with the need her mother felt for her. It was only these moments that somewhat anchored her sense of belonging to a family. The resulting dependence on the mother will be repeatedly acted out in the form of dependence on friends' approval, dependence on her husband's latent inferiority to her and, much later in the novel, dependence on her slave Moses. This shows that there is more to her need for others than Walder stated when he said that she mostly "depends on her relationship with a man to give her an identity" (Walder 108).

This intricate relationship with the mother has a major effect on Mary's sense of identity because, according to Chodorow, the limitations of female identity are closely related to the relationship between the mother and daughter (Chodorow 99-104). Mary's role model, her mother, who is desperately poor and without any emotional support, unavoidably brings Mary to the point where the mother was earlier. Therefore, the protagonist "repeats the errors of her mother and dies, and the novel's circular structure is the narrative correlative to matrophobia" (Greene 36). In her review of Lawler's[7] book, Fell states that the phenomenon of matrophobia can be defined as "the fear of becoming one's mother" (Fell 2000). Ironically, Mary, while trying to avoid becoming her mother, finds herself playing a role very similar to that of her mother, paying for it with a mental breakdown, which is the only way for her to "move towards a new inner self" (Walder 108) .

[7] Lawler, Steph. *Mothering the Self: Mothers, Daughters, Subjects*. London and New York: Routledge, 2000.

Lawler claims that matrophobia does not occur due to identification with and rejection of the mother but because of women's "insecurities around their class positioning" (Lawler 102 quoted in Fell 2002). This is especially relevant to Mary's case as she is a member of the subaltern group whereas she is supposed to belong to the colonizing or the dominant culture. To put it more simply, as Mary's mother married a poor white, she was a member of the poor whites that were considered to be "very close in hierarchy to that of the colonized," in terms of social positioning (Mutekwa 731). On the other hand, Mary ended up leading her mother's miserable life, not because she adopted her as her role model or because she hated her, but because she didn't feel secure with the identity her class positioning provided. In support of this assertion, Lawler also states that "these women's mothers may come to signify a class position to which they fear returning" (Fell 2002), again relating the mother and daughter relationship to class issues, which is quite relevant to the context of *The Grass Is Singing* (Lessing 102). As an example of the kind of humiliating life Mary fears to return to, instances from the mother's life can be analyzed. These are instances when the character's dignity is compromised. For instance, Mary's mother goes to the barman, "complaining that she could not make ends meet, while her husband squandered his salary in drink", which is quite inappropriate for a female member of the white society (Lessing 33).

A similar pathetic situation is repeated in Mary's life. Mary decides to run away from her marriage and her husband, so she leaves the farm secretly. After walking five miles with "her suitcase swinging heavily in her hand and bumping against her legs, her shoes filling with the soft gritty dust, sometimes stumbling over the sharp ruts", she comes across Charlie Slatter, their closest neighbour who "had not troubled to hide his dislike" in the two or three previous occasions they had met, and she asks if he could drive her to the train station (98). Although such behaviour is unacceptable according to the account the writer provides, just like her mother, Mary also embarrasses herself by falling short of the standards of middle class white woman. She does so by asking for help from a man who despises her, as did her mother when she stood in front of the barman,

"waiting for the condolences of the man who pocketed the money which was rightly hers to spend for the children" (33).

She also goes through a series of humiliations especially when she arrives in the town. She is refused assistance by her previous employer and the Girls' Club. Moreover, when she comes back to the country after her unsuccessful escapade, the whole community in the country starts talking about her. The story becomes "monstrously distorted" and it is "told all over the district to the accompaniment of headshaking and tongue-clickings" (169). Such public humiliation is something both Mary and her mother are made to experience by the judgmental society. This clearly shows that neither Mary nor her mother belonged to the group they supposedly were members of. This similar pattern of not behaving according to the norms of the white society is also repeated in Mary's life as an indication of the fact that she can't avoid the vicious circle which leads to her death at a young age, just like her mother, though in a more horrible way.

There are four instances in the novel that draw clear parallels between Mary's life and that of her mother's. The first one is when Mary comes to the farm after marrying Dick. Mary feels "that it was not in this house she was sitting, with her husband, but back with her mother", and that "her father, from his grave, had sent out his will and forced her back into the kind of life he had made her mother live" (54-55). It seems that "as the years pass her sense of taking on the identity of her mother increases" (Roberts 76). Despite her social dependence on men, Mary regards them "as the embodied threat to her identity, to her independent life", which is due to the feminism she inherited from her mother (Zak 484). The second reference to the mother is when Dick and Mary have a row over the native houseboy who wants to leave. Mary wants to hurt Dick's feelings and blames him for their poor and miserable conditions. The narrator comments on Mary's tone, which is just like her mother's.

> She was speaking in a new voice for her, a voice she had never used before in her life. It was taken directly from her mother, when she had those little scenes over money with her father. It was not the voice of Mary, the individual

> […] but the voice of the suffering female, who wanted to show her husband that she just wouldn't be treated like that. In a moment she would begin to cry, as her mother had on these occasions, in a kind of dignified, martyred rage (Lessing 79).

The third example of Mary walking her mother's path to reinforce the theme of matrophobia is at the beginning of her mental breakdown, when Dick takes her back home after Mary's escapade. The narrator draws another parallel between Mary and her mother by stating that "if Dick had not got ill when he did, […] she might have died quite soon, as her mother had done, after a brief illness, simply because she did not want particularly to live" (102). Mary's indifference, which has been her "defining quality" since her days in the Girls' Club, paradoxically results from her mother's indifference, which "dismayed the child Mary" (Zak 483). The last occasion is when Mary (although she dislikes children) decides to have a child with Dick as she is depressingly lonely with nothing to do.

> She thought of herself, as a child, and her mother; she began to understand how her mother had clung to her, using her as a safety-valve. She identified herself with her mother, clinging to her most passionately and pityingly after all these years, understanding now something of what she had really felt and suffered. She saw herself, that barelegged, bareheaded, silent child, wandering in and out of the chicken-coop house – close to her mother, wrung simultaneously by love and pity for her, and by hatred for her father; and she imagined her own child, a small daughter, comforting her as she had comforted her mother (Lessing 135).

It is obvious that Mary repeats the mistakes of her mother and leads the same life her mother had. The fact that Mary would make her hypothetical daughter lead the same childhood as she did signifies that an individual learns the way of life and thinking from one's family. This seems to be a vicious circle that Mary tried to avoid but ended up clinging to in order to preserve her sanity. Thus, matrophobia, resulting from the

insecurities of one's social positioning, is likely to manifest itself over and over throughout different generations.

Not surprisingly, Mary feels "extremely happy" when she is sent to a boarding school, and thus, her relationship with the family comes to an end with this turning point in her teenage years (34). Later on, Mary completes her escapade from her family and poverty by starting to work at the age of sixteen and moving to the town for a better and more independent life. Therefore, when Mary enters the real world with its harsh realities, she lacks the sense of belonging to a family and thus she is deprived of a genuine personal identity which is independent of her mother's. In fact, she goes to the town to provide these for herself, and she succeeds to some extent because she doesn't fully develop personal and social identities, and a sense of belonging. However, we are told that she seemed content because "as long as she was able to maintain her 'false self', she was safe from emotional distress" (Zak 485). The writer indicates that "she could have become a person on her own account" but she didn't: "this was against her instinct" (Lessing 36). The simplest reason is that being independent isn't in her nature: she is "for death, not life" (Sarvan 537). She can be said to be a weak person from the very beginning of the novel, and at the end she becomes totally dependent: "she comes to rely physically and emotionally on her black servant" (Maslen 1994:4). When she is suffocated in her marriage, she tries to go back to the city, to her so called independence, only to find that everything has changed including herself: "it was the first time that she admitted to herself that she had changed, in herself, not in her circumstances" (Lessing 101).

Mary's relationship with her father is the second major factor that affects her female identity and sense of belonging to female society during her adult life. The fact that "Mary was pleased to be rid of him" clearly displays the nature of the father-daughter relationship in the novel (35). The father, being a heavy drinker and a poor pumpman working for the railway, influences Mary's relationship with men. "There had been little privacy" in the small farm house where she grew up; therefore, she developed "a

profound distaste for sex" (39). The narration of Mary's dream clearly shows that she continues to be affected by the traumatic experiences of her childhood, detaching her from adult sexuality.

> At the bedroom door she stopped, sickened. There was her father, the little man with the plump juicy stomach, beer smelling and jocular, whom she hated, holding her mother in his arms as they stood by the window. Her mother was struggling in mock protest, playfully expostulating. Her father bent over her mother, and at the sight, Mary ran away (162-163).

The described scene is an example of untimely exposure to sexual intercourse, which can be classified as a blow on Mary's identity as a woman. Moreover, the rest of the dream, which is full of sensory images, hints at sexual abuse by the father, further sickening Mary of males.

> Her father caught her head and held it in his lap with his small hairy hands, to cover up her eyes, laughing and joking loudly about her mother hiding. She smelt the sickly odour of beer, and through it she smelt too - her head held down in the thick stuff of his trousers - the unwashed masculine smell she always associated with him (163).

As a result of these factors, in her socially active town life as a working woman, Mary comes to develop just friendships with men; she is "a good pal, with none of this silly sex business" (40).

"Mary's early life in town, after her escape from her parents' farm is described as very happy" until her self-image is shattered (Maslen 1994:4). As Mary led a carefree life in the town, "it never occurred to her to think, for instance, that she, the daughter of a petty railway official and a woman whose life had been so unhappy because of economic

pressure that she had literally pined for death, was living in much the same way as the daughters of the wealthiest in South Africa, could do as she pleased ─ could marry, if she wished, anyone she wanted" (Lessing 35).

The death of her father "removed the last link that bound her to a childhood she hated to remember", and "she was free" (36). Thus, she manages to totally detach herself from her socio-economic background and seems to have climbed one step up the social ladder, stripping herself of her inherited social positioning and assumes the role of a town girl. In fact, Mary "loved the town, felt safe there, and associated the country with her childhood" (44). However, her sense of security is only temporary and she only enjoys this illusion until she learns her friends' actual opinion of her. Therefore, up to the time when Mary overhears her friends say, "She just isn't like that, isn't like that at all", she is somewhat happy with her life and self (40). Her friends criticize her for dressing like a girl although she is older than thirty at the time: "She's not fifteen any longer: it's ridiculous! Someone should tell her about her clothes" (40).

As mentioned before, because of the influence of her father, Mary's refusal of sexuality, which is part of an adult female identity, is underlined by emphasizing "her retention of a childlike image into her thirties" (Roberts 74). Mary seems to resist the normative sense of female and heterosexual identity imposed by the society. "She still wore her hair little-girl fashion on her shoulders, and wore little-girl frocks in pastel colours, and kept her shy, naïve manner" (Lessing 38), which is an effort "to avert the male gaze from herself" (Roberts 74). Considering the fact that colonialism is a gendered process that has male attributes (Mutekwa 726), Mary's avoiding the colonial realities by living in the town parallels her avoidance of the male gaze of her father. However, the change in location that takes place with her marriage triggers a series of destructive experiences. When she arrives in the country, stepping into marriage, sexuality and colonialism simultaneously, "the traumatic Oedipal experiences of her childhood" return to "torment her and make it impossible for her to cope rationally with the vicissitudes of her life" (Roberts 76).

The description given above is that of a teenage girl, but the actual character is in her thirties. This gap clearly indicates that Mary isn't the person of her age but she is stuck in the role of a young girl, far away from the new roles that a woman has to assume as she proceeds further in adult life. Hence, it becomes obvious that Mary cannot fit in with the social circles of other women of her age for fear that the father image will reappear to destroy the protected world she has created for herself. However, Mary "is not a woman who can justify her conduct rationally or courageously maintain it on principles" (Sarvan 536). Therefore, she has to suffer the consequences of not being strong enough to challenge the society and to refuse to get married, even though these are not what she wants for herself.

It could be understood from the beginning of the novel that Mary's illusion of having the easy life of a town girl is only temporary. This also contributes to Lessing's use of female identity to shape the circular plot, ironically repeating the mother's life because Lessing's "sense of possibilities [of change and breaking the vicious circle] is internally bound up with her sense of female identity: hope about one is hope about the other" (Greene 24). In other words, Lessing foreshadows that Mary will not achieve a sense of identity, nor will she change her existence for better as "the best things have been poisoned from the start" (Lessing 39). Mary's refusal of female sexual role is also made clear in the novel: "if a man kissed her [...], she was revolted" (44). This is the outcome of Mary's "interwoven fears of being the double of her mother and of being forced into a kind of sexual partnership with her father" (Roberts 77). Therefore, there is no hope for Mary no matter how hard she tries because she cannot make peace with her female identity due to "a profound distaste for sex", and the end of the novel is already revealed at the beginning thanks to the circular structure (Lessing 39).

The writer leaves no doubt that Mary is not going to enjoy the same complacent existence after hearing these words which drove "knives into her heart" and threw "her quite off balance" (41). It is obvious that Mary was dependent on the approval of her

friends to maintain the illusion that she belongs and fits into the standards of female identity. When she can't get this approval, she is devastated to such an extent that "she couldn't recognize herself in the picture they had made of her!" (41). On overhearing her friends' comments about her, Mary's "protective stance collapses" because "she is forced to see herself according to the standards of the world through which she had so far naively moved" (Zak 485). However, the writer prepares the reader for Mary's alienation from the image of herself that she has preserved in her mind. Earlier in the novel, it is mentioned that Mary sometimes thinks before sleep, "Is this all? When I get to be old will this be all I have to look back on?" (Lessing 39). This is a sign of Mary's questioning of her existence because "Mary's passive conformity to the conventions of town life" doesn't necessarily mean that she belongs to that culture or social circle, or that she has developed a full, strong sense of identity that can't be shaken by the words of others (Maslen 1994:6). Although she vaguely questions her existence, "her grasp on who she is [,] is tenuous at best" (Zak 484). She suffers from "ontological insecurity" (Laing[8] quoted in Zak 484), for Mary "possesses no sense of a healthy or vital self" (484). In order to better understand Mary's identity and sense of belonging issues together with how she is affected by her social environment, a closer look at her social life in the town will be helpful.

The first group of people Mary comes into contact with in the town is the young women living in the Girls' Club. Mary's relationship with them is not based on equality as Mary is older and considered to be "a person of some importance" or like a "maiden aunt to whom one can tell one's troubles" (Lessing 37). Rather than being one of them, Mary is presented as a character above the girls in the Club because "she moved among all those young girls with a faint aloofness that said as clear as words: I will not be drawn in" (37). Mary's passivity manifests itself in her reactions to the social life in the Club because Mary was "never shocked, never condemned, never told tales" (37). She assumes the role of a detached onlooker in the Club and "she was very happy" to be so (37). Thanks to the suburban world "that is dominated by the technology, colonial

[8] Laing, R. D. *The Divided Self*. Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1969.

bureaucracy, and manners of the British", Mary feels so safe that "she enjoys more freedom and independence than most women elsewhere could ever hope to know" (Fishburn 3). So far in the novel, Mary is no different from the rest of the South African white community that lives up to the Victorian social norms, paying a lot of attention to appearances: "she was quite presentable. She had the undistinguished, dead-level appearance of South African white democracy. Her voice was one of thousands: flattened, a little sing-song, clipped. Anyone could have worn her clothes" (Lessing 36).

The writer makes it clear that Mary is an ordinary girl with nothing to distinguish her from the crowds. Mary is in full conformity with the imposed or widespread social norms as she leads "a full and active life" in the town (37). Her office life introduced her into social circles to such an extent that "she was friend to half the town", and she attended parties, sports activities and went to the cinema regularly (38). Despite her highly active social life, it is interesting that Mary does not grow to be wiser, more sophisticated or calibrated to sense the subtleties of colonial discourse. Instead, as the years pass, she remains an immature single girl who is taken out by friendly men. Lessing summarizes Mary's existence in the town, saying: "South Africa is a wonderful place: for the unmarried woman. But she wasn't playing her part, for she did not get married" (38). What is expected of her is to relieve the colonial society of "the fear of being swamped by the natives" by getting married and having children to alleviate the numerical inferiority of the colonizers (Mutekwa 732).

> But all women become conscious, sooner or later, of that impalpable but steel-strong pressure to get married, and Mary, who was not at all susceptible to atmosphere, or the thing people imply, was brought face to face with it suddenly and most unpleasantly (Lessing 40).

As befitting the expectations of colonialism from white women to be "a buffer between the 'civilized' whites and 'uncivilized' Africans", Mary comes to face severe social pressure, pushing her towards the conventions of marriage and children (Mutekwa 732). She is expected to play her role "in the construction of the racial, gendered hierarchies of

empire" (732). This shatters her self-image by means of the incident in her friend's house when she hears two of her friends gossiping about her. After this point, Mary's identity crisis begins, for she goes to the cinema more frequently and "seeks connections" (Zak 486) between "the distorted mirror of the screen and her own life" (Lessing 44). Nevertheless, she fails to "fit together what she wanted for herself and what she was offered" (44).

As Mary starts questioning what her friends meant when they said "she just is not like that", she also comes to vaguely figure out the effect of the society on her private life (Lessing 40). However, Mary's being a grown up child is also underlined by the writer when communicating Mary's thoughts to the reader, because Mary is depicted as a person who is neither aware of her feelings nor articulate enough to verbalize them.

> She did not put it to herself like that; but after all, she was nothing if not a social being, though she had never thought of 'society', the abstraction; and if her friends were thinking she should get married, then there might be something in it. If she had ever learned to put her feelings into words, that was perhaps how she would have expressed herself (42).

By giving such a naive picture of Mary's emotional world, her "ontological insecurity" in Laing's terms, the writer arouses warm sympathy and affection for Mary, feelings that make the mistakes and weaknesses of the protagonist excusable and her relationship with the reader more sustainable, especially considering the fact that Mary is a character who is depressingly passive throughout the novel. However, Lessing punishes Mary, "whose own psychological failings make it impossible for her to conform with the dedicated thoroughness that her repressive society requires of its members" (Fishburn 2).

Immediately after this trauma, Mary starts looking for a husband and just as her gossiping friends predicted, she allows a much older man than herself to approach her.

Mary preferred “a widower of fifty-five with half grown children” because she “felt safer with him […] because she did not associate ardours and embraces with a middle aged gentleman whose attitude was almost fatherly” (Lessing 42). At this point, the influence of Mary’s Oedipal trauma caused by her father becomes obvious once again in the novel. Mary’s distaste for sex and her considering an old man for a husband carry implications of Freudian ideas, which explain female adult sexuality by means of the relationship with the father in childhood. In other words, Mary quite predictably chose an old man to flirt with in order to compensate for the fatherly affection she lacked when growing up. However, when he tries to kiss her, she runs away and the whole town learns about this humiliating situation. The reaction of the society is meaningful because “when people heard it they nodded and laughed as if it confirmed something they had known for a long time” (43). The colonial society is depicted as an entity whose colonial discourse always needs to be right and that grows even more powerful and dogmatic as it is proved to be right. It is interesting that Mary’s gossiping friends had a better idea than Mary had of what kind of a person she was. Moreover, how cruel and judgmental the society can be is clearly depicted by the writer in a vivid picture of the society of the time.

> A woman of thirty behaving like that! They laughed, rather unpleasantly; in this age of scientific sex, nothing seems more ridiculous than sexual gaucherie. They didn’t forgive her; they laughed, and felt that in some way it served her right (43).

As she kept looking for a husband she also became the laughingstock of the town, which consumed her even to a greater extent than the traumas she had to go through. When Mary lets her social environment direct her life by affecting the decisions she makes, Mary’s life starts to revolve around the expectations of the society. As Mary leads the life of an independent town girl, the society expects her to quit that role and assume a new one that suits her age. She is expected to become a wife and then a mother. Mary cannot do this because, deep down, she suffers from matrophobia, and because her

sexuality is impaired by her childhood trauma, namely her untimely exposure to sex. This intricate interplay between her familial background and the harshly demanding attitude of her social environment forces her into marrying anybody "literally to *save face* among her friends" (Roberts 75).

> Then she met Dick Turner. It might have been anybody. Or rather, it would have been the first man she met who treated her as if she were wonderful and unique. She needed that badly. She needed to restore her feeling of superiority to men, which was really, at bottom, what she had been living from all these years (Lessing 44).

The writer very strikingly makes it clear that Mary needs an ego-boost which a man can provide. She yearns to be reminded that she is "wonderful and unique" because she lost her self-worth when the society, embodied in her friends and their opinion of Mary, confronted her and shattered her self-image, demanding that she change. Another significant aspect of Mary's personality is revealed in the quoted paragraph. "The arid feminism" which she "inherited from her mother" manifests itself in Mary's adult life after her "comfortable carefree existence of a single woman in South Africa" is over (35). She is in desperate need of power over men, which she thought she had when she enjoyed a friendship with males which evaded conventional gender roles. Although a woman's attending different social activities with men who are just friends is perfectly normal in today's world, the lack of romance, which was expected to emerge sooner or later between Mary and at least one of her male friends, made the society of Mary's day uneasy. According to the stereotyping colonial society, as an individual is either in or out when it comes to the social sense of belonging, the society turns upon Mary, obliging her to marry someone so that she would at least appear to belong.

She marries Dick Turner due to "perceived social pressures"; however, she is "immediately unhappy" because her pride is so bruised in the process that she feels relieved to be away from the town and its people (Roberts 74). In other words, even

though Mary does what is incumbent on her, she is humiliated beyond repair, so she flees to the country just as she did when she fled from her family and her socio-economic background earlier.

In the country, the social environment Mary finds herself in is a slack one. However, there are still some conventions to be followed. When "she made her first contact with 'the district', in the shape of their closest neighbour, Charlie Slatter and his wife", she was completely unprepared as a decent host (Lessing 73). Charlie Slatter, "a fortune hunter, a rabid racist, a domineering and ruthless maniac" (Mutekwa 730), has been defined as the person "who, from the beginning of the tragedy to its end, personified Society for the Turners" (Lessing 13). He raised his social standing from rags to riches, starting off as "a grocer's assistant in London" and ending up a typical rich white farmer (13). He is depicted as an ambitious farmer whose only idea is "to make money" in South Africa (14). His work ethics is characterized by a profit-oriented and strict mindset because "he believed in farming with the sjambok [heavy leather whip]" and because "he farmed as if he were turning the handle of a machine which would produce pound notes at the other end" (14).

This implies that his "god is mammon, rather than the one preached by the missionaries, negating the very pretences of colonialism as a civilizing mission" (Mutekwa 730). He is the embodiment of the colonizer culture as he is "a crude, brutal, [and] ruthless" man whose motto that "hung over his front door" is "You shall not mind killing if necessary", which is highly ironic considering the Ten Commandments (Lessing 14). The ambivalence resulting from the questionable concept of *civilization*, nevertheless, is only revealed by the writer as a criticism of the white society, although it could have been used to subvert colonialism, especially if combined with Slatter's *uncivilized* farming methods which "are tantamount to a rape of Africa, which in colonialist Manichean representations is perceived as female in terms of being conquered land" (Mutekwa 730). In fact, the writer informs the reader that Charlie Slatter "killed a native in a fit of temper" and he got away with it by paying only "thirty pounds" (Lessing 14). By means

of this subtle biblical allusion to Judas, who was offered thirty pieces of silver to betray Jesus, Slatter is implicitly depicted as evil, and so is the colonialism embodied in him. In fact, reference to the Bible is found once again in Lessing's choice of the name Moses for Mary's houseboy, who kills her. Having received his name and education from the white people in the missionaries, he symbolically leads "his people from bondage to freedom" (Sarvan 536) by killing Mary, and thus subverting the "religious discourse [of colonialism which] plays an important part in subalternization of the colonized Africans" (Mutekwa 733).

With such theory and practice, Charlie Slatter became one of the rich whites in the district, but till then he was also "hard with his wife, making her bear unnecessary hardships at the beginning; he was hard with his children" (Lessing 14). Charlie Slatter is portrayed as a man with contradicting ideas and attitudes as he despises "soft-faced, soft-voiced Englishmen", but appreciates "their manner and good breeding" (15). Another conflict is that he spends a good deal of money to make his sons gentlemen and he feels proud of them yet he also resents them for the same reason: that they have grown up to be gentlemen. These conflicting attitudes correspond with the affectation the colonizer culture has on a larger scale. Two more examples of this are Mary's and Mrs. Slatter's attitudes towards each other.

> Mrs. Slatter was a kindly soul, and sorry for Mary who had married a good-for-nothing like Dick. She had heard she was a town girl, and knew herself what hardship and loneliness was, though she was long past the struggling state herself. She had, now, a large house, three sons at university, and a comfortable life. But she remembered only too well the sufferings and humiliations of poverty. She looked at Mary with real tenderness, remembering her own past, and was prepared to make friends. But Mary was stiff with resentment, because she had noticed Mrs. Slatter looking keenly round the room, pricing every cushion, noticing the new whitewash and the curtains (75-76).

Mrs. Slatter approaches Mary with kindness and pity, intending to make friends because she thinks Mary married below her by choosing a poor man like Dick for a husband. In contrast to her good intentions, she carefully looks around the Turners' house with an air that insinuates her own vanity and also resentment against the impoverished Turners because they are letting the side down. Although Mrs. Slatter's sympathy for Mary may be genuine, she still cannot help judging Mary by the house and conditions she lives in as a reminder of learned social values of judgment. The second contradiction is that Mary meets them in a "faded cotton frock she was ashamed of" (76), she can only serve "a packet of store biscuits" (75) and tea in cracked cups, brought in on a tin tray. Nevertheless, she assumes an aristocratic posture and attitude to keep up the appearances that could not have been worse for a white family according to the society's standards. Mary does not only turn down Mrs. Slatter's "sympathy and her help" during their visit, but also Mrs. Slatter's later invitations by writing short and formal notes (77). Although Mrs. Slatter's invitations were sent "on an impulse of friendliness, for she was still sorry for Mary, in spite of her stiff angular pride", she was offended because the note Mary sent "might have been copied out of a letter writing guide", and "this kind of formality did not fit in with the easy manners of the district" (80-81). As a result, it is obvious that Mary is neither a town girl, nor does she fit in with the country people, for her bruised senses of personal and social identity that she inherited from her parents prevents her from being adaptable and flexible to develop a sense of belonging.

As for Charlie Slatter's role in the novel, the narrator states that "he touches the story at half a dozen points; without him things would not have happened quite as they did" (13). Obviously, he has spent more time in the country both as a farmer and as an eminent member of the society. Inspired by his role of senior farmer, he criticizes Dick's farming methods and spends "hours trying to persuade Dick to plant tobacco", which is very profitable due to the war (81). To be more precise about the historical background of the story being told, it can be understood from the information about Charlie Slatter that "until World War I, Slatter had been poor; after it, he found himself rich" (170). His wealth has been enlarged by World War II, which is in progress at the time of the story

in the novel. At this stage, Charlie Slatter becomes the representative of the greedy entrepreneur, who wants to make profit no matter what. Similarly, the fact that "Mr. Slatter's farm had hardly any trees left on it" also shows that making money is the only care that Mr. Slatter, as a typical member of the colonizing culture, had (81). It is very significant that the narrator points out the similarity between Mr. Slatter and the natives in their approach to the land saying that "his attitude to the land was fundamentally the same as that of the natives whom he despised; he wanted to work out one patch of country and move on to the next", just like a typical exploiter, a parasite (170).

As for his latter role, the narrator makes it clear that Mr. Slatter assumes responsibility for his fellow white people and if anything goes wrong, he exercises his unofficial authority to intervene. At the beginning of the novel, Charlie Slatter "practically controlled the handling of the case, even taking precedence over the Sergeant himself" (11). It is not only the Sergeant who thinks Mr. Slatter has a right to be so involved, but also "people felt that to be quite right and proper" (11). The narrator also makes it clear in an ironic tone that "Slatter was a fair man in his own way, and where his own race was concerned" (15). In other words, he could be selfless and protective in order not to "let the side down" (25). Thus, one can say that Slatter is the defender of "esprit de corps [the common spirit existing in the members of a group and inspiring enthusiasm, devotion, and strong regard for the honor of the group] which is the first rule of South African society, but which the Turners themselves ignored" (11). This is the reason why "they were hated" and Charlie Slatter could dare to step in and surpass the law and its enforcement at the very beginning of the novel (11). Moreover, the narrator subtly hints at the possibility that Mr. Slatter himself was the special correspondent who made the news about Mary's death for the newspaper. What makes this plausible is Slatter's undeniable power to form and shape the narratives in his community. He is able to "replace his own version of events with that of the gossips" (Fishburn 6) about Mary's unsuccessful escapade. When Slatter hears that he supposedly "horsewhipped" Dick for mistreating his wife, he begins to "put people right about the affair" (Lessing 169). As a result of the explanation he makes "Mary was execrated; Dick exonerated" (169). Thus,

it is obvious that Slatter has the power to reinscribe the social consciousness and narratives of his society, so he is the embodiment of colonial discourse in the country.

The same reason is the motive behind Mr. Slatter's encouraging the Turners to leave the country and take a long break by the sea towards the end of the novel. Charlie Slatter notices the easy way Mary talks to her houseboy and the casual manner in which the houseboy answers Mary. He panics because of two things that he notices. First, Mary "was speaking to him [Moses, the houseboy] with exactly the same flirtatious coyness with which she had spoken to himself [Mr. Slatter]" (177). Slatter is alarmed by "a triangulated rapprochement she apparently invites Slatter himself to share, when she flirts with him" (Fishburn 5). In other words, Mary's using the same manner of speech to the houseboy and Slatter undermines Slatter's sense of social self because his "individual self worth is so dependent on his conviction of *general cultural* superiority that" he cannot bear to see the other and self merging in Mary's perception (5). Second, the houseboy talks back in a "tone of surly indifference, but with a note of self-satisfaction, of conscious power that took Charlie's breath away" (Lessing 177). Slatter realizes that Mary has not only "elided the difference between himself (white colonizer) and Moses (black colonized)" but also the barrier between white woman and black man (Fishburn 7). Because the "division between Self and Other has been breached" (7), Charlie Slatter takes charge, by speaking "as if there could be no question of refusal; he had been shocked out of self-interest" (Lessing 178). At this turning point, Charlie Slatter exercises his unofficial power to intervene for the sake of protecting esprit de corps or the norms that protect white supremacy as well as the "hegemony of his own colonialist discourse" (Fishburn 7).

> It was not even pity for Dick that moved him. He was obeying the dictate of the first law of white South Africa, which is: 'Thou shalt not let your fellow whites sink lower than a certain point; because if you do, the nigger will see he is as good as you are.' The strongest emotion of a strongly organized society spoke in his voice, and it took the backbone out of Dick's resistance. For, after all, he

> had lived in the country all his life; he was undermined with shame; he knew what was expected of him, and that he had failed (Lessing 178-179).

It is very striking that the pressure of the colonizing culture on its own members can become so palpable as it is embodied in one individual like Charlie Slatter, who is relatively more experienced and sensible in terms of the group's pride. The narrator very cleverly uses Mr. Slatter as the mouthpiece of the colonizing culture and its values, by equipping him with full authority with a silent agreement. Thus, it can be said that the community, especially in the country, functions in a close circuit with the values of judgment instilled hard in the members' consciousness.

There are two more individuals with whom Mary comes into contact in the country. The first one is the doctor who shows up in the two instances when Dick gets malaria. He appears to be one of the "rich professionals" who has a "calm way of shrugging their [the Turners'] difficulties" by recommending taking expensive measures against health hazards posed by Mary and Dick's living environment (107). Seeing the conditions they live in, the doctor does not send them a bill but he sends them a note in reply to that of Mary's, saying: "'Pay me when you can afford it'" (108). Although Mary feels humiliated because of their poverty, she has to accept the situation and go on despite being "miserable with frustrated pride" (108). When the doctor comes the second time, he scolds Mary for not having followed his advice about the environment they live in. Thus, he becomes "indifferent" because he realizes that the Turners are "hopeless" (157). As a man who has been in the country long enough, the doctor knows "when to cut his losses as a doctor" (157). It is clear that he does not refer to money when he says this but to people. In other words, he believes that there are certain people who can be helped and some who cannot. The Turners could not be helped because they were doomed, so they "were bound to come to grief" (13). In the novel, the doctor is the individual who calmly realizes this fact and acts accordingly. Thus, his role in the novel is to strip the readers from the sympathy they have for the Turners and see their situation with absolute objectivity though with a tinge of indifference.

The last person that Mary socially interacts with is Tony Marston, “a young man just out from England, who wanted a job” (179). Charlie Slatter arranges for him to take care of the Turners’ land while they are away. Tony Marston appears in the story towards the end. Therefore, he functions as “an outside observer”, or as a merely different perspective on the Turners’ situation and on “the closed colonial society” in South Africa (Fishburn 4). For instance, “he was sorry for Dick Turner, whom he knew to be unhappy; but even this tragedy seemed to him romantic; he saw it, impersonally, as a symptom of the growing capitalization of farming all over the world, of the way small farmers would inevitably be swallowed by the big ones” (Lessing 182). In contrast to the doctor, Marston appears to be a more sensitive and sensible person in his observations. His being “full of idealism” is also the reason why Lessing planned for him to be the major character in the first draft of the novel (Thorpe 99). He serves to reflect the secretive approach of the society to Mary’s murder and the Sergeant’s abstinence from investigating the motives behind the murder.

Marston is depicted as a man who is “interested in everything, well-informed, fresh, [and] alive” (Lessing 183). He is given the store-hut which is in terrible condition and poorly furnished, but “standards that would have shocked him in his own country seemed more like exciting indications of a different sense of values, here” (181). Obviously, he has some romantic ideas about South Africa as he has just arrived from England, but the narrator comments that he will also change in time as he will also face and adopt the attitude of the white community in the country: “Because he had never yet earned his own living, he thought entirely in abstractions. For instance, he had conventionally ‘progressive’ ideas about the colour bar, the superficial progressiveness of the idealist that seldom survives a conflict with self-interest” (182). In other words, Marston will sooner or later be ideologically indoctrinated by the white South African society if he ever wants to survive and make money there.

Although they might seem a bit offhand, Marston's observations and comments have significance. For instance, he repeats that Mary's situation is a "complete nervous breakdown" or "a case for a psychologist" (184). On the other hand, although he supports Mary in a sympathetic and gentlemanly manner when she is fighting with herself to send Moses away, he is unintentionally making a "manly (protocolonial) intervention" (Fishburn 10), because he "realized that she was trying to assert herself: she was using his presence there as a shield in a fight to get back a command she had lost" (Lessing 188). Thus, Tony becomes someone Mary is able to somewhat communicate with as she can tell him, by referring to her friends in the town, gossiping about her sexuality, that "they said" she was not "like that" (187). Later, she can admit to him that she has been "ill for years" (201). These two cases reveal that Mary has at last "begun to reckon honestly with her sexual desire and has exposed her 'true self' to a relationship with another person without, as she had always feared, suffering 'engulfment'" (Zak 489). What "true self" means here is her personal identity which she has not hitherto had a firm grasp on. It is what she does and does not want for herself. As a result of having drifted from one oppressive context—her family background and upbringing—to another—judgmental and repressive society—without being consciously aware of whether, how and against what she defined her existence in the colonial world that was sick itself, she becomes ill. Her mental breakdown "emphasizes the disjunction between self and world through the fact that oppression has both political and psychological modalities, both of which are divisive" (Rubenstein 212).

After the murder, that is, at the beginning of the novel, although Marston is the one to find Mary's body, he is bypassed and Charlie Slatter takes charge to question him with Sergeant Denham, who is also aware of the "necessity for preserving the appearances" (Lessing 25). Marston senses that he is being warned against something he cannot fully understand. The way the country treats him for being new there hurts him and "Tony held his tongue, angry but bewildered" (19). Ultimately, he understands "the gentleman's agreement that prevents the inquiry into the motive for the murder", which

is full of “implications of forbidden human—perhaps even sexual—contact” between Mary and Moses (Zak 482).

> He felt wounded, even insulted that he had not been called: above all, that these two men seemed to think it right and natural that he should be bypassed in this fashion, as if his newness to the country unfitted him for any kind of responsibility. And he resented the way he was being questioned. They had no right to do it. He was beginning to simmer with rage, although he knew quite well that they themselves were quite unconscious of the patronage implicit in their manner, and that it would be better for him to try and understand the real meaning of this scene, rather than to stand on his dignity. (Lessing 20-21)

Lessing deploys Marston as a character to give “a contextual account of the narrow and oppressive world in which Mary Turner was born, went slowly and undramatically mad, and violently died” (Zak 482). Marston also provides the profile of a newcomer and by means of the way he is treated by the two authorities of the district, in the face of an unpleasant event that lets the side down for the white people, the narrator gives a vivid picture of how the threshold characters are treated in the country. Marston is a threshold character because he is trapped between his instinct, due to his education, to explain everything not “in black and white” but in detail and with deference to those involved, and with the new values he is trying to learn in the South African country. To put it simply, “the two standards - the one he had brought with him and the one he was adopting - conflicted still” (Lessing 18). To overcome the conflict, he has to put his dignity aside, which, implicitly, all newcomers have to do in order to adapt to and be accepted into the colonizing society. This conflict also shows that the colonizers form a social identity by means of othering processes as they differentiate themselves from those in the mother country.

As for Mary’s relationship with her husband Dick, it can be said that their marriage is based on Mary’s gratitude to Dick for acknowledging the fact that Mary married below

her by accepting him. Mary accepts Dick because “his worship restores” (Zak 486) "her feeling of superiority to men” (Lessing 44). Dick is aware that he dragged Mary into a miserable poor farmer’s life by proposing to her. Although he is very determined and hardworking, in the end he is a poor and jinxed farmer; he thinks “he had no right to marry” (55). His sense of guilt manifests itself as shyness and meekness whenever they have a fight. He is intimidated by his not having been fair to Mary by marrying her. In other words, he has a certain latent inferiority that Mary comes to appreciate and enjoy in time. For instance, when Mary asks Dick to put in ceilings, Dick refuses as “it would cost too much” (63). The second time she wants to ask him the same question, she knows she should expect a painful expression on his face, and she finds energy to sustain her marriage in Dick’s crushed dignity due to his poverty.

> But she knew she could not easily ask, and bring that heavy tormented look on his face. For by now she had become used to that look. Though really, she liked it: deep down, she liked it very much. When he took her hand endearingly, and kissed it submissively, and said pleadingly, ‘Darling, do you hate me for bringing you here?’ she replied, ‘No, dear, you know I don’t.’ It was the only time she could bring herself to use endearments to him, when she was feeling victorious and forgiving. His craving for forgiveness, and his abasement before her was the greatest satisfaction she knew, although she despised him for it (66).

This intricate relationship is sustained thanks to this silent agreement between the two. Dick retreats in most of the arguments, and Mary’s ego is boosted by Dick’s pangs of conscience. For instance, when Dick accuses Mary of wasting water by having frequent baths to cool herself, Mary gets furious and “she opened her mouth to shout at him, but before she could, he had suddenly become contrite because of the way he had spoken to her; and there was another of those little scenes which comforted and soothed her: he apologizing, abasing himself, and she forgiving him” (71-72). The nature of their relationship being so, it can be said that Mary does not conform to the wife role as she

pictured it when "unconsciously, without admitting it to herself, she was looking for a husband" (43).

Mary can never assume the feminine and sexual role of a wife in marriage because "through childhood trauma [she] has been incapacitated for marriage" (Roberts 74). After the first night of their marriage, "it was not so bad, she thought, when it was all over: not as bad as *that*", because Mary is able "to withdraw from the sexual relationship, to immunize" herself against it (Lessing 55). Because Mary "quickly associates Dick with her hated and ineffectual father" (Bertelsen 1991:651), Dick is pushed away and never fully accepted as a husband and, in addition, sex "meant nothing to her [Mary], nothing at all" (Lessing 55). The bed comes to symbolize the different points of view of Mary and Dick on marriage. It was bought by Dick before their marriage and "it was a proper, old-fashioned bed, high and massive: that was his idea of marriage" (55). For Mary, however, "the sight of it gritted on her, reminding her of the hated contact in the nights with Dick's muscular body, to which she had never been able to accustom herself" (146). Once again, Mary's trauma from her childhood manifests itself as withdrawal from sex. Moreover, "if Dick felt as if he had been denied, rebuffed, made to appear brutal and foolish, then his sense of guilt told him that it was no more than he deserved" (55).

Although Dick and Mary had similar childhoods, they do not seem to form a bond out of this common point.

> She knew so little about him. His parents were dead; he was an only child. He had been brought up somewhere in the suburbs of Johannesburg, and she guessed, though he had not said so, that his childhood had been less squalid than hers, though pinched and narrow. He had said angrily that his mother had a hard time of it; and the remark made her feel kin to him, for he loved his mother and had resented his father. And when he grew up he had tried a number of jobs. He had been clerk in the post office, something on the railways, had finally inspected watermeters for the municipality. Then he had decided to become a vet. He had studied for three months, discovered

> he could not afford it; and, on an impulse, had come to Southern Rhodesia to be a farmer, and 'to live his own life' (137).

Although Mary recognizes his good personality traits, she cannot help despising him for being a failure despite his various attempts to make money on the farm. He tries farming, raising pigs, chicken, bees, rabbits and turkeys and finally opens a store. Each attempt makes him lose more money, "earning him the cruel but apt" (Fishburn 3) nickname of "Jonah" (Lessing 47). She supports his initiative at first, but with failure following failure, she loses all hope in Dick. During this period, Dick's "incompetence becomes for a while the focus of her own fears" (Bertelsen 1991:652). First she goes through a phase of "recognition of why Dick's farming has so consistently failed" and so did "her own opportunity to help him to material success" (Zak 487). Later, she starts patronizing him to such an extent that Dick calls her "boss" twice in the narrative (Lessing 92 & 126). Realizing that "demonstration of her superior ability would provoke Dick to destructive defensiveness" (Zak 487), she withdraws all her support including going to the fields with him just "to sustain him with her presence" (Lessing 136). She realizes that there is no hope for them.

> The women who marry men like Dick learn sooner or later that there are two things they can do: they can drive themselves mad, tear themselves to pieces in storms of futile anger and rebellion; or they can hold themselves tight and go bitter, Mary with the memory of her own mother recurring more and more frequently, like an older, sardonic double of herself walking beside her, followed the course her upbringing made inevitable (90).

Thus, the parallelism between Mary and her mother is made clear once again in the novel. They both married men who were no good for their wives. The only difference between Mary's father and Dick is that Dick is not a drunkard, nor is he lazy. Moreover, Dick's "veneration, his respect, and even his nervous wonder at her efficiency, her energy, and her intelligence fail to save her from her mother's fate" (Zak 486). Mary, "worn down by heat and poverty, becomes aware of Dick's real character" (Bertelsen

1991:652), and starts to appreciate Dick's positive qualities much later in the novel as their marriage is not based on the two knowing and loving each other.

> Dick was so nice - so nice! she said to herself wearily. He was so decent; there wasn't an ugly thing in him. And she knew, only too well, when she made herself face it (which she was able to do, in this dispassionate mood of pity) what long humiliation he had suffered on her account, as a man. Yet he had never tried to humiliate her: he lost his temper, yes, but he did not try to get his own back. He was so nice (Lessing 137).

This pattern of the relationship forces Dick to look for sources of self-confidence elsewhere. For instance, he is rejuvenated by the Slatters' visit as he is able to enjoy "the masculine talk which gave him self-assurance in his relations with Mary" (77). During their conversation, they mention the "shortcomings and deficiencies of their natives", which is practising and reinforcing the colonial discourse (76). The farmers' repeating the idea that "they loathe them [the natives] to the point of neurosis" revives their feelings of masculinity, confidence and colonial solidarity as a protection against the surrounding world of the natives (76). He also tries to encourage Mary in vain to visit Mrs. Slatter, thinking that she would like to "talk women's talk" and have "a good gossip" (77). It is striking that neither Mary nor Dick is interested in socializing as Dick, who though generally likes Mr. Slatter's company, feels reluctant to go to their evening party. As Mary's mental breakdown becomes obvious, Dick realizes that she is ill and suggests that she "go into the town and stay with some of her friends" now that he cannot send her on holiday (133). This encouragement to socialize is also turned down by Mary who "appeared horrified" (133). She dreads to think of seeing her friends who knew her "when she was young and happy" (133). "The memory of her friends checked her" when she wanted to run away from Dick and his farm, and now she does not want to be seen in her present, miserable state, "with her record of failure" by the friends who made her marry (97).

They have different reasons for their detachment from the society. Mary is disappointed in her friends after eavesdropping on them in the town, whereas Dick is a loner by birth as "he was ill at ease in crowds" (80). Moreover, he is depicted as a man who "disliked the town", "the bankers and the financiers", and the way of life in the suburbs (45). He feels "uncomfortable and murderous" because he thought that "the cautious suburban mind was ruining *his* country" (45). The reason is that he is of the opinion that all this Englishness does not fit in with the African soil. He despises "those ugly, scattered suburbs that looked as if they had come out of housing catalogues; ugly little houses stuck anyhow over the veld, that had no relationship with the hard brown African soil" (45). He loathes the "hedged gardens full of English flowers" and the cinema because they are the representatives of the aspiration of the white Africans to the British upper-middle class (45). Dick despises the white African community for mimicking the Victorian upper-class society in the mother country, which means that he "could be described as a relatively 'enlightened' colonial (Fishburn 3). By depicting Dick as a character who is closely attached to his farm, as a man who avoids the pretension and superficiality of the white Africans, the writer shows that even Dick, "good hearted but ineffectual and prone to dreaming" does not belong to the society he is in because he is a failure, a loser in terms of farming and marriage (Sarvan 535). In other words, even Dick, as a decent, hard-working man with good intentions does not have a place in the society. Dick "cannot be roused" after Mary's death because he has "slipped into a state of uncomprehending stupor" (Bertelsen 1991:652). This reveals that he has also been through an awakening period with which he cannot rationally cope. The Turners have been excluded as they do not fit in with the imposed, calcified identity profile of the white society. Thus, it is implied that neither a person like Mary, with her adult life spent in the town, nor Dick, with his strong bonds with nature and land, is given a chance to survive in the colonized South Africa without being hypocritical, exploitative and greedy.

In conclusion, the novel presents three different types of individual in colonized South Africa. The first one is the outcast, exemplified by Mary and Dick who are victimized by

their troubled and poverty stricken families. They grow up to be individuals who cannot be whole, successful, approved or happy. They are doomed either by their bruised childhoods or by their self-imposed limitations. They are isolated, alienated, "stunted and unfulfilled figures" because, despite being husband and wife in the same house, "there is no communication between Dick and Mary" (Sarvan 537). The novel is based on their tragedy describing "the plight of the white man, and white woman in particular, in struggling to survive and to create a role and identity in the African context" (Bertelsen 1991:655). Mary's death, on the other hand, does not "usher in any changes to the farming community which hated her" (Roberts 79), nor does it challenge the "white male authority" (84) of colonialism The second type is the typical social entities such as Mary's friends in the town who impose their own notion of right and wrong on others and judge them according to their false values that are marked by Victorian British standards. Their hypocrisy is reflected by the narrator in a cynical and indirect way, by focusing on how their judgmental attitude ruins Mary's life, self-image and decisions. Moreover, the Slatters and Sergeant Denham fall into this category with only a slight difference from those in the town. The country is a smaller social circle characterized by keeping up appearances, gossip and the exclusion of those who let the side down for the white colonizer. Therefore, the Slatters symbolize the cruel, domineering, unofficial but overwhelming authority that dedicates itself to the protection and promotion of the rich, successful, complacent and discriminatory whites in the country, although they have more contact with the colonized. The last type is the newcomer with romantic ideals of making money and living comfortably. This type, which is represented by Marston, is in limbo due to the clash between the value judgments that they experience and the ones that they try to adopt. The process of adaptation is marked by their progressive ideas' being corrupted and tailored so that they either fit in with the South African white society or become outsiders like the Turners. In short, the message that can be drawn about the society as it is depicted in the novel is that it is difficult for the descendents of the English to survive in South Africa either because of the self-imposed responsibility of representing the colonizing kingdom and its ways or because individuality and freedom in the modern sense are hindered by the

social pressure to follow the conventions. The individual is unable to freely develop a personal identity and sense of belonging to a family unit and to a society which are not contaminated by the ambivalences in the colonial discourse.

2.2 *My Place* and the Representation of Sense of Belonging and Identity in the Familial and Social Context

Family, whether nuclear or extended, is very important for Aboriginals as they have been deprived of it and characterized by separation, fear and strategies of resistance as a result of the colonial practices of the white population. The practice of separating half-caste children from Aboriginal mothers was based on the assumption of "white superiority", that saw that these children "could be of some value to society because of their white blood which would dilute the 'savage' tendencies and make these people 'trainable'" (Broun 27). Therefore, some of the half-caste "Aboriginal girls [were] seized from their families and trained specifically for domestic service in white-run missions and institutions", where they were "vulnerable to sexual abuse by white men in the household" (Pettman 31). Although post-colonial Aboriginal women were haunted by the fear "that their lives could be disrupted at any moment by government officials" (Moreton-Robinson 12), they regarded themselves "as heads of households", with responsibility for protecting their family members (Brewster 44). Therefore, the Aboriginal family can be defined as "extended and multi-generational", adding that "many are female-headed" (Pettman 30). Sally Morgan's book, just like other Aboriginal women autobiographers' stories, describes "the family as a strategy of resistance" (Brewster 48). Thus, the Aboriginal women, by keeping the family together as much as they can, actually develop a policy of resistance. Anne Brewster draws attention to "tactics of resistance" in Aboriginal autobiographies, and identifies them as "the affirmation of family in the face of governmental coercion towards new forms of sociality and individuality, and the maintenance of a way of life in opposition to specific structures of domination" (40). This chapter aims to analyze how and to what extent family and society affect the protagonist's quest for senses of belonging and identity with selective references to the novel. The scope of the chapter is mainly based on the

presumption that family is an entity that first masks, then promotes Sally's Aboriginality and that white society is a condemning, assimilating and withholding factor, whereas the native society is welcoming, forgiving and maintaining.

Pettman points out that "many Aborigines who were taken away from their families and brought up in white families or institutions, and others who lived in disrupted and marginalised families, may now seek to recover their Aboriginal identity and cultural heritage", which is why Sally Morgan, whose identity is and, according to her book, will be under construction all her life, wrote *My Place*, in an effort to find out and represent the contemporary Aboriginality of her and her family (Pettman 110). Thus, the evolution from an indigenous, hunter-gatherer, primitive, nomadic and tribal society towards a colonized, westernized, partially assimilated (both genetically and culturally), and "racially oppressed proletarian subgroup" results in the emergence of a hybrid and "matrifocal" family structure, where daughters with formal education write Aboriginal autobiographies informed by "gender-specific strategies of resistance to white racism, such as the maintenance of the family and a distinct [but hybrid] way of life" (Brewster 44). Pettman summarizes the profile of the family structure of the generation that writes these autobiographies, which clearly fits in with the profile of Sally Morgan and her family.

> Increasing numbers of Aboriginal people live in single family homes and may only be in contact with other Aboriginal people socially or occasionally, while living lifestyles similar to their non-Aboriginal neighbours. Nevertheless they may still have a strong ideological and emotional investment in an Aboriginal identity, as an intrinsic part of who they are and how they define themselves (Pettman 114).

The importance of "kin, extended family and community" is underlined in Aboriginal autobiographies "because they are where social memory becomes activated through shared experiences, knowledges [*sic*] and remembering" (Moreton-Robinson 15). According to Anne Brewster, "the orality of these texts signifies a story-telling network which spans generations and affirms the continuity of Aboriginal culture", which is an

extension of Morgan's aim in writing *My Place* (Brewster 70). Morgan starts off with her childhood and questions her background, which leads to the process of recording and writing the stories of Arthur, Gladys and Daisy in an effort to compensate for the discontinuity in her Aboriginal culture.

Sally is the first of five children born to a "poor working class" family, which is essentially a non-Aboriginal classification (Bird & Haskell 7). The father is a white plumber who has fought in World War II and the mother, Gladys, is an Aboriginal who works in part-time jobs, mostly cleaning. The father spends a great deal of time in hospital as he has, what would now be diagnosed as, post-traumatic disorder due to his war experiences. The Aboriginal grandmother, Daisy, whom the father does not like much, lives with the family. Daisy's brother Arthur is another important character as he starts visiting the family more regularly after the father's death. Sally's relationship with her father can be summarized as the interplay of hate, pity, disappointment, admiration for heroism, and love. Sally admits that she "hated Dad for being sick" (Morgan 7). Twice in the novel, Sally says that she "felt sorry for Dad" because he suffered due to haunting memories of the war and because his short temper combined with his drinking problem gave the family a hard time (20 & 51). He is useless around the house as he does not take any responsibilities, which makes Sally feel "disappointed in him" (53). Yet, during his friend Frank's visit, Sally listens to the story of how her father saved Frank's life in the war and thinks that "they were very tough", feeling sorry that she's a girl (35). Moreover, as a child, Sally is aware of her physical similarities with her father and that her assertive and rebellious character is inspired by her father. She also refers to happy memories such as meal times (19) and the Christmas time (32). On the whole, Sally's childhood does not entirely lack a father figure, and her relationship with him is a three dimensional one, which adds a strong "white" effect to Sally's background, even if such an insight is not emphasized by the writer – for Morgan explains that her father exemplified "the absent male", which is "an Australian syndrome"; moreover, her father "was physically absent as well as emotionally absent" (Bird & Haskell 7).

As a result, the name of Sally's father is never mentioned in the novel, except in Gladys' story, where she refers to her husband as Bill. This has implications for Sally's quest through the matrilineal heritage. Newman notes that "Morgan avoids the focus upon 'the [Lacanian] name of the Father'" (Newman 72). The underlying reason behind this consciously political preference—as it is explained in the first chapter—is that Sally chooses her Aboriginal background over her white one because, being the eldest, she has suffered due to her father's psychological imbalances and been neglected or rejected by her white grandparents after the father's death. The protagonist states that her white grandparents were fond of Billy, who "was the image of Dad", but all the other grandchildren, including Sally, "were relegated to the backyard" (Morgan 62). This account is further detailed by a more mature and forgiving tone, and the adult Sally comments that the reason for this attitude was not because her grandparents "disliked" them but because they were worried about "the other half" of the children, which did not belong to them (63). Although issues regarding race and racial discrimination are not within the scope of this chapter, these themes are unavoidable and have to be touched upon, even if only slightly. The racial prejudice of Sally's father towards Nan and Arthur, and that of the white grandparents' towards Gladys and the children motivate Sally to reclaim her Aboriginal heritage as compensation when she is an adult. The simplest but not the best explanation is that she is a proud girl and she would naturally stand up for the side that recognizes, owns, nurtures and approves of her. However, from the point of view of the writer, who is conscious of her text, this is a designated process of appropriation of social and cultural identities.

To be more specific, in the instance when the father has a fit of temper and the whole family flee to their neighbour for protection, the father tells Sally, the unwilling negotiator assigned by Gladys and Nan, that they can all "come back as long as your grandmother [Nan] doesn't" (49). Sally, the narrator, comments that "he had a thing about Nanna", which reveals her awareness of the father's hostility towards Nan (49). Later on, when Gladys tells her story, she makes it clear that her white in-laws never approved of her, and they "didn't want to come to the wedding" (350). Moreover, the

father does not want to meet Arthur and his family, which hurts Gladys as she comments that "he wasn't prejudiced against other racial groups, just Aboriginals" (373). Nan also states in her story that "when Gladdie wasn't around, Bill used to call me [Nan] a bloody nigger" (427). With such exclusionist attitudes from the white family members, including the father, and Sally growing up with Nan and Gladys as major influences on her life, it is quite understandable that she would prefer to identify with the underdog and write about her Aboriginal roots.

The family sticks together after the father's death, and Sally starts to enjoy a peaceful family life that revolves around her relationship with her mother Gladys and her black grandmother Daisy, or Nan as she is called by the family. They quietly become the Aboriginal influences in Sally's upbringing, together with Arthur, Nan's brother. It is repeated in the novel that Sally feels secure due to her strong family ties, which are upheld by Gladys and her role as a dedicated mother and provider for the family. Since early childhood, Sally has known "the happy feeling of warm security" as she slept in the same bed with her brother and sister, and sometimes with all of the members of the family (44). Sally says that she "felt very secure" when she was with her sisters and brothers, Gladys and Nan in front of an open fire, "laughing and joking" (64 & 91). On her wedding day, Sally's brother Billy reassures her that he will always be there for her if she ever has problems with her husband; Sally feels "very lucky" to have "a wonderful family" (165). Even after getting married, Sally sees her family almost every day due to the "strong bonds" between them (180). All of these instances make Sally feel safe, supported, attached and confident. She is cared for, accepted and never mistreated in her family life. Therefore, she knows, from childhood on, that she belongs with her Aboriginal family, which may ironically be due to her family's concealment of the past. It is ironic because Sally does not seem to appreciate her mother and grandmother's secretiveness. Her sense of belonging to a social group, on the other hand, will be strengthened during her trip to the North, and she will be learning more about her identity as a social being.

Sally grows up thinking that she is Indian, as Gladys, silently supported by Nan, told her so (45). Gladys and Nan "disguise their Aboriginal heritage" even after the racist factor at home – the father – has disappeared, because they fear that the government will "take away the children" (Broun 30). Gladys explains this in her story.

> Bill had only been dead a short time when a Welfare lady came out to visit us. I was really frightened because I thought if she realized we were Aboriginal, she might have the children taken away […] I just agreed with everything she said. I didn't want her to have any excuse to take the children off me […] It was after the visit from the Welfare lady that Mum and I decided we would definitely never tell the children they were Aboriginal. We were both convinced that they would have a bad time otherwise […] Aboriginals were treated the lowest of the low (Morgan 377-378).

Although it is a good question to ask how justifiable it could be to deprive children of knowing who they are, the fear of subjecting them to racism could be an answer. It seems that Nan and Gladys internalized their status as colonized subjects and consented to being silenced and to the assimilation that has been in effect for generations. However, in their defence, Memmi, a Tunisian author, critic, activist and scholar, rejects "the fashionable notions of 'dependency complex,' 'colonizability,' etc." and despite admitting the existence of "a certain adherence of the colonized to colonization", he asserts that it is "the result of colonization and not its cause", adding that "it arises after and not before colonial occupation" (Memmi 88). Nevertheless, by lying out of fear, Nan and Gladys actually surrender to one of the tools of colonialism.

Fear of authority, institutions and government, on the other hand, is a recurring theme in the autobiography, especially in the sections related to Nan. Many critics underline this theme as common to all Aboriginals. For instance, Moreton-Robinson notes that "while the motherhood became a basis for self-actualisation and status, Indigenous women lived life under a vague but real sense of threat that their children would be taken from them" (Moreton-Robinson 12). Broun adds that although many years had passed, Gladys and Nan "believed that nothing had changed in respect to white domination of

Aboriginal lives" (Broun 30). This fear has got to do with "institutional racism", another colonial apparatus which will be detailed in the relevant chapter, and this kind of racism negatively affects the "women who are constituted as different by the state" because they "face a combination of discrimination, neglect, and unwelcome attention" (Pettman 87). The quotation from the autobiography reflects Gladys and Nan's fear of the "unwelcome attention" of the government, which manifests itself in the form of the cruel and systematic practice of separating half-caste children from the mother, for as a young mother Daisy knew "that Gladys could be taken from her at any time", which convinced her that "her grandchildren could [also] be taken away from the family home at the discretion of the authorities", working for the maintenance of colonialism and assimilation (Trees 62). Judging by "the policies and laws which controlled Aboriginal lives up until the 1960s [,] it is easy to identify their [Gladys and Nan's] reasons for this behaviour" (Broun 30). Despite the fact that Gladys grew up in a children's home, away from her mother, she is considered to be one of the few lucky ones to see her mother every once in a while. In fact, Gladys happily moves in with her mother, who shares a flat with a white woman (345), because the Drake-Brockmans kicked Nan out due to poverty caused by World War II (343). An Aboriginal mother and daughter living together was a rarity, so Nan admonishes Gladys never to tell the truth about who she is, imparting fear of authority (348). Thus, Gladys comes to perceive being with her mother as a privilege, especially considering the many who were totally and indefinitely deprived of this natural right. Memmi reminds readers that "the colonizer denies the colonized the most precious right granted to most men [and women]: liberty" (Memmi 85).

Indeed, the discreet attitude of Gladys and Nan caused by past traumas triggers Sally's curiosity. Like "so many Aboriginal people [, quite rightly, Gladys and Nan also] see welfare, education, and health workers as dangerous and as agents of surveillance and control" (Pettman 30). Therefore, they seem to fear authority and do their best "to circumvent or forestall it" (Morgan 128). Memmi claims that fear of authority is typical of all colonized people: "he has an evasive glance, and abrupt manners, as though he

wanted to forestall any challenge, as though he were under […] constant surveillance" (Memmi 103). Sally has found this for herself; she suspects that there is a reason for their secretiveness and fear of authority. This is obviously "a tactic developed out of oppressive circumstances" and internalized in time and out of necessity (Robertson 51). "The life writings also reveal various creative strategies developed and deployed for survival and resistance", which is repeatedly exemplified by different generations in *My Place* (Moreton-Robinson 3). As part of these strategies "in various situations, Aboriginal women appeared as buffers or brokers, and had to negotiate relations in which social, police and political power backed the settlers" (Pettman 29). This explanation exonerates Nan and Sally in that they survived as best they could, although they sacrificed to some degree their racial dignity by hiding or keeping quiet. Similarly, Kathryn Trees suggests that "like many Aboriginal people who had been abducted, she [Nan] subsequently learnt to distrust authority and officialdom" (Trees 59). Nan, as the representative of the oldest generation in the family, butters up the rent man so that if the government should ask him questions about the family, he "might put in a good word for" them (Morgan 129). Here is what Nan tells Sally about the government:

> You don't know what the government's like, you're too young. You'll find out one day what they can do to people. You never trust anybody who works for the government, you dunno what they say about you behind your back. You mark my words, Sally (118).

In the second generation, Gladys describes in her story how at bath time in the children's home, "the House Mother used to stand in the doorway" till she heard the children cry in pain due to hard scrubbing, and leave only after she was satisfied; therefore, Gladys and all of the other kids would start "crying as soon as the House Mother appeared in the doorway", so that she would leave sooner (305). Gladys' "experience of school taught her to be indirect" in order to survive (Robertson 52). Thus, she admits that she always "managed to get out of trouble by making up a good story" and that she survived by learning "to lie so well" because "it was your word against the white kid's, you were never believed"; "they expected us [the] black kids to be in the wrong" (Morgan 330). This is a perfect example of how Gladys responded to the conditioning by the colonizing

culture, in which "all the members of the colonized group are accused" (Memmi 81). As another survival tactic, Gladys befriended adults who worked in the children's home, especially the ones that gave her food, which was provided sparingly by the home (322).

As for Sally, representing the third generation; she mentions many instances when she was humiliated at school. As a result of hating school—the chapter about which is quite acerbically entitled "The Factory"—and "regimentation" (107), she pretends to be sick (40), and later she starts to "truant as much as possible" (108-109), one genuine reason for skipping school every afternoon being her "chalk allergy" that she considers a "bonus" (94). Although she herself employs such methods of avoiding what is painful, shameful or unpleasant, Sally is so naive that she cannot understand why Gladys and Nan would not "just say so" if they are Aboriginals but "pretend" to be something they are not (131). At this point, Sally is too young and ignorant to realize that being Aboriginal has been painful, shameful or unpleasant for the previous generations.

Sally feels different throughout her school years. There are also times when she is made to feel different. For instance, in her first year at school she draws a picture of her mother and father naked, which shocks her teacher into grabbing the drawing and putting it into the bin (18). The adult Sally remembers that she "was hurt and embarrassed" as the other children "snickered" (18). In her second year, she wets her pants in class as the teacher does not notice her raised hand. "One of the clean, shiny-haired, no-cavity girls" starts mocking her (25). The teacher notices her situation, embarrasses her by calling her "dirty" and throws her out of the class to sit outside alone (27-28). Sally the narrator comments that she "felt different from the other children" as "they were the spick-and-span brigade" whereas she was "the grubby offender" (28). What Sally notices in relation to schooling in colonized lands is that "there is no communication either from child to teacher or […] from teacher to child, and the child notices this perfectly well" (Memmi 105). Sally confirms Memmi's assertion in her description of the lack of communication at school as follows.

> All my lessons seemed unrelated to real life. I often wondered how much my teacher could be so interested in the sums I got wrong, and so disinterested in the games I played outside school, and whether Dad was home from hospital or not (Morgan 41).

In her third year at school, Sally naively becomes more aware of the differences between herself and the other children at school in terms of class and income level (43-44). There are kids coming from the rich part of town; Sally can tell by the lunches they bring. Some kids have "bacon sandwiches" whereas she is among the ones who have "sticky jam sandwiches" (44). The other kids have their own rooms and carpets on the floor. Sally feels different as she happily shares her bed with her sisters and brothers whereas the other kids do not even socialize with their siblings at school. When her friends mock the Milroy kids saying that they "stick like glue", Sally can confidently say that of course they do (45). This happens to be the year in which the other children start asking the Milroy kids what country they are from. Sally is puzzled because she thinks she is from the "same" country "as them" (45). The answer that her mother gives is good enough to satisfy her playmates because, to their minds, the Milroys' being Indian is more plausible than their being "Aussies" (45). It is as if they could be anything but Australian. At this point Sally starts to become aware of her racial difference.

Sally's racial difference from the dominant whites and her hybridity lead to a ritual in her school years, which is "to take part in the Anzac Day march once a year" after her father's death, although Sally is unwilling (65). Their assigned Legatee Mr. Wilson takes the children to the march every year and "to all the Legacy outings" (65). The irony lies in the fact that Sally, although not being aware of it, is an Aboriginal girl, but also the daughter of a veteran, so she has to honour the very army which colonized her ancestors' land, and which is, also, the army of her white ancestors. Memmi comments on such social events and celebrations that belong to the colonizer: "It is the colonizer's holiday […] and is celebrated brilliantly […] It is the colonizer's armies that parade, the very ones which crushed the colonized and keep him [her] in his [her] place (Memmi 103). In other words, every social event carries implications and ambiguity for the hybrid

Aboriginals. This is still the case today: even the opening ceremony of the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, showed a very dark Aboriginal man, representing the past, dancing with a blond and blue-eyed girl, representing the future; yet where the place of the mixed race remains a question that is not even thought about by the dominant culture.

During her secondary school years, Sally feels more and more "self-conscious" as she does not like her body and she finds herself "old-fashioned" (101). She feels "lost and intimidated" (102). Despite "desperately" wanting to be like other children at school, Sally does not "seem to be made of the right stuff" (103). In other words, Sally not only suffers from becoming a teenager but also being fundamentally different from others. She conveys her frustration with herself through her reaction to Nan's peculiar and essentially Aboriginal method of sterilising the house. Sally has her first row with Nan over the "freshly chopped onions" she puts everywhere to keep the house free of "germs" (104). After Sally sees her friend Steph's room and notices that it does not have onions or the smell, she protests against the onions in her room (105). The same feeling of being different, lost and unable to make sense of anything grows in high school as Sally becomes "more and more aware" that she is "different to the other kids at school" and that she has "little in common with the girls" in her class (106). Judging by what she sees in other people's lives, Sally feels that, and realizes that to others, she is "abnormal" and unable to "understand the world any more" (107).

Sally is closely attached to her family and feels that they are lucky to have each other as a family but she has no idea about how others see them. On the other hand, Jill is more sociable and aware, as Sally notes "with envy and surprise" that even on the first day of primary school Jill "seemed to fit in, somehow" (23). Jill is also more sensitive to the expectations of her social circle as Sally says: "she was much more attuned to our social environment [...whereas] I did live in a world of my own" (121). Indeed, the writer admits in an interview that she "wasn't very perceptive about the world" and that she "used to live a lot in [her] imagination" (Bird & Haskell 14). Jill feels "shamed" because Sally does not go to Sunday School and pressures her to attend it more regularly,

identifying her problem as not caring about "what other people think" (Morgan 77). Due to her awareness and sensitivity, Jill knows they are "boongs", which is a terrible thing to be because she says: "if they [the kids at school] want to run you down, they say, 'Aah, ya just a boong'" (121). In fact, Jill confesses to Sally that although "none" of her friends "like" Aboriginals, she needs her friends' approval, so she has been "trying to convince" her best friend "for two years" that she is "Indian" (121). In fact, Gladys regretfully confesses that she is "a coward", for saying she is "a Heinz variety" because "she is "scared to say" who she really is (379). In the introduction he wrote for Memmi's work, Sartre summarizes the internal clashes of a colonized human being, which Jill and Gladys experience, as such: "he [she] suffered first in his[/her] relationships with other and in his [/her] relations with himself [/herself]" (Sartre xxv). Jill tries to reason with Sally to stop bothering Gladys and Nan, but Sally has "to hear it from her mother's lips", although she "consistently denied Jill's assertion" (122).

Sally wants her mother to confirm her suspicion about her Aboriginality to satisfy her strong sense of justice, because it is her right to know who she is. The uncompromising aspect of this personality trait is revealed when Sally fails her sister Jill in the test she gives to all students as "the president of the Red Cross Club" (86). Moreover, Gladys' effort to instil in her children the idea that kinship is more important than anything is also exemplified here.

> Jill sat for the test and went home crying to Mum because I failed her. You were only allowed to make two errors and she, uncharacteristically, had made three.
> Mum was furious. She maintained that I should have passed Jill simply because we were related. Jill sat the test the following week and passed. I breathed a sign of relief. I wasn't sure how long I could hold out against Mum's Blood's Thicker Than Water routine (86-87).

It is very meaningful that even at a relatively early stage of becoming aware of a possibility that she may be of a socially unacceptable ancestry, Sally is ready to accept the fact and make peace with being an Aboriginal. Although she is not sure whether they

are Aboriginal or not, she knows that "there's nothing we [the Milroy kids] can do about it, so we might as well just accept it" (121). Pettman claims that "in a school where there are few Aboriginal peers and supports, and especially where staff or other students make Aborigines pay, some children may not identify as Aboriginal, although they may do so happily enough at home or socially" (Pettman 115). This could be the reason why Sally does not want to go to school but "stay home" (Morgan 121) or sit in "the small gum tree" in the backyard instead (101). It is foreshadowed that her unheeding and rebellious character, topped off with her strong sense of justice, will be stimulated by the challenge of not only accepting her heritage, but also asserting it socially. The assertion is to come in the form of an autobiography, publicly and proudly declaring her Aboriginality.

Her dislike for school and education is the only thing in her teenage years that leads to major arguments between Sally and her mother Gladys. What Sally wants is to be an artist (98, 118), for she has been drawing since her childhood with Nan's encouragement, which is an Aboriginal influence because Aboriginals are well-known for the original style in painting that they have developed (123-124). Although this may sound stereotypical, Sally Morgan is actually a world-renowned artist. On the other hand, Gladys makes tremendous efforts to convince Sally to make something of herself by going "on to tertiary studies" (98); be "a vet" or "a doctor", which means becoming respectable and accepted by the colonizing culture (102-139). In fact, Gladys slowly climbs up the white social ladder to start her own florist's business (132). Similarly, she tries to encourage Sally in vain, saying that she "could do anything" if she "really wanted to" (107). De Groen comments on this clash between mother and daughter, suggesting that the career expectations of parents in relation to their children are essentially a Western cliché. Moreton-Robinson elaborates on this by relating it to colonial policies: "Embedded within the rhetoric of the assimilation policy was the notion that Aborigines were to achieve equality with the rest of the Australian public" (Moreton-Robinson 10). Thus, mimicry becomes obvious in such ambition.

> Gladys, who has imbibed the Western view of success based on competition and the work ethic, has always wanted a doctor in the family, an understandable ambition for someone wishing to gain acceptance within white middle-class culture, given the high status of the medical profession in Australia (De Groen 45).

Gladys not only pushes Sally in terms of education, she also brings in Aunt Judy, whom the children know as a family friend, but in fact she is one of the Drake-Drockmans, who employed Nan as a servant. It is very striking that Gladys can bring in a representative of the colonizer herself so that Aboriginal motives emerging in Sally could be exterminated. Sally does not mind Aunt Judy's saying that she cannot be an artist, but she is "furious" because "Mum had the nerve to get someone from outside the family" to talk sense into her; Sally feels betrayed, and quite rightly so (Morgan 119). Obviously, Sally's attachment to her family and desire to keep such topics as her life decisions inside the family make her feel disappointed in her mother's desperate attempts to make her listen. Gladys also knows that she is betraying the family ties by inviting Judy, as she walks around "looking guilty" all afternoon (119). Moreover, her art teacher at school points out "everything wrong" with Sally's drawings in front of the class, humiliating her and making other students laugh at her (119). The teacher's criticism is a perfect example of how the colonizer tries to trap the colonized in mental and cultural boundaries and how they look down on Sally's creatively done painting due to its differences from a western understanding of art: "There was no perspective, I was the only one with no horizon line. My people were flat and floating. You had to turn it on the side to see what half the picture was about. On and on he went" (119). Sally's reaction to these events is to finally lose hope, accept that she is no good in the only field that she thinks she has a talent for, cry and burn all her drawings and paintings (119). Thus, although she has an unconscious cultural affiliation, nurtured and encouraged by Nan, with a *definitively* Aboriginal cultural pursuit, art, she adheres to the white expectations of her mother and studies hard and passes all her exams, because her pride pushes her to prove that she is capable of doing it (124). However, being "sick of people

telling" her "what to do" with her life, Sally does not want to study any more, but "work and earn some money", and "be independent" (139).

There are two cases in which Sally makes contact with Aboriginal children in social life. The first one is when Sally finds that she has "a natural affinity with" the two younger Aboriginal girls at the camp organized by the youth group of the church (138). They tell her about their family, home life and where their parents are from, which are distinctive topics pointing to their Aboriginality. Similarly, but with a reversal of roles, Gladys describes in her story how she enjoyed the affection of older Aboriginal girls in the children's home she was raised in (305). Gladys experienced the privilege of being black by getting extra attention, with a "kiss and cuddle", from the older girls in the children's home; even though they "weren't related, there were strong ties between black kids" (305). Pettman describes the solidarity between the Aboriginal children, and Sally and Gladys in different generations, as a mobilising social power.

> Shared experiences of being labelled and treated as Other may give a basis for affiliation and a collective interest in mobilising in support of particular claims against the state, or against others within the society (Pettman 106).

The second case in which Sally makes the first and the only Aboriginal friend who is mentioned in the book. Sally meets girls from other churches talking about a girl who has "a great personality and sense of humour" (Morgan 139).

> I was keen to meet her. Firstly, because I hadn't met many girls with a great sense of humour, and secondly, because I'd come in on quite a few conversations about this girl that had ended in, 'Yeah, but she's got a great personality' or, 'Yeah, but she's nice, isn't she?' I wondered what was wrong with her (139).

When she meets her, Sally realizes that the reason for other girls' finding excuses for this girl so that she is acceptable is her being "a very dark Aboriginal girl" (140). Although Sally enjoys being with her, their friendship does not last long, as she decides

to go back to her people, live with them and help them if she can. Sally is puzzled by who her people could be and why they should need help though she is "too embarrassed to ask" (140). It is interesting that Sally reflects the social stigma around Aboriginality by not daring to talk about these issues, even with an Aboriginal girl who seems to have conquered the difficulties of being different, to act and talk freely as to change her lifestyle preferences. Indeed, the juxtaposed attitudes of the teenager Sally and her Aboriginal friend parallel those of Nan and autobiographer Sally because one party—teenager Sally and Nan—is silenced due to indirect colonial effects whereas the other—Sally's Aboriginal friend and autobiographer Sally—is outspoken due to the liberty which hybridity provides. Brewster points out that the dichotomy between silence and speech, or confession and secretiveness is underlined by Stephen Muecke (Muecke 1988 quoted in Brewster 33). However, this issue will be detailed in relation to Nan's silence later in this chapter.

As Sally tries out two different jobs and spends some time unemployed, her friends come over to spend some time in the family's house. When one of these friends, Jeff, who comes "from a wealthy Victorian family", wants to have a shower, the family realizes that explaining how their old fashioned "chip heater" works causes a sense of a "culture shock" for the guest; in shame, Gladys decides to make renovations around the house (146). Losing face in social relations forces the family to adopt new technology to improve the conveniences they already have, drawing them closer to white middle class families. In other words, Gladys has internalised mimicry, an inevitable reaction of the colonized to the ongoing and changing assimilation policy that the new generation white Australian people, represented by Jeff, adopted "unconsciously", perhaps because they were also born into it. Sartre's assertion has to be remembered here: "there are neither good nor bad colonists: there are colonialists" (Sartre xxv).

Sally meets Paul, whose brother Bruce has been Sally's friend for a long time (160). Sally and Paul spend a lot of time together, finding that they have a lot in common and enjoying the friendship; moreover, Paul fits into Sally's family well (160). They fall in

love and get married. Gladys also falls in love with Sally's father, but her marriage turns out to be a more troubled one (349). They move into an old weatherboard house that lacks even the most basic necessities, but they love the place and enjoy being on their own (167-168). After a while, Jill and two other friends move in with them; they have an enjoyable time together. Sally and Jill talk more about their background (168). When Sally asks him whether he thinks Nan is Aboriginal, Paul, being a white man brought up in the North "with Aboriginal people", says that it is obvious that she is (169).

Sally can get her mother to admit that they are Aboriginals only after she is a married woman (170). Sally feels "closer to Mum" and that "a wall" between them has "suddenly crumbled away" (170). When she starts to write a book about her family history, Gladys mostly supports her by giving her leads, but she only comes round to telling her own story after Arthur eagerly tells his and dies as a proud, content and happy Aboriginal man. As for Nan, it is the most difficult thing for her to reveal everything, but she goes through a reconciliation process in the course of years. When Sally first starts asking questions as a teenager who feels different from everybody else, Nan gets furious and locks herself into her room (122 &130). Arthur says that she has been "with whitefellas too long", so she has internalized shame because this is how the white people make the Aboriginals feel (188).

Arthur has a key role as he reflects Aboriginal males' predicament in the book. Moreover, except for Sally, Arthur is the only (or the first) person in the family who came up with the idea of telling his story. Although he has always wanted to be the subject, and there have been people promising to write it, they have never come back, so Arthur thinks: "It's better your own flesh and blood writes something like that" (211). Arthur does not want his "story mixed up with the Drake- Brockmans'", knowing that Sally talked to them first (208). This is a political choice Arthur makes in order to contribute to the construction of Aboriginality. Therefore, the writer integrates the interviews with Judy and Alice Drake-Brockman in the chapters, whereas Arthur, Gladys and Daisy's stories appear as separate chapters with an extra cover page added,

and there is no authorial commentary included. Arthur's story has a familiar pattern as he was taken away from his mother Annie when Daisy was just a baby. Arthur claims that Alfred Howden Drake-Brockman, the white station owner, fathered both Daisy and himself (223). Until he was taken away, he grew up with his mother Annie and his Aboriginal father, uncles and grandfather as the white fathers denied paternity in those days (223-224). Pettman explains that mixed race children "were absorbed back into the Aboriginal mother's family and community, with her husband often the social father" and that these children "were culturally and socially Aboriginal, although that was contested by the racist state" (Pettman 112). True to form, Arthur, unlike Gladys and Sally, has gone walkabout (Morgan 224) and attended corroborees and seen initiation ceremonies on Corunna Downs station (230). However, the state asserted "a highly ambivalent public paternity" over children like Arthur and Daisy, taking them away even in cases "where the actual 'white father' was two or three generations back" (Pettman 112). First, Arthur is taken into the station, taught English and given religious instruction as a means of deracinating him from his native language and the traditional belief system which empowers the individual with rainmaking or healing abilities (Morgan 223-224), whereas Christianity assures "compliance and docility" in the colonial sense (Moreton-Robinson 30). Arthur gets beaten up if he speaks to Aboriginals or uses his native language (Morgan 227). Later, he is sent to Swan Native and Half-Caste Mission, where he was christened Corunna, to be educated, but he is more beaten up than educated there (232). Moreton-Robinson explains the discrepancy between the theory and practice of educating the Aboriginals by hinting at the hidden agenda of the colonizer.

> In theory the policy of assimilation was aimed at resocialising and educating Aborigines to be able to function in the white-man's world. However, in practice, it involved cruelty, discipline and punishment for Indigenous girls and boys who received minimal training to become indentured Indigenous servants for Australia's emerging white middle-class (Moreton-Robinson 8).

As Arthur is not aware of the real intentions behind the so-called education he gets, he naively becomes hopeful that he will be given some responsibility in running Corunna Downs one day and that is the reason why he should be schooled (Morgan 226-231). Realizing that education only means violence in reality, he runs away although he cannot escape working for white men (237). He works extremely hard in return for very little food and accommodation, and is terribly exploited by all of his employers (240-251).

So far, the picture drawn by Arthur's story can be generalised to most Aboriginals of his time (except for the ones that were killed or imprisoned). What makes him different is that he managed to buy a farm and machinery of his own. He thinks he "must have been somethin' out of the ordinary, to be a black man ahead of everybody else" (262). He obviously has extraordinary vision, adaptability and perseverance, for he does what white farmers cannot do and stays away from debt and mortgages (252). However, he cannot escape the prejudice and jealousy of the colonizer: "men teased me when I bought the farm, they didn't want a blackfella movin' in" (260). Arthur actually threatened the established order and the unwritten rules of engagement in the colonial environment by being the first farmer in his area to have a cheque book (252) and to buy a truck and a header (262).

> This move threatens the relationship of the coloniser/colonised, in that it allows for Aborigines to become landed people, therefore quasi-members of the dominant white system. A farmer is generally seen to be hardworking and productively contributing to the economic viability of Australian nationhood – it makes 'us' uneasy that one of 'them' has these capabilities (Trees 64).

Arthur's thriving in the capitalist and colonial Australia, as a black man who never uses "the name of Brockman" although he can, strips him of the stereotype of a hunter-gatherer Aboriginal (Morgan 259). However, it would not be right to assert that he has been assimilated or has lost his Aboriginality either, because he turns mimicry into a

weapon against colonisation, which is a telling instance of Bhabha's positive views on mimicry. He is proud to be an Aboriginal evolved into exceeding the capitalistic goal that the white colonizer has set for itself, more importantly without falling into the traps of capitalism which rob farmers by mortgage and debt spiral. Arthur says "I didn't want no one sayin' to me, 'You in debt, we got to sell you up!'" (264).

The reasons for Arthur's remaining an Aboriginal despite his close contact with the colonial apparatus are that he is aware of the atrocities of colonization, he demands land rights, he can speak his native language and he has strong bonds with his family. The first two reasons will be covered in the last chapter due to their relevance to racial issues. The last two reasons are actually more related to culture, family and society.

To begin with, Arthur resists the assimilation policy of the government by not forgetting his native language although "one effect of separating children from their parents and extended family was to diminish the use of Aboriginal languages" (Brewster 46). Sally witnesses Arthur and Nan "talking in their own language", and not only talking but "jabbering away" as if they have always used the language (Morgan 188). On the other hand, Gladys and Sally cannot speak their native language. This makes Nan and Arthur more "eligible" to represent Aboriginals in the essentialist sense due to their proficiency in their own language, which is a vital component of culture, "a basis for association affiliation, familiarity and confidence, safety and belongingness" (Pettman 126). Secondly, Arthur sticks with his elder brother Albert, whom Howden fathered from another black woman, both on Corunna and in the mission, fighting with bullies to defend him as he was weak (Morgan 232). Calling Nan the only family he has, Arthur visits and takes Nan out as much as he can; moreover, he wants her to come and live with him and maybe marry his neighbour , but the Drake-Brockmans do not let her go (254-256). He also gets married and starts a family of his own with four children, later having grandchildren as well (261). Thus, it would be fair to say that Arthur also uses family as a strategy of resistance, as detailed earlier.

As for Gladys, who is the stereotype of a colonized Aboriginal as she tries to stop the transfer of culture to the next generation (by her career preferences for Sally) and wavers between talking about her past and leaving it undisturbed, there are two major familial effects and one social effect that encourage her to take a confessional stance. First of all, Gladys is touched by Arthur's proudly telling his story and dying soon after on his own farm, encouraging her to reconcile with her Aboriginality and reconstruct her racial identity (217). Secondly, Sally learns from Alice Drake-Brockman that Gladys did not actually grow up with Nan at the Drake-Brockmans' house, Ivanhoe, but in a children's home, seeing Nan very rarely (216). When Sally learns the truth she is shocked and demands an explanation, which obliges Gladys to tell her story. As the third effect that encourages Gladys, Sally and Gladys' emotional trip to the North to find their roots comes into focus (275-295). Sally's reason to go to Corunna Downs station, Arthur and Nan's birthplace, is "to be there and imagine what it was like for the people then" (271), although Nan tries to stop them by pretending to be sick, to make them feel guilty. This is another tactic Nan uses to protect her secrets and maintain the silence which is an imposition by the colonizer (272-273). By following different leads they find distant relatives and people from the same tribe as Nan and Arthur. A couple of them comment on Sally and Gladys' searching for their roots and trying to belong as follows:

> …'hundreds of kids gone from here. Most never come back. We think maybe some of them don't want to come home. Some of those light ones, they don't want to own us dark ones.'
> 'I saw picture about you lot on TV,' chipped in another. 'It was real sad. People like you wanderin' around, not knowin' where you come from. Light-coloured ones wanderin' around, not knowin' they black underneath. Good for you comin' back, I wish you the best.' (279)

The warmth, sympathy and hospitality are obvious in these people's reactions. Unlike the white friends that Sally and Jill have in the city, the people in the North, blood relatives or not, approve of Sally's efforts to identify with being an Aboriginal and to construct an identity and sense of belonging. The contrast between the values Sally and

Gladys find in the North and those in white dominated urban life, which is a colonial catalyst in the assimilation of Aboriginals, becomes more conspicuous.

> Aborigines assert as Aboriginal values spirituality against white materialism; caring and sharing against white individualism; extended kin against isolated selfishness and affiliation; and custodial attention to place and land [which will gain more importance in the second chapter] against white exploitation and degradation of the environment (Pettman 1988a[9] quoted in Pettman 113-114).

As they learn about their family ties, with all the common details and rituals that Nan has in common with them, Sally and Gladys' "social memory becomes activated" as a result of their defining themselves in relational terms as mentioned earlier (Moreton-Robinson 15). Therefore, they realize that their family "was something to be proud of" (Morgan 285). The feeling that they "have a sense of place now" is the first step in decolonizing their existence (290).

By the end of their first day in the area, another quality that is attributed to Aborigines manifests itself: a shared spiritual experience. There are other examples of such instances in the book such as Sally hearing Nan's special bird sing (11), Gladys and Nan hearing the ancestors have a corroboree in the swamp every night till Bill died (364), and Gladys having visions at times of trouble in her marriage or in childbirth (352,362,363,367-368,370,375,376). However, Sally and Gladys share a vision in the North, in which three women and a girl, who are Nan's two sisters, her mother and grandmother, are smiling in white gowns (286). This experience is even more striking than the others that are not mentioned here, because it reinforces the idea that "Indigenous women perceive the world as organic and populated by spirits, which connect places and people" (Moreton-Robinson 18). Spirituality is marked as a distinctive Aboriginal trait especially when it takes place in their ancestors' land.

[9] Pettman, Jan. "Learning about Power and Powerlessness: Aborigines and White Australia's Bicentenary." *Race and Class* xxix, 3. (1988):69-85

Although such spirituality may be puzzling for the Western world, Sally Morgan mentions such spiritual experiences in an interview, in a quite offhand manner.

> That's really common though. It is not unusual in Aboriginal culture. All the people I know – friends and everything – all have experiences like that, so it is just taken for granted, but people don't talk about it outside. I have probably broken the rules a bit because I have talked about it. It's only uncommon, I think, if you put it in the context of western society and rationalist thinking where those things are unacceptable, unacceptable because those things cannot be explained. So people would say that you are not having a vision, you're hallucinating (Bird & Haskell 10-11).

In fact, the mother and daughter's shared spiritual experience may be interpreted as an Aboriginal affirmation of their success in decolonization by linking up with their heritage and culture in general terms.

Pettman claims that "in places in the Northern Territory, […] the Aboriginal domain and the white domain are physically quite separate and frequently antagonistic", which Sally and Gladys' visit to a reserve on their second day confirms (Pettman 116-117). Accompanied by a translator, they visit an exclusive Aboriginal community that only speaks the native language.

> Armed with our old photos, we went from house to house on the Reserve, asking about Lilla [Lily, Nan's half-sister whom everybody in the area knows and loves]. We drew a blank every time. I couldn't understand it (Morgan 286-287).

However, the atmosphere changes into a warm welcome when it is understood that the residents of the Reserve know Lily by her Aboriginal name, not by the English one. The fact that Sally and Gladys prove their relationship with Lily and the community, by communicating via the correct signifier (correct meaning in the language of the

community), changes their perception of Sally and Gladys from outsiders into kin. Sally and Gladys are transformed from total outsiders into members.

> Later, we retraced our steps back down through the Reserve, stopping at each house in turn and asking about Wonguynon. It was totally different now, open arms, and open hearts. By the time we reached the other end of the reserve, we'd been hugged and patted and cried over, and told not to forget and come back.
> An old full-blood lady whispered to me, 'You don't know what it means, no one comes back. You don't know what it means that you, with light skin, want to own us.'
> We had lumps in our throats the size of tomatoes. I wanted desperately to tell her how much it meant to us that they would own us. My mouth wouldn't open. I just hugged her and tried not to sob.
> We were all so grateful to Gladys [, the translator who is also a distant relative,] for the kind way she helped us through. Without her, we wouldn't have been able to understand a word. Our lives had been enriched in the past few days. We wondered if we could contain any more (288).

Although it seems to be a very emotional moment as Sally and Gladys finally secure a place for themselves (292, 294-295), this quotation is more important not because of the reconciliation and rootedness implied, but just the opposite. The tragedy of not being able to communicate with their own people bars Sally and Gladys from constructing a full identity because in the course of translating the native language into English, "the untranslatable residue remains to be the property of those who speak it" (During 126). Therefore, most of the experience of the relatives that Sally and Gladys talk to remains inaccessible because they cannot use the native language which "affirms a sense of intimacy and common experience" (Brewster 46). The tragedy of the colonized is the triumph of the colonizer, for "control over language" (Ashcroft et al. 1989:7) is achieved and "the language was not passed on to their [the Aboriginals'] children" (Talib 81).

Gladys finally tells her story, which has gaps due to her unknown father. As a child, she desperately dreams of living with her mother to satisfy her longing for a family (Morgan

315) and cannot understand why she cannot live at Ivanhoe and go to school with the Drake-Brockman girls (329). Despite Gladys' questioning who her father is, Daisy does not say anything directly but implies that it was Howden Drake-Brockman by saying that "everybody knew who the father was, but they all pretended they didn't know" (419). Alice tells Daisy that she cannot keep Gladys at Ivanhoe (420) because "Alice can live with [… Howden's] sexual indiscretion, namely Daisy, but seeks to remove the product of his incestuous rape, Gladys, without any consideration for the feelings of Daisy and Gladys" (Moreton-Robinson 25). On one of the holidays she spends at Ivanhoe, Alice Drake-Brockman gives Gladys a black doll with "a slave cap on its head" upon which Gladys throws the gift on the floor and starts crying, for she does not want a black doll; Alice laughs (Morgan 328). Alice's "gesture" carries implications in that she represents the colonizer mistress who imposes the role of a servant onto the native child, so the conditioning carried out by the oppressive culture in imposing "racial stereotype[s]" as a means of "colonial othering" begins with childhood (Huggan 24). On the other hand, Gladys' refusing the black doll is also a refusal of being an Aboriginal, though according to the white people's definitions. In fact, Gladys' witnessing that "all the Aboriginal girls were sent out as domestics once they reached fourteen" confirms the persistence of this policy (Morgan 339). Another such policy is revealed in Gladys' story. Gladys mentions having dinner with the Drake-Brockmans, but feeling "like an outsider", for her mother ate in the kitchen and came to "wait on" them when the bell was rung, which made her feel "very unsure of my [her] place in the world", so she stops eating with them (338). This is another method of alienating the colonized from her family.

Moreover, as in all the other contexts of education, the white culture assumes "the role of the knowing subject", whereas the Aboriginal woman, in this case Gladys as a child, becomes "the object to be taught" what she should aspire to (Moreton-Robinson 22). Similar to Arthur and Sally's unpleasant experiences of education, Gladys encounters abusive teachers and headmasters, who touch the girls' legs or lift their skirts before caning them (Morgan 331,332, 343); in other words, the theme of sexual abuse by the

colonizer as a means of degrading the colonized by asserting power recurs in her experience as well. Although Gladys says she has not been raped, she admits that she had "no protection" and such misfortune happened to some girls at the children's home (336).

Telling her story is a healing experience for Gladys because she becomes reconciled with her identity and changes her opinion of how her children should "achieve greatness": "All I want my children to do is pass their Aboriginal heritage on" (379). Nan goes through a reformation during the time Sally writes the book. She becomes more sympathetic towards the idea of openly accepting her Aboriginality and the troubles of other black people in the world (173). On her deathbed, she tells Sally's children stories, passing down the Aboriginal culture (397,399) probably because she comes to realize, in Memmi's terms, that "the most serious blow suffered by the colonizer is being removed from history and from the community" (Memmi, 91). When Nan tells her story, she mentions the Victorian attitudes of the colonizer, represented by the Drake-Brockmans, as revealed by their building a tennis court on Corunna (Morgan 405), having servants wait on them (414) and making Daisy the nanny to their children, "like they have in England" (412). All of these are examples of how the colonizers assert their difference from and superiority over the natives. Being "a house native", Nan was isolated from her family and friends who were "camp natives" and had to "sneak away" to see them (410). Such categorization reinforces the othering process by means of classifying the individuals within the native community according to terms coined by the white, which blurs their senses of social identity and belonging to a group.

In conclusion, although Nan resists talking to Sally about the past for a long time, "insisting on her right to withhold information from her" (Gelder 11) as "the colonized […] avoids his [her] own past" (Memmi 104), *My Place* documents "the lost or suppressed aspects of personal identity" (De Groen 33) with the help of family ties, relationships and striving racially and culturally to unite with the Aboriginal society. In an effort to decolonize their history from the ongoing colonial practices of the white

society, Gladys, Arthur and Nan tell their stories to Sally, for Memmi answers the question he raises: “By what else is the heritage of a people handed down? By the education which it gives to its children and by language, that wonderful reservoir constantly enriched with new experiences” (Memmi 104). Sally is also aware that, when telling her Aboriginal history, “it must have been difficult for her [Nan] to speak English, and therefore to express herself” (Morgan 431). Nevertheless, Nan’s being equipped with all the cultural aspects of being an Aboriginal is the reason why Sally thinks “something more than Nan’s body was dying” (436). What is disappearing is the responsibility of “the Indigenous women [...] to impart such principles [as the importance of relationality and their own history and culture] to their own children and grandchildren in later life”, which being the head of the family necessitates (Moreton-Robinson 18). In spite of years of oppression, separation, fear and violence disguised as education, Morgan manages to develop senses of belonging and identity in the familial and social context, pass them down to the next generations and raise the awareness of her contemporaries.

CHAPTER 3

SENSE OF BELONGING AND IDENTITY IN RELATION TO PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

The notion of environment encompasses land, landscape, nature or space, all of which have been used interchangeably and analyzed in relation to post-colonial literature because they "play a significant role in establishing the subject's sense of location and belonging" (Innes 64) . They assume different meanings for the colonizer, the native and the individuals of "mixed race and cultures" in colonial and post-colonial contexts (64). Land, landscape or space are "linked to concepts of power" (Darian-Smith et al. 2) because they function as a dynamic "medium of exchange, a site of visual appropriation, a focus for the formation of identity", which produces "a complex network of political, social and cultural identities" (Mitchell 2). In other words, land serves to "create and naturalize histories and identities inscribed upon it", and thus it "hides and makes evident social and historical formations", by means of which "space is transformed into place" (Darian-Smith et al. 3).

It is due to this power that the native is strong against and resistant to colonial discourse. However, the colonizing culture always feels threatened by the power of wild nature and vast lands "that needed to be subdued"; therefore, colonialism is "always on the defensive" (Mutekwa 730). In accordance with the colonial ambitions, "space was divided […] so that it could be conquered and assimilated" (Rosner 83). The white colonizer has tried to appropriate an imperial landscape by "the European naming and mapping of its [the landscape's] geographical features" (Darian-Smith et al. 5). Guidebooks for prospective settlers published in Britain "advised that the house should provide a solid barrier between the settler family and the unfamiliar landscape" (Rosner 67). It is, therefore, significant that Mary Turner "feels no organic tie with her environment: she is indifferent to the farm and afraid of the dark, 'hostile' bush" (Sarvan

536), and that Sally does not feel at ease in the formal constructions of the government like the school and the hospital with their "rigid and 'unnatural' regulations" (Innes 66).

3.1 *The Grass Is Singing* and the Effect of Physical Environment on Sense of Belonging and Identity

Description of setting and nature has been used as a subtle tool to provide an insight into the characters and themes in a literary work. *The Grass Is Singing* is no exception. The interplay of man-made environment and the natural environment described in rich detail reveals a lot about the protagonist, Mary, who is also described as "a misfit" and one of "the self-exiled" (Lessing 10). The setting in *The Grass Is Singing* is in harmony with the novel's cyclic structure. The story begins with Mary's death, and by means of a flashback, leads back up to the night of the murder. Likewise, the narrative begins and ends in the African countryside, with a very short part in the middle, which takes place in the town. In this chapter, Mary's life will be followed chronologically rather than according to the narrative sequence, dealing with all of the natural descriptions that are relevant to Mary's lack of sense of belonging as a part of her identity.

Lessing quotes Eliot's *The Waste Land* in her epigraph, which reveals "the source of her title for the readers", and it is at the same time "a physical and spiritual analogue for the world that she depicted in her novel" (Sprague 178). In other words, "the spiritual and lifeless decay of the European is reflected in a landscape seen in terms of aridity and nothingness" (Rooney 433). It is drily ironic that the distant African land that the empire considered to be "waste places" and would rather transform into "civilization" (Rosner 64) is depicted as the setting for this novel, "a tragedy of the wasteland of colonialism" (Fand, 99-100).

The opening scene, where Mary is found dead, is set in the South African countryside. Later the writer establishes that Mary spent her childhood in "one of those dusty dorps [villages]", with a store and a bar close to her parents' house in the country, yet for her,

“home meant England, although her parents were South African and had never been to England” (Lessing 32). This opens the possibility that she does not feel that she belongs to the land on which she was born. Despite being a second-generation colonial, Mary seems to detach herself from the land she has lived on as if her state of being away from “home” would end someday and all she was going through was just temporary. As for what home literally means to her, it is made clear that where she lived in childhood was no more than a “wooden box shaken by passing trains”, which hints at lack of sense of security and stability (39). The physical environment surrounding her as a child was a “little sordid house on stilts, the screaming of trains, the dust and the strife between her parents”, which do not provide the sense of security one would wish to find at home (36).

As the story progresses, the reader is presented with little descriptive detail of the town, and this is the setting where Mary spends all her adult life until she gets married. Naturally, Mary feels secure in the town because she is far away from the “dorps […] surrounded by miles and miles of nothingness – miles and miles of veld [flat field that is grassy or bushy]” (44-45). Interestingly, Mary lives in a girls’ club that has the atmosphere of a dormitory, a place where young and single women earning little money stay only temporarily. By living there, Mary “assures herself of company and at the same time impersonality” (Sarvan 534). The fact that she lives there well into her thirties indicates that she is very much adapted to the feeling that it is just a phase, a temporary situation. In fact, Mary’s choice of accommodation is a sign of her not knowing what to do with her life, or not knowing herself well enough to make a decision that will shape her life. Thus, her environment supports the way she leads her life in the town, unconsciously waiting for something to happen because she is too passive, ironically juxtaposed with the active social life she had in town, and unable to make a decision about her life. As a result, when something finally happens “she kn[ows] so little about herself that she [is] thrown completely off her balance because some gossiping women […] said she ought to get married” (Lessing 44).

When Mary marries Dick and moves to the country in this state of not knowing what she wants, she seems to be glad to "get close to nature", but this is just a superficial statement that comforts her (51). It could only be "a reassuring abstraction", and "a pleasant sentimentality" to which nature and environment contrast harshly. It is sweltering, dry, dusty and suffocating in the country, whereas Mary is used to going on posh picnics with "a portable gramophone", yet still feeling "profoundly relieved to get back to hot and cold water in taps and the streets and the office" (51). Before she "actually encounters the veldt in the flesh" she could entertain romantic ideas about nature, but "once she actually arrives at the farm the more powerful and pervasive master colonialist narrative takes over" (Fishburn 7). Obviously, the veld would not tolerate naivety and weakness but demands adaptability and strength.

The night when Mary arrives at her new "home", the writer paints the picture of a miserable, lonely and helpless Mary, intimidated by the awe-inspiring and overwhelming presence of wild nature:

> She looked round her, shivering a little, for a cold breath blew out of the trees and down in the vlei [body of inland water] beyond them hung a cold white vapour […] she turned and ran back, suddenly terrified, as if a hostile breath had blown upon her, from another world, from the trees […] she stumbled in her high heels over the uneven ground and regained balance (Lessing 52).

It is obvious that she does not fit in with the new environment and nature does not give her a warm welcome. Mary's isolated life in the town prevents her from understanding the new life she has embarked on and the realities of the colonial situation, and thus her "lack of comprehension becomes an experience of nature as the site of obscure threat" (Walder 111). The danger implicit in the colonial encounter is projected onto nature and the environment. This hostility is worsened by the heat that Mary cannot stand, so she asks when it is going to rain (Lessing 70). Ironically enough, it rains on the night when she is murdered. Lessing complements her "anti-colonial critique" with an "ironic use of

imagery" because "the dry season ends and the rains come […] signalling the political shift of power" (Visel 160). In other words, Moses' killing Mary symbolizes the black natives' gaining their independence from the white rule and making a new beginning, marked by the life-giving quality of rain, which is supported by Lessing's "diction that foregrounds ideas of purging, cleansing and rebirth" (Roberts 79).

After spending some time in the heat, she comes to understand that the weather had never bothered her when she was in the town: "[I]t seemed to her that in the town there had been no seasons" (Lessing 70). This further implies that, in the town, she has led a protected life, immune from weather conditions and the nature (in both senses) of South Africa, which sustained her illusions about herself. However, in the country, she comes to face the harsh realities and becomes a slave to the cycle of nature. Her immunity is somehow breached by the extreme heat and desperation for rain, which stands for relief, and having to bear the fact that she cannot do anything about it, but be dependent on the cycle of nature and wait patiently for it.

When Mary is having tea with Dick at "home" the night she arrives, she suddenly feels irritated because she is "possessed with the thought that her father, from his grave, ha[s] sent out his will and forced her back into the kind of life he had made her mother lead" (54-55). This is basically because Dick's place reminds her strongly of her own house in her childhood as she feels "that it [is] not in this house she [is] sitting with her husband but back with her mother" (54). The writer uses the environment to underline Mary's matrophobia at this point. She wants to avoid being like her mother, leading the same miserable life and living under the same miserable conditions that all come back to her embodied in Dick's house. Naturally, Mary feels trapped in the marriage that she has just stepped into, and this feeling of hers is also portrayed by using the sunlight "barring the room with gold" when she woke up to her first morning of imprisonment in the house (57). The weather contributes to the psychological hostility of the environment in a more physical way by suffocating Mary. Even on her first morning in the house, it is so hot that "already the song of the birds ha[s] been quenched by the deepening heat; at

seven in the morning Mary [finds] her forehead damp and her limbs sticky" (60). Moreover, the dogs in the house give her the non-person treatment by "ignoring her, the stranger" (60). To put it another way, the physical environment she finds herself in is full of hints of either hostility or indifference. All of this is a slap in the face that shatters the illusions Mary has nurtured and the immunity she has enjoyed in the town.

The fire which starts in the fields comes very close to the house almost surrounding it as a sinister sign that foreshadows danger and destruction because charred grass lands on Mary's skin and leaves "a greasy black smudge" (74). Mary does not want to see the remnants of the fire that "swe[eps] over part of their farm" as they remind her of her deteriorating situation both economically and emotionally.

In her first real fight with Dick, Mary puts all the blame on the environment she lives in, as the house is a "pokey little place" where Dick "won't put in ceilings" (79). According to white African standards, good housing should "not [be] made of local materials" and it should create "strict division between the interior and the exterior and between England and Southern Rhodesia" (Rosner 73). This is an attempt on the part of colonialism to maintain racial hierarchy and separation so that "the settler women" could remain inside or close to the house, fulfilling their role as signifiers of home and of whiteness, of 'white values'" (72). Moreover, this spatial othering provides the white settlers with racial and social identities. Referring to Lessing's *Under My Skin*, Rosner points out that "having an identity is equated with having a home" and this theme can be traced in Lessing's first novel as well (76). Although Rosner's article's focus is not the same as that of this thesis, nevertheless her findings strongly support the present analysis. The roof, on the other hand, is a "key marker of financial progress", so it is not surprising that Mary brings it up in the first fight in their marriage, emphasizing her financial discontent (74). Although the fight between them started because of the house boy, the environment where Mary does not belong is the real cause. The natural description given is totally apt as it reflects Mary's mood.

> After a while feeling caged, she went out into the dark outside the house, and walked up and down the path between the borders of white stones which gleamed faintly through the dark, trying to catch a breath of cool air to soothe her hot cheeks. Lightening was flickering gently over the kopjes [small rocky hills]; there was a dull red glow where the fire burned; and overhead it was dark and stuffy. She was tense with hatred (Lessing 80).

The Turners' iron roof is "not a wise choice" despite the "solid appearance" it gives, because it has "severe health consequences" (Rosner 74). This picture is a very significant one as it symbolically summarizes the state of colonialism, which looks firm and strong although it is actually faulty and ambivalent. The house cannot protect Mary from the outside world. On the contrary, it is the house that makes her sick. As a result of imposed separations such as white-black, inside-outside, house-bush, the individual's psyche is fragmented due to "an inability to reconcile" these oppositions (74). As mentioned earlier, this situation is foreshadowed when Mary first arrives at Dick's house. The "disquieting and uncanny emanations arising from" Dick's house and its surroundings "presage the breakdown of the barrier between the internal and external in Mary's psyche" (Roberts 75). It is obvious that the Turners' house does not fit the ideal profile and neither do they, as explained earlier.

With the opening of the store, Mary feels trapped in her childhood even more and the physical conditions make everything worse for her, which marks the onset of her depression. The store was "always there, a burden on her, not five minutes' walk down the path where ticks would crawl on her legs from the crowding bushes and grass" (Lessing 96). The despair manifests itself as dreaming of going on a holiday or going back to the town because "the soil, the black labourers, always so cut off, Dick in his farm clothes with his hands stained with oil – these things did not belong to her, they were not real" (97). Her desperation to go back to her old setting is portrayed very vividly when she sees the advertisement for a shorthand typist by the old firm she worked for.

> She was standing in the kitchen, that was lit dimly by a flickering candle and the ruddy glimmer from the stove, beside the table loaded with soap and meat, the cookboy just behind her, preparing supper – yet, in a moment, she was transported away from the farm back into her old life (98).

These lines very clearly juxtapose the physical conditions she is in with the one she wants to see herself in. Similarly, the description of the weather and the environment in the town when she gets there is the exact opposite of the ones on the farm.

> It was such a lovely, lovely day, with its gusts of perfumed wind and its gay glittering sunshine. Even the sky looked different, seen from between the well-known buildings, that seemed so fresh and clean with their white walls and red roofs. It was not the implacable blue dome that arched over the farm, enclosing it in a cycle of unalterable seasons; it was a soft flower-blue and she felt, in her exaltation, that she could run off the pavement into the blue substance and float there, at ease and peaceful at last. The street she walked along was lined with bauhinia trees, with their pink and white blossoms perched on the branches like butterflies among leaves. It was an avenue of pink and white, with the fresh blue sky above. It was a different world! It was her world (99-100).

However, at the Club, the rule which dictates that married women are not allowed comes as a reality check for Mary. "The unchanged setting which was yet so very strange to her" implies that she is a different person and she is not welcome in her old habitat (100). Her impression that everything at the Club "looked so glossy, and clean and ordered" was the exact opposite of her house in the country (100). Ironically, although the Club has not changed, Mary does not belong there any more because she is not the same person. On the other hand, when she went to the office that "had been part of herself" she found that "the furniture had been changed: the desk where she has sat was moved, and it seemed outrageous that her things should have been tampered with" (100).

At the beginning of Chapter Seven, the natural description of the cool months, “when the country was purified of its menace”, is full of positive imagery, which shows that “Mary felt healed - almost. Almost, she became as she had been, brisk and energetic, but with a caution in her face and in her movements that showed she had not forgotten the heat would return” (105). In other words, Mary has “no connection with the natural world, seeing it as brutal and hostile” (Sarvan 537), so even at this time of year she is afraid to go “far into the bush” (Lessing 104).

Winter draws Mary closer to Dick. The joy of seeing frost “in this baked, god-forsaken spot” and the pleasure of “sharing with him this moment of delight” mark the beginning of a more peaceful stage in Mary’s life (106). However, since the area where they live is a malaria district, Dick becomes ill. One more time, the environment refuses the comfort Mary needs. The doctor’s comments about the house prove that Mary is right in her complaints about the environment she lives in. The doctor recommends that the house “should be wired for mosquitoes”, “the bush should be cut back for another hundred yards about the house” and that “ceilings be put in at once” (107). Moreover, he prescribes a holiday on the coast for Mary’s bad nervous condition, yet Mary “has never seen the sea” (107). Mary resents the doctor for making these suggestions so nonchalantly, disregarding the fact that they are too poor to afford these things.

When Mary has to go to the fields to replace Dick, the environment rejects her with its rough road, slippery grassy path, flies everywhere, bushes leaving “sharp needles in her skirt” and shaking “red dust into her face” (109). On the other hand, since Dick is incapable of supervising the work on the farm, Mary takes over, and this draws her closer to the land and makes “it real” for her (117). Now, she is able to see “the farm whole in her mind” (116). “Before it had been an alien and rather distasteful affair from which she voluntarily excluded herself” (117). For the first time, being engaged in farming and the land gives Mary a sense of achievement and satisfaction. With Mary’s analysis of the situation of the farm and her suggestion to put things right, it becomes clear that Mary and Dick have totally different ideas about how the land should be

managed: “she was looking at the farm from outside, as a machine for making money” whereas Dick “loved it and was part of it” (122-123). However, his failure to conquer the land and make it fertile in order to make financial gain out of it, which is the major goal of colonialism as “a conquering institution”, undermines his masculinity and designates him as “not measuring up to the standard” (Mutekwa 731). He is considered to be one of the poor whites, who are “only marginally better than Africans”; therefore, he will be “robbed of his land in more or less the same way Africans are robbed of theirs” (731). Dick’s weakness becomes “a fault line of the colonial institution as it gives the colonized the space from which they can subvert colonialism” (731), which creates ambivalence that colonial discourse attempts to obviate through a golden rule: “Thou shalt not let your fellow whites sink lower than a certain point; because if you do, the nigger will see he is as good as you are” (Lessing 178).

When Dick accepts her proposal to grow tobacco and starts building the barns, for the first time Mary has an effect on the environment she lives in. In “a final spasmodic attempt to make of Dick the only thing she really wants him by now to be—a material success” (Zak 487), she watches “the progress of the block of tobacco barns that were being built in the vlei below as she might have watched a ship constructed that would carry her from exile” (Lessing 129).

With the hope and motivation provided by the goals she has set, Mary manages to get through the hot and dry season relatively easily as she “said to Dick that the heat wasn’t so bad this year” although Dick thought “that it had never been worse” (129). This shows that Mary’s mood makes her more vulnerable to weather conditions. When she feels trapped and helpless, the heat bakes her and she finds it unbearable, yet when she is hopeful, she does not mind the heat so much. Dick also diagnoses this as a “fluctuating dependence on the weather, an emotional attitude towards it” (129).

Mary’s and Dick’s attitude towards nature is juxtaposed as Dick thinks Mary’s attitude is “alien to him”, but because “he submitted himself to heat and cold and dryness, they

were no problems to him" (129). In other words, Dick has learnt how to adapt to and live in harmony with the nature's ways, so "he was their creature, and did not fight against them as she [Mary] did" (129). Mary, on the other hand, not only refuses to adapt as revealed by her attempts to cool herself by pouring water over her body, but she also comes to see the land as a means of making cash, an approach that Charlie Slatter, Dick and Mary's closest neighbour, is criticized for and that strips the soil of its soul and reproductive qualities.

The major depression Mary is in is depicted through the description of skies that "were black and cold, without even stars to break their blackness" just like the desperation she feels (141). Her deteriorating mental situation is also due to Moses' overwhelming presence in the small house as "he appeared even taller and broader than he was because of the littleness of the house" (142). Thus, Mary is even more trapped in the tiny habitat she had. To clarify this even more, the author depicts Mary going to the bedroom to get some water after scolding Moses who is in the kitchen, because "she didn't want to face the native Moses" (145). She clearly tries to avoid Moses; however, the bedroom is not the place to seek shelter either. When she looks at the bed, "the great connubial bed which she always hated", it reminds her of "the hated contact with Dick's muscular body, to which she had never been able to accustom herself" (146). To put it simply, she is not only stranded in the wild African country, where "Mary's fragile civilized inhibitions cannot supply a sufficient authority or cohesive force" but also inside the house, where the kitchen is invaded by Moses and the bedroom by Dick, with neither of whom Mary has a comfortable relationship. Due to the fact that Dick "cannot assert his manhood in the way either she or the landscape requires" (Bertelsen 1991:652), Mary increasingly feels the need for "a man stronger than she who could assume responsibility for shaping both their lives" (Zak 487). The more disappointed in Dick Mary becomes, the stronger an ascendancy "the combined antagonism of the natural forces, as represented by the hostile elements, the bush and its 'boys'" gains (Bertelsen 1991:652).

In Chapter Nine, where Mary's depression is further detailed through expressions such as "hot hazy days with slow winds blowing in sultry, dusty gusts from the encircling granite kopjes", she comes to a stage where she loses all her responsiveness (Lessing 148). Although Mary sits "hatless under the blazing sun, with the thick cruel rays pouring on to her back and shoulders, numbing and dulling her", she is actually incapable of feeling anything except for the sensation of being "bruised all over, as if the sun had bruised her flesh" (148). Her depression reaches such a point that she cannot run simple errands around the house. For instance, her chicken die of starvation as she forgets to feed them: "Fowls were lying over the baked earth, twitching feebly in death for lack of water" (149). This sentence impressively and metaphorically summarizes Mary's end, which is depicted at the beginning of the book and which will be dealt with at the end of this chapter.

After the incident where Moses touches Mary to help her to bed, Mary sleeps and later wakes up to see "the sky outside the square of window, banked with thunderous blue clouds, and lit with orange light from the sinking sun" (152). The contrasting emotions depicted through the horror of the thunderous clouds and the lively, happy orange overlap with the horror and loathing that Mary feels when touched by a native and the comfort and support she subconsciously finds in Moses' giving her water, leading her to the bedroom and covering her legs with her coat, shortly his "almost fatherly" way of taking care of her (151). The depiction of the bedroom when she wakes up further emphasizes Mary's mixed feelings as "the room was now a shell of amber light and shadows, hollowed out of the wide tree-filled night" (152). The light and shadows stand for Mary's mixed feelings, her inner world, yet still this room, which is her world, protecting her like a shell from the hostility of the country, is carved out of the surrounding wild nature that is closing in on her. The contradiction that gives rise to Mary's mixed feelings is her being "oppressed by the bush, ignorant of the lives of Africans, yet pathetically yearning for the physical freedoms they represent" (Walder 108). The amber light, just like the colour orange in the sky, hints at joy that is overshadowed by shame and disgust. However, the writer does not explicitly state that

Mary is comforted by Moses' almost affectionate behaviour as such an intimacy is/was unthinkable in South Africa. As with, for example, Lessing's description of Mary's character, the narrator does not dictate information, rather the information is indirectly given, insinuated through the scenes that the reader is made to witness. Lessing seems to offer this subtle hint to the careful reader who bears in mind that Mary grew up without the affection of a sober father who cares.

After the rains come, Mary's relationship with Moses, which will be analyzed in detail in the last chapter, changes. His gaining the upper-hand in their struggle for power is reflected in the description of him bringing her a tray full of food, adorned with flowers, although Mary only wanted tea. Through the description of "crude yellows and pinks and reds, bush flowers, thrust together clumsily, but making a strong burst of colour on the old stained cloth", the colonizer and the colonized personified in Mary and Moses are being contrasted (Lessing 154). The negative associations of the "old stained cloth" can be attributed to Mary, who lets herself sink into depression and helplessness. The flowers creating a "burst of colour" stand for Moses, who is full of life, healthy, strong, caring and in harmony with the environment, giving him freedom of mobility, whereas Mary is worn, numbed, weak, defeated, depressed and in captivity due to feeling incompatible with the land. To put it simply, their contrasting situations are reflected in the flowers on the cloth.

Moses' caring and affectionate attitude reaches the stage where he himself admits that the outside world is dangerous for Mary and she "should not walk around in the dark bush by herself" even if it is to check on Dick, who is late for dinner (156). This is a turning-point in the novel as Moses is mimicking a white husband's protective attitude to ward off the dangers of the bush, unanimously associated by the white people with "black peril", which means "black male rape of white women" (Rosner 72). He seems to be taking over Dick's place as the husband who imposes domesticity in the guise of protection. Moses, as a black man, assumes the role of a white husband who is preoccupied with protecting the white woman from the black assailant because he is

suspicious of his fellow black man, which creates ambivalence. This shows that through mimicry and ambivalence engendered here, Moses reverses the colonial discourse of "emasculation of the [black] servant, commonly called the 'houseboy', whatever his age" (73). Thus, Moses' deployment of the white connotations of *the bush*, functions as "a way of getting back at the colonialists and recovering his masculinity which colonialism has robbed him of, acts crowned by the murder of Mary" (Mutekwa 736). In other words, Moses succeeds in subverting the colonial authority by taking advantage of a major fault line, which resonates with Bhabha's views on mimicry and ambivalence. In fact, "the veil of silence, hypocrisy and covering up that follows the death", as explained in the previous chapter, "shows that colonialism had [*sic*] been struck at its weakest point" (736).

Contrasted with Mary's freedom in the city, her coming back from the cinema late at night, and walking in the streets of the town without a care in the world, her situation stands out as literally being trapped in the house. From this point on, "it is too late for freedom from the dominant ideology" because the "domestic sphere" that is assigned to women is both isolating and imprisoning" (Walder 108). With her physical world shrinking, her depression gets worse, reaching its peak with Dick's illness.

When Dick falls ill with malaria the second time, the doctor comes over once more. He scolds Mary for not making the necessary changes he had prescribed earlier such as "cut[ting] down the bush round the house where mosquitoes can breed" (Lessing 157). The principle that "the space immediately around the house should be kept free of bush and undergrowth" (*Handbook for the Use of Prospective Settlers on the Land*[10] 54 quoted in Rosner 67), which the empire formally dictates, is reiterated by the doctor. Judging by the state of the house, the doctor thinks that Mary and Dick are a hopeless case: "The window-curtains faded by the sun to a dingy grey, torn and not mended, proclaimed it. Everywhere was evidence of breakdown in will" (Lessing 157). Mary's

[10] Southern Rhodesia, *Handbook for the Use of Prospective Settlers on the Land* (Issued by Direction of the Hon. Minister for Agriculture and Lands, 1924)

physical environment is the solid proof of her emotional and mental state into which she is forced again by the colonial environment she has lived in. If the house and Mary's body are to "be interpreted as representatives of colonialism", it can be said that both will be "destroyed by 'Africa'" (Roberts 79). Previously, she made an effort to keep herself busy with sewing and mending, but now, she does not even have the will to eat or sleep. Metaphorically speaking, the sun has eroded Mary's will power and resistance, just as it has faded the curtains. They are "torn and not mended," just as Mary is torn and tormented (Lessing 157). She finally gives up her last speck of responsibility, which is looking after Dick, when Moses insists that she get some sleep.

Just before she surrenders and retreats into the corner of the sofa, Moses' overpowering insistence on protecting Mary is depicted by means of the view from the window and Mary and Moses' physical positioning in the room: "She saw him standing by the window, blocking the square of the star-strewn, bough-crossed sky, waiting for her to go" (160). When the scene is visualized, it is clear that Moses stands in Mary's way, protecting her from the sky that is barred with boughs, symbolizing her captivity and helplessness. Yet this is not comforting for Mary at all as she fears intimacy with Moses, emerging as the handing over of power to Moses. Therefore, she specifically feels even more trapped in this "close night, and the air in the little room hardly stirred", underlining her immobility (160). Except for the "little intimate glimmer of light", which stands for human contact in Moses' affection, "in the room itself there was only a small yellow circle on the table" and "everything else was dark", hinting at Mary's lethargic despair (160). The sound of her loudly "thudding heart" is accompanied by "the tiny night noises from the bush" when she "heard the movement of branches, as if something heavy was pushing its way through them", foreshadowing something evil and invasive (160). "The low crouching trees all about" scares her to death as "she had never become used to the bush, never felt at home in it" (160). This sentence is extremely relevant to the argument of this chapter, explaining that Mary, as an outsider, will never be a part of Africa and she is aware of this. She could only live peacefully in the town that was superficially inserted into the African land by the white colonizer. Her

marriage, dislocating her from her cocoon, exposes Mary to wild nature with "the strangeness of the encircling veld", and consumes her slowly by making her confront the consequences of having nurtured a fake sense of reality (160). She knows that she is temporarily delaying her own destruction by taking refuge in "the small brick house, like a frail shell that might crush inwards under the presence of the hostile bush" (160). For this reason Mary "often thought how, if they left this place, one wet fermenting season would swallow the small cleared space, and send the young trees thrusting up from the floor, pushing aside brick and cement, so that in a few months there would be nothing left but heaps of rubble about the trunks of trees" (160).

As Mary tries to sleep on the sofa, she feels and hears the movements of Moses, and she is disturbed by the physical proximity. Moses is depicted as sitting behind the wall, "so close that if it had not been there his back would have been six inches from her face!" (161). She listens to Moses' "soft breathing which seemed, as she turned restlessly, to come from all over the room" (161). The disturbing presence of Moses haunts her by means of this sound that comes "first from just near her beside the sofa, then from a dark corner opposite", signifying that Moses is actually close to her with his caring attitude, but he is also distant, unknown and scary (161). Therefore, "like a small hunted animal turned to face its pursuers", Mary "turned and faced the wall" so that she would position herself in the only way "that she could localize the sound" (161). This is how she tries to avoid the sense of being invaded in her personal space.

Before sunrise, she looks out of the window to see that "all the sky was clear and colourless, flushed with rosy streaks of light, but there was darkness still among the silent trees" (167). The depiction is significant as the "clear and colourless sky" implies the end of a night of turmoil during which Mary "flushed" with embarrassment and rage resulting from her dreams and the important conversation with Moses, which reveals her fear of him:

> Suddenly he said softly: 'Madame afraid of me, yes?' […]
> She fought to control her voice, and spoke after a few

> minutes in a half whisper: 'No, no, no. I am not afraid.' […]
> He said easily, familiarly, 'Why is Madame afraid of me?' She said half-hysterically, in a high-pitched voice, laughing nervously: 'Don't be ridiculous. I am not afraid of you.' […] She saw him give her a long, slow, imponderable look; then turn, and walk out of the room (165-166).

The end of the night, drawing near, is like a breath of fresh air for Mary, yet still there is fear and "darkness" hidden nearby (167). Hence, she starts avoiding Moses in the tiny house, "trying to keep out of his way; if he was in one room she went to another" (167).

In Chapter Ten, when Tony, Dick's replacement fresh from England, comes to live on and learn about the farm, he sees Moses helping Mary get dressed. Judging by what he has seen up to that point, he decides that Mary is having a "complete nervous breakdown" (184). He questions what madness is and comes to the conclusion that it is "a refuge, a retreating from the world", just as Mary does (187). She has run away from the surrounding environment to such an extent that "there was only the farm; not even that - there was only this house, and that was it" (187). The day before Mary and Dick were supposed to leave the farm, Mary, taking courage from Tony's presence, sends the native away at the cost of Moses' making a scene.

The last chapter opens with Mary's suddenly waking up at night to see that "the sky was luminous; but there was an undertone of cold grey; the stars were bright; but with a weak gleam" (190). This depiction of the sky hints at Mary's mixed feelings after Moses left. She is both relieved, almost joyful, for Moses has left, but she also feels that she has become totally dependent on Moses by now and she cannot get him back even if she wants to. These mixed feelings are elaborated on by means of natural descriptions in the chapter. In the first half of the chapter, Mary enjoys a kind of awakening and, feeling fresh and alive, she wakes up to a new sensuality, experiencing the surrounding nature and actually enjoying it for the first time. This lasts only till sunrise. In the second part

of the chapter, however, she is shaken into the fact that with sunrise come terror and evil, resulting in her total destruction.

In the first half of the chapter, Mary wakes up "vastly peaceful and rested" and she visualizes the room and then the house (190). She pictures the house; "hollowing it out of the night in her mind as if her hand cupped it", which shows her desire to protect a part of her own being from danger (190). It is further explained that "it seemed as if she were holding that immensely pitiful thing, the farm with its inhabitants, in the hollow of her hand, which curved round to shut out the gaze of the cruelly critical world" (190). The description reveals that she has come to make peace with the house, the farm and their surroundings, and she is trying to keep them from harm's way. With this fresh perspective, she looks out of the window and sees that "everything was on the verge of colour" (192). For the first time in the novel, the nature is not depicted as a source of hostility but as a living and changing being. This impression is further detailed with sensual images. For example, "there was a hint of green in the curve of a leaf, a shine in the sky that was almost blue, and the clear starred outline of the poinsettia flowers suggested the hardness of scarlet" (192). Despite her sharpened senses and her alert "mind as clear as the sky itself", she knows that "when the sun rose… her moment would be over, this marvellous moment of peace and forgiveness granted by a forgiving God" (192). A strong theme of reconciliation with the physical environment and one's self can be seen in these sentences.

> But why, this last morning, had she woken peacefully from a good sleep, and not, as usually, from one of those ugly dreams that seemed to carry over into the day, so that there sometimes seemed no division between the horrors of the night and of the day? Why should she be standing there, watching the sunrise, as if the world were being created afresh for her, feeling this wonderful rooted joy? She was inside a bubble of fresh light and colour, of brilliant sound and birdsong. All around the trees were filled with shrilling birds, that sounded her own happiness and chorused it to the sky… The world was a miracle of

> colour and all for her, all for her! She could have wept with release and lighthearted joy (192).

It feels like Mary is a new and different woman who has healed, saying goodbye to the farm on which she has spent a long time although it was mostly painful. Ironically, she is not saying goodbye because she is going to leave the farm to start a new life on the coast but because she will face death. Yet, it is interesting that she can only achieve reconciliation with her environment during the transition from the night to the day. In other words, she catches a glimpse of peace, joy, reconciliation and forgiveness just a short time before she dies with the rising sun.

As she was enjoying this fleeting moment, she suddenly hears "the sound she could never bear, the first cicada beginning to shrill somewhere in the trees" (192-193). She thinks that this bird's song is "the sound of the sun itself, and how she hated the sun!" (193). With this sudden mood shift in the narrative, from a state of relief and elevation to the terror of the familiar, the effect of the hot sun and the hostile bush with all of their components is made even stronger and more unbearable. Thus, the reaction to Mary's death that the writer tries to evoke in the readers will be one of relief and sympathy. To achieve this end, natural descriptions in this part of the chapter are marked with strong fear, terror and restlessness. The "steady shrilling noise" of the cicadas is associated with "the noise of the sun, whirling on its hot core, the sound of the harsh brazen light, the sound of the gathering heat" (193). The sun is almost like a machine, devoid of life and out to kill. Similarly, the sun rises like a "dull red disc", underlining the impression that it not only lacks life but it also tries to take it from those who are alive (193).

Mary's reaction to the rising sun comes with her head "beginning to throb" and "her shoulders [starting] to ache" (193). As mentioned above, she feels the overwhelming heat even more especially after the brief period of relief, peace, joy and reconciliation. The descriptions of nature and of the room she is in are also significant at this point in the chapter: "a lean, sunflattened landscape stretched before her, dun-coloured, brown and olive-green, and the smoke haze was everywhere, lingering in the trees and

obscuring the hills" (193). Mary's emotional reaction to this sudden change that brings uncertainty and danger is immediate. She is being encircled by the hostility of her environment once more but for the last time and even more violently.

> The sky shut down over her, with thick yellowish walls of smoke growing up to meet it. The world was small, shut in a room of heat and haze and light. […] She was leaning pressed back against the thin brick wall, her hands extended, palms upwards, warding off the day's coming. […] 'There,' she said aloud, 'it will be there.' And the sound of her own voice, calm, prophetic, fatal, fell on her ears like a warning. She went indoors, pressing her hands to her head, to evade that evil verandah (193).

She knows that she has been trapped and there is no escape. The outside world is not on her side. On the contrary, it supports Moses, who "was standing under a tree somewhere, leaning back against it, his eyes fixed on the house, waiting" (193). She somehow senses that she is going to die because her paranoia that Moses is "waiting" in the bush causes her to "rush about the house in panic", which indicates that she perceives Moses as a deadly threat (194). Moreover, she imagines herself "on an invisible mountain peak, looking down like a judge on his court […] without a sense of release" (194). She starts contemplating how she will die and what will happen to the farm afterwards. The reason why Mary is presented as if she were expecting her demise is that the depiction of land and nature (through Mary's eyes) as hostile entities is somehow personified in Moses (who has been nurturing and caring like the land), with whom Mary unfaithfully broke off her relationship. Therefore, Mary projects her fear of the vindictive land onto Moses. The complex relationship between Mary and Moses is analogous to the relationship between the colonizer culture and the colonized people. The colonizer is both dependent on the colonized and paradoxically resentful and fearful of them.

Another such paradox can be observed in Mary's thoughts about the land and her environment. In the quotation below the same theme of taking a short break from the sorrow invading her life can be seen.

> That was how they would see her, when it was all over, as she saw herself now: an angular, ugly, pitiful woman, with nothing left of the life she had been given to use but one thought: that between her and the angry sun was a thin strip of blistering iron; that between her and the fatal darkness was a short strip of daylight (194-195).

Mary simply describes what a wasted life she has and how the sun specifically and the environment in general destroyed her by also showing her the life and joy hidden inside nature. This has the effect of a "short strip of daylight" before she dies and faces "the fatal darkness" (194-195). As she thinks about these, she also feels that "the trees were pressing in round the house", as if they were going to destroy the house with its inhabitants (195). It can be said that the house is neither in perfect condition, nor spick and span because Mary has sunken into the state where she is "sitting on an old ruined sofa that smelled of dirt, waiting for the night to come that would finish her" (195). In other words, Mary has cared little about the house so far, mostly hating it, yet just before facing her death she comes to think of what will happen to the house. Mary in her "heightened state" foresees the future: "nature, hostile and long patient, sweeps over, destroys and obliterates all trace of their home and life" (Sarvan 536). All the elements of nature will collaborate in erasing the traces of a housing that was placed in the middle of the African country. Thus, the country will symbolically take revenge on the invaders.

> When she was gone, she thought, this house would be destroyed. It would be killed by the bush, which had always hated it, had always stood around it silently, waiting for the moment when it could advance and cover it, for ever, so that nothing remained. She could see the house, empty, its furnishings rotting. First would come the rats. Already they ran over the rafters at night, their long wiry tails trailing. They would swarm up over the furniture and the walls, gnawing and gutting till nothing was left but brick and iron, and the floors were thick with droppings. And then the beetles: great, black, armoured beetles would crawl in from the veld and lodge in the

> crevices of the brick. Some were there now, twiddling with their feelers, watching with small painted eyes (Lessing 195).

All of the signs of destruction can already be seen around the house, but Mary seems to think that the bush, the animals, the insects and the weather conditions will work together to demolish the house, which stands for the artifacts created on the land by the colonizing culture; Mary's, or rather the colonizer's, shelter and at the same time a jail, "a place of self-imprisonment, a claustrophobic place that cannot be escaped from" because outside represents the native, and the white people's being outnumbered and defenceless (Rooney 434). Although hypocrisy on Mary's side can slightly be sensed here, it would be fair to put all the blame on approaching death and despair caused by it. It is similar to a situation where the individual does not want to lose even the smallest and the most worthless objects she/he has in the face of the risk of totally losing everything. Therefore, Mary's reaction and hypocrisy is totally human and understandable as she knows what is to come.

Finally, her mind and consciousness become invaded by the enemy, nature, because "her mind was filled with green, wet branches, thick wet grass, and thrusting bushes" (Lessing 196). That is why "she ran outside: what was the use of sitting there, just waiting, waiting for the door to open and death to enter?" (196). These sentences show that Mary knows she will die. However, despite the knowledge, she is not in charge and it is no good that she walks "straight into the bush, thinking: 'I will come across him, and it will all be over'" (196-197). Interestingly enough, Mary's last attempt to gain her dignity and do something about her life comes in the form of challenging death, or her prospective killer. By doing so, she is caught off-guard by her enemy as Mary realizes that "she had never penetrated into the trees, has never gone off the paths […] and for all those years she had listened wearily, through the hot dry months, with nerves prickling, to that terrible shrilling, and had never seen the beetles who made it" (197). Mary's never going off the paths is a metaphor for her inertia and not taking any responsibility for her life. She has never investigated what was around her, nor has she

been brave in her decisions. Thus, she is trapped by the bush and now it is too late and scary to get to know it.

> Lifting her eyes she saw she was standing in the full sun, that seemed so low she could reach up a hand and pluck it out of the sky: a big red sun, sullen with smoke. She reached up her hand; it brushed against a cluster of leaves, and something whirred away. With a little moan of horror she ran through the bushes and the grass, away back to the clearing. There she stood still, clutching at her throat (197).

Even when she reaches out a hand to make contact with her environment, she is refused violently and literally scared to death as she ends up almost suffocating herself. It feels like the nature has its own defence mechanisms to keep intruders like Mary away. Just like the narrator, Mary personifies the bush characterized by hostility and vengeance because she thinks "before she was even dead, the bush was conquering the farm, sending its outriders to cover the good red soil with plants and grass; the bush knew she was going to die!" (198). Ironically, her killer does not hide in the bush but in the store that has haunted her since her childhood. At this point, Lessing seems to give the impression that Mary's death stems from her own wounded past that has dragged throughout her life.

> There it was, the ugly store. There it was at her death even as it had been all her life. But it was empty; if she went in there would be nothing on the shelves, the ants were making red granulated tunnels over the counter, the walls were sheeted with spider-web. But it was still there. In a sudden violent hate she banged on the door. It swung open. The store smell still clung there; it enveloped her, musty and thick and sweet. She stared. There he was, there in front of her, standing behind the counter as if he were serving goods, Moses the black man, standing there, looking out at her with a lazy, but threatening disdain (200).

Moses' hiding in the store, the symbol of the childhood Mary fears to remember, and the building, the symbol of colonial institution, slowly crumbling away signify one thing: Mary will have to "offer herself as a sacrifice which will both atone for past crimes and hasten the coming of the new order" because of her uprooted and shattered existence (Sarvan 536). In order to survive, Mary would either have to fit in and be a part of the land, or would go to England, which she called home earlier in the novel. Thus, in a very subtle way Lessing combines the effects of colonization on its individual representatives, and the weakness in human nature that prevents them from taking action against the colonial society's dictates and shaping their lives by using free will. For both of these reasons, Mary would have to understand that "there was no salvation" and that "she would have to go through with it [her death]" (Lessing 200).

Towards the end of the novel, the natural descriptions accompany the horror of waiting for one's death: "there was no lessening of the heat; the invisible dark sky bent over the house, weighing down upon it" (202). The outside natural forces are patiently waiting and they are relentless. As rain has always been a relief for Mary, she says to herself that "it will rain […] after I am dead" (202). In other words, she will be relieved of her own existence that has tired her out with helplessness, loss of will-power and inertia, and the country will have its revenge and wash away the traces of murder. As the end draws near she feels the pressure of the outside world even more.

> Now it seemed as if the night were closing in on her, and the little house was bending over like a candle, melting in the heat. She heard the crack, crack; the restlessly moving of the iron above, and it seemed to her that a vast black body, like a human spider, was crawling over the roof, trying to get inside. She was alone. She was defenceless. She was shut in a black box, the walls closing in on her, the roof pressing down. She was in a trap, cornered and helpless (203).

Mary "foresees her killing and does not try to save herself from it" (Roberts 79), she goes out "as the lightening flickered" and "nothing could be seen until the lightening plunged again, when the crowding shoulders of the trees showed against a cloud-packed sky"

(Lessing 204). As a result of the focalized narrative voice foreshadowing the murder, "it becomes obvious that Moses plans to kill Mary" (Roberts 79). The reader empathizes with "Mary's nervousness in his presence" because "his largeness, blackness, and silent appearances are repeatedly emphasized" (79). Mary has identified the trees with the enemy so much that she tries to fix her gaze on the trees so that "they could not creep up to her" (Lessing 204). She is getting closer to her killer and what she thought earlier about the rains coming after her death becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy as it is about to rain. Fearing the trees that "stood still and waited", Mary leans on the wall so hard that "she could feel the rough brick pricking through her nightgown into her flesh" (204). Thus, just before her death she experiences the sensual stimulation that she lacked all her life. Just before being stabbed, Mary opens her mouth in "an attempt to explain and seek forgiveness" because she feels "guilt towards Moses" and everything that is African embodied in him (Sarvan 536). Thus, Mary is depicted as a member of the subaltern who cannot speak, as befitting Spivak's assertion. When finally she dies by the hand of Moses, "the bush avenged itself: that was her last thought. The trees advanced in a rush, like beasts, and the thunder was the noise of their coming" (Lessing 204). The final triumph of nature is "the triumph of Moses and that of the black African at last coming into his own" (Sarvan 536).

In conclusion, the colonialists are "never at ease as they are frequently on guard" against not only the hostile African nature, but also "the colonized natives representing the contending forces that can subvert the colonial enterprise" (Mutekwa 736). Mary's environment, including the nature and the weather, is the embodiment of the soul of Africa that is being invaded by the colonizer, divided, exploited and pushed to its limits. On the other hand, the house, which represents the colonial presence of the white people in Africa, fails to offer Mary a "sense of personal safety" because the "distinction between house-land and bush-land" is blurred in Mary's perception (Rosner 74). It is clear from the analyses of the novel given in this thesis that nature as defined above has stood for a vindictive, invasive and destructive entity that is victorious at the end of the novel, "when the vegetation invades Dick's home after its abandonment" (Mutekwa 736).

In fact, the title of the novel alludes to this victory and "the swamping of colonialism by the subjugated Africans" (736). Thus, Mary, being a weak representative of the colonizer, has been victimized for her own past, upbringing and personality by the natural forces draining her mental faculties and physical mobility, and making her dependent on her houseboy. Lessing admits that "if you take a very inadequate, a very psychologically frail woman and put her in an environment like that, of course, she will be dominated by a stronger personality" (Gray 112). Moses hides in the bush, which is a source of fear for Mary, and kills her in front of the house, the symbol of the colonizing artifacts that stand out as artificial in the African countryside.

3.2 *My Place* and the Effect of Physical Environment on Sense of Belonging and Identity

Physical environment, land and place have different connotations in studying a text written in the colonial Australian context. In this analysis, physical environment refers to the settings, nature and natural events that are mentioned in Morgan's book; land refers to a dynamic entity that constructs, maintains and transfers culture, spirituality and ancestry, with reference to Aboriginal Land Rights; place refers to recovery of identity and belonging as an act of decolonization, which is implied by the name of the book: *My Place*. By using the given definitions, the aim of this chapter is to make a close reading of the physical environment reflected in the book, establish its interaction with or implications about land and place; give an account of land as it is reflected in the book, with references to Aboriginal Land Rights, and then analyze the place of the Aboriginal people in the book, with reference to the effects of (de)colonialism.

The family home in the book is a habitat that is a hybrid of the colonizer and the colonized cultures' way of life because it is a house provided by the government (Morgan 351), but it has a swamp in the backyard, which is teeming with various forms of wildlife (71). The interior is characterized by poverty despite the improvements the family makes, such as plastering the living room with wallpaper- which becomes a fun activity for the family- getting a water heating system and a washing machine, and

building a side gate and a flywire door (145-149). The "house seemed to get smaller" as the population of the family increased (44). Sally describes her room and the bed that she shares with her sisters, brothers and Nan: "we had two single beds lashed together with a bit of rope and a big double kapok mattress plonked on top […]. I loved that mattress. Whenever I lay on it, I imagined I was sinking into a bed of feathers, just like a fairy princess" (44). Similarly, she keeps up the same spirit in her approach to the "run-down old weatherboard house" she moves into after getting married (167).

> The toilet was miles down the back of the yard, only one gas burner worked on the stove, the hot-water system wasn't even as decent as the old chip heater we'd had at home, and the place was infested with tiny sandfleas. […] we also discovered that there were rats residing underneath the floorboards. For some reason, none of this seemed to bother us. We thought the place had character […] (167-168).

Obviously, the colonization has not fulfilled its so-called mission of civilizing the natives, at least in terms of the living conditions of Aboriginals, who were known to be a nomadic hunter-gatherer society. Because the Aboriginals in the book are city-dwellers, they have been negatively affected by "'deculturation' through urbanization of Aboriginal people" (Brewster 72). As Aboriginals "suffered rapid dispossession of their land", they had to experience "cultural changes in response to their new position"; Moreton-Robertson identifies the most striking one of these changes as the Aboriginals' becoming "fringe dwellers living on the edges of towns" (Moreton-Robertson 5).

On the other hand, Sally loves the swamp and the bush, where she loses "all track of time" (Morgan 71), which hints at the timelessness of land. Nan has an enormous influence on Sally's approach to nature, encouraging her to take an interest in wildlife, teaching her about wildflowers, trees and animals of all kinds, and also their tracks, and the food they eat; she forbids the keeping of wild animals as pets, warning her granddaughter to return them safely to their habitat and not to harm them (10-11, 36, 67-69, 72 &123). Nan's caring and attentive attitude towards nature and land are associated

with Aboriginal people's "hunter-gathering practices and philosophies [that] entail a complete aversion to any thought of owning nature, and are inexorably tied to the land" (Moreton-Robinson 5). At the beginning of the book, when Sally is in the hospital visiting her father, in order to relieve the oppressive atmosphere of the hospital she brings to mind memories of a very special moment she shared with Nan in nature.

> This morning I was waiting for the bird call. Nan called it her special bird, nobody had heard it but her. This morning, I was going to hear it, too. […]
> Suddenly, the yard filled with a high thrilling sound. My eyes searched the trees. I couldn't see that bird, but his call was there. […]
> Nan smiled at me, 'Did you hear him? Did you hear the bird call?' 'I heard him Nan,' I whispered in awe.
> What a magical moment it had been. I sighed. I was with Dad now, there was no room for magic in hospitals (Morgan 11-12).

In the following quotation, Robertson notices the juxtaposition between the worlds of the colonizer and the colonized. The critic also touches upon the ironically devastating situation of the veterans of World War II, who fought the empire's fight despite the immense distance between where they live and the location of Britain.

> *My Place* establishes a dichotomy between the white world of Sally Morgan's father, and as yet unnamed, puzzling but soothing world of her grandmother. The father's world is represented firstly by the institution of the hospital, and by the broken men who are remnants of the European war. Nan's world is represented by the changes of the seasons, and by the early morning observations of the creatures who live around the house. The world of Morgan's father is one in which people are spiritually bankrupt, and her visits to that world leaves her depleted. […] In contrast, the moments in Nan's world are replete with vitality (Robertson 49-50)

Richness, vitality and magic characterize Nan's world, which "reminds us of the crucial role that she occupies as a direct link to Morgan's Aboriginal heritage" (Pulitano 43). De

Groen also contrasts "the clinical, alienating environment" of the hospital, "which signifies most completely the scientific western approach to health", with "the magic of the garden" that Sally enjoys with Nan (De Groen 42 & 43-44).

Nature and the bush are frequently described as soothing, relaxing, replenishing, protecting and nurturing. The chapter describing Sally's first day at school is quite aptly entitled "The Factory", as the school represents regimentation and oppression in colonial institutions. The description is one of coldness and un-naturalness as the words "bitumen path", "grey weatherboard and asbestos buildings" indicate; Sally thinks that "like The Hospital, it was a place dedicated to taking the spirit out of life" (Morgan 15). As a replenishing source, by contrast, Sally takes refuge in nature by skipping school very frequently to spend time in the bush, sitting on a gum tree all day (41). When Arthur escapes from the half-caste mission, he camps and hides in the bush to seek protection from the police who are looking for him (238-240). Gladys turns to the bush as a means of coping with the stress, the violence and the imposed western popular culture at the children's home, where the dormitory walls "were covered with huge framed pictures of film stars" (which, Gladys thinks, are photographs of mothers and fathers as this is what she is concerned with); she spends time in the bush eating fruit and inspecting animals (307). She has "a crying tree", whose "limbs curved over to make a seat and […] weeping leaves covered me [Gladys] almost completely", as if nature embraces her and offers protection (313). Gladys remembers: "the peace of that place would reach inside of me and I wouldn't feel sad any more" (314). Nan "ran down to the wild bamboo near the river", where she "hid and cried" in nature to find consolation when Gladys was taken away from her (420). After visiting the children's home, Nan's sorrow of separation is lifted to some extent because she sees that "there was bush everywhere", which, Nan knows, would look after and protect Gladys like a mother (420). In the same fashion, when Sally feels suffocated during the visit to the hospital, she wants "to run and fling [herself] on the grass", which stands for a getaway, and the wind relaxes her (13). When father tells the children to stay in the car and goes to the pub, "the sweet, clean smell of the Swan River […] penetrate[s] our [the children's] glass and metal

confines. […], beckoning me [Sally] to come", and they get out to play and have a good time by the river (30). Later, the father has a fit of temper and gets physically aggressive, so the family runs into the bush and hides there (47).

Thus, nature and the bush are almost personified as Mother Nature, which offers a kind of epistemology as exemplified by Nan's conception of cyclones, earthquakes and what should be done in such cases; and it also provides physical and emotional refuge whenever the Aboriginals are in need. All of the examples above reveal that there is a close relationship between physical environment and land, considering the connotations identified earlier in this chapter, because "for indigenous people the land was the basis of spirituality and the sole means of subsistence" (Moreton-Robinson 5).

The sections accentuating the Aboriginals' awareness for nature, natural events, animals and the bush can be contrasted with the white colonizers' approach in certain parts of the book. Arthur remembers the "wonderful wildlife on Corunna Downs" (230). Later, he nurtures "plenty of the wildlife on [his] place", saying "the wildlife always got a home with" him (266). Likewise, Nan grows up on her people's land, learning about various fruit and berries, and observing birds, lizards and snakes (408-409). She becomes fully aware of the dynamism of nature in the North, experiencing the heavy rain and watching the growth of seeds inch by inch afterwards.

> […] the rain was so heavy up North, it hurt when it hit you. […] One day, the place would be desert, the next day, green everywhere. Green and gold, beautiful really. […] we'd watch a little seed grow. […] By the time we finished lookin', that seed'd be half an inch long (407).

She experiences natural events such as a cyclone which she says "is a terrible thing" (405). Therefore, she developed "a deeply personal" view of "the physical world", and made predictions more reliable than those in the weather forecast on the radio, by "observing the weather" daily, checking "the sky, the clouds, the wind, and, on particularly still days, the reaction of […] animals" (72), and by fearing earthquakes and

storms (73). Gladys confesses that "most of my [her] happiest times were spent alone in the bush, watching the birds and animals", and that she "had such respect for [the insects'] little lives that [she] would feel terrible if [she] even trod on an ant" (313). Since she has grown up with a fondness for nature which is fostered by Nan, Sally Morgan devotes a whole chapter to nature and animals in her childhood, in which she describes the history of their innumerable pets of all kinds (66-74). As a child, she brings a variety of animals home to take care of them, including a "baby mudlark" fallen from its nest (69-70). She also finds the life of the characters in schoolbooks very "dull" and feels "sorry for them" as "none of them lived near a swamp, and there was no mention of wild birds, snakes or goannas" (24). This shows that she has culturally defined Aboriginal values attached to nature as an integral part of life and a sense of land with all its relevance to Aboriginal culture and spirituality.

On the other hand, the colonizer's cruelty towards animals is exemplified in Arthur's story. The cook on Corunna kills a piglet by hitting it on the head; he cooks and eats it, whereas Arthur cannot even "look at him", nor can he eat the meat because he thinks it is "cruel" (229). A man working on the mission, Coulson, kills the cats "sneakin' around the chicken house" by cornering and hitting them "on the head with a hammer" (234). He also kills his own dog in the same manner because "his foot went under the wheel and his leg was cut off" on the railway, and he leaves the dog's dead body there; Arthur wonders what Coulson could do to him if he can be so cruel to his own dog (235). Arthur contrasts the approaches of the colonizer and the colonized to animals as follows.

> They [the Aboriginals] don't have to hunt too hard, the spirits can bring birds to them. Say they want a wild turkey, that turkey will come along, go past them and they can spear it. Kangaroo, too. They don't kill unless they [are] hungry, the white man's the one who kills for sport (266-277).

Moreover, the colonizer has a totally different view of land. In Sally's experience, her father and her white grandfather's chopping down the gum trees in the backyard without

any consideration for the nests in them (31), and not having the bush to enjoy during her visits to her white grandparents' home (62) are disturbing. As for Arthur, his dealings with the white farmers taught him that the colonizer is greedy and destructive when it comes to land. The white farmers make him clear the land for agriculture to make money (246, 248-250). Arthur does the same on his land, which means that he uses the ambivalence in the white man's treatment of land to subvert colonialism by means of becoming a financial success, and he attains an equal status with the colonizer thanks to the white man's farming methods which he mimics. One of the white farmers wants to buy Arthur's farm, even though he already has other farms (260). He longs for the old days when "there were no insecticides [...] to kill the birds", and shows the destructiveness of the colonizer as the main reason "why the blackfella want their own land, with no white man messin' about and destroyin' it" (230).

At this point, the colonizer's destroying the "land" should be read both literally and with reference to land's cultural, spiritual and ancestral connotations, relocating the issue in the context of Aboriginal Land Rights. "During the first five years of the colony the relationship between Indigenous people and white colonists" Moreton-Robinson explains, "involved violent confrontations as more and more land was appropriated to establish a new economy and society" (Moreton-Robinson 4). The colonizer's outlook on land has been summarized by Trees as one of "economic viability, therefore ownership"; the white colonizers brought with them concepts that transformed Australian land into "a commodity which has been captured", and Aboriginals have "been denied any legal claim to land" (Trees 1991). Therefore, Aboriginals suffered from dispossession of their land and displacement leading to alienation from their own culture, spirituality and ancestry, which they associate with the land they lived on, with and through. Thus, Aboriginals became vulnerable to the "epistemic violence of colonisation (that is, the manner in which the colonial subject constructs knowledge of the other)" (Brewster 6). Some of the Aboriginals "were forced to live on the fringes of towns where they suffered from malnutrition and introduced diseases" (Moreton-Robinson 6). Some others, on the other hand, "managed to remain for decades or even

generations on their land" in the North due to the colonizer's need for "Aboriginal labour", which "allowed a degree of cultural maintenance" (Pettman 19). The price these Aboriginals had to pay was extreme exploitation of labour and the female body, which will be analyzed in the next chapter.

Pettman asserts that "there are powerful claims for land rights as compensatory justice and as securing for Aboriginal people a resource base to support self-determination" (Pettman 89). Arthur, being a farmer with his own land, vehemently defends the Aboriginal Land Rights in his story, saying that the colonizers brought "the Commandment, Thou Shalt Not Steal, and yet they stole this country", hinting at the discrepancy between their spirituality and their deeds (Morgan 268).

> There's so much the whitefellas don't understand. They want us to be assimilated into the white, but we don't want to be. They complain about our land rights, but they don't understand the way we want to live. They say we shouldn't get the land, but the white man's had land rights since this country was invaded, our land rights. Most of the land the Aborigine wants, no man would touch. They don't want to live on that land themselves, but they don't want the black man to get it either. Yet, you find something valuable on the land that Aborigines has got and whites are all there with their hands out (266).

Arthur underlines the materialistic and exploitative approach of the colonizer to land and underlines the unfairness in land ownership, just like Nan does in her story: "[T]he white man's had land rights for years, and we not allowed to have any. Aah, this is a funny world" (422). In the quotation below, Nan also clarifies what Arthur means by "something valuable" (266), by referring to mining companies, which "led to embarrassing attention to unresolved issues regarding Aborigines and land" (Pettman 89).

> I'm wonderin' if they'll give the blackfellas land. If it's the one thing I've learnt in this world it's this, you can't trust the government. They'll give the blackfellas the dirt

> and the mining companies will get the gold. That's the way of it (Morgan 429).

The Aboriginals' land claims are "not based on white conceptualisations of property" and profit but, Moreton-Robinson asserts, are "underpinned and informed by the inter-substantiation of relations between Indigenous land, spirit, place, ancestors and bodies", with "specific concerns about the lack of protection of our [Aboriginals'] sacred sites and our [Aboriginals'] lack of formal ownership" (Moreton-Robinson 162-164).

Sally Morgan makes room for the white perspective in the book as well. During her trip to the North, she talks to Happy Jack, a white man whose family started off most of the tin mining" business in the area (Morgan 283). He explains the process of working on the field with the Aboriginals of Corunna Downs station, which has interesting implications for the colonizer's treatment of the land, ownership of the findings and attention paid to sacred sites.

> We would go through and strip the country, and all that old Corunna mob would come behind and yandy[11] off the leftovers. I think they did well out of it. We were happy for them to have whatever they found, because they were the people tribally belonging to that area. It was like an unwritten agreement between them and us. Now and then, others would try and muscle in, but we wouldn't have any of that, it belonged to that mob only. We let [!] them come in and carry on straight behind the bulldozers. It gave them a living. We were very careful about sacred sites and burial grounds too, not like some others I could mention. The old men knew this. Sometimes, they would walk up to us and say, 'One of our people is buried there.' So we would bulldoze around it and leave the area intact (283).

This extract is full of irony. To begin with, the white colonizer considers himself to be willing to share the profit, the equality of which concession is questionable as the Aboriginals only got the leftovers and probably sold them to white colonizers again, very cheaply. Happy Jack considers himself to be fair in acknowledging the ownership

[11] Yandy: a process of separating mineral from alluvium by rocking in a shallow dish (Morgan's footnote)

of the Corunna mob over the land and not letting "other" Aboriginals get anything from the leftovers. This means that he assumes more right over the land and what it contains than the Aboriginals that he calls "others" have. Presumably, this attitude would have imparted capitalistic goals and competitiveness to Corunna Aboriginals, by showing them that they can make a living out of it, which in turn would engender separation between them and the "other" Aboriginals, which is an example of the "epistemic violence" that was previously mentioned. The white pioneer of mining in the area thinks he was respectful enough by bulldozing around each grave when he compares his attitude to the more horrible ones of other white miners. Finally, his name, Happy Jack is quite ironic, for a moral person is not supposed to feel content after bulldozing and exploiting somebody else's land.

To clarify the Aboriginals' spiritual connection with the land, Pulitano's comments are helpful, as she also touches upon Aboriginal oral tradition as an integral part of culture: "in Aboriginal cartography, the land contains the stories that tell the people who they are and where they come from; as such, the land is like a book whose linguistic codes Aboriginal people have learned to read and interpret extremely well" (Pulitano 45). The role of land in defining who a person is can also be seen at the very beginning of Arthur's story. He does not know exactly when he was born, but he can define himself with his people's land, by saying, "The land of my people was all round there, from the Condin River to Nullagine, right through the Kimberly" (Morgan 222). He remembers going walkabout with his mother and Aboriginal father "for weeks at a time, from one station to another, visiting people that belonged to us [Arthur's tribe] (222). Aboriginals are known to "have always walked the land in balance and respect, telling and retelling the stories associated with the various sites they would travel" (Pulitano 44). As an example of the link between orality and land, Arthur remembers on their walkabout "going through a gorge" at night when the local tribal headmen started whistling, which "means that they want you to talk"; thus, they were allowed to pass (Morgan 224-225).

Although Nan and Arthur spent their early childhood on their people's land, later they were taken away. Arthur remembers how his mother told him stories, which had implications for belonging to nature and land; but he also points out that displacement put an end to it.

> She used to tell me a story about a big snake. A snake especially for me, with pretty eggs. 'One day,' she said, 'you will be able to go and get these eggs.' I belonged to the snake, and I was anxious to see the pretty snake's eggs, but they took me away to the mission, and that finished that (224).

It is no coincidence that it was while he was digging the soil that Arthur understood that his mother had died. His connection with the land manifests a spiritual power through a mysterious event, which is Arthur's becoming temporarily blind as he was digging the soil on his own farm (260). His loss of sight signifies the loss of mother in a symbolic way, and the land functions as a medium between Arthur and his mother. This connection can be further explained by noting that "Indigenous spirituality encompasses the intersubstantiation of ancestral beings, humans and physiography" (Moreton-Robinson 19). This results from the fact that "the spiritual world is immediately experienced because it is synonymous with the physiography of the land" (19).

Although he was displaced earlier, he manages to buy his own land by working really hard in the colonizer's world, where he had to live "in a bough shed" for three years because "there was no proper place to sleep and, in winter, the wind cut through you" (248). Under such physical conditions, he "get[s] old gallon tins and fill[s] them with hot water, tie[s] bags around them, then strap[s] them to my [his] feet" to protect his bare feet from the cold (Morgan 248). Despite all hardships, he obtains his own land and develops a sense of belonging to that place, implying a subtext that hints at his identity. He wants to die there as he has "a yearning for that place", which he calls "my own home, my land" (211). According to Pulitano, "even though deprived of their original homeland, Aboriginal populations have always managed to adapt and change in the light

of traumatic environmental circumstances, their history of travelling and migration inevitably facilitating their response to forced removal" (Pulitano 46).

This is easier for Arthur because he works as a farm labourer, but Nan, being a "house native", has not been easily cured of deracination. That is why, even when she is close to death, she says, "[W]e don't know who we belong to, no one'll own up" (Morgan 403). She longs for "the kind of community life that her Aboriginal people had re-created at Corunna Downs Station" (Pulitano 46), as she confesses: "I needed my people, they made me feel important. I belonged to them. I thought 'bout the animals, too. The kangaroos and birds" (413). Due to Nan's lacking the opportunity to get rooted in a physical environment until she settles down in Gladys' family home, Pulitano asserts that "Arthur […] had a deeper sense of place" (Pulitano 46). When Nan couldn't keep Gladys with her, she says "it wasn't like I had a place of my own. It wasn't like I had a say over my own life" (Morgan 420). Alice Drake-Brockman, whom she worked for, kicked her out a couple of times (423), Howden Drake-Brockman's first wife Nell took her to Perth and "she didn't even give me [Nan] a place to sleep"; Nan "had to find my [her] own place" (412). The word "place" in these quotations can be read in terms of a sense of belonging to the land, which brings freedom to construct social and personal identities to reverse the colonial effects on her existence, which she does much later, mainly through sticking with her daughter Gladys and her grandchildren as explained in the previous chapter. However, Nan and Gladys' spiritual bond with the land enables them to hear the corroborees of ancestors: "It was the blackfellas playin' their didgeridoos and singin' and laughin' down in the swamp. […], we was hearin' the people from long ago" (426). This event is very significant because it is a telling instance of the assertion that "Aboriginal people have inscribed songs and stories onto the land, strongly believing in the extraordinary power of words to change the world" (Pulitano 50). Thus, when Arthur says "the black man's got a long memory" (Morgan 264), he refers to the past which is made accessible by means of Aboriginals' attachment to the land because the reading of the subtext reveals that "memory has been crucial to

such an epistemological construct, as they [Aboriginals] depended on memory to transmit their history and culture" (Pulitano 50).

As Gladys and Sally have never been to the physical environment where Nan, Arthur and their relatives and ancestors lived, they decide to go to the North, which takes them on a modern version of walkabout, suggesting "the intricate relationship between landscape and travelling" (44). Although Sally has "always had a hankering to go North", she tries to find her way by looking at "a map of Western Australia", which reveals her pathetically being uprooted due to colonial practices (Morgan 270-271). Similarly, the fact that Sally's children think "that going North was as adventurous as exploring deepest, darkest Africa" (273) reveals "just how much the family had lived" like people in a diaspora (Docker 16).

It is crucial for Sally "to see if there are any of the old buildings left [,]" and she wants "to look at the land" and "walk on it" in order to "imagine what it was like for the people then" (Morgan 271). The land she refers to can be read as the culture and spirituality of her ancestors. Gladys adds that it is important for her to see "the old place" which refers to her relatives' identification with and sense of belonging to the land (271).

Nan tells Gladys and Sally that all they will find on Corunna is "dirt and scrub", rather than land and bush. This is because she does not want them to go there and find out about all the pain, humiliation, separation and misery that Nan has been through just because she is black (270). She wants to dissuade them from going by frightening them with "cyclones, flooded rivers and crocodiles" (272). It is very convenient that she reverses all the positive Aboriginal symbols of attachment to nature, land, and thus re-identities them as negative, for she only suffered because of her Aboriginality. In fact, when Gladys and Sally see that Corunna Downs station "is a beautiful place", representing the sense of belonging and Aboriginal identity that they are chasing after, they decide that Nan tried to stop them because "she just doesn't want to be Aboriginal" (289).

De Groen states that "the natural settings of the swamp and Corunna Downs afford a healing serenity and spiritual peace" (De Groen 35). During the short visit to Corunna Downs station, Sally and Gladys find that all of the old buildings, the kitchen and a tree that Nan mentioned were all there and the same, which helps them to establish a spiritual connection with the people of the past though the timeless and encompassing quality of land, giving Sally and Gladys a sense of place (Morgan 290, 292). Moreover, in the North, they repeatedly hear words of affiliation: "You'd be related to a lot up here" (277), "You'd be related to most of the people round here" (279), "You belong to a lot of people here" (291), "[Y]ou can come here whenever you like", "You got a right to be here same as the others", "There's always a spot here for you all" (292), "[Y]ou've come to the right place", "You can come and live here", "This is your place too" (294).

This, in such a short time, is such an emotional bombardment that the experience reverses the colonial displacement in discourse and gives Gladys and Sally the feelings of "ethnic belonging" and "collective identity" through "the articulation of a cultural identity in which 'home' is imaginatively re-created in language" (Pulitano 49). Sally's comment reveals a lot about the interrelatedness of land and place: "How deprived we would have been if we had been willing to let things stay as they were. We would have survived, but not as whole people. We would never have known our place" (Morgan 294). Thus, Sally establishes "not only a link with the geographical territory of her grandmother's country but also a deeper, spiritual connection with her Aboriginal heritage" (Pulitano 48).

At the end of the book, the importance of the place where the Aboriginals belong is underlined by Nan's sensitivity in choosing to leave this world in the hospital, in order to keep their "old family home free of death" (Morgan 440) – just like her grandmother Old Fanny, who went walkabout and never came back (402). Nan's special bird, which symbolizes Aboriginality and "the collective memories of a people passed down the generations through the oral tradition" (Pulitano 44), is heard one last time to give Nan

the message that she is going to her own “land” and her own “people”, just like Arthur (Morgan 439).

In conclusion, the physical environment, land and place are significant in subverting colonialism, and thus alleviating the problem of deracination and alienation of the colonized by making it possible for them to reclaim social, cultural and personal identities. Physical environment carries implications for both the deteriorating living conditions of Aboriginals after colonial displacement, and their sensitivity to nature, by means of which they are connected to the land. The colonizer sees the land as a means of capitalistic profit, whereas culture, spirituality and ancestry are at the core of Aboriginal perceptions of land, which gives them a place to survive “as whole people” to pass down what it means to be Aboriginal (294).

CHAPTER 4

SENSE OF BELONGING AND IDENTITY IN RELATION TO RACE

As a "major signifier of identity under colonialism," race created "boundaries and dichotomies that demarcated colonial physical and mental spaces" (Mutekwa 725). These mental spaces, taken as racial and personal identities in this chapter, are appropriated by the colonized due to and despite the liminality of colonial discourse, which is predicated on "the essentialized category of race" (725). What this might mean on an individual level is explained below.

> Man is human only to the extent to which he tries to impose his existence on another man in order to be recognized by him. As long as he has not been effectively recognized by the other, that other will remain the theme of his actions. It is on that other being, on recognition by that other being, that his own human worth and reality depend. It is that other being in whom the meaning of his life is condensed (Fanon 168-169).

This assertion in *Black Skin, White Masks*, when considered in relation to colonialism and formation of racial identity, is at the core of the othering process that establishes the individual's identity and its margins. In colonial discourse, these margins have been extended to encompass race and gender as the major determiners of the colonial individual's difference from the other, whether he/she be colonized or the colonizer. Bhabha elaborates on Fanon's view of "difference that informs and deforms the image of identity in the margin of Otherness that displays identification" given above, by adding that "the disavowal of the Other always exacerbates the 'edge' of identification, reveals that dangerous place where identity and aggressivity are twinned" (Bhabha 1986:xxxiii), which refers to the racism and violence—physical or epistemic violence—that stems from it.

Because racial distinction and discrimination were "essential to sustaining notions of white superiority, even a slightest modification of the rules of association" within the colonial discourse, would "threaten the structures which upheld" the entire colonial system (Boehmer 65). This is defined as the productive power of ambivalence because it creates a site for the colonized on which colonialism can be subverted (Bhabha 1994:112). The aim of colonial discourse in dwelling on racial distinction and discrimination "is to construe the colonized as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin" so that it can "justify conquest and […] establish systems of administration and instruction" (70). Although these systems, such as religion, epistemology, ontology, education and language, which embody western civilization, exist for the so-called "native improvement which colonization promoted [, native improvement] could not in any circumstances take place at the expense of European superiority" (Boehmer 78). In other words, "the other could never, finally, become the European" and this dictate of colonization "gave the lie to justifications of empire which appealed to native development, civilization, Europeanization, Christian conversion" (78). Although "progress in the image of Europe might be advised," the racial distinction and division between the colonizer and the colonized "had to stay in place" (78). What if this distinction is blurred or the gap between the two races is breached? This chapter aims at analyzing how race, and all the aforementioned issues that surround it, influence the identity issues of the colonizer in Lessing's novel and the colonized, hybrid individual in Morgan's book.

4.1 *The Grass Is Singing* and the Effect of Race on Sense of Belonging and Identity

The Grass Is Singing is a novel that is set in a colonized African country, Rhodesia or modern day Zimbabwe, where the dominant white society and the native black people have to live together. Thus, for the sake of realism, it is perhaps natural for the narrator to touch upon issues regarding the policies and laws of the white government with its effects on both parties, black and white; the unwritten codes of conduct for the two races, and apartheid (or "colour bar" as the term current when the book was written)

with reference to individuals' perceptions of the other race. This paper aims to analyze these themes and their implications with selective references to the novel, and to establish the relationship between the race issue in a colonial context, as it is depicted in the novel, and how it affects, or rather undermines, the protagonist's senses of belonging to the society, and personal and racial identity.

In the first chapter of the novel, it is made clear that there is "certainly a race division" in the country, which is supported by the policies of the white government (Lessing 11). Although the black men who are "picked for their physique" (16) can become policemen, they are not trusted with white people as "black men, even when policemen, do not lay hands on white flesh" (12). In other words, black policemen are not authorized to intervene if the white race is involved in a crime. Moreover, as the superior officers are all white, the enforcement of the laws that would penalize the whites becomes questionable or negotiable due to the way in which white men watch each other's backs in the land they colonized. One example of this double standard appears in Charlie Slatter's background. When he killed one of his black farm labourers "in a fit of temper", he got away with it except that he had to pay a fine of "thirty pounds" (14). On the other hand, it is almost certain that Moses will be executed for killing Mary, a white woman. The writer comments that he may "not see it [the sun] much longer" (25). This event indicates that the life of a black person can be measured with British currency in the colonized Africa; yet taking the life of a white person costs the black murderer his life. This contradictory practice provides valuable insight into how fair the laws of the day were. Moreover, it is ironic that the law made by the whites makes it possible for black men to handcuff one of their own kind, on their own land as in the case of Moses, which is aimed at alienating the black people from the members of their own race (12).

The fact that Moses turned himself in instead of trying to run away and across the border is explained as tradition. To put it more clearly, under the rule of Lobengula, a black king in the 1800s, "if someone did an unforgivable thing, like touching one of the King's women, he would submit fatalistically to punishment" as it is explained in "the memoirs

or letters of the old missionaries and explorers" (13). By using such a reference to explain why Moses did not run away, the narrator implies that the rule is still valid but only with a different king, who is presumably the British one. On the other hand, the black men are not given credit for having the dignity to surrender to punishment, which follows from their culture. Instead, the missionaries and explorers' observations such as "there was something rather fine about it" are merely "forgiven" by the white community because the white people take it for granted that such statements do not mean that "things natives do are 'fine'", which clearly exemplifies the prejudice against the native culture (13). The narrator also notes in parentheses that "the fashion is changing: it is permissible to glorify the old ways sometimes, providing one says how depraved the natives have become since" (13), which shows that "the community's last word on Moses is about his (native/inborn) depravity" (Fishburn 12). This is a reiteration of the negative qualities of attributed to the black race by the colonial discourse.

One law that protects the rights of the black labourers is the one that bans striking the natives. The narrator's tone, which echoes the white colonial convictions, reveals that this law, as expected, was not enforced either. Mary is worried that Moses may complain to the police after she struck Moses with a sjambok (whip) in the fields.

> She thought: he will complain to the police that I struck him? This did not frighten her, it made her angry. The biggest grievance of the white farmer is that he is not allowed to strike his natives and that if he does, they may − but seldom do − complain to the police. It made her furious to think that this black animal had the right to complain against her, against the behaviour of a white woman. But it is significant that she was not afraid for herself. If this native had gone to the police station, she might have been cautioned, since it was her first offence, by a policeman who was European, and who came on frequent tours of the district, when he made friends with the farmers, eating with them, staying the night with them, joining their social life. But he, being a contracted native, would have been sent back to this farm; and Dick was

> hardly likely to make life easy for a native who had complained of his wife. She had behind her the police, the courts, the jails; he, nothing but patience. Yet she was maddened by the thought he had even the right to appeal; her greatest anger was directed against the sentimentalists and theoreticians, whom she thought of as 'They' − the law-makers and the Civil Service − who interfered with the natural right of a white farmer to treat his labour as he pleased (120).

This is a very important paragraph for certain reasons. First of all, it proves that the white authorities favour the white people and are not fair to the black people as mentioned before. Mary would only be warned for using disproportionate force against Moses. Thus, it is revealed that the system of justice, with all its components, works for the whites and against the blacks in the case of a complaint by a native. Secondly, the black people cannot use their legal right, as theory and practice do not match. If a black labourer happens to complain about his white boss, the white farmer can make his life on the compound a lot more difficult than it was before. Moreover, the contracted labourers, whose recruitment process will be explained later, have no choice to leave after such a disturbance because they are no different than slaves. The third important point is about how a white farmer perceives "his labour". It is implied that the black labourers are no better than things that can be exploited and treated however the white farmers like, without having to be accountable to any authority. In addition, the white farmer takes it for granted that it is his natural right to do as he pleased with the black race. This perception is deeply rooted in the sense of power provided by being a member of the white colonizing culture. The last point worth noticing is the white farmer's attitude towards those of his own kind that give the black people certain rights by law. He cannot accept the fact that a black labourer has a right to complain or go to the court to defend themselves. This leads to a certain separation within the white community. On the one hand, there are law-makers and other government offices that have to act in accordance with humanistic and equalitarian principles for the sake of appearing politically correct. On the other hand, there is the white community that is face to face

with the blacks every day, and who want unconditional and full support from the government.

Thus, one can say that *some* of the white farmers are left to fend for themselves in a foreign country where they were promised wealth and comfort. It must be admitted that it is not just one race that suffered due to colonial, imperialistic practices and laws. Dick is a very good example as he had to leave the farm empty handed, and what is worse, in debt. He worked on the farm for fifteen years but he did not even own the land: "So here he was, this hopeless, decent man, standing on his 'own' soil, which belonged to the last grain of sand to the Government, watching his natives work" (138).

Therefore, it is ironic that Dick strongly rejects the idea of leaving the farm, when he says "it won't be mine" although he is reassured by Charlie Slatter that he can come back and pick up from where he left (180). The irony lies in the fact that Dick, quite sentimentally, feels like burning down the fields rather than see someone else "farm his soil and perhaps destroy his work", but in fact, it is not his but the black labourers' work (183).

Although Dick is different from other greedy farmers, as he looks after the soil, plants trees (86) and avoids planting tobacco because "it seem[s] an inhuman crop" (81), he is disabled in the sense that he does not have the means to achieve the ideals of colonialism. He does not own the land, he has to struggle with the natives and he complains that the government is disinterested.

> He began to storm against the Government, which was under the influence of the nigger-lovers from England, and would not force the natives to work on the land, would not simply send out lorries and soldiers and bring them to the farmers by force. The Government never understood the difficulties of farmers! Never! And he stormed against the natives themselves, who refused to work properly, who were insolent − and so on. He talked on and on, in a hot, angry, bitter voice, the voice of the white farmer, who

> seems to be contending, in the Government, with a force as immovable as the skies and seasons themselves (138-139).

Obviously, by making the whites and the blacks work under difficult conditions and with a minimum of a head start, it is the colonial and imperialistic government that makes a profit. In other words, the government and its policies exploit both the whites and the blacks, using different methods for each race. On the other hand, it is interesting that a man like Dick, who treats the natives, relatively, more like human beings, can also take it for granted that the black people must work for the white farmers, as if it were the only reason for their existence on the face of the world. On the whole, one can say that the white community is both the victim and the victimizer as it is neither totally innocent, nor is it the only one to blame. In fact, this is the human condition in a colonial context that the writer tries to reveal, by telling the story of outcasts and their clashes about identity and belonging.

Another important aspect of colonialism that alienates individuals from themselves and from the community they supposedly belong to, resulting in an identity problem and lack of the sense of belonging to a group, is the existence of unwritten rules of conduct and imposed clichés. What a black person has to do, or is forbidden to do, is imposed by the dominant white culture. In return, how a member of the white community should or should not behave is deeply embedded in the consciousness of each white South African from birth. The newcomers go through a short culture shock, but in the end, they have to adopt the accepted norms, or they are cast out.

To begin with, “one never had contact with natives, except in the master-servant relationship”, and “one never knew them in their own lives, as human beings” (18). This shows that the two races that lived so close to each other were also very distant from one another despite the workings of the colonial discourse, dictating how the native should be viewed. Because the unknown creates fear, so does the black race because it is never truly recognized by the whites. However, as the master and the servant are physically

close, just as in the case of Mary and Moses, the tension between the two races increases, as "the daily, physical proximity strengthens their consciousness of each other" (Sarvan 535).

The second dictate of the white society on its own members is that "one could not put a black man close to a white woman" (Lessing 24) because of the crucial role that is imposed on white women by colonialism, which is the "role in the construction of the racial, gendered hierarchies of empire" (Mutekwa 732). The underlying reason for this assertion of the colonial discourse is that miscegenation or cross-racial sexuality "represented a site on which these racialized hierarchies could be subverted and deconstructed" (732). This would result in the demise of the colonial authority, which marks its superiority by means of the "construction of the colonial subject in discourse, and the exercise of colonial power through discourse", articulating "racial and sexual" difference (Bhabha 1994:67).

It is this idea that prevents Sergeant Denham and Charlie Slatter from transporting Mary's corpse and Moses in the same car because the rule is a rule and it cannot be broken "even though she were dead, and murdered by him" (Lessing 24). The writer's dry humour and piercing irony is particularly well exemplified here because she is actually parodying the overdoing of the practise of colonial discourse in a paranoid manner by the country people. The irony here is that whether it be sex or violence that characterized the contact of the two, it is over and one is dead; still, the representatives of the dominant white culture refuse to "admit that a white person, and most particularly, a white woman, can have a human relationship, whether for good or evil, with a black person" (26). It is important to consider that Slatter and other white colonists like him cannot perceive Mary's "act of reaching out to Moses as a desperate plea for the human contact that might save hr from desolation and madness" (Fishburn 2). In fact Lessing is trying to reveal how ruthless and dehumanizing colonialism is by "destroying her protagonist in an almost ritualistic murder" that is committed by Moses, "the one person

in her life who has achieved an emotional connection with her, however neurotic or 'diseased'" (Roberts 79).

The third idea that is fixed in the minds of the white people is that the black race is never to be trusted as "he was the constant, the black man who will thieve, rape, murder, if given half a chance" (Lessing 25). In accordance with this dogma, Dick says "you can't trust niggers further than you can kick them […] as far as money is concerned" (94). Therefore, he does not want a native to run the store. In the same fashion, he locks the pantry, and Samson, Dick's houseboy, has an amusing "matter-of-fact acceptance of a [this] precaution that could only be against his stealing" (59). Mary's living very close to the strongest source of fear in her life, that is Moses, is symbolic of white man's living in fear and paranoia due to being close to the blacks, which is seen as a constant threat. The whites see the blacks as a relentless source of fear, an obsession which manifests itself in parents' attitude. For instance, every South African white girl grows up with the notion that walking in the bush alone would be too risky and would have irreparable consequences. Mary was also warned by her mother that "they [the natives] were nasty and might do terrible things to her" (59). The reason is the prejudice that the black man is looking for the slightest chance to steal, murder or rape as if the white people are exonerated from the possibility of committing such crimes. This is an example of altercasting, or imposing identities, by colonial discourse. This biased attitude is also valid for other nations, which means that the whites developed hostility towards other races and nationalities due to their extremely guarded existence. In fact, the constructedness of the "racially gendered hierarchy" is ambivalent both because of the existence of financial and masculine "white failures like Dick", and because "certain white groups like the Afrikaners and the Greeks are also othered by the dominant Anglo-Saxons" (Mutekwa 735). For instance, Mary's mother forbids her to play with their Greek neighbour's daughter, saying that "her parents were dagos" (Lessing 32).

There are also certain references to white Christian ideas in the novel. When two farmers come together, they talk about the native labourers "who are so exasperatingly

indifferent to the welfare of the white man, working only to please themselves" (76). Dick and Charlie Slatter criticise the natives as they have "no idea of the dignity of labour, no idea of improving themselves by hard work", which are obviously principles of the so-called Protestant work ethic (76). Although it is meaningless for the natives to strive to make the white colonizer's life more comfortable, Dick and Slatter, like other white farmers, expect the black people to dedicate all their efforts to this end. This is an unrealistic expectation because the only reason why the black race suffers is the white man who turned them into slaves in their own country and on their own soil. What is more, the writer comments that the white people "loathe them [the natives] to the point of neurosis", which makes it even less plausible that the natives would willingly and wholeheartedly work for the well-being of the white race (76).

Similarly, when Mary takes over the farm work for a short time when Dick is ill, she lectures the natives about "the dignity of work, which is a doctrine bred into the bones of every white South African" (114). At this point, Protestant indoctrination and the mentality of the white community surface once again, revealing hypocrisy due to the gap between what they preach and practice.

> They would never be any good, she said […] until they learned to work without supervision, for the love of it, to do as they were told, to do a job for its own sake, not thinking about the money they would be paid for it. It was this attitude towards work that had made the white man what it was: the white man worked because it was good to work, because working without reward was what proved a man's worth (114).

By contrast, the white colonizer exploits the land and the labour of a country that is not theirs by right, and looks for more wealth for the minimum effort. The same hypocritical attitude goes for Mary as well. She tries to manipulate Dick about how he runs the farm so that he would do as she says, plant tobacco and produce cash for Mary to realize her dream of going back to her old city life where Dick does "not fit into the picture" (124). Just like Slatter and the society he represents, Mary thinks that Dick is no better than the

natives. Therefore, just as the white men exploiting the natives for their own welfare, Mary tries to make Dick a financial success so that she alone could get out of the country.

There are more examples of the behaviour patterns expected of the natives. They cannot speak their own language, and "it is 'cheek' if a native speaks English" (119); they always keep their "eyes on the ground" because they cannot look a superior [meaning a white person] in the face" (57 & 68); they are not allowed to make mistakes like dropping "a plate through nervousness" (68). In short, the native is expected to be "an abstraction, not really there, a machine without a soul" (152). This is the reason why Dick thinks Moses and other natives from missionary schools "knew too much" (155). According to Dick, "they should not be taught to read and write: they should be taught the dignity of labour and general usefulness to the white man" (155).

Moreover, the natives are expected to bear being mistreated for no good reason as the white people can direct the unhappiness and anger that results from problems in personal relationships, to all natives as racism. Mary "vents her frustration on a succession of houseboys" (Sarvan 535). To illustrate, after having a row with Dick about the water she consumes trying to cool herself, Mary makes the houseboy scrub the zinc bath and "go on scrubbing till it shone", which is an impossible task (Lessing 72). Similarly, after Dick and Mary have a fight about the native houseboy, Mary cannot "smother" her dislike of Dick but she puts it "against the account of the native who had left [because Mary fired him], and then indirectly, against all natives" (80). Because Mary is "without an operational sense of self", and has nothing to do or to define herself with, "her only social expression becomes her overweening hatred for the blacks" (Zak 487). She treats the black race "with exaggerated cruelty and impersonalness" because the natives threaten her "not only as men, but as usurpers of her only useful, though hated function on the farm—housekeeping" (487). Another incident takes place when Mary criticises Dick for going nowhere despite all his efforts. After a fit of temper he has on the fields, "he returned to the house preoccupied and bitter, and snapped at the houseboy, who

temporarily represented the genus native, which tormented him beyond all endurance" (Lessing 139). The last example takes place when Mary and Moses look after Dick in shifts. When Mary wakes up after a night during which Moses took care of Dick, she expects to find something "he had left undone", "something he was paid to do" (164). However, she sees that everything is in order, and "her annoyance with herself turned into anger against the native" (164).

These examples also shed light on the reason why the white colonizer resorts to violence. All of the events mentioned above lead to a certain sense of guilt because, deep down, conscience would prove that it is not fair to project one's frustrations onto the natives. The writer explains this by saying "when a white man in Africa by accident looks into the eyes of a native and sees the human being (which it is his chief preoccupation to avoid), his sense of guilt, which he denies, fumes up in resentment and he brings down the whip" (144). The whip being a "weapon of domination" and a phallic symbol in Freudian terms, it is important to notice the humiliation and emasculation of the natives, contrasted with the assertion of white male dominance (Mutekwa 730). This explains the reason why Mary feels more confident down the fields with the sjambok on her wrist (Lessing 112). Symbolically, the whip or violence paradoxically saves the white man from the sense of guilt and pangs of conscience by providing an outlet for his anger and frustration. Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that the white man's confidence is rooted in the sjambok, but "that sjambok did not do the Turners any good" (14).

Racial prejudice is one of the main themes that appears in the novel. Although it is the colour bar that brings about the unwritten codes of conduct and clichés which have been explained, it becomes more distinct in certain sections of the novel. The colour bar is like an invisible wall between the white and the black races because "race" is the South African "equivalent" of "class" (35). In other words, the narrator creates an analogy between racial distinction in South Africa and class distinction is in Britain in order to hint at the discrimination and othering by means of which identity formation occurs.

Although the racial superiority that the whites assume provides a certain freedom of movement to the white race, it also limits the members of both races, on which colonialism thrives.

The two sides hate each other so much that Mary feels vulnerable to "the waves of hatred that she could feel coming from the gang of natives" (111). While the white people say that the natives stink, Samson, Dick's old houseboy says, "to us there is nothing worse than a white man's smell" (116). Fanon asserts that "hate is not inborn; it has to be constantly cultivated, to be brought into being, in conflict with more or less recognized guilt complexes" (37). Colonial discourse cultivates hate between black and white races to establish white dominance; however, white individuals in a colonial context, just like Mary, "grudgingly acknowledged [the] economic need of the black upon which white African society is predicated" (Zak 482). This becomes obvious when Mary calls one of her houseboys "cunning swine", due to her conviction that he is "certainly stealing while her back was turned" (Lessing 69). Similarly, in the fields, Mary comes "face to face with the African labourers whose sweat has made possible all the privileges all colonizers enjoy" (Fishburn 3). Being somewhat aware of her dependence on an object of hate, Mary whips Moses for taking a long break; she holds the *lazy* native responsible for her poverty. The resulting hostility nourished by colonial discourse that is embedded in the consciousness of both sides, regardless of which race initiates a human relationship, is mostly unpleasant and sometimes tragic. If a black man breaches the colour bar, he is sacked, punished, whipped, or executed, just like the native labourers and houseboys in the novel, depending on the greatness of the offence. However, if a white person breaches the colour bar, either he/she is called soft, weak and incompetent, as in the case of Dick, or he/she is fined, as in the case of Charlie Slatter, or this white person may even be murdered, as in the case of Mary.

As the narrator puts it, "to live with the colour bar in all its nuances and implications means closing one's mind to many things, if one is to remain an accepted member of the society" (Lessing 26). This means an individual has two options in a colonized

environment. For one thing, he/she can modify his/her values, reactions and way of thinking according to the expectations of the society, and unconsciously internalize the imposed mindset, which, in turn, either alienates the individual from himself/herself or turns him/her into a fanatic and violent racist. In other words, the individual can sacrifice the sense of personal identity, of who he really is, for the sake of belonging to a group; or he/she can stick with his/her own morality despite the high risk of being excluded. The second choice takes a strong personality, mental stamina and the ability to rejuvenate one's self in the face of public humiliation and degradation. Thus, the individual will have self-respect, and senses of personal identity and wholeness as an individual, but he will lack the sense of belonging to a group. If the individual cannot pick one of these alternatives, the incredible effort of closing one's mind to the obvious and the endless fight involved in making one's mind accept the imposed social and personal identities it cannot may lead to withdrawal from the world or insanity. Therefore, one can say that Charlie Slatter is the stereotypical example of those who pick the first alternative. Doris Lessing, as a writer and an individual in a colonized land, exemplifies the minority who go for the second choice due to the observations she makes and the stance she takes by writing this novel. However, Mary shifts from total naivety to racial fanaticism and then she turns to herself and she finds no personal identity to hold on to. When she realizes this in the last chapter of the novel, she admits that she has "been ill for years […] inside, somewhere […] everything wrong, somewhere" (201). Therefore, one can say that she is one of those who do not make an actual choice between the above-mentioned two alternatives, but she embraces her destruction to end her misery because she belongs nowhere, and neither does she know who she really is. Towards the end of the novel, as a part of her unconscious efforts to establish a humane relationship with another human being and to recover a personal identity independent from the social impositions, Mary comes to acknowledge "the possibility that she and Moses are not so terribly far apart after all" (Fishburn 7). It is this propensity that is "Mary's sin" according to Slatter and the larger colonial society, "and it is a cardinal one", which is "to blur racial distinctions" (7). Mary deserves

punishment, which is a self-inflicted one, thereby her case is summarized by the white farmers as “a silly woman [who] got herself murdered” (Lessing 11).

To better understand the colour bar and the hatred it nourishes, the life and the point of view of the black people should be taken into consideration. It has been mentioned earlier that contracted workers are in a position no better than that of slaves due to their hiring process.

> 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 the promises of good employment and finally sell them to the white farmers at five pounds or more per head for a year’s contract (Lessing 114).

Obviously, these people are gathered by using force, sold to farmers, and they are not allowed to quit working on the farm even if they want to. The fact that they are called contracted workers is a euphemism used for slaves. The black labourers do physical work, which is very hard as they work in the sun all day: “The natives unloaded the dusty sacks from the wagon, holding them by the corners on their shoulders, bent double under the weight. They were like a human conveyor-belt” (118).

Their living conditions are terrible. The black labourer builds his own hut in one day before starting work and the huts are made of “sticks and grass”; they are “grass-roofed, with pole walls plastered with mud and single low doors, but no windows” (109). They are trapped in this life, for some of them are contracted workers, and the others do not have a chance of getting a better job, move to the city and finding a decent place to live because all doors are closed to the black people as a result of apartheid.

Besides, the narrator insinuates that there was also the problem of child labour: “there were some children working among the others who could be no more than seven or eight years old” (115). Nowhere in the novel is it mentioned that these children were paid for the work they do. The narrator does not say whether they went to school or whether there was a certain limit to the working hours of the children. Therefore, based on the information provided, it would not be wrong to assume that these children worked under the same conditions as the adults, but most probably without pay. It is bitterly ironic that a nation should impose on black people the difficulties and inhumane working conditions that they experienced themselves during the industrial revolution just because they are considered to be inferior or different due to the colour bar. This is a telling instance of how dehumanizing colonization and racism are, and how deprived of empathy the white colonizer is, which eliminates communication between the two races. In fact, this aspect of colonization is what the imperialistic and capitalistic ambitions are based on.

Living under such conditions all their lives, beginning from childhood, the black people hate the white people just as much. They look at the white people blankly as if they were not there. When Mary tells Moses to get back to work on the farm, minutes before striking him with the whip, the look on Moses’ face is depicted in detail by generalizing it to all of the black people.

> He looked at her with the expression common to African labourers: a blank look, as if he hardly saw her, as if there was an obsequious surface with which he faced her and her kind, covering an invulnerable and secret hinterland (118).

This beautiful description reveals that the colour bar prevents black people from sharing their rich, strong and uncorrupted accumulation of culture and wisdom with the white people. The natives have to avoid them at all times due to the imposed rules of conduct and maybe due to their group pride. Moses’ unwillingness to touch Mary is also a telling instance of the avoided interaction or communication with the white race: “He put out

his hand reluctantly, loathe to touch her, the sacrosanct white woman" (151). No matter what the reason, the two races do not know each other and it is thought that everything is better this way because if the white man sees the human side of the natives, he may exercise his power more violently on them as a result of his sense of guilt as mentioned before.

What happens if this barrier between the two races is breached? There are instances when this is also exemplified in the novel. The main characters, namely Dick, Moses, Mary, Tony Marston and Charlie Slatter, and the instances in which they are involved will be analyzed respectively, in relation to their behaviour and the colour bar. For instance, Dick feels sentimental as his old houseboy Samson leaves the house after Mary's arrival (65). However, Mary "could not understand any white person feeling anything personal about a native", so she despises Dick for his weakness (65). In the same chapter, Dick tries to talk the next houseboy into staying although Mary wants him to go. When Dick almost apologizes to the native by saying "it would not happen again" because Mary has made him scrub the bath without allowing him to have a break or have lunch, she gets furious (78). Although Dick calls the natives savages, he is aware that they are human beings and they have got to eat. Dick's punishment for breaching the colour bar like this is severe condemnation.

Moses also goes beyond the limits set by the colour bar after coming to the house as a houseboy. After Mary's nervous breakdown sets in, she cries and asks Moses not to leave (151). Mary lets herself go, and Moses forces her to eat and drink by serving food "with flowers", in an attempt to please her (154). Such a sign of compassion is not expected of a houseboy because "he was waiting for a word of approval and pleasure from her" (154). Actually, Moses has sympathy for a woman who is ill and going mad, so he speaks gently, "almost fatherly" and "as if he were speaking to one of his own women" (151). The narrator's choice of the word "fatherly" has other implications for Mary but these will be discussed in the following paragraphs. Yet, the colour bar forbids such human relations between the two races. Similarly, Moses takes full responsibility

for Mary's well-being and patronizes her, and gives her an ultimatum so that she will treat him more fairly. "If Madame cross, I go", he says "in a tone of finality" (153). Mary has to "back down, being fearful of Dick's anger if yet another servant decamps" (Roberts 77). Moses claims that Mary is "unjust", but she does not see it like that. Although they have different points of view and social positioning, they are in contact on the personal level as they have to survive under the same roof (Lessing 153). Although it is idealistic for its time (and maybe even for now), this is an objective, fair and humane representation of the whites and blacks sharing the same land, as a proof of Lessing being a visionary. In any case, the two events that are explained undoubtedly reveal that the power relation has changed to favour Moses, who is "a huge man with a proud bearing and a missionary-school education" (Roberts 74). In both of these cases, Mary does "not know what to say", because she is afraid of encouraging him further beyond the racial barriers (Lessing 153).

Moses breaks another racial barrier after this climactic point in his relationship with Mary. When he feels that Mary is about to scold him, he looks "at her deliberately, not accepting it, but challenging her" (154). Thus, Mary is "unable to muster the anger she would need to rebuke his familiarity" (Fishburn 9). As mentioned before, a native is expected to lower his eyes and not look a white person in the face but Moses not only does these things, he also displays a dominant white male's attitude due to the power he feels over Mary. The fact that "twice he asked her questions, in that new familiar friendly voice of his" also reveals the relaxed mood Moses is in (Lessing 155). Such an attitude would be shocking to a third white party but their being alone in the house all day without any intrusions lets the relationship flow in a course of Moses' own choosing, disregarding the colour bar. In fact, there is a mutual understanding here because Mary has "permitted human contact to take place between them" despite being "fearful of this new relationship" (Fishburn 5).

Moses goes one step further when he questions the Christian values in relation to the ongoing World War II with an innocent tone of voice that overshadows the judgmental

attitude and the implied criticism in his question: “Did Jesus think it right that people should kill each other?” (Lessing 155). This question infuriates Mary so much that she wants to learn more about him, and she finds out that he was a “mission boy”, which explains “that irritatingly well-articulated ‘madame’, for instance, instead of the usual ‘missus’, which was somehow in better keeping with his station in life” (155). This is a critical incident because Moses forces Mary to wonder about him, which is the first step of establishing a human relationship with someone, and Mary takes this step. However, the clashing values in her mind cause her to reveal another prejudice she has. It is the idea that the black people should always act according to their inferior rank, that they should know their place. Mary’s sticking to her biased clichés once more, in an attempt to preserve her superiority and power, is due to “the fear [that] engulfed her” (152). It is both the fear that Moses will take revenge for Mary’s striking him and the fear “of some dark attraction” that may lead to sexuality between herself and Moses (154). Once again, Mary’s sticking to the colonial dictates is underlined because colonialism “mainly tried to protect itself by guarding the sexual relations and miscegenation along the black man-white woman axis” (Mutekwa 736). This extra care paid to this issue by the colonizer is paradoxically and ambivalently both the reason and the result of cross-racial sexuality becoming “a site for attempts to subvert” colonialism (736).

Mary is helplessly trapped and inactive in the face of this native man who “forced her now to treat her as a human being”, and literally “she was being forced into contact” in her dreams (Lessing 156). Mary senses that this is dangerous due to the white colonizer values she has imbibed because Moses gets even more protective, almost like a husband, when he says “Madame should not walk around in the dark bush by herself” (156). In fact, Mary is “attracted to him” although her “social myths prevent her from acknowledging it” (Fishburn 9). The contradiction between her feelings and social conditioning creates two conflicting reactions in Mary. She starts to project her desires for Dick onto Moses and see him “as the strong and secure man she had ambivalently wanted Dick to be” (Zak 488) because Dick’s “masculinity can be best described as subordinate” (Mutekwa 731). She also carefully thinks of her actions and see if they will

"allow Moses to strengthen that new human relationship between them, in a way she could not counter, and which she could only try to avoid" (Lessing 157). However, her worsening mental state prevents her from suppressing "her emerging self" (Zak 489), from maintaining her colonial indoctrination, and from resisting Moses' unrelenting efforts to exceed racial discrimination and progress towards a relationship between two sexes.

Another example of Moses' acting far beyond the codes of conduct suitable for the members of two races is observed when Moses asks Mary if she is afraid of him. Mary replies in the negative, but she speaks "half-hysterically" and in such "a high-pitched voice" that Moses understands that she is terrified by him (Lessing 165-166). That a black man should dare to ask such a question to a white person is unthinkable, yet the relationship at hand is far beyond that stage at this point in the novel. Therefore, Moses gives "her a long, slow, imponderable look" and leaves the room quite confidently (166). Thus, he starts giving evil, threatening looks rather than talk as he did up to this point. In fact, Mary is projecting the threats; she may be imagining them because the narrative technique is limited to Mary's perspective only. The fact that he dominates Mary so much that he can force her actions such as attempting to scold Moses or lying to protect herself becomes more obvious as the end of the novel draws near.

According to Mary's perception, Moses gives similar but longer, more evil and threatening looks to Tony Marston when he tries to support Mary so that she can send Moses away (188). Moses, "speaking past Tony", asks Mary if she was going away for good and if she was going away with Tony Marston (188). This implies that Moses suffers from the sorrow of separation together with maddening jealousy as if Mary and he were lovers. This can also be supported by the narrator's comment concerning Moses and why he murders Mary: "Though what thoughts of regret, or pity, or perhaps even wounded human affection were compounded with the satisfaction of his completed revenge, it is impossible to say" (206). The narrator may be carefully manipulating the reader so that he thinks the revenge refers to Mary's striking Moses. However, the real

reference (and the one that would be more meaningful on a social and colonial level) could be to Mary's unfaithfulness to a human being who probably forgave her, looked after her, cared about her and showed compassion to her. It would not be wrong to say that the real reason why Moses killed Mary is because he felt Mary cheated on him with Tony Marston, because it crosses Moses' mind to kill Marston as well. After killing Mary, Moses goes to "the Englishman's hut", but he sees that "his enemy, whom he had outwitted, was asleep" (206). Thus, one can say that he intended to kill him too, but then he changed his mind or maybe he was already satisfied.

Many critics agree that although Moses is a very important character, "he is almost entirely presented from outside" (Walder 109), and that Lessing "makes no real effort to understand Moses: who he is, what he believes in, where he comes from, why he treats Mary with compassion, or even why he ultimately kills her" (Fishburn 4). Moses, as a character, is not developed well-enough, his thoughts are not conveyed and his motives for murdering Mary are open to speculation. However, the text supports a reading of Moses like the bush; "he is impenetrable, inexplicable, and dangerous" (4). Lessing accepts this criticism.

> There was a long time when I thought that it was a pity I ever wrote Moses like that, because he was less of a person than a symbol. But it was the only way I *could* write him at that time since I'd never *met* Africans excepting the servants or politically, in a certain complicated way. But now I've changed my mind again. I think it was the right way to write Moses, because if I'd made him too individual it would've unbalanced the book. I think I was right to make him a bit unknown (Bertelsen 1994:133).

Despite the question of "how much" it is "possible to represent the Other" (Walder 109), Moses, as he is depicted, serves to execute the "punishment that the text decrees for [Mary] this accidental rebel" (Fishburn 2). In fact, it is very meaningful that this punishment does not "even have to be administered by the British whom her weakness has betrayed" due to the powerful system of colonialism, which is a closed-circuit (2).

The white society can “rely on an African (Moses) to do all their dirty work for them” (2). Moses acts in obedience with the role colonial discourse has assigned to him by moving from missionary school to “field labourer” and then “to houseboy [and finally] to murderer” (2). In colonial terms, if Mary deserves to die for her betrayal of the white society, Moses has to murder “in fulfilment of his nature” (2).

However, there is another possible reading. After coming to the house, Moses “becomes an individualized human being” who is “someone” capable of “scripting his own narrative of self-worth, dignity, and racial equality” (11). No sooner does he achieve this by subverting colonialism than “it is taken from him” (11). This means that “his reversion to native ‘type’ is affirmed when he ‘acts out’ the role assigned to him,” which reinstates, as in the previous reading, the “absolute power of the colonizers’ ‘imaginary’ discourse” (11). Ironically, the very act by which Moses “asserts his dignity, his sense of self-worth” serves to “reinscribe him as archetypal native (savage/Other)” (11). Because this is the tragic human condition induced by colonialism Lessing aims at exposing to the readers, “Moses’ motives are of genuine interest only to someone outside of Lessing’s text” (11), which is written with a style that ironically reflects the prejudicial blind spots of the white colonizers in Africa.

As for Mary, it would be best to look into how she perceives the race issue and apartheid, with reference to how she breaches the colour bar. Her interaction with the black race can be considered as a process. It starts with apathy, moving towards the revival of the hardwired prejudice that leads to hatred and violence. Then comes the stage where she recognizes the black race and develops contact with it. Finally, she totally retreats from the world with all its value judgments, and briefly questioning herself, she embraces her destruction, which she has always known to be inevitable.

At the beginning of the novel, Mary is presented as a woman with almost no contact with the natives and no interest in the subject.

> She had never come into contact with natives before, as an employer on her own account. Her mother's servants she had been forbidden to talk to; in the club she had been kind to the waiters; but the 'native problem' meant for her other women's complaints of their servants at tea parties. She was afraid of them, of course. Every woman in South Africa is brought up to be (Lessing 58-59).

It is clear that Mary lives in a vacuum, a very detached and protected life, until she comes to Dick's farm. She has had no communication with the natives, nor does she have any firsthand experience with them. Thus, she does not consider them as human beings with needs and lives of their own.

> She never thought of natives as people who had to eat or sleep: they were either there, or they were not, and what their lives were when they were out of her sight she had never paused to think (74).

As a result of the emasculation of the black man by colonial discourse, Mary is able to "boss over the houseboys without for a moment acknowledging that they are human beings" (Mutekwa 732), but the situation changes with Moses, with whom Mary's whip "has forged a link, which cannot be denied" (Sarvan 535). As time passes, Mary moves from this state of total ignorance, presented in the quotation above, to being fully aware of the natives. This process takes place due to her constant proximity to the black race, which helps the instilled prejudice and learned values of judgment to surface. The learned hatred manifests itself in Mary's thinking process very unconsciously, and she finds these norms quite natural. After she fires the houseboy, she starts doing the housework herself, and "she cleaned and polished tables and chairs and plates, as if she were scrubbing skin off a black face" (Lessing 68). Thus, her hatred becomes obsession and she commits herself to scrupulously monitoring the work the next houseboy does. In other words, the native in the house becomes a pursuit she (literally) follows (everywhere): "she had something to do in the house, supervising that native" (70).

Due to differences in lifestyle and culture, and lack of communication, the houseboys naturally do not meet her expectations, so she frequently rages against the houseboys and all natives personified in them. This tension becomes so invasive that her fury against the houseboy seems to be the only sign of vitality in Mary. Therefore, realizing that Mary is isolating herself from everything, Dick is "grateful for the resurgence of vitality that showed itself in an increased energy over the shortcomings and laziness of her houseboy" (105). In fact, the narrator makes a humorous reference to what the colour bar brings about, which is a lack of communication and congruousness between the white community and the natives as Dick's efforts to keep bees availed Mary and him nothing: "not a bee ever went near his hives; perhaps because they were African bees, and did not like hives made after an English pattern" (87). Thus, everything about Africa, its soil and native people repeatedly going wrong for her and her husband, Mary's prejudice turns into hatred. Her observations about native women and children clearly show that she finds them repulsive.

> If she disliked the 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. She could not bear to see them sitting there on the grass, their legs tucked under them in that traditional timeless pose, as peaceful and uncaring […] Above all, she hated the way they suckled their babies, with their breasts hanging down for everyone to see; there was something in their calm satisfied maternity that made her blood boil. 'Their babies hanging onto them like leeches,' she said to herself shuddering, for she thought with horror of suckling a child. The idea of a child's lips on her breasts made her feel quite sick; at the thought of it she would involuntarily clasp her hands over her breasts, as if protecting them from a violation. And since so many white women are like her, turning with relief to the bottle, she was in good company, and did not think of herself, but rather of these black women, as strange; they were alien and primitive creatures with ugly desires she could not bear to think about (94-95).

The passage above reveals “the perpetual evidence of uninhibited physicality among the Africans”, which is like an “insistent beating on the doors of Mary’s repression, an intolerable situation that becomes maddening” especially when Mary is “forced into dependence on a black man” (Roberts 76). First of all, this passage shows that Mary is full of hatred for the natives, and she cannot bear to see them around. She despises their motherhood and womanhood, not because they do things in the wrong way, but because they are in full and relaxed conformity with nature and what it brings to them. Therefore, apartheid, with its implication that the white race cannot have anything in common with the black race, prevents Mary from appreciating the most innocent, basic and natural relationship between a mother and child, breastfeeding. She cannot overcome her disgust for nudity and physical intimacy because she considers these to be only peculiar to the natives. Secondly, considering the fact that Mary never feels at ease in the country when she is close to nature, and that she is alienated from her own body and sexuality, it is plausible that she should despise the native women, for they uncaringly enjoy what she lacks, namely nudity, physical contact, maternity and female sexuality. Besides, it is strikingly ironic that she feels supported by a sense of unity with the women of her own race, who would rather use a bottle to feed their babies, yet Mary never belonged in the group of white women in the city and she is extremely cut off from them in the country. Naturally, apartheid promotes such unity against the other, and to know this is theoretically comforting for Mary. Finally, she cannot accept the natives for who they are, their manners and even the way they sit on the grass, which reflects their culture, customs and life style. She finds them inquisitive, insolent and vain because she assumes the role of the reserved British middle class.

Thus, the immense hatred and subconscious jealousy that Mary feels for the natives make her resort to violence with ease because she says that she does not “believe in treating them soft”, and that she would “keep them in order with the whip” (Lessing 116). In fact, Mary’s striking Moses with the sjambok is the accumulation of her being helplessly alone and being surrounded by what the imposed value judgments and her upbringing disapprove of. However, right after this climactic incidence, her fear of

natives starts to build up because Moses "looked at her with an impression that turned her stomach liquid with fear" (120). Moreover, when "Dick, unaware of this incident, brings Moses into the house as Mary's next houseboy", her fear becomes unbearable and her mental health starts to deteriorate, resulting in Mary's slowly letting go of the deeply embedded norms and clichés of the colonial discourse (Sarvan 535).

With the history they have, as perhaps for the Africans and whites in Lessing's Rhodesia, it is impossible for Mary and Moses to get along and enjoy a peaceful togetherness under the same roof, although "there was nothing in his attitude to suggest that he remembered the incident" (Lessing 142). The narrator does not explicitly state that Moses has forgiven Mary but this is a possibility. This has implications in a larger sense. The blacks and the whites cannot survive together only with the amendments brought to the laws about slavery. The white people's obsession with protecting themselves, not letting the side down, asserting their authority and dominance will cause destruction for all, including the white society itself because the whites exclude every colour, nationality and income level that is not the same as theirs. Thus, one can say that Mary and Moses' relationship is a metaphor for the clash between the colonizer and the colonized, trapped on the same land but also distant due to colour bar. Mary's reaction to her predicament is one of alienation and timid protest.

> She felt, rather, she had been lifted from the part fitted to her, in a play she understood, and made suddenly to act one unfamiliar to her. It was a feeling of being out of character that chilled her, not knowledge that she had changed. The soil, the black labourers, always so close to their lives but also so cut off, […] these things did not belong to her, they were not real. It was monstrous that they should be imposed upon her (97).

As a result of her alienation, fear of Moses and worsening mental health, Mary starts to care less about the value judgments of the society. She cannot admit that she is drawn to Moses because she "would have died rather than acknowledge" that there was "some dark attraction", but she fully recognizes his presence (154). Mary finds herself torn

between two contradictory states, namely fearfully sensing that she may be attracted to Moses, and her strong denial of and disgust for such a possibility.

> She used to sit quite still, watching him work. The powerful, broad-built body fascinated her. She had given him white shorts and shirts to wear in the house, that had been used by her former servants. They were too small for him; as he swept or scrubbed or bent to the stove, his muscles bulged and filled out the thin material of the sleeves until it seemed they would split (142).

This is a fairly erotic description of a male body given from Mary's perception. At such a sight, Mary cannot help looking at Moses' muscular and well-built body, and so her apathy for the black race begins to vanish. However, when Moses notices her prying on him as he is having a shower, Mary's attitude becomes so vain that, in her mind, she puts all the blame on Moses. Thus, she distances herself from responsibility or her sexual desire for a native, which under no circumstances would the colour bar allow.

> [S]he was arrested by the sight of the native under the trees a few yards off. […] As she looked, he turned by some chance, or because he sensed her presence, and saw her. […] A white person may look at a native, who is no better than a dog. Therefore she was annoyed when he stopped and stood upright, waiting for her to go, his body expressing resentment of her presence there. She was furious that perhaps he believed she was there on purpose; this thought, of course, was not conscious; it would be too much presumption, such unspeakable cheek for him to imagine such a thing, that she would not allow it to enter her mind; but the attitude of his still body as he watched her across the bushes between them, the expression on his face, filled her with anger. She felt the same impulse that had once made her bring down the lash across his face (143).

Obviously, both Mary and Moses evade the racial barrier in this scene. To begin with, Mary justifies herself in watching the native in his private time, but she fools herself into believing that it is Moses who invades her privacy by being arrogant and vain enough

even to imagine that she is watching and admiring his body, which may be true. Suddenly, Mary's "apathy disappears"; nevertheless, it is "not entirely clear whether she is newly energized by the sight of the half-naked native or the deeply felt anger his dignity inspires in her" (Fishburn 9). The paranoia of the white race reaches such an extent that the whites make assumptions about the natives' intention, get angry over it and violently punish the entire black race. Mary becomes "hysterical as she tries subconsciously to deny her attraction for Moses" (Roberts 77). In other words, Mary feels like resorting to violence once again because she "feels a guilt which she must deny", unconsciously knowing that she is in the wrong by the society's standards (Fishburn 9) due to "her 'discovery' and finally acknowledgement of the masculinity of Moses" (Mutekwa 732). The implied human contact in this scene is what Mary fears, so Mary feels "a need to punish the native who has been the agent of such unwelcome knowledge" (Fishburn 9).

After this turning point, Moses begins to "loom large in her life as a father figure, to replace the image of her wimpish father, and as a lover, to replace the failed and equally wimpish Dick Turner" (Mutekwa 732). Moreover, Mary's unconscious desire to start a sexual relationship is somehow rebuffed by Moses. As Mary feels rejected, she surrenders to anger and is overwhelmed by the impulse to physically hurt Moses, which is ironically a very feminine reaction to rejection as her pride is bruised. On the other hand, Moses breaches the colour bar when he, quite normally, implies by his posture that he wants to be left alone while he is having a bath. The apartheid rules that, being a native, Moses does not have the right to send a white person away. He especially cannot display the vanity to think that a white woman may find him attractive because, as mentioned before, he is no different from a dog in the eyes of white people. Thus, it can be said that in the extract above both parties are challenging each other and apartheid silently.

Another step from total ignorance of its presence to contact with the black race takes place when Mary shows Moses her weakness. When Moses asks to leave, Mary

"tearfully asks him to stay because she is so fearful of Dick's anger" (Fishburn 9), which reveals her "perceived powerlessness within patriarchy" (Roberts 78). She becomes aware that her crying in Moses' presence was a "resignation of her authority" (Lessing 154). This is yet another example of Mary's breaching the colour bar, which, in return, paves the path to the impending physical contact between Mary and Moses: "He put out his hand […] and pushed her by the shoulder; she felt herself gently propelled across the room towards the bedroom" (151). Moses' trying to help a weak and crying woman who is in a fit of hysteria can also be read with reference to sexuality although Mary is depicted as being disgusted by the touch: "as they approached the bed, the soft touch still on her shoulder, she felt her head beginning to swim and her bones going soft" (151). This extreme reaction can be interpreted in two ways. First of all, Mary associates Moses' touch with "her sickened panic at having her face thrust into her father's lap" and therefore with nausea (Roberts 78). To put it another way, Mary transforms her "confused Oedipal feelings for her father into a fear of all physical intimacy" (78). Inevitably, she "assumes the identity of her mother" gradually, and projects onto Moses "the sexual power of the father" (78). Secondly, Mary's swimming head and softening bones may be due to outright sexual desire that she cannot accept, not "horror", "nausea" or indignation as the narrator suggests. The reason why this interpretation is valid is the writer's style of depicting emotions and events as they should be perceived by the white society that imposes the colour bar. In other words, the hidden irony that recurs throughout the novel gives the impression that Mary is pleased by the physical intimacy, but she is afraid to admit that.

This time, the nature of the contact that is referred to is not related to race because the relationship between Mary and Moses begins to shift from white master and black servant to more of a husband and wife relationship, which will be explained in more detail later. The issue of authority is still present in this kind of relationship, yet it changes hands. As long as there is a question of authority, one side will always hurt the other no matter what the colour is. This is the reason why Mary, despite being unsure

about everything else due to her nervous breakdown, knows for sure that she is approaching her end due to her violation of the colour bar.

> […] she felt as if she were in a dark tunnel, nearing something final, something she could not visualize, but which waited for her inexorably, inescapably. And in the attitude of Moses, in the way he moved or spoke, with that easy, confident, bullying insolence, she could see he was waiting too. They were like two antagonists, silently sparring. Only he was powerful and sure of himself, and she was undermined with fear, by her terrible dream-filled nights, her obsession (167).

Mary senses that she is getting even closer to an inevitable viciousness, yet she cannot send Moses away for fear that Dick will get angry. This would be a situation "she could not face", so she feels she has no choice but keep the native and pretend that everything flows smoothly around the house (150). However, Mary has to suffer from more consequences of her evading the colour bar as her unconscious links the afore-mentioned physical intimacy with the others in her past via dreams.

> He [Moses] approached slowly, obscene and powerful, and it was not only he, but her father who was threatening her. They advanced together, one person, and she could smell, not the native smell, but the unwashed smell of her father. It filled the room, musty, like animals; and her knees went liquid as her nostrils distended to find clean air and her head became giddy. […] He came near and put his hand on her arm. It was the voice of the African she heard. He was comforting her because of Dick's death, consoling her protectively; but at the same time it was her father menacing and horrible, who touched her in desire (Lessing 165).

Mary's associating her father's "unwashed masculine smell" with sex was mentioned earlier, as was the implication that her father might have sexually harassed her in her childhood (163). These hints, combined with Moses and his depicted attitude, reveal that Mary foresees or rather senses that she might have sexual intercourse with Moses

although she considers sex unpleasant. Her reaction to the smell in her dream is very similar to the one she displayed when Moses touched her and led her to the bedroom, which could be due to pleasure. However, it would also be fair to consider that Mary is somehow trying to come to terms with her sexuality, which has three different aspects: untimely exposure to sex and its negative memories related to her father, Dick and the unpleasant task that marriage makes unavoidable, and finally Moses, a forbidden, unknown and powerful object of desire. This triangle is an interesting subject of study, yet what is more relevant to this chapter is that Mary's suppressed sexuality including desires and traumas that surface with her fear of and closeness to Moses and that, all together, undermine what is left of her sanity. This process will result in her total retreat from the world, which will be hastened by one more event that follows the nightmare quoted above.

When she wakes up in fear she sees Moses with a cup of tea on a tray. On her shrinking back with fear, due to the vivid effect of the dream, Moses asks her if she is afraid of him. Although Mary's paranoia strengthens "in proportion to Moses' parental care-giving", she can never admit this openly to Moses due to the restrictions brought about by her imposed racial identity (Roberts 78). However, Mary's negative reply comes a few minutes later and in a cracking whisper, which "forms a multiplex of repulsion and attraction, anger and gratitude, passivity and fear—fear being the strongest affect" (78). At the same time Mary gets "furious with herself for denying something whose possibility should never even be admitted" as she is still under the influence of the imposed codes of conduct and way of thinking although she repeatedly acts against them (Lessing 166). When Moses insists by asking the reason why she was afraid of him, she speaks in such a way that her answer not only provokes disbelief but it also convinces Moses that she is terrified by him. Indeed, "the thought of the African grew obsessive" in time and Mary feels that "it was a nightmare, the powerful black man always in the house with her, so that there was no escape from his presence", just like the white community in Africa, separated from the natives by apartheid, yet living on the same land with them (167).

Moreover, after the dream and Moses' question, "she spoke as she might have done to a white man, with whom she was flirting a little", which shows that she does not know what to do and how to behave because the imposed white morality does not apply to her present situation with Moses (166). He is the one who has the authority in the relationship and Mary tries to fool both herself and Moses into thinking that she is still in charge by acting in a carefree and relaxed manner, which becomes flirtatious when it is overdone. Of course, another possible reading of this behaviour is that Mary comes to make peace with her adult sexuality, and therefore begins to encourage Moses, which may sound less plausible considering the fact that Mary has just woken up from a nightmare involving Moses and that she is quite off balance and fearful.

Either way, Mary breaches the colour bar progressively more easily every time she gets into contact with Moses. Especially her letting or making Moses help her get dressed is the last and the greatest implication that there is sexual intimacy between them.

> Mary was sitting on an upended candlebox before the square of mirror nailed on the wall. She was in a garish pink petticoat, and her bony yellow shoulders stuck sharply out of it. Beside her stood Moses, and, as Tony [Marston] watched, she stood up and held out her arms while the native slipped her dress over them from behind. When she sat down again she shook out her hair from her neck with both hands, with the gesture of a beautiful woman adoring her beauty. Moses was buttoning up the dress; she was looking in the mirror. The attitude of the native was of an indulgent uxoriousness. When he had finished the buttoning, he stood back, and watched the woman brushing her hair (185).

This scene, which Tony Marston happens to witness, is one of a post-coital affection that a husband and wife would show to one another. The reason why Lessing presents this as an event witnessed by Tony Marston, a newcomer, is that she had originally planned to base this novel on his observations of the colonial situation in Africa (Gray 112). What

Marston, as a stranger to colonial realities and as "a young Englishman with vaguely progressive ideas, product of his place and generation" (Gindin 25), would think of cross-racial sexuality and the white society's reaction to it in colonized Africa was the original idea behind this novel. In previous quotations, the narrator enters the mind of Mary and makes use of irony to avoid straightforwardness. However, this time she further distances herself from the incident by using a third party and relates what he sees as this is the most intimate situation that a white woman and a black man may find themselves in, considering the strict unwritten rules of the colour bar. Moreover, Mary cannot "bear the white discovery of her fascination with the Negro," which inevitably "precipitates her destruction" by making Mary's inner conflict surface (25). This conflict is caused by "the alternating love and hate toward the Negro" and by "the frightening awareness that she possesses the one [and only] emotion her society most violently condemns" (20). The writer's choice of the character to witness this scene is thus significant as Tony Marston is new in South Africa, yet even he has "been in the country long enough to be shocked" by what he sees (Lessing 185).

Lessing uses Tony Marston as a mouthpiece to analyze Mary's condition, as he is relatively more objective. Marston is the one to use the phrase "in the last stages of breakdown" to describe Mary's mental state (186). He further details the narrator's diagnosis of Mary by saying "she had shut out everything that conflicted with her actions, that would revive the code she had been brought up to follow" (187). She totally surrenders to Moses' care and affection, and Moses takes full responsibility for her well-being in all senses of the word, which is, on the social level, the same for the white society that attains welfare thanks to the black labourers they exploit. A striking similarity is that Mary is forced into contact with the native, she does not return the dedication and good-will and pays for it with her life. Mary's death becomes a warning to the white community. In the same fashion, the white farmer or the office worker does not pay attention to the black farm labourer or to the native waiter in a restaurant. If they do, they are crushed by their conscience, turning to violence and victimizing the black race to deal with it. In brief, a role reversal of the victimizer and the victimized is

observed when the black and white relationship on a social level is contrasted with the one on a personal level.

Therefore, Mary can sense that she is going to die. In fact this is the final stage that Mary goes through in the process that starts with total ignorance of the black race, moves towards becoming fully aware of it and getting into contact with it, and then to a complete retreat from the world. Marston observes that "she has forgotten what her own people are like" and that she is not mad but "she lives in a world of her own where other people's standards don't count" (187). This is what Zak refers to as "relinquishment of self" in relation to Mary (488). What he means by self here is the imposed social and racial identity which is based on the assumed superiority of the colonizer predicated on racism. After the subconscious realization of this, Mary briefly questions herself and how everything has come to what it is for her. She comes to strip herself from everything that surrounds her, which is the peak point of her alienation, and "looking down like a judge on his [Moses' and all the black people's] court", she finds that "it was a torment to her, in that momentarily pitiless clarity, to see herself" (194). She analyzes her predicament and the reasons behind it.

> And time taking on the attributes of space, she stood balanced in mid-air, and while she saw Mary Turner rocking in the corner of the sofa, moaning, her fists in her eyes, she saw, too, Mary Turner as she had been, that foolish girl travelling unknowingly to this end. I don't understand, she said again. I understand nothing. The evil is there, but of what it consists, I do not know. Even the words were not her own. She groaned because of the strain, lifted in puzzled judgement on herself, who was at the same time the judged, knowing only that she was suffering torment beyond description. For the evil was a thing she could feel: had she not lived in it for many years? How many? Long before she had ever come to the farm! Even that girl had known it. But what had she done? And what was it? What *had* she done? Nothing of her own volition. Step by step, she had come to this, a woman without will, sitting on an old ruined sofa that smelled of dirt, waiting for the night to come that would finish her.

> And justly – she knew that. But why? Against what had she sinned? The conflict between her judgment on herself, and her feeling of innocence, of having been propelled by something she did not understand, cracked the wholeness of her vision (195).

As a result of the judgment she passes on herself, she rules that it is "the evil", which stands for the colonial environment, her family, her upbringing and the racist white society, that drove her mad. For Lessing, "in order to change, or merely to survive, we have first to understand how different aspects of our individual experiences fit into the general or collective experience", which is what Mary cannot do up to this point in the novel (Walder 105). She can neither question the racist and colonial conditioning that started in her childhood nor can she diagnose how her attachment to colonial racist ideas supported by poverty, isolation and fear paradoxically disintegrate her imposed identity without replacing it with a genuine one. This is the reason why Zak wishes Mary "had been able to sustain the 'false sense' that preceded the accidentally overheard conversation" (490). However, towards the end of her life, she realizes that she has lived all her life in "the evil" and she has inhaled it like air, and yet she cannot name it due to her naivety. She finds that she has done nothing of her own choosing because she is deprived of making a choice and because she is overwhelmed by lethargy as mentioned earlier. She has only done what the society expected her to do, such as getting married. Roberts, by wishing that "Mary Turner had never married", actually wishes that Mary had never conformed to the demanding and oppressive society (84). However, it is obvious that Mary would have come to a similar ending whatever choices she had made, because "she lives in "a world whose sanity itself is questionable" (Zak 490). Therefore it is very meaningful that she comes to realize that she will "justly" die as she deserves it, yet she also feels that she is an innocent victim, which is the clash caused by having had no choice—the clash that she cannot deal with. This double-edged situation distorts her perception to the extent of insanity.

As for Tony Marston and his perception of apartheid, it is true that he has relatively more "'progressive' ideas about the colour bar", yet he stands for the theoretician or the

"idealist that seldom survives a conflict with self interest" (182). Therefore, his stance in the issue may be regarded as fickle or temporary due to his being new in the country. The narrator comments that at first, all of the newcomers go through a culture shock because "most of these young men were brought up with vague ideas about equality", and "they had been prepared to treat them [the natives] as human beings" (18). Naturally, the newcomers "were revolted a hundred times a day by the casual way they [the natives] were spoken of, as if they were so may cattle; or by a blow, or a look" (18). However, sooner or later they will have to adapt to and then adopt the white society's norms and rules about the colour bar to be able to survive and make money. This shows that the white society in South Africa is invincible in face of all resistance and novelty as even the members of the white race are assimilated and the apartheid is maintained no matter what.

After Tony witnesses the intimacy between Mary and Moses, the narrator makes very important comments about the sexual aspect of the colour bar, by using Tony as a mouthpiece again. Although "interracial marriage and sex were forbidden" in the sexual politics of the day, "white men could cross this boundary with virtually no repercussions" (Mutekwa 731) Tony is aware of the fact that what he saw is an "evidence of white ruling-class hypocrisy", which can be exemplified by the "coloured children appear[ing] plentifully among the natives wherever a lonely white man is stationed" (Lessing 186). This is to mean that despite the segregationist attitude of the white community that sets the two races apart, the male members of the same community do not refrain from having relations with black women. On the other hand, white women were considered to be the "marker of racial boundaries and the preserver of the purity of the race" (Mutekwa 731). Therefore, a white woman's crossing the racial boundary with a black man was "difficult and fraught with danger for both parties", making cross-racial sexuality a major fault line along which colonialism could be subverted (731).

The sexual aspect of apartheid is also evaluated from the white male point of view. The white man is intimidated by "the superior sexual potency of the native", so he both boosts his ego by having affairs with the women of the natives and he also excludes and banishes the native man from sexual relations with the white woman (Lessing 186). This is almost another case of unsatisfiable greed of the white race. Just like he wants all that there is to exploit in Africa, he wants all the possible pleasure, but only for himself, not even for his fellow white females. Therefore, Tony is "surprised at one of the guarded, a white woman [Mary], so easily evading this barrier" (Lessing 186). Tony also relates what he has heard from an experienced doctor from a country district: "the number of white women who had relations with black men" is shockingly high, regardless of the "jealousy of the white man" (186). It is interesting that even Tony finds the thought of having sex with a native disgusting as "it would be rather like having a relation with an animal, in spite of his 'progressiveness'" (186). By criticising the only character in the novel that has a certain degree of innocence, good-will and open-mindedness, although he has come to Africa to benefit from the colonization, Lessing reveals another fact of South Africa, which is its ruthlessness and lack of mercy. Although Tony is the only character that the readers who have not experienced colonialism can identify with to some extent, the writer bitterly criticises his superficiality, damaging the relatively good impression he makes at the beginning of the novel by trying to be fair, analytical and realistic in approaching the murder case. Ironically, this is in full harmony with the message of the novel that nobody is totally innocent and nobody is the only one to blame, but this is how things are in the colonized Africa.

The last character to be analyzed in relation to colour bar and its implications is Charlie Slatter. It would be more illuminating to look into how he reacts when the colour bar is breached, rather than focus on just how he perceives himself and the natives in terms of apartheid as his efforts to protect esprit de corps, which are dedicated to strengthening apartheid, have already been explained.

As mentioned earlier, he is a segregationalist and the embodiment of the white ruling class with all its hypocrisy. He likes "his natives either one way or the other: properly dressed according to their station [such as the black policemen], or in loincloths" (15). According to Charlie Slatter, the white people should be different from and superior to the natives, which is the idea at the core of apartheid. Towards the end of the novel, in a visit he pays to the Turners to convince Dick to sell the farm to him, he observes the interior of the Turners' house as if he were an inspector.

> Charlie looked at Mary's ear-rings, and at the sofa-cover, which was of the material always sold to natives, an ugly patterned blue that has become a tradition in South Africa, so much associated with 'kaffir-truck' that it shocked Charlie to see it in a white man's house (176).

Obviously, he judges the Turners and all the other white people by how superior they are to the natives. According to Charlie Slatter, "if Mary is no better—in her appearance and behavior—than the undifferentiated natives against whom Slatter defines himself, his own identity as superior white man is threatened" (Fishburn 5). Seeing that they have been sinking lower and lower than the white standards, he accepts Dick's invitation to have dinner together just "out of curiosity" and to observe the household in more detail (Lessing 176). What makes the situation worse in Clarlie's terms is that he notices that Mary talks to him and Moses "with exactly the same flirtatious coyness", and this is what "jarred him" at first (177). Besides, he is stupefied by the "note of self-satisfaction, of conscious power" in Moses' voice when he says "oranges finished", whereas he is expected to obey the given order and serve the oranges after dinner (177). From Charlie's perspective, Moses does not only reject the command but he also finds an excuse that would underline the poverty of the household, implying that the Turners have no fruit to serve to their guests. As the rules of the white society dictate that a native can never be allowed to talk to a white person in that manner, Charlie is enraged by the ease with which this rule is violated by Mary and Moses so openly.

Charlie Slatter is such a dominant and authoritative character that his manners, his silence and even the way he looks at Mary and Dick reveal a lot. Thus, Mary fearfully understands that Charlie has "noticed something" (177). This brief incidence is enough to indicate that the white society, personified by Charlie Slatter, is extremely powerful, invasively inquisitive and ruthlessly judgmental, which is the reason why Mary is scared although she keeps "glancing at him [Charlie] guiltily, smiling" (177). Afterwards, Charlie forces Dick "to take notice of something he wanted to ignore" (178) although "Dick no longer seems to register the full significance of Mary's behaviour" (Fishburn 7). Charlie insists that Dick take Mary away "for a holiday, for at least six months" (Lessing 178). What galvanizes Charlie Slatter into action is Mary's "openness […] toward the Other", so he acts "to reestablish the hegemony of his own colonialist discourse" (Fishburn 7). By taking such radical action, Charlie is apparently helping an insane woman and her weak husband, just as a responsible and helpful neighbour should, but in fact Charlie has a hidden agenda, which involves buying Dick's farm to be used for grazing. The greed of the white society, always looking for more land, more labour and more profit is exemplified by Charlie's intentions once again. Charlie's second aim is to keep up appearances by preventing the natives from seeing the miserable situation the Turners are in. The dominant white people regard Mary "as a threat to the myth of their own cultural superiority—a threat to the colonial status quo, one that must be contained, removed or eliminated" because Mary has "broken their biracial sexual taboos" (2).

> He [Charlie] spoke as if there could be no question of a refusal; he had been shocked out of self-interest. It was not even pity for Dick that moved him. He was obeying the dictate of the first law of white South Africa, which is 'Thou shalt not let your fellow whites sink lower than a certain point; because if you do, the nigger will see he is as good as you are.' The strongest emotion of a strongly organized society spoke in his voice, and it took the backbone out of Dick's resistance (Lessing 178-179).

However, for Dick, it is simply unfair that his way of life should change and his property be forcefully bought off from him just because his wife and the houseboy speak in a relaxed, casual manner to each other. He does not want to understand Charlie's main concern, which is killing two birds with one stone. To this end, Charlie makes vigorous efforts to find a manager for the farm and to arrange tickets for the Turners. Charlie's efforts to help the Turners leave the district are motivated by "an instinctive self-preservation", and the self he refers to is the rich white society (181).

> Charlie was fighting to prevent another recruit to the growing army of poor whites, who seem to respectable white people so much more shocking (though not pathetic, for they are despised and hated for their betrayal of white standards, rather than pitied) than all the millions of black people who are crowded into the slums or on to the dwindling land reserves of their own country (181).

As another example of the hypocrisy of the white ruling class, the narrator comments that the white society helps the poor whites or, as in the case of the Turners, pushes them out of sight so that they do not damage the reputation of the white colonizer. The motive behind such an attitude is to maintain the illusions that apartheid creates. What is more interesting is that the white ruling class hates the poor whites who let the side down, but still they do whatever they can to ameliorate their social and financial situation. On the other hand, the same dominant white society would not lift a finger to help the poor natives, out of whose land they make money.

As a last analysis of the relationship between Mary and Moses, Sarvan asserts that it is "Mary's relationship with Moses [that] drives her further on the path to total insanity, disintegration, and death" because Mary's "racist society" instilled in Mary "a contempt for all black Africans" (536). This means that the cross-racial relationship is to blame; however, it is, in fact, the interventionist white colonial society and the ideas imposed by it that cause Mary's insanity. Sarvan touches upon this issue by noting that "Moses' strength and gentleness […] are an attraction she cannot resist, but a part of her stands

back in horror at herself and at this relationship" (536). On the other hand, Zak point out a significant fact that Mary begins to discover her personal identity after her "submission to Moses" by though fearfully recognizing him as the embodiment of "her sexual [and otherwise] desire" for a "strong and demanding man" (488). His interpretation hints at the fact that that this relationship could have been a healing process for Mary if only the colonial society embodied in Slatter and Martson had not intervened. If Mary had been able to enjoy Moses' caring attitude, she could have gone through a transformation, unlearned the prejudiced ideas the society had imposed, overcome her Oedipal fears and made peace with her innermost feelings and desires, which is a process the society had forbidden if the aid is to be a black man. Therefore, it can be concluded that it is not Moses that causes her disintegration but the colonial and oppressive society when contrasted with the liberty she finds in her relationship with Moses and in living in a world "where other people's standards don't count" (Lessing 187).

For her part, Mary "acquiesces reflexively" (Zak 489) to "other people's standards" under Marston's "protocolonial" influence in Fishburn's terms (Lessing 187). However, "that acquiescence is a betrayal of her emerging self" (Zak 489), and of Moses "to whom she had been disloyal, and at the bidding of the Englishman" (Lessing 204). This is the reason why Zak claims that Mary dies "at the hands of Moses, who had *helped* her" (489) to end her "extraordinary feeling of guilt" (Lessing 204) towards Moses, and her disintegration resulting from imposed value judgments of the white society, which have been revived due to the colonial intervention mentioned above. This is a criticism directed to "the political version" of the European idea of "support[ing] a sense of dominant group position that becomes elaborated into an ideology of racial domination" (Bertelsen 1991:655).

On the other hand, Sarvan makes a good point about Mary's insanity by asserting that "in her apartheid society someone like Mary has to become less than her normal self in order to become truly human" (536). Mary has to relinquish the instilled values of her society and "become less" in order to find her personal identity that is true to herself

rather than the society. This is the reason why she "shuts off her other self [conditioned by the society], Dick, and white society" (Sarvan 536). It is the same reason why she cannot ask Dick to help her because Dick reminds her "of what she had to forget in order to remain herself" (Lessing 191). What the narrator is referring to here is Mary's identity that is shaped by the society's norms and what she had to forget is her expectations and what she wanted for herself when she watched movies and compared what was offered to her instead. Marrying Dick is what is offered to her (Zak 486), and thus her own desires, her personal identity, are what she had to leave behind.

In conclusion, the writer presents the white race as a hostile and exploitative entity that is equipped with absolute social and legal authority and power over both the white and the black races. The white ruling-class is depicted as harsh and ruthless in its dealings with the black people. The colonizer does not refrain from using violence as a defence mechanism against its own sense of guilt. Moreover, there is a certain cross-racial sexuality being experienced despite the norms banning it. Thus, one can say that the depiction of white characters is very realistic because they are both portrayed as cruel exploiters of the land and its native people, and as human beings who try to survive and thrive on foreign lands despite their weakness and hypocrisy which they try to overcome and/or suppress. As the dominant white society only contains the white people that can fit in at the cost of sacrificing their own value judgments and ethics, and as it casts out the ones that it cannot assimilate, the profile of the white colonizer is one of contradiction as he yearns to be accepted and to follow his human instinct. This atmosphere is also characterized by fear, criticism, condemnation and seclusion, which undermines the senses of personal identity and belonging to a society in the protagonist as she finds herself in a world she can neither understand nor be a part of. Therefore, by gradually crossing all the racial boundaries but at the same time fighting with her unconscious norms, she ends up fully recognizing the black race, interacting with it, and in turn, the protagonist comes to be victimized by the society because she loses her mental health, which is nothing more than the ability to cope with the complexities of the world. However, only "the most resilient and ruthless whites" like Charlie Slatter are

allowed to survive in this world, because only they can "genuinely thrive in the Darwinian competition, wresting control away from the native inhabitants and over their land" (Fishburn 3). As a result, the writer uses the predicament of the protagonist, which is one of a tragic anti-hero, to reveal that the race issue in a colonized environment alienates individuals from themselves, from their own race and from the other race with whom they have to live together.

4.2 *My Place* and the Effect of Race on Sense of Belonging and Identity

> But this is so inhumane. […] How many […] people have had the same experience! No one wants to rock the boat […]. They're not God! That's how they keep their power, you know, they stick together like glue and count on the apathy of the silent majority! (Morgan 392).

These sentences uttered by Sally reflect the colonizing race's atrocities, suppositions about itself, methods of maintaining power, the silencing of the colonized race, and the colonized race's fear of standing up for itself. This enunciation of revolt against the colonizers and their ways is in the book actually directed at prospective doctors who treat Nan, who was alone and helpless, horribly at hospital in order to diagnose her illness to prove their proficiency (391). However, a deeper and analogical reading points to a down-to-earth criticism of colonialism. The process, means and their overall effects in bringing the colonized race, (represented by Sally and her family), to the point of revolt, with reference to the nature of the revolt, are the topics to be investigated in this section. As this section of the chapter will provide a comprehensive account, how the colonial apparatus and its deployment of the oppressive and assimilative white state, discriminatory and exclusionist laws, exploitation of labour and female body, violence and religion are reflected in *My Place* will be examined initially. Next, traces in the book of the effect that colonialism has on Aboriginals in terms of mimicry, ambivalence, hybridity and the resulting elements of identity crisis on one hand and of Aboriginal "nationalism" on the other will be analyzed in relation to sense of belonging and identity.

A minimal definition of the colonial apparatus is that it is a combination of method and means "that turns on the recognition and disavowal of racial/cultural/historical differences" (Bhabha 1994:70) by "dominating, restructuring, and [thus] having authority over" (Said 3) the colonized. Within this framework, the white state or authority has a crucial role in *My Place*, which is to regulate the lives of Aboriginals by means of various policies, laws and their enforcement via the police; and in Nan and Arthur's time, race was the only "category for managing and servicing Aboriginal people" (Pettman 20). The discourse that the representatives of the white state and its authority use gains importance as its reveals the hidden ideology of colonialism and racism between the lines. Colonialist discourse can be defined as the sum of "the ways in which European linguistic conventions and epistemologies underpinned the conception, management, and control of colonial relationships" (Boehmer 48).

To begin with, examples of the Aboriginals' contact with the white oppressive state and discriminatory laws should be analyzed in order to see the connection between race and colonialism.

> The state penetrates every aspect of social relations through its management of the labour market, the provision of state services and the increasingly complex legislative and administrative complexes. The state is heavily implicated in the constitution and reproduction of social relation that underpin power structures, social relations of class, gender, race and cultural difference (Pettman 78).

As part of the state intervention, the Aboriginals' "separate and inferior legal status facilitated exclusion, confinement and control as a separate class subject to special laws and special administration", which indicates that the law was basically racist (88). As for the approach of the law to the Aboriginals, McCorquodale[12] "has identified some 67 different classifications or definitions of Aboriginal people arising over the last 200 years", which is a legal effort to create confusion over what the Aboriginals as a race are

[12] McCorquodale, J. "The Legal Classification of Race in Australia", *Aboriginal History* 10, 1. (1986): 7-24.

(McCorquodale 1986:8 quoted in Pettman 88). Thus, Aboriginals "were locked into pervasive and entrenched relations of power through which racial, sexual, economic, political and cultural oppressions were part of public discourse sanctioned by the state" (Moreton-Robinson 28-29).

Morgan's book is full of examples of how the racist colonial authority affects the Aboriginals. Sally's library research reveals that "hardly any Aboriginal people had birth certificates" (Morgan 193) mainly because they were not allowed into hospitals (194). The white authority rejects their existence from birth. Alice Drake-Brockman says that bringing natives into Perth "was illegal" (213). Gladys confirms this by saying that Aboriginals could not travel at night "because of the curfew" (315), and that they "had to get permits to travel"; otherwise they would get into "big trouble" as the police could stop them at any time and ask for their papers (316). Speaking out of experience, Nan also says that she "wasn't allowed to go anywhere" without permission, which the Drake-Brockmans did not give (419); she adds that she was like a prisoner in the house in Perth, as she "had to be in" (413).

Sally learns from her library research that there were many "instances of police abusing their power when they were supposed to be Protectors of Aborigines" (208). Arthur's experience with the police verifies the truthfulness of this claim. For fear that he would get beaten up in the mission, Arthur goes to the police, thinking that they would protect him; however, they tell him to "get back to the mission" and that what happens to him did not concern them (236). According to Nan's account, if the Aboriginals did not work hard, the white pastoralists would "call the police in to make" them work (405). In fact, Arthur says that he has "often" seen "native people all chained up around the neck and hands, walkin' behind a policeman" (231). In addition to such events reminiscent of slavery, the police took the natives and "farmed" them "out to other people" (277). Thus, "Aboriginal people were virtually slaves under white control" (Broun 30) and they "had neither the right to appeal nor the means to seek justice when governments sanctioned their exploitation and abuse through legislation" (Moreton-Robinson 11).

Another important fact of colonial Australia is paternalism, practised by the patriarchal state and mobilised by a colonial rhetoric that announces the Aboriginals as a "dying race in need of saving" – so they have to be protected by the white government (6). Memmi explains the power of the colonizing race's language that is used to establish and strengthen the illusion that the colonized needs protection, and to justify paternalism:

> Whenever the colonizer states, in his language, that the colonized is a weakling, he suggests thereby that this deficiency requires protection. From this comes the concept of a protectorate. It is in the colonized's own interest that he be excluded from management functions, and that those heavy responsibilities be reserved for the colonizer. Whenever the colonizer adds, in order not to fall prey to anxiety, that the colonized is a wicked, backward person with evil, thievish, somewhat sadistic instincts, he thus justifies his police and his legitimate severity (Memmi 81-82).

According to Trees, "paternalism, like colonialism, relies on a sense of superiority and the right to look after those 'less able' to look after themselves" and this policy is aimed at making sure "that the government and its representatives manage the country and its people as would a 'father'" (Trees, 61). Thus, "individual responsibility" and "freedom" to make choices were "usurped" (61). All of the atrocities of the white race can be seen in the light of paternalism because it is a associated with domestic paternal authority, dictatorial behaviour, violence, education and a monopoly of the means of concept formation, mainly language.

Similarly, Arthur and Nan's comments about Neville[13], reveal a lot about the racist policies of the white colonial state. Arthur claims that "any blackfella that had dealings with Neville got no good word to say about him" because "he wasn't protectin' the

[13] "Mr A O Neville, Chief Protector of Natives, Western Australia, 1915-1940. Widely credited as a principal advocate and force behind an active policy of miscegenation in Western Australia through the 1930s. The legal removal of 'half-caste' Aboriginal children from their mothers was part of this policy" (Morgan's footnote).

Aborigines, he was destroyin' them" (Morgan 265). As for Nan, she is content, on her deathbed, that "at least" she is "not owned any more" because in the past she "was owned by the Drake-Brockmans and the government and anyone who wanted to pay five shillings a year to Mr Neville to have" her (429). Similarly, Gladys "wasn't even allowed to have the comfort of her mother" when she was sick because she "belonged to the Native Welfare Department" (315). The reason for all this pain and suffering is the fact that "thousands of families in Australia were destroyed by the government policy of taking children away" (208), Aboriginals "weren't allowed to have families" (344), and that there were Aboriginals "who'd never seen their children again" (345). Sally's research confirms and summarizes the conditions of Aborigines in the past.

> Well, when Nan was younger, Aborigines were considered subnormal and not capable of being educated the way whites were. You know, the pastoral industry was built on the back of slave labour. Aboriginal people were forced to work, if they didn't, the station owners called the police in. I always thought Australia was different to America, Mum, but we had slavery here too. The people might not have been sold on the blocks like American Negroes were, but they were owned, just the same (192).

Moreton-Robinson dwells on the same comparison between American slavery and the situation of Aboriginals by asserting that "the difference between slavery in America and indentured labour in Australia was that government, not the free enterprise, controlled the terms and conditions of the trade" (Moreton-Robinson 11).

As a form of contact with the imperial government that has the concerted effect of inflicting ambivalence on natives, Nan remembers the government ration Aboriginals used to get: "It was a blanket, we all called it a flag blanket, it had the crown of Queen Victoria on it. Can you imagine that? We used to laugh about that. You see, we was wrappin' ourselves in royalty" (Morgan 406). This is a strategy used to make the presence of government and imperialism felt in all aspects of daily life. This enhances the illusion that the British offered protection to the Aboriginals; in fact, the Aboriginals

living on camps near the stations needed blankets because of the oppression that immobilised them. What creates the ambivalence is that they lived outdoors befitting their traditional way of life, but they could not maintain their nomadic tradition in the cold season, so they needed the government rations. This is an example of imposed neediness.

To complement the white government's colonial apparatus, native and half-caste missionaries served as a means of imprisoning the native children and alienating them from their own kind on the basis of being full-blood or mixed race. Arthur's account reveals that the children on the missionary were called "inmates", and that the missionary was "just like a prison" (232). Moreover, Governor Bedford visits the missionary one day and separates "the darker kids" from "the lighter kids" as he did not "like" them "being together" (233-234). Moreton-Robinson explains that "government policies implemented on missions and reserves and by employers were aimed at producing disciplined servants, who would comply with the requirements of being in service, by alienating them from Indigenous culture and their country" (Moreton-Robinson 21). Brewster summarizes how far the white government went to oppress and control the Aboriginals from the cradle to the grave.

> Aboriginal people brought up on missions had their mobility restricted; they were also prohibited from mixing with their families, and their time was regimented. When they left the mission to work, the Department of Aborigines exercised control over their money, where they went, and whom they could work for; it could also intervene in their personal lives, and interrogate them at any time (Brewster 46).

Policies of control, subordination, intimidation and assimilation were "legally sanctioned" and these policies were underpinned by the knowledge provided by "scientific discourses in the white public domain" (Moreton-Robinson 13). As an example of how the government intervention of a described nature takes place in the Aboriginals' personal lives, other than the strategy of suppressing by fear as explained in the first chapter, Gladys says that "Aboriginal women weren't allowed to keep children

fathered by a white man" (Morgan 374). As another example, the visit of the "Welfare lady", which has been referred to earlier, can be examined.

> This woman turned out to be a real bitch. She asked me all sorts of questions and walked through our house with her nose in the air like a real snob. She asked where we all slept, and when I told her Helen slept with me, she was absolutely furious. She said, 'You are to get that child out of your bed, we will not stand for that. You work something else out, the children aren't to be in the same room as you. I'll come back and check to make sure you've got another bed.' (378).

The quotation is crucial in revealing two important issues in colonialism, each of which opens up to new discussions: the authority that the white government has obtained and exercised over the Aboriginals, and the internalized sense of power reflected in the language. First of all, even at a time when the third Aboriginal generation in the book was flourishing, the government employs and pays "civil servants", who, as the name ironically suggests, obediently serve the state, which flourished from the days of the empire, in order to permeate and monitor the private life of Aboriginals to make sure that the white authority's ways that were imposed on the previous generations prevail. Moreover, the civil servant, who is actually a copycat of the higher white governmental/imperial authority, is striving to conceal his/her mediocrity. Bearing in mind that imperialism and conservatism go hand in hand, Sartre establishes an argument which is extremely relevant to the hierarchy within the white oppressive authority.

> Conservatism brings about the selection of mediocre men [or women as in the book]. How can an elite of usurpers, aware of their mediocrity, establish their privileges? By one means only: debasing the colonized to exalt themselves, denying the title of humanity to the natives, and defining them as simply absences of qualities – animals, not humans. This does not prove hard to do, for the system deprives them of everything (Sartre xxvi).

Sartre's reason for calling the colonizer mediocre is very much in line with Bhabha's view about the originality of the "signifier of authority", which "acquires its meaning

after the traumatic scenario of colonial difference" asserted in a colonial context (Bhabha 1994:107). He claims that "such an image can neither be 'original' – by virtue of the act of repetition that constructs it – nor 'identical' – by virtue of the difference that defines it" (107). Thus, the Britishness of the colonizer "is always ambivalent, split between its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference" (107).

The core of these arguments, resonating with the Adlerian concepts of inferiority complex and its compensation, aside, the pattern of establishing privileges or superiority can be observed in all of the representatives of the white authority at all levels of hierarchy with different ways of manifestation. Some examples from Morgan's book are the Drake-Brockmans' laughing at Gladys' not wanting the black doll wearing a slave cap and telling it as a funny story over and over again (Morgan 328), Bill's threatening Gladys by telling her that the children would be taken away from her if she left him (374), and many references made to physical violence, sexual abuse and restriction of freedom.

The second important issue that becomes obvious in the quotation about the visit of the "Welfare lady" is the calcified, unchallengeable sense of power reflected in the language of the white authority. Her frequent and offhand usage of the obligation structure in "you are to" and "the children aren't to" are typical of a speaker commanding and dominating the listener. Similarly, her identification of herself with a power figure larger than herself is accentuated by her usage of "we" instead of I. At the same time, "we" distinguishes the colonizing race from the colonized, so the colonizer creates the identities of both sides by means of the interactive effect of "othering". In addition to the assertion of authority and intimidation of the listener, her words "we will not stand for that" insinuates that there will be a kind of punishment or some repercussions.

Another power figure representing the white authority is Sally's teacher Miss Roberts. Sally quotes her saying "I … am Miss Roberts", "I … am going to hand out some

reading books" (24), "I … have an announcement to make", "I … have finished marking your test papers" (26). Her use of the first person subject pronoun, "I", with emphasis and a pause afterwards implies that she wants her authority to sink in, but more importantly, that she is the active doer, the subject and the listener is passive. The ideas that the native is passive, ignorant, lazy, dirty and stupid are all engraved into the consciousness of the colonized by the use and reiteration of these words by the colonizer. In the same fashion, when one of the teachers catches Sally, her sister Jill and some white children playing truant, he openly discriminates against and ignores Sally and Jill by turning to the white girls and declaring that such behaviour is expected of "the Milroys, but not of girls of your [the white girls'] calibre" (108). In the end, the colonized race "ends up recognizing it [the negative quality attributed to it by the colonizing race] as one would a detested nickname which has become a familiar description (Memmi 87). The last example and probably the most striking one to complement Memmi's assertion about accepting a bad nickname is black people's calling tobacco "Nigger Twist". Nan explains that the rough and cheap tobacco given to the natives was called "Nigger Twist" by the white station workers, and even the black people used the same name to refer to it as they "thought that was its name" (Morgan 406). This situation reveals that the language of the white colonizer is a key part of the natives' forming notions and concepts in colonial contexts. Thus, the white racist gets the sickly satisfaction of seeing the natives unintentionally humiliate themselves by referring to each other as nigger, as a means of compensating for his inferiority complex. Unlike the station workers, who were actually civilians, the welfare lady and the teachers act as "agents" of the government who legitimately seek to impose the "rhetoric of rationalisation for the implementation of" the previously mentioned government policies of control, subordination, intimidation and assimilation (Moreton-Robinson 13).

The same discourse is also employed in institutions of education. For instance, the argument of the authority in Sally's frequent visits to the Guidance Officer at school was "based on the premise that there was something wrong with" Sally, for she skipped school as much as possible (Morgan 109). In the same fashion, Sally is "labelled dumb"

according to the result of the IQ test given at school, the test itself being a product of the white race's science of education (98). Her physics teacher also tells her in front of the whole class that she "will definitely fail", so she should not "bother to turn up at all" (136-137). This is a telling instance of the calcified notion that the colonized race is lazy and unsuccessful by white standards. Gladys says that the people in charge at Parkerville Children's Home "expected" the Aboriginal children "to be in the wrong"; moreover, the Home taught the natives "never to talk openly about being Aboriginal" because "it was something to feel ashamed of" (330). Such expectations and teachings are the outcome of white authority's colonial rhetoric.

Arthur claims that during the war, the Aboriginals were gathered "in a compound with soldiers around them" and those who escaped were tracked down, caught, beaten up and put in prison (265). The rationale behind this was to prevent "the bushies" from becoming allies with the Japanese and leading them "through the interior" (265). Obviously, such an allegiance would mean the demise of the white authority (although it probably would not abolish authority over the Aboriginals altogether), so the colonial apparatus does whatever it takes to maintain power. In addition, the Aboriginals who "fought for the country [in fact for the white government] overseas" did not have the right to vote, nor were they citizens (264). Referring to this fact, Arthur criticizes "the white man's justice". Indeed, Memmi comments that not giving citizenship and the right to vote to the colonized race is a method of breaking the will of the native race and eradicating such claims from the following generation by rendering these aims unachievable.

> Not considering himself a citizen, the colonized likewise loses all hope of seeing his son achieve citizenship. Before long, renouncing citizenship himself, he no longer includes it in his plans, eliminates it from his paternal ambitions, and allows no place for it in his teachings. Nothing therefore suggests to the young colonized the self-assurance or pride of his citizenship (Memmi 97).

In the same fashion, Sartre touches upon the danger of giving the right to vote to the colonized race, "whose numerical superiority, if they had voting rights, would shatter the system" (Sartre xxiv). Although his assertion was intended to describe the colonial relationship between France and Algeria, which had more nationalistic characteristics than Australia when colonized, it could apply to Australian Aborigine tribes to some extent, considering the post-imperialistic period of the 20th century in that country. Secondary sources would help to investigate the demographics and the Aboriginals' political tendencies in Australia, but this is outside the scope of this chapter. However, Arthur's saying that "ever since the Depression, I've voted Labor" is very explicative of his sense of awareness about politics, voting and class issues (Morgan 261).

Even as citizens, the legal expectancy of Aboriginals was not granted easily by the government in the second and third generations' time. For instance, the "Canteen's Trust Fund" denies Bill and Gladys financial aid saying that they "weren't desperate enough" (366-367). Likewise, "the Repatriation Department" delays giving Bill even "a partial pension because they considered him a malingerer" (367). De Groen asserts that people like Bill were "blamed for their continuing illness and discriminated against by having repatriation entitlements delayed" (De Groen 42). However, it is quite likely that his being married to Gladys, an Aboriginal woman, could be the real reason for his deprivation because "white men who did support their Aboriginal families were often persecuted and stigmatised" (McGarth[14] 1987 quoted in Pettman).

As a more direct example of racial discrimination, the Commonwealth Department of Education's assuming that their, probably white, anonymous informer is a reliable source to judge Sally as guilty of obtaining the Aboriginal scholarship by lying about being Aboriginal can be analyzed (Morgan 176). Learning that she is an Aboriginal, Sally gets excited and she immediately applies for an Aboriginal scholarship, not for the money but as an attempt to familiarize herself with what it means to be Aboriginal (172). When Sally and Jill start telling their friends that they are Aboriginal, they get

[14] McGarth, A. (1987) *Born in the Cattle*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin

interesting reactions, in which the white government's racist discourse is echoed (175). Some say they are sorry for them, some others feel embarrassed and keep silent, whereas still others say they are lucky as they "could pass for anything" (175). Aside from the obvious prejudice and implied racism in these comments, what is most striking is that a few friends think Sally has applied for the Aboriginal scholarship for the money, the very idea of which Sally finds embarrassing (175). Pettman comments that there are certain incentives that increase an individual's eagerness to identify with being Aboriginal.

> People's readiness to identify as Aboriginal depends on the categories and criteria available, and also on the social and political consequences of identification. Political mobilisation and affirmation, and increased provision and funding offer encouragement and support to identify as Aboriginal (Pettman 117).

Sally also admits that because they "suddenly switched" their racial "allegiance from India to Aboriginal Australia", white people could not see any reason but money as an incentive (Morgan 175). However, her real aim, which is familiarizing herself with what it means to be Aboriginal, is ironically fulfilled when she is faced with an anonymous complaint that she "obtained the scholarship under false pretences", leading her to defend herself in the Commonwealth Department of Education (176). At this point, Sally realizes the difficulties of being an Aboriginal with all the pains of having to deal with authorities directly, having to face an accusation marked by the contention that she is guilty rather than an investigation, and the hardships of standing up for herself without "parading" her mother and grandmother "up and down" so that the authorities would be convinced (176-177).

This, the only experience of racism in Sally's adult life inflicted by the white state, is the greatest blow to her self confidence and search for an identity. Sally does some soul searching, trying to decide whether it is a good idea to defend her Aboriginality. She confesses that "it hadn't been easy trying to identify with being Aboriginal" because "no

one was sympathetic, so many people equated it with dollars and cents, no one understood why it was so important" (178). Her bruised pride leads to her not giving up the scholarship, becoming outspoken, and finally deciding to write a book about her family history, because she wonders "what it was like for Aboriginal people with really dark skin and broad features" and especially for older generations (175). Thus, Morgan's book becomes a means of asserting her racial identity.

According to Marcia Langton[15], there are "three categories of cultural and textual construction of Aboriginality", the first of which "is the experience of the Aboriginal person interacting with other Aboriginal people in social situations located largely within Aboriginal culture" (2003). Sally and Arthur actively use the mentioned category by taking part in the process of telling and writing down the story with the desire for "everyone to read it" (Morgan 268). It is a constructive process for Sally as well, because by "eliciting the life stories of members of her family", she proves that "this narrator is no disinterested ethnobiographer, but a character whose own selfhood is actively constructed through this process, the formulation of other lives" (Newman 71-72). Moreover, Ken Gelder[16] agrees, stating that "the narrator, Sally Morgan, who collects that information is not only intimate with her informants, she is related to them: no ethnologist could be more 'at home' with her subjects", Gelder adds that "it is doubtless this collapsing of the difference between ethnographic discourse and the 'other' that has made *My Place* so popular". This, actually, is the second category determined by Langton, namely the construction of Aboriginality which is "generated when Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people engage in actual dialogue" which takes place through the interaction between the reader and the storytellers (2003). Thus, the

[15] Langton, Marcia. (2003) *Aboriginal Art and Film: The Politics of Representation*, <http://www.rouge.com.au/6/aboriginal.html> 22.11.2009 The article also appears in *Blacklines: Contemporary Critical Writing by Indigenous Australians* (Melbourne University Press, 2003). An earlier version appeared in *Race and Class*, Vol. 35 No. 4 (1994). The electronic article will be referred to as Langton (2003).

[16] Gelder, Ken. (1991) "Private Knowledges and the Public Gaze: Aboriginal Writing as Property in the Late Twentieth Century", Working Papers in Australian Studies no: 64 (ed. Richard Nile) <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/content/1/c6/01/51/32/WP64KenGelder.pdf> 9.12.2009

racially prejudiced attitude of the Commonwealth Department of education as a representative of the white state triggers an oppositional discourse that is embodied in Sally Morgan's book.

The examples given from Bill and , indirectly, Gladys, and Sally's experience of asking for funding from the racist colonizing government units verify Memmi's assertion that "all effectiveness and social dynamics […] seem monopolized by the colonizer's institutions. If the colonized needs help, it is to them that he applies. If he does something wrong, it is by them that he is punished" (Memmi 103).

The second theme that should be analyzed to clarify the interdependence between the colonial apparatus deployed by the white state and race is exploitation of labour. Sartre explains that the exploitative system works in congruity with the capitalistic goals of the white government: "the colony sells produce and raw materials cheaply, and purchases manufactured goods at very high prices from the mother country. This singular trade is profitable to both parties if the native works for little or nothing" (Sartre xxiii). Therefore, Aboriginals were "exploited and forced to labour for little return, often for rations or keep on reserves or for white employers (Pettman 19-20).

> Aborigines were exploited as servants, unpaid labour or underpaid employees. This exploitation was possible in the relationship between the British and Aborigines because Aborigines were not protected by Australian laws until 1967 (Trees 63).

Arthur's and Nan's stories are important in that they give an insight into the hard work they did and the little return it brought, because "the state in Australia is a capitalist state, and it acts to protect the long-term interests of capital and to maintain its own legitimacy (Pettman 79). Arthur gets many jobs in return for food and board (Morgan 240). He eats in the kitchen, where "the white workers sat at one table, the blacks at another", so racism is not only observed in the exploitative nature of labour in white Australia, but also among the workers (242). The employers who promise Arthur money

in return for his labour do not make payments (242-243, 248). He loads "twelve ton of sandalwood" with a friend for a storekeeper for "half a crown", and then gives it back to the storekeeper "for some sardines and biscuits" (247). His comment about this event is very relevant to the white employers' mentality: "it seems like the whitefellas doesn't want the blackfella to get a foot in this world" (247). His employer, Hancock, promises to give him twenty pounds if Arthur clears the land that nobody wants to clear due to the difficulty of the job; moreover, the land gets even more difficult to work on because of the flood and the non-stop rain (249-250). Despite all this, Arthur finishes the job in three weeks but Hancock keeps him waiting for the money, and when he finally pays him, he deducts board from the sum (250). After doing a variety of jobs for very little money, Arthur finally goes into partnership with a white farmer, but Arthur does all the work while his partner gets most of the money (253).

The exploitation that the white pastoralists inflict on Arthur does not end, and even after he buys his land, his means of production such as his "horses and machinery" are exploited (261). He cannot buy sheep because his "colour wasn't right" (260). One of his neighbours who "was livin' on what he could steal off" Arthur tries to make an alliance with other white farmers by explaining to them "how two white men can easily get rid of one black man" (263). Arthur also mentions that during the war "the black man […] workin' for the [white] farmers [were] getting' paid in tea, flour and sugar" (265). As a final note to finish his story Arthur adds that "the black man has nothin', the government's been robbin' him blind for years" (266).

Despite all the hard work and terrible living conditions, the white race accuses the natives of being lazy and ungrateful, which is a recurrence of colonial discourse. As for Nan, she has been exploited by Alice Drake-Brockman as the power relations between the white women and the black women "were always unequal, and the mistress-servant relationship rarely encouraged or even allowed reciprocal or caring relations (Pettman 32). Therefore, white women were no different than men in terms of deploying the colonial apparatus and discourse. An example of the colonial discourse used by white

women as employers revolves around the assumption that the natives are dirty. Mrs Stone gives Topsy, Nan's friend, "a cake of soap" and tells her "to take a bath" (Morgan 408). This gesture, accompanied by a command reveals that Mrs Stone considers herself to be superior to Topsy, firstly because she is white, secondly because she is "clean" and finally because she is her boss. However, Topsy's throwing "the soap back" and saying that she is "not takin' no bath!" reveals that she has not yet surrendered to the repetitively implied presumption of the white race that natives are dirty (408). As for Nan, she regards Topsy's reaction as "cheekin' a white woman", adding that "old Topsy" was "great fun", probably because Nan was not as assertive as Topsy (408). What Nan does is to obey to such an extent that she even picks up and washes the dirty clothes that the Drake-Brockmans throw from balconies onto the grass (413). The more the native tolerates, the more oppressive and intimidating the white race becomes.

> White women participated in gendered racial oppression by deploying the subject position middle-class white woman both unconsciously and consciously, informed by an ideology of true white womanhood , which positioned Indigenous women as less feminine, less human and less spiritual than themselves (Moreton-Robinson 24).

For the reasons given in the quotation above, because of the knowledge that Howden both fathered and raped Nan, and more importantly, because she is a capitalistic white woman, Alice refuses to keep Gladys at Ivanhoe with Nan as "she cost too much to feed" and says that Nan is "ungrateful" (Morgan 420). Although she is in the habit of paying Nan very rarely and not giving her any time off (337), and justifying this exploitation by asserting that Nan is "family" and there are "no servants" (214), Alice is such a capitalist that she would rather separate mother and daughter than pay for Gladys' food, and she still expects Nan to be grateful. Nan's reaction to the white capitalistic imposition that she should "give up her flesh and blood and still be grateful" comes as a question: "Aren't black people allowed to have feelin's?" (420). In fact they are not, as Aboriginal life writings reveal that native women "were treated as though they had no knowledge, no feelings or emotional attachments" (Moreton-Robinson 22). In fact, the

capitalistic and exploitative white colonizer maintains that "the native is subhuman, [and that] the Declaration of Human Rights does not apply to him [/her]" (Sartre xxiv). Moreton-Robinson's views are in line with those of Sartre's.

> Alice denies their [Daisy and Gladys'] relationship as mother and daughter. She is able to do so because what underpins her actions is a belief in the less than human status of Daisy and Gladys. Alice also knows that the state will support her request to remove Gladys for "economic reasons" because its policies are predicated on the same belief (Moreton-Robinson 25).

The native is what the white colonizer's discourse makes him/her. "The same reason is also true for the colonized's notorious ingratitude"; Memmi adds, ironically, that "the colonizer's acts of charity are wasted, the improvements the colonizer has made are not appreciated" (Memmi 82). Assuming that she has worked miracles for Nan and Gladys, Alice implies that she has used her position of influence to get Nan accepted into the Midwifery Hospital for delivery without waiting for permission from the authorities, and to put Gladys in Parkerville Children's Home, which "was very hard" to do (Morgan 215). Similarly, Alice claims that she gave Nan "quite a lot of furniture, brooms and things" to furnish the flat she moved in (215); but Nan claims that although Alice "owed me [her] back wages" and made Nan "work for nothing", all she gave her was "a couple of odds and ends and an old broom" (423). Encouraged by racist laws and the police backing the whites, Alice claims that the police took Nan away from her due to the war (214), but Nan rejects this view, saying that Alice used her up and kicked her out (423). Furthermore, Alice becomes "a well-known authority on native affairs" who "was quoted in the *Herald*" after bringing Nan to Perth, despite the law against natives in cities (213). She not only gains prestige and expertise in the white society's opinion, but she also treats bringing native girls into the city as a profession by saying that she trained them and "provided quite a few" to families "who wanted one" (213). This indicates by means of "Alice's terminology" that the girls are "'goods' to be shared with other 'whites' when trained" and that they are "things to be distributed according to her [Alice's] will" (Trees 62). Thus, by means of her discourse and choice of words to refer

to Aboriginal women, she exemplifies the racist assertion that "Indigenous women were objects to be moved around" (Moreton-Robinson 22).

Alice reinforces the idea that the natives are lazy by using the colonial discourse. She says that "natives never liked to work" and that "you had to work with them if you wanted them to work" (Morgan 214). As Memmi says, the colonizer attributes a negative quality to all of the natives; "the mythical portrait of the colonized therefore includes an unbelievable laziness, and that of the colonizer, a virtuous taste for action" (Memmi 79). Alice claims that the Aboriginals "couldn't stand the tedium of the same job", which is in fact producing cash for the white man and getting misery, hunger and deprivation in return (Morgan 214). Arthur's account of his employer's son disproves the assumption that all the white colonizers are devotedly hardworking. On the contrary, Ernie is lazy and greedy as he does nothing all day but lie down on the grass and smoke till sunset; he does not share anything due to his greed (242). This again proves that Sartre is right. He asserts that the colonizers "do every day in reality what they condemn in fantasy" (Sartre xxv).

Another method that the colonial white race uses is the exploitation of female body in two ways: miscegenation and rape, both of which are political acts condoned by the white state, and aimed at "diluting or eradicating the traces of Aboriginal blood" (Huggan 91). Perhaps an even more important goal of the capitalistic white government was to produce cheap labour via these two methods.

> Miscegenation was again the catalyst for the new policy because it disrupted racial purity but offered white society a pool of cheap labour. Mothers and the children from such union were usually removed from the Indigenous community. Indigenous women's sexuality was policed and contained and their children removed from the influence of kin and community (Moreton-Robinson 8).

However inhumane it may sound, such a rationale is deeply embedded in the motives of capitalism: "to keep salaries and the cost of living at a minimum, there must be great

competition among native workers, so the birth rate must rise" (Sartre xxiii). This is also in line with the changing policies for dealing with the *native problem* in Australia, as miscegenation is "closely tied to colonial histories of racial violence and exploitation" (Huggan 90). Moreton-Robinson states that the history of colonialism in Australia displays a "shift from extermination to protection", which brought about paternalism and producing half-castes to be exploited as cheap or free labour as mentioned earlier, in relation to missions and reserves (Moreton-Robinson 6). Broun adds that "although pastoralists often fathered 'mixed blood' children, it was extremely rare that any of them claimed their children due to public disgrace associated with miscegenation", which is the case with Howden Drake-Brockman and his children Arthur and Nan (Broun 28).

Miscegenation not only serves to produce a cheap work force and to "dilute" the Aboriginal race but it paradoxically promotes domestic racism to split the Aboriginal race as well. For instance, one of Nan's Aboriginal friends marries a white man who forbids her "to talk to or mix with any natives again"; "he wouldn't have married her otherwise" (Morgan 416). Nan also says that "the other native girls thought" that those who "had some white in" them "were better than them", and that "it was a big thing if you could get a white man to marry you" (415). As an example from the following generation, Bill does not mind Gladys's being an Aboriginal at first but later he changes his mind (349). He turns out to be a racist, even though he has experienced racism, been tortured, learnt the language to pass for Italian, and pretended to be an Italian farmer as he sang and drunk with Nazi officers, his enemies with whom he pretended to be friends (355-356). In other words, by assimilating himself with the Italian people, he experiences what it is like to be an Aboriginal. In fact, his contradictions make his psychological sufferings worse and lead him to commit suicide by taking all of his pills at once (376). This can be perceived as a metaphor for colonialism being self-destructive as Sartre says "colonialist society cannot integrate them [the colonized] without destroying itself" in the post-colonial situation (Sartre xxviii). Besides, the white men who supported "their Aboriginal families were often persecuted and stigmatised"

(McGrath[17], 1987 quoted in Pettman 28). Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that miscegenation costs a lot to both sides.

The white race also exploits the native female body without her consent: abuse or rape. Native women, considered to be "immoral", "highly sexed" and available "prostitutes" (Pettman 27) condemn abuse and rape as outlets for the culturally reinforced "myth that male sexuality is an irrepressible force and male needs must be provided" (Moreton-Robinson 169). In such a conceptual context "racism and sexism reinforce each other, and are experienced by Aboriginal women in a brutal interaction" (Pettman 27).

> For Daisy [Nan], as for many Aborigines, sexual violation was symptomatic of being part of a subjugated people. There were no forms of protection from such personal violation. There was no social or legal recourse to protect their personal rights or their sense of personal dignity (Trees 61).

Moreover, rape is a political power act as it asserts the domination of the white male because "the cry of rape was used to signal moral panics" in order to control "white women's, black women's and black men's bodies and associations" (Pettman 28). Black men are also metaphorically castrated as they are rendered incapable of protecting their women. Thus suppressing the Aboriginals, Howden Drake-Brockman, the white station owner, shares Arthur's "Aboriginal father's two wives, Annie and Ginnie" (Morgan 223). He goes on practising sexual violence on his daughter Daisy (or Nan) to whom Annie gave birth. Referring to how her father Howden treated her, Nan says "some men can't be trusted. They just mongrels. They get you down on the floor and they won't let you get up" (417).

Fanon establishes the relationship between western culture and how it affects male sexuality in colonial situations to the point of perversion and incest.

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[17] McGrath, A. *Born in the Cattle*, Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1987.

> Every intellectual gain requires a loss in sexual potential. The civilized white man retains an irrational longing for unusual eras of sexual license, of orgiastic scenes, of unpunished rapes, of unrepressed incest. In one way these fantasies respond to Freud's life instinct (Fanon 127).

This means that everything that is learned, every scientific, judicial, social and cultural aspect, "every intellectual gain" in the Western civilization that constitutes its existence deters the white civilized man from indulging in any sexual activity he pleases in the mother country. In other words, the civilized European man is not supposed to have sexual intercourse with any white woman he is attracted to because of inappropriateness, impending social exposure and disgrace and because of the deterrent effect of legal punishment by judicial system, which is, in short, Freud's superego that suppresses the id. When all of these mandates disappear or adversely become a shield to enable the white man to get away with anything he likes, the white man considers any kind of sexual activity, including cross-racial sexuality and even incest, to be his right. In other words, the libidinal energy that manifests itself as sex or aggression is unconditionally unleashed. What makes the mandates disappear or start to favour the white man at all costs is the fact that they are a product of the white civilization which establishes its existence by means of contrast with what the native race is not; therefore, sexual activity with the "other" in colonial contexts becomes a means of asserting difference and also superiority for the white man. "In the past, Indigenous women had no legal avenue to take action against white men" Moreton-Robinson notes, "even though laws existed that made sexual intercourse between white men and Indigenous women illegal" (Moreton-Robinson 168). What is worse, even the police "participated extensively in the same practices", so "they did not enforce these laws" (168).

This is the reason why Gladys says, in referring to general cases of "kids being molested" (Morgan 336) and about their abusive headmaster, that "everyone just ignored it" and that "there was no use complaining because no one would believe you" (331, 336). She also says that the chemistry teacher who liked touching girls preferred "passive" girls (343). Gladys also mentions that a minister who "always lifted the girls'

dresses before caning them" and that "it was quite degrading" (332). Nan and Gladys repeat that they had "no protection" (336, 417) against sexual abuse and Nan adds that "a lot of native servants had kids to white men because they was forced" (417). Arthur's accounts of the "extra babies" belonging to white workers at the station (228), which is confirmed by Nan (404), and of how "the other blokes" would "take a girl out, get her into trouble and then let her go" are telling instances of how widely rape was practised (258). Moreover, "girls made love to the soldiers" to get away from the compounds during their imprisonment due to the war (265). Similarly, "plenty of pastoralists got black kids running around" (277-280) because the white fathers did not "own them" (280). Sally, as one of the third generation in the book, feels sorry that all those kids did not know "who fathered them", and blames the white men by saying that the "early pioneers, they've got a lot to answer for" (299). Nan as the member of the family who suffered the worst kind of sexual violation imaginable, says that it "makes you want to cry to think how black women have been treated in this country" (417).

Other than the oppression, assimilation, discrimination sanctioned by the white government's laws, and exploitation of labour and female body, the white authority uses extreme violence against the native race as a means of suppression, intimidation and degradation. Arthur's account shows that there were white men "shooting blackfellas for sport" as if they were "some kind of animal" (231). He adds that school "was where they gave you a good hiding for doing nothing" (244). Nan claims that Howden's first wife Nell used to whip the girls "with the bullocks cane for not workin' hard enough" and when she did not do that, she would give them "a real hard thump over the head" (411). Similarly, Gladys states that the House mother "had a terrible temper, and when she got angry she could inflict terrible beatings" and that "everyone got punished" if one of the children cried (312). Gladys adds that the House Mother would hit them "across the head" so hard that sometimes Gladys would "go deaf for a couple of days" (324).

Violence at the white man's hand reaches such extents that one of the girls adopted by a wealthy family died of arsenic poisoning (318) and a boy committed suicide by hanging

himself in the bush; as Gladys says, “You could feel that low that you’d want to die” (333). Moreover, in the Home, the white authorities would show the children, who were forcefully taken from their families, some films portraying “heart-rending tales about” stolen children as a form of psychological violence exercised over the Aboriginal children, who “really identified with those films” (311). Coulson, who works at the school Arthur is sent to, strips the children and beats them until “there was bits of blood everywhere”, taking pleasure in their begging him to stop by calling him “master” (236). As Arthur does not give him the satisfaction, he beats him even harder; and Arthur, as an old man, still carries the scars (236). Similar to Coulson’s imposing his assumed racial superiority by exerting physical violence, the Drake-Brockmans’ raising “the Union Jack” whenever there is a guest on Corunna, on the land that they colonized is an example of chauvinism (231). This can also be interpreted as resorting to psychological violence to alienate the Aboriginals from their land and lifestyle.

The white colonizer also tries to alienate the Aboriginals by exposing them to the strong Victorian tradition and way of life by mimicking British nobles. After listening to Alice’s account, Sally realizes that the “strong English tradition amongst the upper classes” must have made Nan feel “terribly out of place” (216). For instance, Nan feels strange about the white people’s considering leaving “the crust on sandwiches” to be “bad manners” (414). She is puzzled by their keeping up the British habits as she says “it was in England, they were all sittin’ outside in their fancy clothes with servants waitin’ on them” (414). Drake-Brockmans “were real upper class” with their “beautiful cups and saucers”, whereas Nan “only had a tin mug” (414). Gladys is also fully aware of the fact that the Drake-Brockmans’ name or money opened all doors, which is “a hang-up from Victorian England” (345). Besides, they made Nan their children’s “nanny”, “like they have in England” (412). Arthur also suffers due to the white people being “very particular about” his parentage when it comes to announcing Arthur’s engagement on the newspaper (258-259). The British colonizer’s blunt attitude regarding their British habits contributes to highlighting their racial background, and thus causing the natives to become estranged.

After suppressing and alienating the native race with fear of physical or emotional violence, the colonizer teaches them about Christianity as a refuge. By giving the natives religious instruction, the colonizer fools them into thinking that they are protected by Jesus, whereas the real aim is the "containment" of the natives on "reserves and missions" to "assure their compliance and docility" (Moreton-Robinson 30). True to form, Gladys confesses that "fear disappeared" as she grew older because she "started to learn about Jesus" (Morgan 308). Sally remembers that their neighbour gathered children in her house and showed them religious films in which the devil "was predominantly black", and the soundtrack consisting of the sounds of "hissing", "crashes of thunder" and "rain" was terrifying (76). Thus, by imposing religious belief, and associating widely experienced natural events and blackness with the devil, the colonizer converts the colonized race.

On the other hand, religion both creates ambivalence and reveals the colonizer's hypocrisy, for in Nan's day, the minister preached them about saving themselves "for marriage", yet it was embarrassing for the native girls as they "had already been taken by white men" (416). Another example of ambivalence is the Aboriginal woman in the North who determines whether Gladys and Sally are her kin or not, on the basis of their religious choice: "I saw you people here and said to myself, Doris, they Christian people, they your people. Now, what Brockman mob do they come from?" (280). This shows that Doris has been assimilated, for she has come to identify Aboriginality with Christianity, which is not a defining characteristic of Aboriginal people. Moreover, the white people use religion as a method to split the Aboriginals. Doris proudly asserts that Aboriginals from a neighbouring area came to where she lives and "held meetings" and "converted" the Aboriginals in Port Hedland, which has changed the town for the better (281). Assimilation reaches the point where Aboriginals convert other Aboriginals; this means that, after a certain point, religion spreads like a domesticating epidemic, without the imposition of the whites.

Luring the Aboriginals to religious meetings or church service was a method commonly used by the white colonizer. The hunger-stricken Aboriginals attended such meetings for the food that was given afterwards. Alice mentions the "church service" and the "singsong" they used to have on Corunna. She claims that the natives "just loved it"; that "they lived for it" and "that was their life" (214). However, the natives were probably most enthusiastic about the "cocoa and hot buns" served later on (214). This is an example of how the white colonizer exploits the Aboriginals' fondness for food, which is intensified due to the imposed hunger by the capitalistic and exploitative practices of the colonizers. In the same fashion Sally was attracted to going to the meetings of the youth club of the church because of the Chinese food that was given at the end of the meeting (215).

As another example of ambivalence taking place due to religion, Sally's experience with a deacon in the church she attends can be analyzed. The deacon openly discriminates against Sally due to her Aboriginality by asking her, in a charming but insulting way that is typical of British nobility, "to stop mixing with Mary"(127), his daughter, as Sally is a "bad influence" (128). Sally feels very "hurt and "disappointed" because she "looked up to him", for he is a deacon; and yet, he discreetly displays a racist and exclusionist attitude (128). The same kind of racism can be seen in another parent's attitude because according to Jill's account, their friend Susan's mother "reckons all Abos are a bad influence", so she does not want her daughter "mixing with" Sally because she's "a bad influence"(122). It is very interesting and suspicious that both parents, one in a religious institution, the other a civilian, use exactly the same words to discriminate against Sally. This boils down to the reiterative colonial discourse, which engraves certain signifiers and signified into the minds of both white people and the blacks, reinforcing a stereotype it created.

What are the effects of the white colonizer's vigorous efforts to suppress and assimilate the Aboriginals by all means possible? There are some "ethnic identities for claim [which] are new identities produced in the context of anti-colonial struggles or post-

colonial nation building" (Pettman 112). It should be kept in mind that Aboriginals were not a homogeneous group with a sense of identitarian solidarity, nor did their pre-colonial tribal way of life allow a sense of unity other than that within each tribe. Therefore, in the colonial and post-colonial contexts, "Aborigines made and continue to make themselves, but within structures, relations and discourses not of their making" (20). As a result, one Aboriginal may assume a variety of roles and display a variety of responses depending on the context. According to Moreton-Robinson "they deployed different subject positions depending on who they were engaged with, and when and where they were engaged" (Moreton-Robinson 29).

Basically, there are three contradictory reactions, which are not totally consistent within themselves due to traces of mimicry and ambivalence. Some Aboriginals, like Nan and Gladys, turn into meek, silenced and assimilated hybrid individuals with clashing desires like getting their traditional ways and old days back, and being like the white people and hiding their Aboriginality. Some other Aboriginals, like Arthur, seem to be assimilated as they use the colonial apparatus against white suppression as skilfully as a white man would against the natives, but they also represent the Aboriginal sense of nationality by using an anticolonial discourse, which rejects the impositions of colonial discourse, without feeling ashamed of their Aboriginality. On the other hand, still other Aboriginals, like Sally, try to uncover, identify with and enunciate their Aboriginality as much as possible, and yet go on with their somewhat assimilated identity, and urbanized western way of life.

To begin with Nan, she admits on her deathbed that she has been ashamed of being an Aboriginal all her life although now she is ashamed of having denied her Aboriginality. Thus, it would not be wrong to say that she has been through a transformation period regarding her Aboriginal identity. At first, when she was alone among white people, she "wanted to be white"; she would "lie in bed at night and think if God could make me [Nan] white, it would be the best thing" (Morgan 415). Apart from the fact that "all the native women [on Corunna] wanted to look like the white women, with fancy hairdos

and fancy dresses" (406), a more extreme example of being ashamed of being black and mimicking the whites would be Nan's friend Nellie, Aboriginal daughter of a white station manager. Nan says that "she always wanted to be white" by taking "all those baths in hydrogen peroxide and dyin' her hair red" (416).

Nan imitates the colonial discourse of the whites against her own brother, before realizing it is Arthur, when he comes to visit her.

> 'You listen here,' I growled at him. 'We don't like strange blackfellas hangin' around here. You better get goin' before the mistress comes home. She'll take a stick at you.' I was trying to frighten him, he was a big man.
> 'Don't you go getting' uppity with me, Mrs,' he said. 'Thinkin' you're better just 'cause you work for white people. I got every right to be lookin' for my little sister Daisy. I want her to know she's got a brother who's getting' on in the world.' (417).

In this dialogue, Nan is trying to frighten and intimidate Arthur by calling him a "strange blackfella" as if she is not black herself. She also points at her mistress Alice, who stands for the white colonizer, as a stronger symbol of authority for her to fall back on in order to threaten Arthur. This is a perfect example of mimicry, yet Arthur's reaction is very important as well. He sticks up for himself and stands his ground. Just as he has done all his life, he always challenges authority and its representatives.

Nan's supposition that the white man and God are equally powerful, and her desire to pass herself off as white become obvious in her dialogue with the new rent man, whom she wants to impress. Talking about the beauties of nature, Nan says, "[H]ere are you and I, both white, and we couldn't do that" (134). The dry irony here is that Nan is too broad featured to pass for white, yet she thinks declaring herself to be white is more plausible and acceptable for the white authority than enunciating her Aboriginality.

Due to Sally's determined investigation of her past, Nan is encouraged and she develops an interest in the news about black people. However, her reactions are ambivalent and inconsistent.

> If the story was sad, she'd put her hand to her mouth and say, 'See, see what they do to black people.' On the other hand, if black people were doing well for themselves, she'd complain, 'Just look at them, showing off. Who do they think they are. They just black like me.' (173).

It seems that Nan switches from one identity to another in her reactions to the news. She is sympathetic towards the black people who suffer at the hand of white oppression as she has been there. On the other hand, the "successful" black people, who climb up the social ladder to make the news, make her uneasy, defensive and critical as if she is being looked down on by her own people. By analogy, her being "too black for the whites and too white for the blacks" is very much in line with her contradictory reactions to the news (415). Both of these cases are examples of her ambivalent feelings for her own kind and genetic hybridity. She has too protected a life in government housing, surrounded by her grandchildren, which puts her in a privileged position to pity her own race, but she is too working class to appreciate the progress other blacks make.

In addition to her accepting to be silenced and frightened by the whites, Nan, mimicking the white imposition, makes Gladys scared of telling people that she is Aboriginal: "Terrible things will happen to you if you tell people what you are" (348). Thus, Gladys also surrenders by saying "I'd better keep quiet" (348). Gladys admits that she is ignorant of the atrocities of the white people after her short dialogue at the bus station with a woman who admires Gladys' beauty. On learning that Gladys is Aboriginal, the woman sympathetically and sincerely pities her asking "oh, you poor thing, […] what on earth are you going to do?" (347). Gladys understands that the woman "knew I [Gladys] had no future, that I'd never be accepted, never be allowed to achieve anything" (348). However, Gladys opens her own florist's shop, raises her children well and, at the end of her story, she manages to feel proud of being Aboriginal by reversing the colonial

discourse, which has caused her to feel ashamed of her racial identity: “if we all keep saying we’re proud to be Aboriginal, then maybe other Australians will see that we are a people to be proud of” (379).

Similarly, Nan “kept my [her] eyes down” (415) when “people stared at her” because she was black and “broad featured” (348). However, Nan also comes to terms with her Aboriginal identity, though bitterly, as she says the Aboriginals “got to show the white man what they made of”, which signals a newly-flourishing sense of unity, also sensed in Gladys’ words above (430).

Pettman claims that “the state seeks to control them through its manipulation of ideology and expressions of some kinds of difference, and Aboriginal people in turn use this opportunity to articulate a sense of difference as part of and oppositional politics”, which is what Arthur does (Pettman 111). Arthur’s outstanding resistance to attempts to assimilate or degrade him contributes to his creating himself a place to speak from. He manages to buy his own land and machinery. He stands up for himself by hiring a lawyer on two different occasions (Morgan 262 & 264). He gives up in the first court case against the Westfarmers, which sued Arthur for his debt over the header he bought in instalments, although he could win (262). The second case is about his racist neighbour who tries to ally himself with other white farmers to get rid of Arthur. This man steals Arthur’s sheep, puts “his own earmark” on them and “when the sheep came back” to Arthur’s land, he accuses Arthur of stealing his sheep (264). Arthur sees another lawyer and “they dropped the case against” him (264). It is interesting that Arthur has to give up the header in his legal fight against a capitalistic white company, but succeeds in proving his innocence against his white neighbour. This shows that racism is easier to fight than capitalism, which is the root cause of colonialism.

Before he dies, Arthur is content because he has his own land, a large family and Sally writing his story, (268). However, he forcefully expresses his opinion about the political and colonial situation in Australia: “You see, the trouble is that colonialism isn’t over

yet. We still have a white Australia policy against the Aborigines. Aah, it's always been the same. They say there's been no difference between black and white, we all Australian, that's a lie" (266). Arthur is fully aware of the atrocities of colonization and he demands land rights. According to Bhabha, this is only possible "if the effect of colonial power is seen to be the *production* of hybridization rather than the noisy command of colonialist authority or the silent repression of the native traditions" (Bhabha 1994:112). If and when the hybrid native can get out of this dichotomy of "noisy command" and "silent repression", "then an important change of perspective occurs", which "turns the discursive conditions of dominance [of the oppressor] into the grounds of intervention [for the oppressed]" (112). It is in so doing that Arthur manages to disturb his white neighbours with his presence that is a threat to their authority. Arthur finishes his story by contrasting the Aboriginal way of life with that of the white man's to underline the difference of Aboriginals from the whites and to dismantle the white colonizer's stereotyping and homogenising attitude towards Aboriginals: "those Aborigines in the desert, they don't want to live like the white man, ownin' this and ownin' that. They just want to live their life free" (266). Trees' comments below also support the view that Arthur's declaration is another step towards a nationalism which embraces individuality rather than stereotyping .

> He recognizes the very obvious difference between desert people, station workers and urban Aborigines. He speaks to deconstruct the notion of Aborigines as a homogeneous group, and his emphasis on difference extends to Aboriginal and white people in terms of land usage (Trees 64).

As for the emerging nationalism, Sartre claims that "colonialism creates the patriotism of the colonized" (Sartre xxviii). As their shared experiences discrimination, racism, humiliation, exploitation and pain unite the Aboriginals. Pettman adds that "in places in the Northern Territory, […] the Aboriginal domain and the white domain are physically quite separate and frequently antagonistic" (Pettman 116-117). Therefore in the North, Sally and Gladys face hostility at first, but when they introduce themselves as relatives of people living in the area, they are welcomed and accepted. Similarly, one of their

relatives, Billy, who moved to the North, admits that other Aboriginals did not talk to him until one of them remembered his mother (Morgan 294). After they made sure that he was one of them, he was accepted and now he feels that he belongs there (294). The Aboriginals living in the North "are interlocked" now (284).

Sally, on the other hand, becomes the medium through which her elders and relatives express themselves. Sally, as a modern day, urban Aboriginal, embraces her hybridity, which is "the strategic reversal of the process of domination through disavowal", with extra emphasis on her Aboriginal roots (Bhabha 1994:112). In other words, Sally may not be the subaltern herself, yet her hybridity makes the subaltern speak. Spivak claims that "the postcolonial intellectuals learn that their privilege is their loss", which means that Morgan's loss of a total experience of her racial identity becomes her privilege in writing the book (Spivak 28). On the other hand, Nan is the real subaltern as she avoids telling everything, which is very much in line with Spivak's assertion that "the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow", which is true considering Nan's secretiveness and Arthur's assertiveness (28). Her construction of Aboriginality is an ongoing process that takes place as long as the book finds a reader and/or a critic.

> *My Place* flushes the critics out from behind their personae of scientific detachment, making it necessary for them to 'confess' their own personal positions. It draws out from critics what seldom explicitly finds its way into academic writing, and they have no choice but to express their own critical position. The result is therefore a dialogue between the text and the critic [or the reader]. In reading *My Place*, the critics make a discovery about themselves, about the similarity or difference of their political position from that of Sally Morgan (Robertson 48).

The dynamism and transformation that Sally, Gladys and Nan are depicted to go through in the book, supported by the subjectivity of the genre, make the book an enunciation of Sally's Aboriginality. When she starts her investigation into her family history, Sally claims that "there are all sorts of files about Aboriginals that go way back, and the government won't release them" (Morgan 208). The Aboriginals have been deprived of

their history by the white colonizer: “there’s nothing about Aboriginal people and what they’ve been through” (205). Memmi’s opinion about the colonizer, the colonized and history is very relevant to Sally’s concerns in writing the book.

> The most serious blow suffered by the colonized is being removed from history and from the community. Colonization usurps any free role in either war or peace, every decision contributing to his [the colonized’s] destiny and that of the world, and all cultural and social responsibility (Memmi 91).

This is the reason why Sally writes the book. She wants “to tell a little bit of the other side of the story” in order to fulfil her social and racial responsibility and to get back the authority.

To summarize the point that is being made here, it would be fitting to end in the way it began: “[M]aybe it’s a good thing. Could be it’s time to tell. Time to tell what it’s been like in this country” (Morgan 429). With all the subjectivity and personal nature of confession, what Nan says at the end of her story would be very meaningful: “The government and the white man must own up to their mistakes. There’s been a lot of coverin’ up” (429). In fact, the legitimate deeds of the white colonizer are shameful enough due to discriminatory laws and their arbitrary execution. Exploitation of Aboriginals as if they were “resources, without rights” (Trees 62), exerting violence by all means possible, and imposing Christianity, epistemic violence disguised as consolation and sense of protection lead to a chain reaction in the colonized. Although the process is marked with ambivalence and loss of sense of belonging, alienation is followed by mimicry and hybridity. The ones disturbed by this process are “only those who are inclined to be disturbed”, who is Sally in the book and Sally Morgan the writer (Memmi 113). The result is a weak glimmer of nationalism to reverse colonization and create senses of belonging and identity.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

As the analyses of Doris Lessing's *The Grass Is Singing* and Sally Morgan's *My Place* have shown, the effects of colonialism on the protagonists of these two novels are quite different: Mary is isolated throughout the novel, whereas Sally builds up senses of belonging to her native group, familiarity with traditions and heritage, and identities in the social and racial senses by the end of her family history. Mary is drawn away from her troubled family and unable to repair the damage caused by the microcosm of her colonial society. However, Sally is not discouraged from adhering to and even reinforcing family bonds despite the turmoil caused by her father—an influence Morgan chooses to ignore—and the secretiveness of her mother and grandmother.

The Lessing novel shows a sensitive handling of how colonialism affects different groups of people in the country as well as how it impacts upon an individual. Colonization in Rhodesia does "not lead to an opening" of the minds and lives, but "to a contraction, disappointment, and madness" (Clayton 56). This is revealed through Mary, whom "the colonial paranoia which, in its racial form, engulfs" (56). Mary's interaction with her "damaging nuclear family" (56) and with different social groups, as well as some of the various hardships that result from white rule in Rhodesia (as it was then) are demonstrated as the reason for her disintegration. Mary's social life is characterized by aloofness and the deprivation of sincere and supportive relationships. The South African white society populating cities tries to keep up the British ways of their remembered mother country, so their contact with the black race is very limited. However, the white farmers in the country, who are face to face with the realities of colonization, depict harsher racist attitudes at the expense even of excluding the poor whites. The reason for this is that "the whites in Lessing's text develop a laager or siege mentality and a herd instinct" which colonial discourse decrees, and they "model themselves along the lines

of hegemonic masculinity in their relations with the colonized space which includes the African people, the land and the natural environment in general" (Mutekwa 730).

Mary does not feel that she belongs to these communities, yet she cannot help mimicking their ways and the values she has unavoidably imbibed. This ambiguity in her existential position, which prevents her from building a personal identity and a sense of belonging to a social group, throws her off balance. Her close contact with the natives, aggravating her Oedipal fears and underscoring her crippled sexual identity, makes her situation deteriorate. She is rejected by the whites, the blacks and the land, so her only outlet is death, which she comes to realize at the end of the novel. As a result she finds and restlessly maintains the human contact that she yearns for in a native, her houseboy Moses. However, the colonial apparatus does not allow this and punishes her for her accidental rebellion.

Lessing's novel is, thus, "an indictment of the South African apartheid system" imposed by colonial othering processes (Roberts 83), with a "symbolic ending in which the bush, in the figure of Moses, takes its revenge" (Visel 158). Thus, he "'speaks' through violence" (164), while disrupting "the gender hierarchies of empire" just like a new leader who shows these hierarchies' "ambivalence to the colonial institution by appropriating" for his own purpose "the masculinity of the former colonizers" (Mutekwa 738). However, Lessing's presenting Moses as a symbol, and not as a three-dimensional character whose thoughts are conveyed, undermines the idea that Moses assumes the role of a new leader. Still, the political but highly implicit allusion to the necessity for a new order in Africa is obvious.

On the other hand, in Morgan's Aboriginal autobiography, the protagonist belonging genetically to both the colonizer and the colonized groups finds a solution to the problem of belonging to a group by espousing one identity over the other. Sally's naivety and ignorance of her true racial identity shields her from the racism of the whites in her school years. As a young adult, she discovers and embraces her heritage with

wavering support from her family. Her progressively developing self-confidence and assertiveness motivate her to enunciate her racial and social identities so strongly that she is able to build a sense of belonging to the land, to her people and to their heritage. Her ability to integrate so completely with one group is not so much a personal success as due to the generous and loving sense of community and family that the colonized groups extend to each other, and to their particularly strong historical and spiritual links with the land itself. The very story of her being accepted by her family, by her own race and by the land, which spiritually supports her in her quest, creates a fictional identity immunized to criticism due to the subjectivity of the genre in which it is presented. Finally, she not only manages to engender a meaningful existence for herself, but she also transforms her family into Aboriginals at peace with who they are, by providing them with a medium through which they can create their own histories by speaking out.

To conclude, colonial and post-colonial situations can cripple the individual by taking away his/her freedom to "be" outside the imposed, absolute and unchanging patterns of existence. Although both writers are aware "that there are no easy apologies or justifications for the historical injustice" and that it will not be easy or sometimes possible to "redress" them, they prefer to criticise colonialism with all its components, tools and implications (Walder 112). Both Mary and Sally face this threat of being victimized posed by the authority that uses a "conceptualization of women as the cultural and biological producers of the nation" (Mutekwa 727). However, coming from a group that considers itself socially exclusive and is also unwelcoming to the 'other' within its own population, Mary is too bruised and isolated to deal with her predicament, worsened by an unhappy marriage. Therefore, her being doomed is also reflected in her crippled femininity, preventing her from entertaining even the idea of having a child. The effect of poverty is also important here. Sally, on the other hand, is able to identify with a group that has far more welcoming and less individualistic characteristics, and is therefore able to find a 'place' of her own in the colonized land. She has children and she passes down her cultural identity as a source of pride, which is a reversal of colonialism that devalues the native culture. She does not suffer from the psychological

weaknesses of Mary, which destabilize her personal and social identities from the beginning, because Sally is more self-sufficient, aware, assertive, decisive, and supported in her dealings with social and colonial impositions. It is a fact that "individual and cultural memories may intersect;" nonetheless, they can also "diverge, leading to conflict about who precisely has a just claim on the future" (Walder 112). Therefore, it would not be wrong to say that Mary is made for death, whereas Sally is a survivor due to their perceptions and dealings with the concepts of family, society, environment and race in a colonial framework.

As a final note, Lessing's novel has more literary value in terms of western literary standards because it portrays the colonial situation with its destructive impact on both the colonizer and the colonized with a tragic ending that requires contemplation and comment. On the other hand, Morgan's appropriating the western genre of autobiography and creating a hybrid genre by means of which she subverts colonialism and its literary tradition to lead the story to a predetermined happy ending in terms of the protagonist's survival in colonization makes the book a popular read, which implies that the readers are involved in empathy and sympathy, contributing to the writer's aim of forming an approved fictional identity as a survival technique.

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