

A FEMINIST ANALYSIS OF BESSIE HEAD'S OEUVRE

WITH REFERENCE TO MIGRATION AND

PSYCHOANALYSIS

BY

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DEDICATION

To the memory of my mother MARY MAKWEKWE NCUBE 1942 - 1990. My first Professor who taught me to do things on a long term basis and to persevere until the horizon became clear. That gave me enough space to explore the world to its fullest and to my own satisfaction:

Every wise woman builds her house: but the foolish pluck it down with her hands [Proverbs 14:1].

My mother was one of those dedicated women who struggled against ignorance for the sake of all black African women and men with special reference to Mzimela Tribal Authority where she spent her precious time for the empowerment and the well being of the society.

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DECLARATION

I, THEMBELIHLE THANDI NCUBE declare that this thesis is entirely my own work. I have not submitted it in its entirety or in part, to any other University except at this University.



T. T. NCUBE

2001

INTRODUCTION

The research problem undertaken in this thesis is the extent to which Bessie Head's oeuvre can be used for feminist analysis. The thesis will explore the degree to which Head explicitly aligns herself to women's movements and the degree to which the characterizations in her books support feminist positions. She will also be looked at in the context of recent debates on feminism in Africa. Although Head's work has been extensively commented on, not much has been done through careful theoretical analysis of her work from a feminist perspective.

The main objective of this thesis is to look at how Head's texts, especially novels such as When Rain Clouds Gather [1969], Maru [1971], A Question of Power [1974] and A Bewitched Crossroad [1984], reveal feminism. Included are also two books of short stories, which contribute to the analysis. These are The Collector of Treasures [1977] and Tales of Tenderness and Power [1989]. Five short stories will be analyzed from The Collector of Treasures [1977] : those stories are, " Hunting", " Life", "The Special One", "Heaven is not Closed", and "The Collector of Treasures". Two short stories will be analyzed from Tales of Tenderness and Power [1989] : those are " The Property" and " Lovers".

To achieve the stated objective, three theories play a prominent part in guiding and leading the interpretation of scenarios and events in the texts. The chosen theory is Feminism, supported by the theories of Migration and Psychoanalysis.

Chapter one deals with the theoretical background and focuses on the three theories, Feminism, Migration and Psychoanalysis. Moreover, Feminism will be looked at in relation to its evolution through three generations. Feminists who demanded equality with men characterize the first generation Feminism. The second generation focuses on issues surrounding sexual differences. Finally, the third generation distinguishes between sex and gender and identifies the interaction between social and natural functions, but without the concept of biological determinism.

Chapter two deals with Head as a writer and with Head's biography. This chapter is important because it illustrates how Head's biography links to the general topic of this thesis: A Feminist Analysis of Bessie Head's Texts with reference to Migration and Psychoanalysis.

Chapter three deals with the analysis of Head's texts through Feminism, Migration and Psychoanalysis. This chapter is based on how Head portrays both men and women in her work.

CHAPTER 1

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

This chapter deals with the three theories applicable to Head's texts. According to Wright [1984: 4 -5] psychoanalytical theory brings out the unconscious aspect of utterance through its concentration on the relationship between sexuality and sexual roles.

For Davies [1994: 17], feminist theorists are beginning to concur that the category 'Woman' is a social, not a natural or biological construct. The Theory of Migration is examined with respect to its effects upon the lives of women. Freud propounded his theory of psychoanalysis during the Victorian era. From the perspective of psychoanalysis, women were seen as subordinate to men and were portrayed negatively in society.

Freud uses the concept of 'penis envy' in order to reveal how women are jealous of men's phallus. Freud formulated this concept from what women told him about their dissatisfaction with their husband's behavior. Usually, women complained to Freud about inequality and subordination. Freud concluded that women are subordinated because they are women and they do not possess the penis. Moreover, according to Freud 'penis envy' originates in childhood experience.

According to Millet [1977:181], girls first notice the penis of a brother or playmate and note its visibility and of [relatively] large proportions. They recognize it as a superior counterpart to their own small and inconspicuous organ and from that time forward become envious of the penis. When boys and girls are playing together, the boys urinate, unconscious of their differences. Girls quickly notice the difference when they see the penis.

Women fall in love with men because they like the penis. Women associate themselves with the penis in order to satisfy a desire to partly own the penis. For Mitchell and Rose [1982], until puberty, the little girl sees herself as a little man. According to Wright [1984:14], Freud sees the child's relationship with its parents as critical for the achievement of a proper sexual identity.

Difficulties begin with the child's dependence on the nurturing mother. The problems are specific to the very formation of a self-concept in the initial separation from the mother's body and the love of the mother remains dominant in the early formative years. Inevitably, according to Freud, a perception of the father as a rival for this love becomes prevalent in the boy-child to the point where he is drawn into fantasies of killing his rival and of possessing the mother.

This is known as the Oedipus complex, which emanates from the fear of castration. Boys develop feelings of love towards their mothers in order to negate their father's phallocentricism. Freud proposed that human society developed through stages, from a patriarchy to a matriarchy and finally back to a patriarchy. He illustrates this thus: during the first patriarchy, primitive people lived in small groups, each dominated by a jealous, powerful father who possessed all the females of the group.

One day the sons, who had been banished to the outskirts of the group, overthrew the father – whose body they devoured – in order to secure his power and to take his women for themselves. Overcome by guilt, they later set up a totem as a substitute for the father and also renounced the women whom they had liberated from the father. The sons voluntarily gave up the women, whom they all wanted to possess in order to preserve the group which otherwise could have been destroyed as the sons fought among themselves. In “Totem and Taboo” Freud suggests that the germ of the institution of matriarchy may have originated here [Creed 1993:24].

For the girl-child, the issue is not so straightforward. The complex works in reverse. The castration complex ushers in the Oedipus complex. She interprets the absence of a

penis as a failure, on the part of the mother, in provision. Under the influence of this disappointment, she develops feelings of hostility for her mother. In the unconscious, however, the wish for a penis is not abandoned but replaced by the wish to bear the father a child.

The girl then becomes the rival of the mother for the father's love [Wright 1984: 14]. A different perspective is that by giving birth a woman does not symbolize her love for children, but rather her love of the penis. If the child is a girl, she sees her mother as responsible that she had been born castrated. She then develops feelings of love towards her father [Wright 1984].

Freud himself was aware that the mother is frequently viewed by children as the parent who utters castration threats. In his study of the Wolf Man From the History of an Infantile Neurosis [1941], he describes the mother / nanny as the feared agent of castration as follows:

He therefore began to play with his penis in his Nanya's presence, and this, like so many other instances in which children do not conceal their masturbation, must be regarded as an attempt at seduction. His Nanya disillusioned him; she made a serious face, and explained that was not good; children who did that, she added, got a "wound" in that place [Creed 1993:103].

1.1 FEMINISM

Feminism can be defined as a woman's conscious struggle to resist male domination. Women have always suffered discrimination because of their sex. Aristotle declared that "the female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities" [Widdowson 1993: 203].

Cagatay, Grown and Santiago [1986] maintain that when First World women are exposed to what it means to be a women in the Third World setting, they move to a broader definition of Feminism:

Feminism constitutes the political expression of the concerns and interests of women from different regions, classes, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. There is, and must be, a diversity of feminism responsive to the different needs and concerns of different women, and defined by them for themselves. This diversity builds on a common opposition to gender oppression and hierarchy which, however, is only the first step in articulating and acting upon a political agenda [Cagatay, Grown and Santiago 1986: 411].

Four years earlier, Marie Angelique Savane, first president of the Association of African Women Organization for Research and Development [AAWORD], put forward a similar analysis:

Feminism is international in defining as its aim the liberation of women from all types of oppression and in providing solidarity among women of all countries: it is national in stating its priorities and strategies in accordance with particular cultural and socio- economic conditions. We consider that national and ethnic traditions must be respected and maintained so as to create a genuine sense of nationhood. However, aspects of our culture, which discriminate, restrict and devalue women's physical, psychological and political development must be eliminated. To achieve this, women must be politically mobilized for action.

In order to create an alternative culture, responsive to national needs and open to international solidarity, we women defend our right to speak from a woman's perspective and to express this in writing and through action.

We demand that society give and maintain value and respect for women's contributions in their roles within the labor force, in the family and culturally. At the same time, as individuals, as citizens, as mothers and as wives, we women deplore the loss of resources and of lives in the present senseless resistance to change towards a more equal and just society. Equally, we condemn discrimination and injustice based on race or ethnicity just as much as that based on gender. We believe our hope lies in joining with those progressive forces which will achieve a future human society in harmony with the environment and free of discrimination and inequality between men and women, black and white, believer and unbeliever [Savane 1982:15].

The Spark Of Feminism

The spark of feminism originated in a work of Mary Wollstonecraft. Called A Vindication of the Rights of Women. [1996] Wollstonecraft belongs to the first wave of egalitarian feminists who demanded equality with men. In 1946 the authors of a psychoanalytically oriented text wrote :

Mary Wollstonecraft was an extreme neurotic of a compulsive type there can be no doubt. Out of her illness arose the ideology of feminism, which was to express the feeling of so many women in years to come [Martin 1985 : 70]

He echoed Rousseau by saying that :

Whatever else men and women may be in relation to each other, they are not equal, identical. They are similar in species, different individually, and always complementary [Martin 1985: 70]

Martin denigrated Wollstonecraft's concern for the equality of women to an attempt to achieve masculinity reinforced when she was diagnosed as "psychically ill". On the other hand Kate Millet [1977] argues that ideologically, indoctrination as well as economic inequality, are the causes of women's oppression. Her argument ranges through history, literature, psychoanalysis, sociology and encompasses other fields of study.

According to Davies [1995: 28], feminist discourse, is itself, politics directed at changing existing power relations between men and women in society as a whole. These power relations structure all areas of life: the family, education, the household, the political system, leisure, culture, economics, sexual intercourse and sexuality. Feminism questions and seeks to transform what it means to be a woman in society, and to understand how the category 'women' and the term 'feminine' are defined, structured and produced.

It is important to consider the fact that Olive Schreiner, the South African writer, belonged to first generation feminism and was one of the pioneering radical feminists. As such, Schreiner's vision was based on women's empowerment, and she maintained that women should aspire to an equal position as men in the work place. Schreiner handled the crucial issue, which was to struggle for women's involvement in industries, and she made it clear that women had the right to control the economy as they had been marginalized.

Olive Schreiner was born in March 1855 at Wittenberg, Basutholand. In 1880 Schreiner returned to South Africa from Britain as a literary celebrity. She used her influence and her reputation to champion minority radical causes. In her experience, Victorian society secluded and silenced women. Colonial society did so even more. She moved from themes of women's subjection and powerlessness to those of national oppression.

Schreiner was an advocate, first of the Boer cause against British imperialism, and then of the African people of South Africa subordinated in the interest of both Boers and Briton. Almost alone amongst her contemporaries, she saw that the race conflicts during South Africa's industrial revolution must be understood in terms of the worldwide struggle between capital and labor. [First and Scott 1980: 16 - 17].

As a feminist of first world women Schreiner introduced the concept of "sex parasitism". This concept implies that one sex [female] lives at the mercy of the other sex. As a result, there is no reciprocity among the two. However, Bessie Head as a Southern African writer, belongs to the third generation of feminists. The third generation of feminists tries to understand sexual and symbolic differences within the framework of the prevention of their cultural and professional realization [Harcourt 1994 : 198]

Head focused on women of the Third World and Third Generation who were marginalized. As a pioneering woman in Botswana, her novels and short stories portray characters that support women's liberation. Head's teachings about women in Botswana were recognized because women re-defined themselves and located themselves within available resources. For instance, the vegetable garden along with Cape Gooseberry played a prominent part in uplifting the economy of the country and improving the status of women.

Both Schreiner and Head spent much of their time shaping the future of women. Schreiner was concerned about the improvement of women's working conditions. Head was concerned with the well being of both women and men. In her novels and short stories, Head portrays women as both passive and active. When women are passive, men resolve conflicts. For instance, Paul Thebolo who maintained Mokopi's children when he rejected them, resolves the conflict between Mokopi and Dikeledi in *The Collector of Treasures*. On the other hand, the four women who served as companions to Dikeledi in jail had all killed their husbands. Head manipulates these characters in

order to illustrate the injustices that male insensitivity could inflict on the psyche and mental equilibrium of their partners in family life. These women are regarded as active because they initiate the action rather than passively endure pain and humiliation.

Christopher Heywood [1976] regards Head's empathy for women as comparable to that of Olive Schreiner. Head verifies Heywood's statement when Head stated that:

I have struggled to survive, I haven't really liked my sort of life - my sort of personal loneliness, but I have liked the discipline of solitude, I have much in common with Olive Schreiner - I too have a pioneering role as she did. I have concerned myself with the trends that will evolve in Southern Africa with independence. I am caught between the times Africa was not independent and when it was. Schreiner had similar tendencies. She bothered about all South African questions, I would say I've been concerned with African questions as a whole [Marquard 1979 52-3].

It goes without saying that modern feminists attempt to understand women as discursively constructed identities. They critique women's subjectivity, sexuality and common assumptions of power ideology and representation. It is vital to note that the feminist project aims to transform the prevailing models of sexual evaluation and women's oppressed social position. For Harcourt [1994], psychoanalysis as the understanding of gender identity and its relation to desire and power, is necessary if one is supposed to influence social change.

Feminism has turned to psychoanalysis in order to further the knowledge of how social relations and gender interact. Feminism embraces psychoanalysis as a means of comprehending the unconscious structure of patriarchy, while seeing feminism as a means for providing a strategy for change. Harcourt [1994], mentioned that the third generation of feminism dedicated itself to undo the association of women with their bodies and to search for a more politically defined female role [Smith and Mahfouz 1994:74].

First Generation Feminism

The first generation of feminism studied the work of Virginia Woolf. Woolf's fame rested on her own creative writing as a woman, and later feminist critics analyzed her novels extensively from a very different perspective. Her recognition that literature, particularly its syntax and address, is determined by the gender of the author is what makes her eligible to be called a feminist. The confirmation of that feminism comes in her demand for a new critical tradition for women writers and readers, in her ideas of difference and her triumphant battle with the techniques of her critic father, among others. Virginia Woolf rewrote literary history to include forgotten women [Humm 1986 : 123]. Like the first generation feminists, Woolf was principally concerned with women's material disadvantages compared to men.

Woolf also advanced the notion that while women were indeed the victims of men, they colluded in their own domestic and professional victimization by acting as a "looking glass" and reflecting back to men the image they [men] desired. Woolf's general contribution to feminism was her recognition that gender identity was socially constructed and can be challenged and transformed. Apropos of feminist criticism, she also continually examined the problems facing women writers. Moreover, Woolf believed that women had always faced social and economic obstacles to their literary ambitions, and was herself conscious of the restricted education she had received [she was not taught Greek like her brothers] [Smith and Mahfouz 1994].

Woolf wanted femininity to be conscious so that she might escape from gender confrontation. In pursuit of this, she adopted the Bloomsbury sexual ethics of androgyny and hoped to achieve a balance between male self-realization and female self-realization. Her repeated attacks of madness and her eventual suicide suggest that the struggle to transcend sexuality failed, although, they might also be regarded psychoanalytically, as symptoms of her resistance to a repressive patriarchy [Selden and Widdowson 1993: 207].

Moi [1985] argued that Woolf was not interested in a balance between masculine and feminine types but in a complete displacement of fixed gender identities. She dismantled essentialist notions of gender by dispersing fixed points of view in her modernist fictions. Woolf [1980] and Moi [1985] both rejected the type of feminism, which was simply an inverted male chauvinism, and showed great awareness of the distinctness of women's writing [Selden and Widdowson 1993 : 207].

Second Generation Feminism

Second-generation feminism continued to share the first generation's fight for women's rights in all areas, but its emphasis shifted to sexual difference. Sexuality, as at once oppression and something to celebrate, became key issues which in the coupling of the personal and political, constituted a crucially influential challenge to traditional [male] political thinking.

Second-generation feminism in the United States took its impetus from the civil rights, peace and other protest movements and Kate Millet's *Feminism* was of that order. Patriarchy subordinated the female to the male or treated the female as an inferior male, and power was exerted directly or indirectly in civil and domestic life to constrain women. Sexual Politics [1970] was a pioneering analysis of masculinist historical, social and literary images of women.

Representations of women, for example as a topic for books and courses, remained a dominant approach while Millet's privileging of literature as a vector helped to establish writing, literature studies and criticism as domains especially appropriate for feminism. One crucial factor in the social construction of femininity, was the way literary values and conventions have themselves been shaped by men and women, who had often struggled to express their own concerns in what might well have been inappropriate forms [Selden and Widdowson1993].

On the other hand, the most influential American critic of the second generation was Elaine Showalter. Showalter [1977] outlined a literary history of women writers, which showed the configuration of their material, psychological and ideological determinants and promoted both a feminist critique [concerned with women readers] and a "gynocritique" [concerned with women writers]. Showalter's title *Women's Writing and Gynocriticism* indicated her debt to Virginia Woolf and as Mary Eagleton [1986] she pointed out that their projects were markedly similar: A passion for women's writing and feminist research linked both critics.

Aware of the invisibility of women's lives, both Showalter [1977] and Woolf [1980] were active in the essential work of retrieval, trying to find forgotten precursors [Selden and Widdowson 1993]. Showalter [1977] however criticized Woolf for her retreat into androgyny [denying her femaleness].

For Moi [1985], Woolf's refusal and subversion of the unitary self and her "playful" textuality are her strengths, whereas the Anglo - American Gynocritics wished to center on the female author and character and on female experience as the mark of authenticity [Selden and Widdowson 1993].

For Moi [1985], Showalter's Anglo - American feminist criticism was characterized both by being untheorized and by the shakiness of its theoretical underpinning - most particularly in the connection it makes between literature and reality and between literary evaluation and feminist politics [Selden and Widdowson 1993].

There were five main foci, sexual difference, biology, discourse, the unconscious, and social and economic conditions [Selden and Widdowson 1993]. Many men keep women in homes and argued that biology was fundamental and played down socialization. If a woman's body is her destiny, then all attempts to question attributed sex-roles flew in the face of the natural order.

On the other hand, some radical feminists celebrate women's biological attributes as sources of superiority rather than inferiority. Others appealed to the special experience of women as the source of positive female values in life and in art. Since only women underwent those specifically female life experiences [ovulation, menstruation and parturition] only women are entitled to speak of women's lives.

Furthermore, women's experiences include a different perceptual and emotional life. Women do not see things in the same way as men, and they had different ideas and feelings about what is important or not [Selden and Widdowson 1993].

Third Generation Feminism

Having started with the idea of difference, feminism will be able to break the face of its belief in women, her power, her writing so as to channel this demand for difference into each and every element of the female whole, and finally, to bring out the singularity of each woman, and beyond this, her multiplicity's, her plural languages, beyond the horizon, beyond site, beyond faith itself [Julia Kristeva, " Women's Time "].

Third generation feminism stems from the work of Simone de Beauvoir of the first generation. Her work distinguished between sex and gender, and realized and

identified the interaction between social and natural functions but without any notion of biological determinism. In other words 'one is not born, but rather becomes a woman; it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature.' Only the intervention of someone else can establish an individual as an other.

As a third generation feminist, Kristeva looked at the concept of self and body in order to tell her story of a female gendered identity in relation to the reality of biological reproduction. She explored the issues surrounding the female anatomical body in shaping the current conditions of femininity by exploring how biological givens are organized by complex unconscious forces that contribute to current gender relations. Kristeva's text begins with the questions:

What difference does it make in the constitution of my social experience that I have a specifically female body? What are my personal histories, identities and desires in the answering of this question? How do I bring the private to the public? From where can such questions be posed? What are the grounds of its possibility? [Smith and Mahouz 1994].

1.2 THEORIES OF MIGRATION

Migration must be viewed in relation to the concept of home. All migration takes place from one home to another. According to Davies [1994:49], home is one of the principal sites of domination and conflict for women. By resisting home-bound identities and theoretical homelands, women are theoretically homeless.

In Hooks [1981] the very meaning of home changes with the experience of decolonization, of radicalization. At times home is nowhere. At times one knows only extreme estrangement and alienation. Then home is no longer just a place. It is locations.

Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and ever changing perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference. One confronts and accepts dispersal, fragmentation as part of the construction of a new world order that reveals but does not demand for more fully, where we are, who we can become - an order that does not demand forgetting
[Davies 1994 : 49].

The contradictory meaning of home is a reality. For black women, there is an inherent contradiction in the very word “home”. Where is home for starters? Can you call a country “home”? When your land has been systematically colonized; can you call this country a home? A place which refuses your existence and your rights through racism in its institutions, media and culture. [Davies 1994 : 96].

According to Davies [1994] migrants conclude that:

“Until we can be both visible and belong, the word home will remain for us ambiguous, ironic and even sarcastic. We will still be strangers at home. This means that even being at home, women still experience displacement”
[Davies 1994: 97].

For Tyhust [1996], a social displacement syndrome can be identified as an incubation period, which can be identified by paranoid symptoms such as hypochondria, anxiety and depression.

Tyhust's argument was verified by Bessie Head's oppressed situation in South Africa as a child of a white woman and black father; Elizabeth found herself utterly dislocated. Head revealed that, Elizabeth could not relate to the story of her mother's incarceration in any way. She really belongs emotionally to her foster mother and the story was an imposition on her life [Head 1974: 16].

Correspondingly for Cohen [1981], various studies focus on the psychological aspects of immigration and emphasize the more serious trauma faced by refugees and their mental health problems. *A Question of Power* [1974], captures this reality in its reference to nervous breakdown which apparently was not an unusual event as the principal told Elizabeth that "A lot of refugees have nervous breakdowns" [Head 1974: 52]. The nightmare of these collapses, manifested itself in the projections of Sello, Dan, Medusa and a host of other black personalities and visionaries.

Other children recognized Elizabeth's dislocation because while they could fight and scratch and bite each other, if Elizabeth did likewise she was locked up. As such, the other children soon noticed something unusual about Elizabeth's isolation periods. None of the prefects would listen to her side of the story. They only said, "Come. The principal said you must be locked up" [1974:16]. This isolation, generated by the principal and the children at school, further alienated Elizabeth.

In *Black Skin White Masks* [1986], Fanon explains that in the Colonial encounters, black children are generally denied the same cathartic outlets as other children. This scene clearly reenacts that trauma [Davies 1994: 37].

It is important to note that initially Elizabeth was extremely angry and potentially revolutionary. Elizabeth tirelessly struggled to find her identity until she moved back to her foster mother after seven years - when she had become a primary school teacher - and asked her foster mother about her origin as follows: "tell me about my mother" [17]:

It's such a sad story, It caused so much trouble and the family was frightened by the behavior of the grandmother. My husband worked on the child welfare committee, and your case came up again and again. First they received you from the mental hospital and sent you to a nursing home.

A day later you were returned because you did not look white. They sent you to a Boer family. A week later you were returned. The women in committee said " What can we do with this child? Its mother is white ". My husband came home that night and asked me to take you.

I agreed. The next thing was the family came down in a car from Johannesburg on their way to the racecourse in Durban. The brother of your mother came in. He was very angry and said; "we want to wash our hands in this business. We want to forget it, but the old lady insists on seeing the child. We had to please her. We are going to leave her here for a while and pick her up later". The old lady came down every time they entered horses in the race.

She was the only one who wanted to see your mother and you. When you were six years old we heard that your mother had suddenly killed herself in the mental home. The grandmother brought all her toys and dolls to you. It was such a beautiful story, the story of the grandmother, her insistence on filial ties in a country where people were not people at all [Head 1974:17].

According to social psychologists, migration is often an individual choice. This is so even though such decisions may be made in consultation with family members. Head's decision to leave the country was based on personal reasons rather than political factors. Head had mentioned that: "What really precipitated my move out of South Africa was the break-up of my marriage". [Marquard [a] 1978 : 51]. Head lost her citizenship because she left the country on an exit permit.

As a result, she was forced to disown her South African citizenship and became stateless. The reader needs to take into account there was both pulling and pushing factors. The pushing factor was the break down of her marriage and the pulling factor was the teaching post she had been offered in Botswana. Botswana had never experienced white oppression in ways the South African people had experienced it.

Head reveals the need for security to combat the segregation among people of different race as follows:

" We are all startled alive by the liberation of Africa, but we have been living in exclusive compartments so long that we are all afraid of each other. Here we are going to make an extreme effort to find a deep faith to help us to live together. I think of myself as a woman of Southern Africa. There was this immense conflict, pressure, uncertainty and insecurity that I have lived with for so long"

[Ogungbesan 1979: 93].

To generate a general theory of migration based on the relations between power and prestige in a society, most theorists rely on societal system's theory. It emphasizes the importance of structural tensions derived from inequalities and status inconsistencies. The tensions may be resolved by immigration to a country where status aspiration can be obtained.

This is an important point in this study because Head's immigration was based on "powerlessness". Her powerlessness was due to racial discrimination and political oppression. Obviously, Head had lost prestige in South African society through the break-up of her marriage. As a result she decided to immigrate to Botswana, a new environment where she would not be exposed to structural violence. Head achieved much more than she hoped for. She became famous both in Botswana and abroad.

1.3 THE ROLE OF AFRICAN WOMEN

The role of women in african families has been examined with specific reference to three corresponding views, which put the roles of women in jeopardy as follows:

The adult primitive women is above all a wife, whose life is centered on her home and family - a woman passes with marriage, from under the authority of her father to that of her husband - the husband's authority, as such, is not challenged. Neither the wife nor anyone else disputes that important decisions with regard to the home, the upbringing of the children, the betrothing of daughters and sons and so forth, rest with him and him alone [Evans - Pritchard 1965: 51].

The [Kikuyu] customary law of marriage provides that a man may have as many wives as he can support. The custom also provides that all women must be under the protection of men, and that in order to avoid prostitution [although no word exists for prostitution in the Kikuyu language] all women must be married. It is held that if a man can control and manage effectively the affairs of a large family, this is an excellent testimonial of his capacity to look after the interests of the tribe [Kenya 1937: 167 -69]

The myth that must be banished is that polygamy has anything to do with the concupiscence of the male is a state into which most African men enter with a certain trepidation. If you think one wife can henpeck a husband, you should see what three wives in league can do.

If co-wives live up to the ideal of their roles, even just barely, no man exists but is under greater strain and control.

The man who has a strong senior wife is a fortunate individual because she will run the household and will straighten out the fusses among the co-wives. If he does not have such a wife, two thirds of his energy goes into administration [Bohannon and Curtin 1968: 108].

These quotations reveal the roles of women in African families, in the first quotation an assumption is made that adult women are merely passive breeders, under the subjection of their husbands. The second quotation asserts that women are creatures of intense sexuality and only the institution of marriage and the firm hand of a husband can control them. The third quotation assumes that African women actually run their families from behind the scenes, and African husbands just takes the credit for the smooth working of daily life.

These three views, all written by men, describe african wives in varying degrees of passivity and dependency, and define a married woman's place in her family in terms of her relationship to her husband. In these quotations there is no idea that a women's relationship to her natal kin, her children, her co-wives, or the crops she cultivates might order and govern her days [Hay and Stichter 1984: 53].

These quotations reveal that the organization of african family life does not depend on economics or ecology or anything outside the homestead, but on the capabilities and qualities of individual men and women. In contrast women's roles in the family have changed, not according to the personal traits of individuals, but as a result of the family's changing relation to natural resources, the state and the society [Hay and Stichter 1984: 54].

Ao Synder and Tadesse [1995], prior to the European domination of Africa, the family was an unchanging unit of loyalty, protection and production dwelling in a timeless, static space that had never undergone radical social change. African families had their own local trials and tribulations and the disruption caused by famine, epidemic, draught, the slave trade and the extreme political dislocation that some parts of Africa experienced in the nineteenth century, amended customary law.

The Position Of Women In Botswana

The focus here is on the historical background of the traditional laws and the position of women. It is worth giving a definition of “woman” and to further look at the historical background of Botswana and the advantages of the transformation. For Mackenzie [1989: 50], a woman is regarded as sacred only if she knows her place, which is in her yard with her mother-in-law and children. Women in Botswana were oppressed by this tradition. They were supposed to think and work in accordance with patriarchal rule and authority. This implies that they were restricted by their culture.

The German traveler, Dr W.H.C. Lichtenstein recorded this situation as follows:

The husband secures a livelihood by hunting, tending the cattle and milking the cow when at home; he only prepares hides and makes skin coats and cloth for himself and his wife. About the children he hardly cares...the gentler sex play a very inferior part in the life of the tribe.... It must not be overlooked that this servitude of women is not a consequence of tyranny by men, but due to certain causes, which ameliorate the lot of Bechuana women, although it might not be desirable according to our standards.

The number of men is relatively small and they have to hunt and go to war, so naturally, all the peaceful duties and occupations are done by women. Only such work can suddenly be dropped and interrupted for some length of time. Women do the tilling of the soil, the making of pots, baskets, ropes and other household utensils. All other work which has to be done continuously, such as building, is done by men. Two thirds of the nation are women, and even without any wars they would have to belong to the working class [Mackenzie 1989: 54].

In general, a true man is not expected to listen to the opinion of the woman. Women do not have freedom of speech. Moreover, in polygamous marriages, women share a husband with one or several women.

The custom of Bogadi or the offering of a gift of cattle by the husband's family to the bride's family at the time of marriage, has overtones of bondage to a husband and his family or of a sales-bargain.

In spite of these customs, women have experienced considerable emancipation in Botswana. An intellectual movement never brought about their emancipation. It arose from a number of historical factors, not the least being the complicated and dominant role Christianity played in the political history of the country [Mackenzie 1989: 55].

All the tribes in Botswana have a shared history. This makes it possible to discuss changes that took place in broad terms. Unlike South Africa, Botswana had a benign form of Colonial rule. Invasion by the British established the Bechuana Protectorate in 1885.

Colonial rule was benign for an odd reason - the country was grim and unproductive, subject to recurrent cycles of drought. The British had no interest in it, except as a safe passage way to the interior. British interest was focused on Mashonaland, which they erroneously believed held large deposits of gold. Due to this, Botswana remained independent in a way.

Its customs and traditions were left intact to a large degree and traditional leaders had some say in governing their people. Despite the influence of Christianity and trade, black land ownership and the retention of the African land tenure system continued [Mackenzie [a] 1989: 55].

About 1890, the iron hand-plough was introduced into the country. This improvement played a major role in lightening women's burden as an all round food producer.

Formerly, women worked the field with the hoe. When the iron plough was introduced, it created a small social problem that could only be solved by men.

It was forbidden by custom for women to handle cattle. So, men were needed to in-span the oxen and pull the plough. Agriculture then, became a joint task shared by a man and his family. In addition to this change, the establishment of trade brought a new form of clothing to the country - European clothes. It was adopted throughout the country [Mackenzie [a] 1989 : 56].

Christianity then presented itself as a doctrine above all traditions. It also provided a moral choice freely available to both men and women and it is in this sphere that all major social transformations took place. In the Bamangwato area [1866-1875], a young chief, later known as Khama the Great, suffered religious persecution from his father, Chief Sekgoma I.

Khama had fully converted to Christianity, which brought him into conflict with traditional African custom as represented by his father. The act of suffering persecution for a faith eventually made Khama the victor in the struggle and the leading social reformer of the country. It could also be said of Khama that he was a compassionate man by inclination because some of his reforms must have been extremely difficult to initiate. It appears as if they were motivated entirely by compassion. This is made evident by his abolition of Bogadi [Mackenzie [a] 1989: 56].

It is significant that of the five major tribes of the country, only the Bamangwato and Batawana completely abolished Bogadi. All the other tribes still adhere to the custom. People vehemently deny that Bogadi is the "purchase of women" and yet, central to its functioning, is human greed and the acquisition of wealth through cattle. Under Bogadi, marriages are so arranged so as to retain cattle wealth within the kinship group.

For this reason, young girls are usually married to close relatives - a cousin or a father's brother's son. For many, marriage provided superficial security. Bogadi made many women a silent slave and a chattel in the home of their in-laws.

If she is ill treated by her mother-in-law or husband she can not complain. Her parents are always anxious that she does nothing to destroy the marriage. This is because they are afraid that they would lose Bogadi cattle offered at the time of marriage.

Bogadi also bonds over to a woman's husband's family all the children she would bear in her life time. What makes matters worse is that if a woman's first husband dies and she gives birth to children from another man, her deceased husband's family claim these children. Bogadi was eventually abolished in Bamangwato country on the grounds that each man ought to be the father of his own children. [Mackenzie [a] 1989: 56].

When Khama abolished Bogadi, he also allowed women to lodge complaints against their husbands on their own and not through a male sponsor - as was required by custom. The widespread adoption of Christianity gradually eliminated polygamous marriages. With independence in 1966, women were given the right to vote alongside men.

They did not have to fight for it. Strangely enough, it may be this innovation causing the present social crisis. The country is experiencing an almost complete break-down of family life and a high rate of illegitimate births. No one can adequately account for it, as it just happened somewhere along the line. She now finds herself as unloved outside the restrictions of custom as she was within it [Mackenzie [b] 1989: 5].

CHAPTER 2

2.1 THE BIOGRAPHY OF BESSIE HEAD

The biography of Head is relevant because it contains the facts about Head's historical background. Bessie Head was born in 1937 in Fort Napier Hospital [a mental hospital] in Pietermaritzburg in South Africa. She was born in that hospital because her mother was insane and her father was black, making Head coloured by race [Head 1990: 27].

Head was born when the position of coloureds in South African society was subject to change. In Natal, until the turn of the century, coloureds were accorded the same legal status as whites; they retained the franchise even when it was taken from Indians in 1893. They served in white regiments during the Boer war, and coloured children went to white schools [Eilersen 1995 : 11].

The life of Bessie Head was problematic from the beginning, as she encountered rejection from her mother because her state of life was beyond her control. Head never knew her biological mother because she was incarcerated in a mental hospital so Head was deprived of the intimate love from her biological mother. Head was adopted by a white family, who returned her after they discovered she was coloured.

She was then adopted by the Heathcote family in East Street in Pietermaritzburg, where she lived until she turned thirteen. Head was first dislocated because she was regarded as a white person and later located by being adopted by the Heathcote family because they were coloureds like her.

In 1950 Head was placed in an Anglican Mission orphanage in Durban. St. Monica's Home was started as a school for children "who on account of their colour and poorness of clothing did not go to the government schools and were not welcome there." The school was enlarged to take in boarders until this became its main purpose.

Having for a while attempted to provide schooling and training for young coloured girls of good background, it converted in about 1911 to cater for orphan children or social outcasts. Black mothers, the victims of white male abuse would often bring children there

[Eilersen 1995: 20].

Head's white uncle maintained domination because Nellie Heathcote mentioned that he was very angry and said: " We want to wash our hands of this business, we want to forget it " [Head 1974: 17]. Head's grandmother was the only person who was responsible for the child's well being; but she ceased to visit Head after the death of her biological mother. She bought all her toys and dolls to Bessie [Head] during her last visit. Toby's death [Head's biological mother] marked the end of the conflict between Bessie Head's grandmother and her son [Head's uncle].

The death of Head's mother broke the relationship between her and the family. That was the first phase of her rejection, in the second phase she was rejected by society and finally she was isolated from Nellie whom she thought was her biological mother. In that scenario, Head was left with no frame of reference. Head finished her teacher's training but she lost interest in teaching as her career.

That was demonstrated by the fact that although she was anxious to impart knowledge to the children in her class, knowing all too well that it was only through education that they could hope to escape from the dreary poverty of their homes, she did not get the response she wanted from them. In 1958 she resigned from her job and faced the challenges of a new job in Cape Town. For the first time, Head encountered her own identity group in Cape Town. To have grown up as a coloured in Natal was a very different experience to going to the world of District Six, Cape Town.

The Natal Coloureds were a poorly defined minority group. That was not the case with the Cape Coloureds. They were descended from the original Khoi - Khoi inhabitants of the Cape and the imported slave population. It was in District Six that Head lived and was to work. [Eilersen 1995: 39].

On the other hand, Head came across a class discrimination, which surprised her, from one of the Cape Town residents who told her that:

"The life of the colored people here is quaint and bewildering. There is a rigid caste system, the upper class who are very fair and cultured, the middle class who are factory workers and the nogoeds who are so poor that they have degenerated morally" [Eilersen 1995: 40].

Head experienced this when she confessed that:

" I have walked into some houses where the reception has been very cold. They seemed to pick out immediately that I had no class and sophistication, which associated with being fair - I was very amused that people could be so childish, just because I am shade darker.

I belong to a low class because I feel so happy in their carefree unsnobbish society that I already have many friends among them. I like degenerate people. They are sometimes pathetic, very shrewd, and often trying to better themselves. They are fun too. Life is one big joke to them as they are rough and live amidst violence. The middle classes are inclined to ape the upper class so I do not worry with them " [Eilersen 1995: 40].

Among the people she began to meet, she found that Mahatma Gandhi was greatly admired, indeed almost idolized. He had lived in South Africa from 1898 to 1915, during which time he had established the Natal Indian Congress and taught the Natal Indian community to combat discriminatory laws with non - violence. Several aspects of the Gandhi stories inspired her.

Gandhi himself was both of the world, an astute political bargainer, yet not of it. But what amazed her was the realization that this great Hindu also believed in Christ and Allah and was admired by both Muslims and Christians for his teachings. This illustrated the inclusive nature of Hinduism as opposed to Christianity's exclusiveness [Eilersen 1995: 33].

Bessie Head elaborated her interest on Hinduism:

Never have I read anything that aroused my feelings like his political statements. There was a simple and astonishing clarity in the way he summarized political truths; there was an appalling tenderness and firmness in the man.

I paused every now and then over his paper, almost swooning with worship because I recognized that this could only be God as man. He drove the Indian masses mad with devotion. He was their first and only spokesperson; he was a peculiar combination of Indian ideal, the truly religious man and astonishingly, a practical man of the world [Eilersen 1995: 34].

Seemingly, Head disliked both the Missionaries and Christianity. This was verified by the fact that after leaving the mission school she developed a negative attitude towards Christianity [Eilersen 1995:25].

As she confessed that:

I had no need to go to church from the age of eighteen but I was in church almost everyday before that at the mission school. There I read widely and also become familiar with the Bible. I do view it as a history of the Jews, nothing more. There were things done, teaching put over to me that I view with horror.

Whole areas of the world were blanked out on geography maps as the land of heathens, especially India. They had a long tradition of inquiring into the things of the spirit. It was a way of life there and something very beautiful.... So you could say I moved straight from Christianity, which I found stifling to Hinduism which I found was very rich and deep in concepts [Eilersen 1995:34].

According to Eilersen [1995: 24], Head was a bookworm. As a result of her rejection experiences, Head chose blindly, later consciously to “live with books”. That was one thing St. Monica provided for her. She ran through the library and was afterwards fed on Plato and anything she asked for out of private libraries because she had become the “teacher’s pet” and remained persistently at the top of the class.

Correspondingly, Lourie Farmer’s pedagogical methods also influenced Head to react negatively towards women’s submission because she believed in justice and the well being of society. Farmer was deeply concerned about the girls and their future in St. Monica. She intended to install them in safe and rewarding posts after leaving St. Monica. Farmer’s aim was to give as many of the girls as possible an all round education and equip them for other and more challenging occupations than the traditional one of domestic help [Eilersen 1995: 22].

Head's Marriage And Job In Cape Town And Johannesburg

Head worked for the Golden City Post in Cape Town without remuneration for more than a month. As a result Head was financially embarrassed and Dennis Kiley realized that she was struggling and helped her financially when he could. Life for Head in Cape Town was hard, particularly as she was living alone and she was the sole source of income.

Head introduced a hand writing competition and asked for riddles. She apparently received a warm response which was accompanied by appreciative comments such as "I think you are wonderful" [Eilersen 1995: 42]. Politically, Pan-Africanism attracted Head influenced by Matthew Nkoana, a reporter on Drum with whom she became friendly. She was inspired to cast off her role of spectator and involve herself in politics.

Head joined the PAC, in particular because the organization had agreed to include coloureds in their definition of "African". Coloureds were regarded as indigenous to the continent and suffered under white oppression.

According to Eilersen [1995: 50], Head was volatile by nature. Moments of great elation could be followed by periods of deep depression. This was the period of her life where the two opposing sides of her nature began to manifest themselves. She was both pragmatist and dreamer.

From childhood she had been practical and helpful. Throughout her schooling she had done what was expected of her and responded to reason. The process of unleashing her imaginative powers, which was actually what was happening here, overwhelmed her to such a degree that there was no possibility of tempering the experience with reason. In each case, she had been dashed and disillusioned to an alarming degree. That was made clear in the struggle to find her own identity and finally her association with the poor coloureds who lived in District Six.

Head recognized the most important element of life in District Six: the sense of community. From this awareness arose the few words of praise she ever spared for South Africa.

She believed that she was through with religion, through with politics. Gradually, however, her resilient common sense showed her that she was wrong. After she had been hospitalized because she was insane, Head left Johannesburg and returned to Cape Town. Her job was still reserved.

She tried to work for two months but became increasingly depressed and as a result she resigned from her job. During this period of unemployment, a German woman befriended Head, by the name of Cordelia Gunther, who had also lived through the trauma of the Hitler era. In that period Head gained some insight into the horrors of the Holocaust which would later become part of the nightmarish world of her third novel [Eilersen 1995: 51].

Head began writing her own paper, which she called *The Citizen*. She took local issues questioning the justice of the laws and highlighting the absurdities of the apartheid system [Eilersen 1995: 52].

Head met Harold Head for the very first time at Stakesby Lewis. On the first of September 1961 Cordelia accompanied the couple and another friend, took the train to Simonstown and False Bay where they were married. Immediately after their marriage Harold got a new job, helping about the production of a liberal fortnightly newsmagazine, *Contact*, which was edited by Patrick Duncan.

Together they moved into a rooming house in William Street in the center of District Six. Both Heads were poor and Bessie Head discovered that she was pregnant [Eilersen 1995: 53]. Howard was born on the 15th of May 1962. Prior to his birth Randolph Vigne and some friends launched a new monthly journal, the *New African*.

In 1963 Harold was offered the editorship of *Contact* and with it the chance for more serious journalism and a regular monthly salary. That was due to the fact that Patrick Duncan was banned and decided to leave the country. Harold returned to Cape Town in April, staying at the Tafelberg Hotel again, while Howard and his mother remained in Port Elizabeth [Eilersen 1995: 58].

Bessie Head was not happy in her marriage due to financial problems and Harold's infidelity. Bessie Head decided to leave the country, but it was not easy because she participated for a short time in the PAC. She had an alternative, to leave via an exit permit, which would mean that she could never return to South Africa.

When Bessie Head arrived in Botswana in 1964, Serowe was stirring with an awakening political consciousness. Head's teaching contract was with Tshekedi Memorial School. The advertisement which she had responded to, had been part of a concerted drive on the part of the government to recruit teachers from elsewhere in an effort to improve the educational standards and combat the shortage of teachers in the protectorate [Eilersen 1995: 70].

As schools went, the Tshekedi Memorial School was one of the better ones, another indication of Tshekedi Khama's foresight and ambitions for his people. The buildings were reasonable but the equipment was poor. Bessie Head was to find that whether she had to teach her class about the structure of human skin or the tropical rain forests of Africa, she would have to rely on her own knowledge to do so as the school could not afford to buy books [Eilersen 1995: 70].

It was at this school that the various pressures building up against her finally exploded in October 1965. The cause appeared to have been a case of sexual harassment. The principal thought he could start to sleep with Head. When he did not succeed, he turned on Head, according to her and twisted her arm in front of the children. Whereupon, Head bit his arm to free herself and fled from the school screaming.

The headmaster sent for the police and encouraged them to declare that she had gone out of her mind. The situation became very tough for Head as she mentioned that:

Such tremendous pressure has built up against me in this little village and I shall get no help from the police if my life is in danger.... The authorities have made no bones about the fact that they don't want me here. I'm not exactly loved by the Batswanas here. I shouldn't really care, there is only a kind of rat race, royalty, society you can revolve in anyway [Eilersen 1995: 77].

Head refused to allow herself to be tested for insanity, as she regarded such a test as totally humiliating. She could not understand why the authorities should want to break her as she was anxious to leave the country and they would be rid of her. She also feared some damning certificate which would prevent her from being employed in any other African country.

At the end of December she received a notification from the Department of Education of Bamangwato Tribal Administration that she had been blacklisted from teaching for having deserted her post. On Christmas Eve 1965, Bessie Head wrote to Randolph Vigne and asked for her stories to be prepared for publication. Earlier in 1965, Bessie had written such short pieces as "*For Napoleon Bonaparte*", "*Jerry and Kate*", "*The Green Tree*", "*Summer Sun*", "*The Old woman*", "*Sorrow Food*" and "*The Woman from America*".

These and other descriptive articles, some to remain unpublished till long after her death, she had sent to Patrick Cullinan because she had no typewriter and Vigne was mandated to find a market for Head's stories in London [Eilersen 1975: 78]. The short story called "*The Green Tree*" was published for the first time in *Transition*, the East African journal. It published a Serowe piece in September 1964.

Another story from her early months in Serowe was published in *Transition* in the April/ May 1967 issue. Laced with irony and humour, *Sorrow Food* was the story of

Boshwa, a promising young politician, educated in New York before returning to Africa [Eilersen 1995: 80]. Bessie Head's attempts to find a scholarship were unsuccessful as she was unqualified for higher education courses, having only a junior certificate which was a prerequisite for coloured students to qualify for a teacher training course.

As such, her Teachers Diploma was inferior, and she was unqualified for a teaching post in England. So Head decided to write articles, novels and short stories for money. [Eilersen 1995: 84].

The conditions were against her but she took pride in her achievements:

The least I can ever say for myself is that I forcefully created for myself, under extremely hostile conditions, my ideal life. I took an obscure and almost unknown village in Southern African bush and made it my own world; I could dream dreams a little ahead of the somewhat vicious clamour of revolution and the horrible stench of evil social systems [1994: 125].

CHAPTER 3

3.1 THE ANALYSIS OF HEAD'S OEUVRE

This chapter reveals how Bessie Head portrayed women compared to her portrayal of men. Head's writings deal at great length with the problems of third world women - the rural women of Botswana. According to Johnson-Dim [1991: 315] the term third world is frequently applied to refer to under developed / over exploited geopolitical entities, namely countries, regions and even continents. Third world women seemed to have much in common with the international women's movement.

It is clear that sexual egalitarianism is a major goal on which all feminists agree, gender discrimination is the sole or perhaps the primary locus of the oppression of third world women. Thus a narrowly defined feminism, taking the eradication of gender discrimination as the route to ending women's oppression, is insufficient to redress the oppression of third world women [Odim1991: 315].

In reaction to this narrowly defined feminism, some third world women have elected not to use the term feminist at all. Alice Walker, an Afro - American woman writer, has chosen the use of the term "womanist" rather than feminist [Odim 1991:315]. Walker [1983], partially describes a womanist as a black feminist or feminist of color and said, "Womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender " She further stated that a womanist is committed to the survival and holistic condition of her entire people, male and female.

Walker's comment underscores the feeling amongst third world women that their struggle as feminists is connected to the struggles of their communities against racism and economic exploitation.

Odim [1991] mentioned that she is more concerned with the participation of third world women in defining feminism and setting its agenda, than with changing the terminology of feminism. The term 'feminism' sets her essay in a political context in which women are integral.

Bessie Head did not identify with third world feminists, but used both men and women characters in her texts and provided her women with solutions to the problems. She was concerned with both men and women for the well being of the society. According to Olausen [1997: 76], Head was caught in a dilemma when women's rights were confused with the rights of the individual, despite the fact that the oppression of women exists in all kinds of societies.

Head recognized those conflicts when she wrote in a letter as follows:

...that certain third world writers are transforming actual fictional forms to both reflect and to precipitate changes in the way, women do have a lot of problems these days. I worked on the problems a bit on the Serowe book but I am taking it up again in a bit more detail in the short stories.

They are very lovable but the men are horrible. I detest the loose sexuality the men have, the consistent betrayals.... and there is almost a complete break -down of a family life in Serowe [Olausen 1997: 76].

Angela Carter wrote:

The Black South African writer, Head, has utilized forms utterly alien to her own historical culture to produce complex illuminations of sexual and political struggle [Hecate 1976: 113].

For Hecate [1976: 115], Head described her upbringing and its results as follows:

On the other hand it was good to grow up outside an environmental control, it was good for my type of work and my type of

temperament and on the other hand as you get older, the loneliness takes a terrible toll on you. It is as though there should be some human there to compensate and some love you've given to life. Its like you've only given to life, and there is nobody to give you anything, you find inside you begins to run down like a clock. you begin to feel more and more drained" [Hecate 1976:115].

Bessie Head wrote all her novels and short stories as an outsider. She illustrated this in an interview when she mentioned that:

" Here in Botswana funeral going is a big thing. But you know...I have a terror that I would suddenly start laughing.... remembering something about the person who died -You have got to have a certain expression. Your face shouldn't be unnecessarily mobile or something. So, I generally live outside all the conventions. I don't go to church. But you get eventually being somebody so outside an environment outside properness if you aren't proper" [Hecate1976: 119].

In this scenario Head depicted that she was not totally involved in Tswana culture, yet she regarded Botswana as her adopted country as she was physically inside the country yet psychologically outside it. She was outside the conventions as well, and this is illustrated by her having failed to condition her mind to concentrate on the gloomy side of death as she created jokes about the deceased individual at funerals.

The Portrayal Of Woman In Traditional And Modern Life

Styles In The "COLLECTOR OF TREASURES " [1977]

The Collector of Treasures [1977] deals with the issues that emerged in Botswana village life: tribal history, the missionaries, religious conflicts, witchcraft, rising illegitimacy and throughout these issues are the problems encountered by women in the society. Each of the listed issues is central in a particular story, but the focus is on the hardship women of the village experience.

The short story "Life" is about a woman who migrated to Botswana from Johannesburg with new life styles. The setting of the story "Life" is in a village in Botswana, shortly before independence. Life, a young woman, after she grew up in Johannesburg, had to return to her Botswana village. She had earned a living in the city at various jobs, among others prostitution.

When, after some time, she started her prostitution business in the village she became the queen of the beer brewing women, who also did not live the traditional married life and had boyfriends, but were still subject to the respectable order of the village.

The protagonist in the short story "Life "[1977] was called "Life" because she brought life to a village in Botswana. Migration is important in this story because Life brought life to Botswana because she migrated from Johannesburg. According to Davies [1995: 2] the migration of many people from homelands for economic or political reasons creates conditions of exile that demands the creation of new communities with new relationships to these homelands. Both parents of Life died and, as a result, she was forced to return to the village.

For Davies [1995], home is often a place of exile for the women, as are sometimes the community and the nation. This idea is feasible due to the fact that Life was theoretically at home in her permanent village but, in reality, she was in exile because the rules and the regulations of the society restricted her.

For Obbo [1981:87], independent single women who rented rooms in rural centers, townships and towns were referred to as prostitutes and discriminated against in townships and towns. It cannot be denied that there are prostitutes in urban areas, but the indiscriminate labeling of urban woman as prostitutes reveals a double standard on the part of men who want to control their wives, sisters and daughters. This gives the impression that men manipulate the concept "prostitute", creating a stumbling block in order to keep women away from the urban areas. The fact that single women managed

to escape the rural life style reveals an innate capability and accountability in the economic sphere.

Life was a free and empowered woman, but Head introduced Lesego [one of the most honored and respected man in the village] to disempower her. According to Head [1989: 16], leadership and power have often been in the hands of men. That was why she mentioned that, "I love these big men. If I haven't got them, I create them" [16]. Lesego married Life with the intention of maintaining order in a corrupted village. This was witnessed by Lesego when he said, "I thought that if she was doing a bad thing with Radithobolo as Mathata said, I better kill her because I cannot understand a wife who could be so corrupt " [Head 1977: 46].

Lesego's attempts failed and Life tried every possible means to escape the cage in order to return to her basic life. Teresa Exert offers a summary of the ways that women's social subjectivity is produced in a patriarchal context, which is useful in reading the text of Life's life.

Ebert [1991], suggests that a woman can be read as a social subjectivity, produced by the economic, political and ideological practices influencing the signification around the dominance of the phallic signifier.

Bessie Head therefore, positioned Life as a figure who disrupted the very foundation on which patriarchal dominance depends. The issue of the definition of women in society has plagued feminist theorists for a long time. As a woman, Life encountered gender oppression in her marriage, for instance. Lesego took control of the money and Life was supposed to account for the money she wanted to use. This proved that she had no right to control the economy because she was the woman.

Head juxtaposed Life and Lesego with the intention of revealing how Lesego resisted multiculturalism. The protagonist [Life] represented the new culture of being a free woman, but there was no cultural tolerance in the village. The character of Life was in contrast to Lesego's character. For instance, Life was the singer, beauty queen,

advertising model and prostitute. The story ends with a popular tune of that time by Jim Reeves: "That's what Happens When Two Worlds Collide" [Head 1977: 46].

Tswana custom, tradition and community life were threatened and destroyed by modern City life ruled by commercial values. This was a central theme of the story, but there were various other themes such as gender relations, the question of exclusion in a society, community life and change, people's projections of each other, life and death.

The short story "Life" emphasized that women had no right to control the money in traditional society. In the short story, "The Special One" women were valued less than men were. This was evidenced by the character, Maleboge, in her confession that, "I lost it because women are just dogs in this society" [Head 1977: 81]. Maleboge lost her inheritance because according to her custom, she had no right to own property.

In the short story "The Special One", the integrity of the family was maintained by the society because Gaenametse was separated from her husband by the society before the divorce was granted. Gaenametse was regarded as a dirty woman because she made love even when she was in menstrual cycle. The society associated menstruation with bad luck, which resulted in the death of the husband if people were involved sexually at that stage.

Head juxtaposed Maleboge and Gaenametse in order to show how women responded to their life experiences. For instance, Maleboge and Gaenametse resorted to religion as their solution to change their lives. Head further juxtaposed the priest and Gaenametse in order to reveal the necessity for women to be regarded as living human beings who deserved emotional satisfaction.

The priest was against the primitive lifestyle, which favoured polygamy. Women wanted to be loved according to the modern life style, and, as Head commented:

As I walked on alone, I thought that the old days of polygamy are gone and done with, but the men haven't yet accepted that the women want them to be monogamists [1977: 86].

Head presented the biased community court in order to depict the manner in which women are presented in the court with male constituents. Both Gaenametse and Maleboge were found guilty of being women. In this scenario, Head demonstrates how women are exploited. This implied that the court was not dealing with individual cases, but with women's inferiority.

The short story "Hunting"[1977] reveals both the modern and the traditional life style as does "The Special One" [1977]. The short story " Hunting" is about the traditional life style, which is depicted by the hunting of animals while the modern life style is depicted by the tractor. Thato was one of the women in the village who was married with an illegitimate child. This also reveals an element of modern life, where men deceived women that sexual relationships lead to marriage, in order to seduce them. [1977: 106].

In the short story "Life" Head portrayed Life [the protagonist] as a sex worker who was involved with men for business. On the other hand, in "Hunting" men deceived women in order to get sex for free [1977:106].

In addition, when a woman had married the man, she had to submit herself to that man. The submission is demonstrated by the fact that Thato felt herself inadequate when listing marriageable attributes as she said that she had nothing to offer except ploughing. It goes without saying that Thato was making herself a permanent slave. During their leisure time, Thato sat on the ground while Tholo sat on the chair. The motive behind the seating arrangements was that women had a special place, which was always inferior to the superior place of men.

According to Bessie Head [1989: 15], in custom and tradition, black women have a heritage of oppression and traditionally, women were not allowed to talk to men while they were standing.

Head depicted women's dissatisfaction with being mere objects. Rapula's wife, Felicia, was against ploughing on the grounds that her husband had an excellent job. In spite of this, Rapula, with true patriarchal mentality, expected her to plough like all women in the community. Rapula resigned from his job in order to drive Felicia into the fields. The assumption is that Rapula took advantage since he paid the bride price and he felt he deserved traditional service.

According to Davies [1995 [a]: 9], black women only get heard by assertively transgressing the imposed boundaries. This they do by being insistent, supportive, by speaking constantly directly or indirectly, demanding a hearing and by challenging the pretended disabilities of hearing. In the short story, "Collector of Treasures", Dikeledi [the protagonist] killed her husband, a man who created misery and destruction in her life and in society.

Also in this short story, "The Collector of Treasures", Dikeledi, when in prison, met other women who had also killed their husbands. Bessie Head most strongly and explicitly denounces the oppressive situation of women in society. Extreme acts were justified on the grounds that women were so exposed to suffering, abuse, rape, harassment both physical and emotional, that when women took patriarchal authority into their own hands, it was understandable, as when Dikeledi imposed the punishment on her own [as judge, jury and executioner]. The emotional shift from "assertion" to "aggression" was also accompanied by a power shift. T030049



Lloyd W. Brown stated that:

Head raises questions about the nature of female self-awareness and the end for female self-help and inner strength that are fraught with implications for women everywhere... more explicit than most African women writers, she is speaking on behalf of and about the African women, while compelling our attention as a voice of all women. [Head 1989: 231].

According to Head [1989], all the traditional constraints and prejudices against women operate against Dikeledi and threaten to reverse the modicum of happiness that she has resourcefully gained for herself and her children. She sees no way out of the trap: she kills her husband by castrating him. In prison the victims [fellow convicted husband murderers] try to construct a life for themselves through mutual understanding and a sense of common purpose.

Garasego was bitterly jealous of the life Dikeledi shared with her neighbours. He decided to return home for a night in order to re-establish his territory. Head placed this issue in a specific socio-historical context and thereby politicized Dikeledi's dilemma. By insisting that Dikeledi's act should be seen not as an arbitrary act of retribution but as a socially determined act, she was making a political statement [Mackenzie 1989:40].

The assumption is that Bessie Head was revealing the power of women and their resistance to male domination, which prevent women from testing the fruit of liberty and power. Moreover, in the short story "Life", Head portrayed the protagonist as a sex worker. This implied that Life empowered herself as men had to pay for sex and became victims of their own weakness. She felt that she had the right to choose her life style irrespective of the opinions of her community and society.

In "Tales of Tenderness and Power" [1989], the short story "Property" revealed the clash between traditional and modern values. The modern values were represented by

Mbuya and his father. They were against the traditional arranged marriages and the subservience of women as represented by Mbuya's mother and his grandmother. Bessie Head portrayed Mbuya's grandmother as a woman who accepted the modern life style because she urged Mbuya's mother to educate Mbuya.

Bessie Head introduced Mbuya to city life in order to introduce the reader to the theme of migration and its importance in the adoption of the new lifestyle. Education taught Mbuya to be assertive. That was one of the reasons why Mbuya refused an arranged marriage because he knew that he had a right to choose his wife, not a "property". Education was a window through which Mbuya got access to the politics of the city.

In "Tales of Tenderness and Power" [1989] the characters in the short story "Property", challenged arranged marriages in the same manner as in "Lovers", where the protagonist Keaja broke all the taboos of traditional values. Traditionally, in Botswana, boys and girls are not allowed to mix, even eye contact is prohibited, but Keaja, "stared at Tselane directly in the eyes, all his movements were natural and unaffected" [1989: 85].

On the other hand Tselane did not reflect the social life of her community. She was supposed to be shy and reserved, but initiated a key conversation as follows, "Aren't you the son of Ra-keaja?" [1989: 85].

The conversation continued and Keaja disclosed that he disliked his parents because his father had stopped cohabiting with his wife [1989: 86]. This implied that Keaja had discovered his identity which was why he associated himself with his father. The spark of conflict was that Keaja knew that his mother favoured an arranged marriage because she was married under such a system.

In contrast Keaja's father was against the arranged marriage because he was forced by social laws to marry Keaja's mother. Keaja and his father were instrumental in introducing the new lifestyle where an individual was able to choose his or her loved one.

Keaja's protest against arranged marriages also influenced Tselane and she questioned Mma-Manosi about it. Head portrayed Mma-Manosi as a strong traditionalist. As a result she discouraged Tselane when she said:

Such things are never discussed here! What put that idea into your head because it is totally unknown to me? [1989: 90]

Tselane was not discouraged and she continued to discuss the issue with Keaja. Bessie Head portrayed Tselane's father as a tribalist because he was an assistant in a tribal court. Tselane chose Keaja for her own and became pregnant before marriage.

Bessie Head regarded arranged marriages as the main cause of women's suffering. Her writing reveals the necessity of monogamous marriages against the existing polygamous marriages as Head mentioned that:

A true man in this world did not listen to the opinion of woman, under polygamy women shared a husband with one or several other women [Mackenzie 1989:55].

Sociologically, home is a suitable place for socialization, yet most feminists realize that home is one of the principal sites of domination and conflict for women resisting specific identities. As such, Tselane left her community in order to free herself from traditional authority [Davies 1994: 49].

Modernism Versus Tradition In " *HEAVEN IS NOT CLOSED*" [1977]

This analysis is based on the effect of missionary teaching and on the traditional customs and values of the Botswana people, specifically those customs pertaining to women and their relationships with men. It also scrutinizes the contribution of the missionaries to the empowerment of African women.

In "Heaven is not closed " [1977] Bessie Head reveals the arrogance of the early missionaries and the pride of the indigenous people. Head depicts the "psychological dislocation " of Galethebeng because she had converted to Christianity but her roots were still in traditional religion.

This is verified by the fact that she failed to behave according to Christian ethics. According to Olausen [1997] "Heaven is not Closed" describes the recent history of a family and, by implication, that of the community.

The central issue of the story is the conflict between European Christianity and Setswana Custom. Galethebeng, a simple yet wise woman, adopted Christian beliefs and wished to get married in church. Her husband to be, Ralokae, is a firm traditionalist and rejected the Christianity that the missionaries brought to Botswana.

The people of the land were never exposed to or broken by the horror of white domination. Bessie Head depicted the psychological resistance of Ralokae, who was a strong supporter of traditional customs, to the power of the priest who represented Christianity.

The priest maintained that, " Heaven is closed for the unbelievers" [11]. Galethebeng and Ralokae fell in love but there were barriers between them. They belonged to different beliefs and, as a result, Galethebeng was compelled by the situation to compromise her beliefs by sliding back to traditional religion. She compromised because Ralokae refused to marry according to the christian values. Galethebeng appealed to the missionary for his blessing of the marriage.

The priest's response, "Heaven is closed for the unbeliever" devastated her. She and her family and friends all left the church in a silent statement of protest against the attitude of the missionary.

This was verified by the fact that she had a suitable place where she prayed, which symbolized modernism. On the other hand Galethebeng married according to the Setswana custom, which reflects her origin and indicates that she was psychologically located in her roots. Galethebeng sacrificed her happiness with the church in order to satisfy her desire to live with the man she loved.

The juxtaposition of the missionaries and the indigenous people caused psychological dislocation of the society. The missionaries convinced Khama the Great that, in order to dominate, he must control the great number of Christians in the society. The women appreciated Christian's teachings.

This is supported by the fact that Head put her hopes on Khama's transformation for the wellbeing of women. As Head commented:

When I think of Khama's conversion to Christianity and his imposition of it on the tribe as a whole - it more or less forced him to modify or abolish all the ancient customs of his people, thus stripping them of certain securities which tradition offered...People might have not realized this, and this might account for the almost complete breakdown of the family life in Bamangwato country, which under traditional custom was essential for the survival of the tribe [Serowe XIV - XV].

Head was aware of women's social life as she argued:

Black women have a certain history of oppression with African culture. Women always had a second position to men. In a society like Botswana, some of women's problems are due to their hereditary position of African culture and their society [Mackenzie 1989: 15].

The modifications to tribal law made by Khama were beneficial to women's social conditions as borne out by Head:

Khama the Great made many changes in connection with the position of women: In Bamangwato Khama abolished bogadi [the bride price].

Moreover he realized that women should be given a voice. Women were beaten or ill treated by their husbands, they could not come to the chief's court to lodge a complaint. When he abolished Bogadi for women, he then allowed them to come forth to the Kgotla before him to complain about ill treatment.

On the other hand women were not allowed to inherit wealth. But what was important was that he first gave women a feeling that they could talk for themselves, but it is a reflection of the degree to which African custom and tradition suppressed women. If beaten or ill – treated women approached an uncle as an intermediary but now the women no longer needed intermediaries [Head 1989: 16].

The situation of African women was thus improved but there was great distinction between Christians and non-Christians. The assumption was that the missionary was against the mixture of both religions, the traditional and christian religion. On the other hand Galethebeng tried to put those religions together. She intended to marry according to Setwana custom and further, went to the church. The priest revealed his power as a priest and the result that Galethebeng was excommunicated from the village church.

It is vital to note that the stories, "Special One", "The Collector of Treasures" and "Hunting " place special emphasis on the role of women in a situation where men have been progressively weakened by the colonial experience and women have had to take responsibility for themselves [Cox. vol.1 1997: 312].

The Discrimination Against Margaret As A Masarwa In “*MARU*” [1971]

The first phase of this analysis is characterized by the main theme, which is the discrimination against Margaret as a Masarwa. This theme portrays discrimination according to class and race, which is a central part of the novel. The second phase is characterized by the sub-theme, which is the discrimination against Margaret as a woman.

In this novel Head used the word "Maru" as the title of the novel and the name of the character. Maru belonged to the Royal family under the Batswana, who were the dominant and superior group in Botswana. Maru's rival was Moleka who also belonged to the Royal family. In contrast, Margaret belonged to the Masarwa race, which was considered inferior and marginalized.

Most of Bessie Head's novels play on the theme of migration and racism, and this includes *Maru* [1974] which contains elements of Head's biography. In this novel Head moves beyond the boundaries created by people to hinder human movement, the boundaries of race, class and historical background.

According to Mackenzie, Head emphasized that:

Maru definitely tackles the question of racialism because the language used to exploit Basarwa people, the methods used to exploit them, the juxtaposition between White and Black in South Africa, and Black and Batswana in Botswana is so exact [1989 [b] : 11].

In *Maru*, Head introduces three migrations undertaken by Maru and Margaret. Margaret migrated to the Batswana community from the Masarwa community in Botswana. She was dehumanized to such an extent that even her class wondered, "Since when is a Bushy a teacher" [45]. In this scenario Margaret's class revealed the fact that Margaret and her class were from different races.

Head depicted Margaret as a passive character, who endured suffering and pain with an intention to prove to the Batswana that even a "Bushy" could enter closed doors. That gave an impression that both Maru and Margaret belonged to different worlds, which were dismantled by the union of two pure souls, Maru and Moleka, who defied the prejudiced world and opened to a new world of true racial equality.

Head juxtaposed Moleka and Maru because they were from the same race, social and cultural stratum, but Maru crossed the boundaries with an intention to honor the Masarwa community, because he saw the natural beauty of a Masarwa woman outside his racial territory.

Mackenzie verified this:

Margaret's journey from alienation to wholeness is a passage from her racially ascribed identity to her true inner identity, Head's contention is that socially ascribed identities are false, degrading to the inner person [1989 [b]: 26-27].

To support Mackenzie the reader needs to consider the fact that social positions are divided into two parts, an achieved status and an ascribed status. For instance, both Maru and Moleka had an ascribed status because they were hereditary chiefs. In contrast, Margaret had achieved status, which Head referred to as degrading and false.

Granted the fact that Margaret migrated from her birthplace, it went without saying that she acquired all the European survival skills, because she was under the supervision of a European woman. She attended school with people outside her race. Despite her achievements Margaret was still marginalized.

In this context Bessie Head showed that ascribed identities were degrading because they did not reflect the true inner person and they did not give the outcasts an opportunity to reveal their capabilities. For instance, it was generalized that Margaret was unfit for the teaching post because she was a Masarwa.

One of the novel's strengths is its striking depiction of the hurt caused by racism at a personal level, but Head also places the racism experienced by the Basarwa within a broader content:

Before the white man became universally disliked for his mental outlook, racism was there. The white man found only too many people who looked different. It was all that outraged the receivers of his discrimination, that he applied the technique of the wild jiggling dance to anyone who was not a white man.

And if a white man thought that Asians were a low, filthy nation, Asians could still smile with relief, at least, they were not Africans. And if the white man thought Africans were a low filthy nation, Africans in southern Africa could still smile, at least they were not Bushmen.....[1971:11].

Maru who migrated from Botswana to the Masarwa community, undertook the second migration. Maru took a physical journey to the Masarwa community because he fell in love with Margaret. Head portrayed Maru as an assertivist because he knew both his rights and the rights of the Masarwa. Head highlighted the fact that people moved from one place to another in search of light and civilization.

Maru undertook the road to his peace of mind rather than the road to fame, giving-up the role of chieftain. Mackenzie regarded that migration as:

The journey of the soul. Man's quest is to attain the realm of the inner self, the being in touch with the secret pulse of the universe. He moved from the alienation of his tribal, exterior identity as a king of heaven [Mackenzie 1989[b]: 35].

Mackenzie further argued:

Maru is offered in one level as a way to end racial antagonism: there is a real sense that Head is concerned to engage with the real world, institute change, put an end to prejudice and reactionary codes of behavior, establish genuine equality between the races and the sexes [1989: 27].

Bessie Head was interested in the way in which the Batswana talk of the Masarwa. She listened attentively to comments such as, " they don't think, " "they don't know anything". Through that research, Head had the insight and advantages necessary to work right at the roots of racial hatred.

Head assumed that exploitation and evil emanated from the lack of communication between the oppressor and the people who were oppressed. The third migration undertaken by the Masarwa community was regarded as a psychological migration, because the mentality of the Masarwa assumed that if they migrated from the marginalized phase, they would reach a phase where they could regard themselves as recognized people.

Rosebotsa [1993] views the novel's "largely optimistic ending" as a sign of Head's idealism in the face of the real social problems facing Botswana [35]. Daymond on the other hand, points to the problematic aspects of the novel's ending when she notes that Margaret's marriage to Maru is virtually an abduction and so she is denied the very freedom of choice which the creation of new worlds seeks to provide [1996: 248].

Although Margaret, Maru and his followers left the village, the fact of marriage between a Masarwa woman and a man who otherwise would have been paramount chief, permanently changed the perceptions of the Masarwa left behind.

Despite the ironies of an image of imprisonment as a vehicle for liberation, the novel's closing paragraphs emphasise the importance of this symbolic marriage for other Basarwa, who have incidentally been virtually absent until this point in the novel. When people of the Masarwa tribe heard about Maru's marriage to one of their own:

A door silently opened on the small, dark airless room in which their soul had been shut for a long time. The wind of freedom, which was blowing throughout the world for all people, turned and flowed into the room.

As they breathed in the fresh, clear air, their humanity awakened [1971:126].

Discrimination Against Margaret As A Woman

The novel is about a Masarwa woman, who grew up as an orphan. Margaret Cadmore, the Masarwa woman's teacher, honoured the Masarwa women by calling her by both her surname and name. She was a white woman from England. Although the Masarwa woman was called Margaret Cadmore, her race did not change because she was Marsawa by virtue of birth. Margaret grows up free of any racist feeling, in spite of being adopted into an environment where racist colonial attitudes are not entirely absent, and the missionaries did not often like you to walk into their yards and prefer to walk outside the fence

[Head 1971:12].

Margaret herself, while protected and provided with Western education and material comforts by the white woman, is never allowed to belong completely:

The relationship between her and woman was never that of a child and its mother. It was as though later she was a semi-servant in the house, yet at the same time treated as an equal, by being given things servant don't usually get...There was nothing she could ask for, only take what was given, aware that she was there for a special purpose because now and then the woman would say "One day, you will help your people" [1971: 16-17].

Margaret migrated to Dipele to seek a job where she found three friends Moleka [whom she desired to marry], Dikeledi [Maru's sister] and Maru [Dikeledi's brother] whom she finally did marry. The arrival of Margaret in Dipele changed Moleka and Maru's mentality about the Marsawa society and the Masarwa women.

The conflict within the novel is caused by the fact that Maru and Moleka wanted to prove that they know their identity, that they were both men and, as such, they had phallic power. This is demonstrated by the following passage:

People said: Oh Moleka and Maru always fall in love with the same girl . But they never knew that no experiences interrupted the river and permanent flow of their deep affection. It was Moleka, so involved in this river, which never had time to notice the strange and unpredictable evolution of his friend [1971: 33].

In this passage, Head introduces the reader to the main cause of conflict between Maru and Moleka. 'Usually, they fell in love with the same girl.' Head included this element deliberately in order to reveal their phallogocentric power. In the novel it is mentioned that Moleka was the first to 'lay the groundwork' and 'break the clouds' in his proposal to Margaret.

Head associated Margaret with the "river" which represented nature. She further used the word "evolution" to indicate the slow pace taken by Maru to change from being evolutionary to revolutionary about the Marsawa society. Prior to revolution, Maru used to complain to Moleka that:

People who had nothing were savagely greedy. It was like eating endlessly. Even if they ate all food they were still starving, they never turn into queens [1971: 34]

These words were direct from the outer Maru and his earthly position of future paramount chief of a tribe. Maru marginalized all the women who fell in love with him because he regarded himself as the one who ruled his kingdom. This is demonstrated by:

" It never went far because it always turned out that Miss so and so had no kingdom of her own " [1971:34].

Head further indicated to the reader that Margaret, as a woman, was nervous when she was in the company of men.

This point is revealed by:

She looked at the shop longingly. She would have liked to walk in and buy food but she had never done anything as bold in her life [1971: 22].

Margaret was hungry, but she hardly mentioned that to the truck driver, until the driver realised that she might be hungry. Margaret kept silent and avoided giving opinions of her own.

Her feelings were summed-up by:

There was a strong feeling in her towards the man, [the truck driver] as though she was ashamed of him [1971:30].

Margaret was not attracted to the truck driver which was why she had this strange feeling. In contrast, she was attracted to Moleka the first day she met him. She did not tell him that she loved him. She suppressed her feelings as a woman. Margaret maintained moral standards, but deep down in her heart, she was waiting for an opportunity, which did not come. Dikeledi got an opportunity and grabbed it.

One way of looking at Margaret's fear is to associate it with an immigrant's fear, the fear of a disoriented individual who left the place where they were born, its language and its people, in order to enter a foreign country alone. Apart from Margaret, there is a sense that women are immigrants for most of their lives.

This is verified by the fact that as Margaret moved towards maturity, she left her adoptive mother [Margaret Cadmore], who had prepared her for the realities of her grown - up life. She entered a world in which both Maru and Moleka regarded her and allowed her to be a woman. Men's presence in Head's novels reflected and challenge men's presence in women's lives.

In Dipele, Margaret was discriminated against both as a woman and as a Masarwa woman. This was proved by the fact that Pete, Seth, and Morafi were against her and took advantage because they thought that she would be easily defeated because she was a woman. Pete emphasized that: "She can be shoved out. It's easy. She is a woman".

The setting of Maru is on the outskirts of the city. The opening lines in page one give an indication of outskirts life: "The rains were so late that year ". This gives an impression that the place was away from the City. As such people noted the late and the early coming of the rain.

They were attentive to the rains as they were dependent on subsistence farming. In the novel it is mentioned that:

Like one accustomed to living in harmony with the earth, the man had continued to prepare his fields for the seasonal ploughing [1971: 1].

The setting shifts from the outskirts to the city because the heroine [Margaret] migrated from her birthplace (the outskirts) to the city of Dipele, where she got the teaching post. In the novel it is presented as follows:

Four months later, she was appointed to her first teaching post in a remote inland village, named Dipele [1971:21]

The heroine migrated again away from Dipele with Maru which was where their marriage took place. The people of Dipele had labeled Margaret a " diseased prostitute " because their society did not accommodate the Masarwa class in the Dipele hierarchy. On the other hand the indigenous Masarwa welcomed Maru into their society. The Dipele community regarded Maru as diseased because he broke the laws of the society. The assumption is that Maru seduced Margaret because her heart was with Moleka.

This assumption is supported by her words when she said:

"I am composing this for Moleka , "she told herself well knowing that the day would never arrive when she would be able to approach him with a gift or thank him for removing the loneliness from her heart [1971: 112].

Bessie Head defended her (Margaret's) feelings, not just for the sake of the heroine's sexual life, but because she saw feelings as the necessary instrument of female liberation. In this situation, the heroine's aspirations failed because at the end Margaret did not escape Maru's attentions in order to marry Moleka, her first choice. Maru seduced Margaret and removed her choices, it was a matter of she must marry him.

Maru arranged the marriage between Moleka and Dikeledi, because he was aware of the fact that Moleka was planning to propose to Margaret, while he was having an affair with Dikeledi (Maru's sister). Moreover, Moleka told Maru that he had spent the night with his sister in order to hurt her [p.85]. As a brother, Maru ensured that his sister married Moleka solely because he broke her virginity. Maru rescued his sister from the trap of being rejected as Moleka usually dumped his mistresses.

Moleka was regarded as an expert in relationships with women as demonstrated by the fact that:

There was nothing Moleka did not know about the female anatomy. It made him arrogant and there was nothing Moleka did not know about violence. There was no woman who could resist the impact of his permanently boiling bloodstream [1971: 35].

Dikeledi's virginity was an asset to be handed over to Moleka as a financially and socially suitable wife. As it was stated in the novel:

He lived a spendthrift millionaire. There was something about him that made people turn their heads and say: "Ah there's Moleka" when he walked into a room. He took this physical fascination and traded it for success with women [1971: 33].

Dikeledi encouraged Maru to love Margaret, which was proved by the fact that:

When Dikeledi tentatively offered the canvas to Maru, he stared at it coldly for some time and said, " No, you keep it. I don't like it". [1971:116].

On the other hand Moleka adored the canvas to such an extent that he came home each night especially to look at the canvas. These were the symptoms that Dikeledi's marriage might be unsuccessful. Dikeledi took action against Margaret in order to secure her relationship with Moleka.

Margaret can be regarded as a heroine because she led her society out of discrimination. Even the laws of the society were changed through the activities of this marginalised woman. Any discrimination against the Marsawa was handled accordingly.

How Makhaya And Gilbert Liberated Woman In Botswana In “*WHEN RAIN CLOUDS GATHER* “[1969]

When Rain Clouds Gather [1969] is about the liberation of women from the bondage of traditional society. The main liberator is Makhaya Maseko, who migrated from South Africa. Makhaya was also against the apartheid regime and he decided to start a new life in Botswana. Apart from Makhaya there was Mma-millipe who was also a migrant, Paul Sebina from the surrounding village, and Gilbert who was an immigrant from England. Head introduced indigenous people such as Mantenge, Dinorego, Chief Sekote Maria and Joas Tsepe. Mantenge and Tsepe were against the immigrants.

The conflict within the novel was caused by the fact that Head juxtaposed the immigrants and the indigenous people. The immigrants were not concerned about the politics of the country, but with the transformation of the society in different spheres such as education, health, economic improvement and women empowerment. On the other hand Mantenge and Tsepe were concerned about the politics and were tribalists.

Head revealed that Makhaya was a man who had migrated from his country because he hated tribalism. He was educated and looked at things differently. As Dinorego mentioned, "It's only education that turns a man away from his tribe" [1969:9].

Head used Makhaya to reveal that women had sexual desires. Makhaya was embarrassed to "find the child looking at him with a full bold stare" [13]. It was worse when the child further harassed him. Makhaya realized that the child was after money.

Makhaya, as a dignified man, distanced himself from child abuse and gave money to the child without intercourse. He further advised the child as an adult. The old woman did not believe that Makhaya had refused to sleep with her grandchild, as it was the case with most men. The old woman enquired:

"You mean he gave you the money for nothing?" she said, beside herself with excitement." This is a miracle! I have not yet known a man who did not regard women as a gift from God! He must be mad! Let us lock the door to protect ourselves from the mad man"! [1969: 15].

Makhaya began to honour women at his own home after the death of his father, and taught his sisters to address him by his first name. As Makhaya's mother commented:

" Why should men be brought up with the false sense of superiority over women? " [1969:16]

That was one of the reasons why Makhaya honoured women, he was influenced by his mother's opinions. In Gomela, Mmidi Makhaya met Dinorego and Dinorego was attracted and spoke to herself as follows:

The young man was very attractive, and he had a difficult daughter whom he wanted married before he died [1969: 20].

That gave the impression that Makhaya was handsome and, as a result, both men and women failed to resist their desires. That was verified by the fact that Maria, [Dinorego's daughter] was attracted by Makhaya even though she had an ongoing affair with Gilbert which had already lasted for three years. Makhaya's arrival made Maria reluctant to go to the farm for her lectures in English.

Maria's absences made Gilbert suspect that Makhaya might fall in love with Maria. This resulted in an inferiority complex as he mentioned that: "I hope you don't love Maria too" [1969: 84]. Prior to those words the situation was tense as Maria attracted Makhaya when he saw her for the first time.

Bessie Head introduces Paulina Sebina, as a woman who loved Makhaya without reservation. She felt herself to be the best woman among the women in the village, but she feared Maria because she thought that Maria might attract Makhaya. Head presented Gilbert as the mediator because he resolved the conflict by confronting Dinorego about Maria [his daughter].

Dinorego approved the marriage because Gilbert was as familiar to him as Makhaya, yet deep down in his heart he knew that he would have loved it if his daughter had married Makhaya.

The marriage between Maria and Gilbert paved the way for Paulina to avail herself of Makhaya without hesitation. Paulina initiated the relationship as follows: "She send the greeting to Makhaya through her child " [1969: 78].

The response was contrary to what Paulina expected. Makhaya protested as follows: "Go and tell your mother I don't know her " [77]. Those words sounded embarrassing to Paulina and as a result she visited Mma-millipede. Generally, women always relied on and depended on each other emotionally. Women told their friends about the problems they had with their kids, husband, their mothers and their in-laws.

Paulina told Mma-millipede that she loved Makhaya but she was disappointed by the feedback from her child. Mma-millipede consoled her, as she noted that:

The women of his country might have an entirely different approach when they wish to arouse the interest of a man [1969: 79]

Gilbert arranged his marriage with Maria. Paulina was ashamed yet joyful that this stumbling block had been removed. Head revealed Paulina's internal conflict during the marriage preparations. All women were happy about the event, but Paulina had an argument within herself about how to disclose the secret to Makhaya. As a result she did not involve herself with the gossip about whether Makhaya was married because it was a sensitive issue on her side.

As a result she was ruled by her emotions and displayed jealousy when Grace Sebina mentioned that she had eyes to see that Makhaya was handsome. Paulina responded rudely as follows:

" If your eyes chase all the men, Grace Sebina," She said crisply, " please don't put them on me "[92]. All other women stared at each other in shock. It was not polite to call a prostitute a prostitute in black and white terms [1969: 92].

This emotional outburst revealed that Paulina was absent minded even while she was trying to concentrate on her problem. Paulina migrated to Gomela Mmidi to escape discrimination by her husband's company, which confiscated all her property, after the death of her husband.

Paulina was underestimated as a woman because the company did not follow the court procedure. Paulina intended to start a new life in Gomela Mmidi with a special place for her new loved one. Paulina's dream became fulfilled when Makhaya changed his mind and introduced himself to Paulina. However, she was confused because he called her his wife before the formal proposal.

Makhaya expressed this as follows:

“ Could you please take my wife home and notify the police at the same time, I'll remain behind ” [1969: 162].

Those words gave hope to Paulina when she heard them for the first time. She talked to herself as follows:

“ You may see no rivers on the ground but we keep the rivers inside us. That is why all good things and all good people are called rain. Some times we see the rain clouds gather even though not a cloud appears in the sky, it is all in our hearts.” [1969:168].

Makhaya called Paulina his wife but in the end he rectified that mistake when he proposed:

“So much had happened so quickly” he said. “I forgot to ask you if you'd like to marry me. Will you Paulie ? ” [1969:188]

Makhaya changed women's lives in Gomela Mmidi. There was the division in roles, both men and women were conscious about role conflict. That was evidenced by the fact that men were not allowed to make the fire, because it was regarded as women's work, as Paulina put it:

" Don't touch the fire it's women's work " [139].

Makhaya was against that division when he said:

Its time you learned that men live on this earth too. If I want to make tea, I'll make it, and if I want to sweep the floor, I'll sweep it [1969:139].

Makhaya's actions were due to the fact that he wanted both men and women to be equal. As such, Head created Makhaya as a hero who dedicated himself to the liberation of women's minds from the chains of tradition. As Aidoo said: "being a woman is a position often defined in relation to serving the male" [Davies 1994: 68].

On the other hand Paulina supported the idea of a division of roles. It was good for the ancestors to design the work for women and the work for men. Aidoo argued that:

Women come to occupy the position in society in which male identity is installed in [Davies 1994: 68].

Paulina revealed that she was ignorant of her rights as a woman. When Paulina gave Makhaya a cup of tea, Makhaya thanked her politely. Paulina commented that it was her duty to make tea as a woman and there was no need for Makhaya to thank her. In this scenario both Makhaya and Paulina looked at things differently.

Makhaya made it clear that there was no such thing as being "used". Makhaya gave the impression that most men undermined their women because they were used to them as Paulina mentioned:

"You must not say thank you once you are used to a person " [1969: 140].

Head intended the title of the novel *When Rain Clouds Gather* [1969] to be metaphorical. That was verified by the fact that there were no clouds in the sky literally. Figuratively speaking, the clouds were gathered in Paulina's heart. Paulina struggled by every possible means to reveal that she loved Makhaya.

Head revealed Paulina as an independent woman. This was verified by her strong words when she mentioned:

We who are here are the bravest; we are the only women who have smoked cigarettes and drink beer. That is why whatever we do the other women also do, though they are afraid to smoke and drink because they will be beaten by their husbands [1969: 116].

That gave an impression that Pauline and other single women were the role models in Gomela Mmidi. These women were not afraid of men except those who still maintained their relationships. The setting for this novel was on the outskirts of a city. Different actions took place in various areas such as Gomela Mmidi where there was the Agricultural project, Boding where Chief Sekote resided and in the cattle post.

The setting in connection with Paulina took place in the village where Paulina was traditionally 'female' because she was not working but was an ordinary house wife, who knew that her place was in the kitchen.

Paulina's husband was the only person working for the nearby company. Paulina's husband committed suicide because the court found him guilty. Phase two of Paulina's life took place in Gomela Mmidi where Paulina was involved in the community project which taught women how to plough using modern methods such as crop rotation and the application of fertilizer. The project was under the supervision of both Gilbert and Makhaya.

The immigrants such as Makhaya from South Africa brought new ideas to Gomela Mmidi, both men and women migrated to Gomela Mmidi with new ideas of modernism. Dinorego played an important part by accepting new ideas for the well being of the society.

Head introduced Chief Sekote as the umbrella of Gomela Mmidi. As such, he was positive about the transformation. It was easy because he had modern trappings, such as fast cars, good food and pretty girls. Sekote's family protested against the sexual mores of a society that overlooked promiscuity in men but severely punished women for any breach of chastity.

That was revealed by:

The chief's eldest son drove up to the mansion and bundled the concubine roughly into a car and sped with her out of the village to some unknown destination. Not only that, the fool-hardy young man had an intense, upright character and quarreled violently with his amiable father and walked out of the house forever. [1969: 50].

The son retreated because he moved out of the house and his father was left behind to maintain his phallogocentric power. The son, as the chief's rival, assisted his mother in removing the concubine. The son sympathized with his mother who was not allowed to reside in the mansion with the chief because it was kept for the concubines. [1969: 50].

The relationship between Mantenge and Chief Sekote revealed a rivalry for power. The point that according to chief Sekote, it was good if the immigrants came to Gomela Mmidi. On the other hand Mantenge as an administrator was afraid that Gilbert's pseudo administration put his power in jeopardy.

Head juxtaposed Ramogodi and Mma-Millipede in order to reveal them as power maniacs. Ramogodi and Mma-Millipede were from two different worlds, the heavenly world and earthly world. Moreover, their marriage was arranged because Mma-Millipede had a strong personality shaped by religious values. Ramogodi was not actually in love with Mma-Millipede and was considered sexually attractive to women.

That was verified by the fact that:

There were few women in the village who had not been his bedmate at some time or other [1969: 68].

Mma-Millipede's marriage was destroyed by Ramogodi. He proposed to his brother's wife, causing his brother to commit suicide. Ramogodi divorced Mma-Millipede.

In this predicament, Head depicted that, to win the fight depended on the survival of the fittest, the weakest always retreated like Ramogodi's brother.

How Elizabeth As A Woman Resisted Powerlessness In "*A QUESTION OF POWER*" [1974]

This novel looks at how Bessie Head portrayed Elizabeth against the rivals Dan and Sello. Furthermore it looks at how Elizabeth managed to escape the evils of the "power-maniacs". This novel is based on "power" or rather it is a question of who is powerful and who is powerless. As such the definition of the concept 'power' is vital, as it is the dominant concept in the novel.

According to Haralambos [1990:117], power refers to the ability of individuals and groups to realize their will in human affairs, even against the will of others. As such it provides answers to the question whose interests will be served and whose values will reign. Power affects the ability to make the world work on our behalf. An example of power would be to gain mastery of crucial resources and interpose oneself between people and the means whereby people meet their biological, psychological and social needs. To the extent to which some groups' command rewards, punishment and persuasive communication, they are able to dictate their terms by which the game of life is played.

In the social context, Elizabeth's "power" was seen as destructive on the grounds that her birth was unacceptable. Power-maniacs such as those in the welfare committee denied her the right to exist. As a result she was alienated. This was revealed by the fact that the woman in the committee inquired:

" What can we do with this child. It's mother is white"
[1974: 17].

The woman in the committee referred to Elizabeth as "it", that showed dehumanization because her mother fell in love with a stable boy. As a result Elizabeth was given to another woman to look after her, because that woman was part-African, part-English like Elizabeth [1974: 15].

It is important to consider that Elizabeth's alienation introduced the notion of race in the novel:

The term racial group is reserved for those minorities set apart from others by obvious physical differences. Each society determines which differences are important while ignoring other characteristics that would serve as a basis for social differentiation like skin or color. [Haralambos 1990: 14].

Dan revealed racism when he introduced Elizabeth to a girl and commented:

She had her hair done up in the traditional style. I like girls like this, with that kind of hair. Your hair is not properly African [1974:127].

Elizabeth was hurt and discriminated against because she associated herself with Africans in order to gain an identity. Elizabeth's inferiority was concisely expressed in the following passage:

He pressed several buttons at the same time. You are supposed to feel jealous, you are inferior as a colored. You haven't got what that girl got. The record went around in her heart the whole day [1974: 127].

Obviously, Elizabeth was powerless and passive and was the focus of all evils. It was made worse because she was a woman. Generally, questions about life are of concern to oppressed individuals. In response, Elizabeth associated herself with the Indian philosophy. In a real life situation one chooses a suitable doctrine to deal with unfavorable conditions such as alienation, deprivation, dehumanization, poverty, sexism and discrimination. Elizabeth chose the Indian philosophy as her doctrine.

Marx argued:

Religion is the sight of the oppressed culture, the sentiment of the heartless world and soul of soulless conditions
[Haralambos 1990 : 460].

In the novel, the power of Buddhism provided the answer to the questions why men were superior compared to women: And why were women passive? Those questions introduced the cause of suffering. Dan had the destructive power, for Dan no one else existed except him.

Generally, power went hand in hand with prestige, which referred to social respect, admiration and recognition. Dan had a feeling that he was admired and thought well of by both Elizabeth and Sello.

To determined Elizabeth's sense of herself as a woman, Sello uses Medusa and Dan uses his seventy-one nice-time girls [Abrahams 1990: 127].

In this predicament Head revealed her concern about excessive sexism in society. That was proved by Bazin when she mentioned that:

Bessie Head chose to focus on sexism rather than racism in "A Question of Power". This forces her African readers, more familiar with racism to see the similarities between the two and their common roots in the philosophy of domination. Men degrade, manipulate and abuse women in Elizabeth's nightmare, basically because they fail to perceive sacredness in them [Abrahams 1990: 56].

The cessation of suffering is brought about through self-discipline. In the novel that was the characteristic of Sello. The sources of power are fully explored in the novel '*A Question of Power*'. Here parallels between the protagonist and the writer include their mutual South African "Coloured" origins, their attempts to form a new beginning in Botswana and more significantly, their temporary breakdown as a result of the mental stresses of exile and loneliness.

Granted in the novel that:

Elizabeth's colleagues really disliked and preferred to have nothing to do with her as a result, she lost the job through the power of Sello which was fueled by the educational board, the Principal and the staff. Both the Principal and the staff did not visit Elizabeth in hospital. Generally, to side with a colleague in misfortune, showed support[Head 1974 : 44]

Elizabeth did not deserve that courtesy because she was an outsider. The medusa who haunted Elizabeth's mind flaunts her sexual prowess and attacks her victim by reducing her to sexlessness [Head 1974 :44]. In her mad, nightmare world, Elizabeth struggled against and escaped patriarchal efforts to manipulate her spiritual and sexual being. She was able to regain her sanity only by recognizing that she did not need to respond passively to those who wish to dominate her.

As Davidson [1990] argued:

Elizabeth's final state of complete integration synthesizes an internal and external labor. Her success in the vegetable garden is the external symbol of her creative act of regaining a foothold on life. Elizabeth's early act of renaming Motabeng - which traditionally means "The place of sand", The village of Rain wind signals her fundamentally positive out look.

This mental act of renaming is transferred into physical action when Elizabeth, with the help of Kenosi, Tom and Eugene, slowly build up her garden in the local industry project. Through this external labor, she takes her claim as an active inhabitant of Motabeng and decisively throws off her marginalized status. Elizabeth's madness therefore, acts as metaphoric period of gestation out of which she emerges reborn [Abrahams 1990: 25].

Economically, Botswana was an under developed country. Elizabeth and the University Agricultural Graduates played a prominent part in improving the country's economy. Elizabeth's power after rebirth is to improve the economy in Botswana, which is associated with the Reconstruction and Development Programme. The garden in the valley was prosperous. The Cape Gooseberry made a good harvest to such an extent that Elizabeth "sold all the fruit to the teacher's wives of Motabeng Secondary School" [Head 1974 :152].

Elizabeth realized that women must work collectively. Elizabeth was restored to mental health by working in a vegetable garden with the uneducated hardworking Kenosi. Elizabeth revealed her capacity by introducing products such as jam from the Cape Gooseberry, with the intention of uplifting local industries in Botswana, which had been affected by the drought. As the middle class rejected Elizabeth, she managed to work with the working class. Elizabeth did the great task for the good of Motabeng society.

As a humble woman, she had constructive power, which demanded no pride, prestige or egoism, but only dedication for the benefit of the Motabeng society. For Davidson, Elizabeth was conditioned and victimized by the social and familial environment. Torn between two cultures, she existed metaphorically as a woman of the penumbra for whom marginalization is prescribed [Abrahams 1990: 20].

Khama III And The Emancipation Of Women In “A BEWITCHED CROSSROAD” [1984]

A Bewitched Crossroad [1984] deals with the history of the Sebina Clan and the Bamangwato Tribe. According to Olausen [1998 : 18] *A Bewitched Crossroad* is a much more ambitious project, however and this is evident in its bold mingling of facts and fiction. For this history was not intended by the author to be a standard history of Southern Africa. It recounts the wandering of Chief Sebina and his Clan from the beginning of the nineteenth century and it ends with the Clan as part of Khama's empire in what was then the British Bechuana Protectorate.

In the arid region to the west of the Transvaal Republic, a leader of the Bamangwato emerged in 1875 after fifteen years of internal struggle. He shone as a Christian convert, a man of upright character and a zealous reformer. His name was Khama III. Soon John Mackenzie, the missionary from the London Missionary society established at Khama's capital, Shoshong, was extolling his praise in letters and published journals.

Khama's image, as recorded by Mackenzie, permanently froze him into perfection, an enlightened leader, a man of integrity and a great Christian. It created a pause in the activities of the Europeans who were eyeing the African landscape, noting its natural resources and knowing it could be theirs [Eilersen 1995: 262].

Christianity played a prominent part in the liberation of women in particular, because the order to spread Christianity was vertical which implied that the order was from Khama himself and was spread downward to grassroot level. There was a conflict between traditional customs and Christianity. The new religion abolished the bride price. This split the community into two parts, those who favoured the old religion and those who favoured the new religion.

Khama was among those who favoured christianity, this was verified by the fact that he convened the meeting and arranged his argument against Bogadi. He concentrated on the degree to which Bogadi suppressed women in the society as follows :

This kgotla is a place where only a man's voice is heard. Women's voice is never heard here unless she asks a man to appeal on her behalf. These things are happening in our society in spite of the fact that the missionaries have taught us that our wives are our equals. I now say to you: Let this kgotla be a place where a women's voice is heard. Let this kgotla be a place where women may initiate a case on her own so that ill- treatment by a husband may become a thing of the past. In times past, divorce for adultery was a right enjoyed by men alone. Let our women put down the burden of bogadi which they have borne all these years and this right too [Head 1984: 170].

Moreover, the Chief provided women with economic independence because most women were divorced when their men became Christians converts. The Chief further mentioned that:

“ It is said of women that from birth to marriage they are the property of their fathers and from marriage to death they are the property of their husbands. Unlike their brothers in the male line they can not inherit cattle wealth from a father. They are dependent on a husband or other male members of their families for all their needs. I would say to you now. Let our women be granted the right to inherit cattle wealth both from the father or husband” [Head 1984: 170].

Khama's kgotla was successful, because all his people took women's issues into consideration although there was opposition from people such as Maruapula, who followed certain derogatory beliefs about women in the society. As the proverb said, a woman is a little dog [to be fondled and kicked]. To listen to the advice of a woman was like listening to the advice of a child [Head 1984: 171].

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, Head's texts have been shown to firmly support feminism. The theory of Feminism, the theory of Migration and the theory of Psychoanalysis have been useful in analyzing Head's texts. It has also been demonstrated in this thesis that Head's characters support Feminist positions. For instance, characters such as Elizabeth in *A Question of Power*, Makhaya and Gilbert in *When Rain Clouds Gather*, Margaret in *Maru* and Khama III in *A Bewitched Crossroad*.

The following short stories from *The Collector of Treasures* also support the Feminist view: "Life", "The Collector of Treasures", "Heaven is not Closed", "Hunting" and "The Special One". In *Tales of Tenderness and Power* the short stories "The Property" and "Lovers" also support the Feminist view.

In the light of the above, it is clear that Head's texts have been successfully analyzed through feminist theory as not much had been done through careful theoretical analysis of Head's work from a feminist perspective. It is important to note the fact that Head used both men and women in her texts to show their support of feminism.

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