

## ABSTRACT

This thesis deals with the comparative analysis of the novels *The Grass Is Singing* by the British writer Doris Lessing, and *Disgrace* (1999) whose author is the South African-born novelist and scholar J. M. Coetzee. Both works portray fundamental problems of Southern Africa, which is racism and colonialism, more precisely its continuing consequences. They are, however, separated by almost half a century, and the profound social changes that took place during that time are significantly reflected in the content, form and the overall message of both works.

The analysis of the novels is preceded by a detailed overview of the colonial and postcolonial history of the region with a special emphasis on the Republic of South Africa and Zimbabwe where the stories are set. Particular attention is given to the history of the first white colonizers who made up the present-day ethnic group of Afrikaners, and their struggle for national liberation against the British colonial Empire, because it is this element that disturbs the usual view on postcolonial literature.

After a brief introduction to the literary work of both writers, including relevant biographical information and the synopses of the books under review, the next part of the thesis is devoted to literary criticism. Some basic notions and concepts of postcolonial theories developed by renowned authors such as Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak and Homi Bhabha are confronted with the specific aspects of South African colonialism, as reflected in both, the novels and the authors' lives. The main critical source is the theoretical work of French authors Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The thesis presents and applies in detail their concept of deterritorialization and minor literature.

Further content analysis concentrates on the different contemporary circumstances surrounding the events depicted in the novels, and foregrounds the contrast between the

modernist concept of Doris Lessing, whose protagonist, overwhelmed by hatred, is focused solely on herself, and the postmodernist reflections of the main characters of Coetzee's novel, who are seeking paths to reconciliation, and whose life stories contain a considerable philosophical overlap. It is then examined in detail, again with using Deleuze and Guattari's categories of 'deterritorialization / reterritorialization' and 'becoming animal'.

The final part of the analysis deals with the critical reception of the novels at the time and in their countries of origin, as even this is an important part of the existence of literary works, which also reflects their, in given circumstances inevitable, social and political significance.