

**THE DETECTIVE FICTION IN THE POSTCOLONIAL CONTEXT: RECONSTRUCTING
THE GENRE IN NURUDDIN FARAH'S SWEET AND SOUR MILK AND DORIS
LESSING'S THE GRASS IS SINGING**

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Received: 27 Apr 2019

Accepted: 03 May 2019

Published: 08 May 2019

ABSTRACT

The article focuses on how the popular genre of detective fiction is subverted and re-constructed in the postcolonial context, with emphasis on two postcolonial texts- Nuruddin Farah's Sweet and Sour Milk, and Doris Lessing's The Grass Is Singing. A detective novel, as a genre, has been known for presenting insight into normative social and moral values and critiquing contemporary socio-cultural malpractices through the character of the protagonist, mostly presented as a heterosexual white male figure. In the postcolonial context, this popular genre has been made an instrument to cultural assertion and self-definition against the appropriations and manipulations under numerous variations of power-relations- from colonialism to dictatorial regimes. Whereas in Nuruddin Farah's Sweet and Sour Milk, the conventional search for the reason of the death re-contextualizes the genre into a search for resistance and self-definition against the manipulations of the socialist dictatorship in the post-independence Somalia; in Doris Lessing's The Grass Is Singing, the search for the motif of murder leads to a revealing commentary upon racism in southern Africa in the apartheid era. With its focus on the conventions of the genre of detective fiction, the article will analyze how this popular genre is subverted, reconstructed and re-contextualized in these two novels.

KEYWORDS: *Detective Fiction, Dictatorship, Discourse, Norms, Racism, Apartheid*