MADNESS AND VIOLENCE IN THE WORKS OF BESSIE HEAD: A CRITICAL EVALUATION

BY

KOFOWOROLA, KAYODE GBOYEGA

B. A. (Hons) A. B. U.

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR

THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS IN LITERATURE

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

FACULTY OF ARTS

AHMADU BELLO UNIVERSITY

ZARIA

JANUARY, 19 9 8

DECLARATION

I declare that this study is an original work of research by me. It has not been presented before partially or wholly for any higher degree in any other University. All borrowed material has been acknowledged and distinguished by quotation marks and footnotes.

Kayode Gboyega, KOFOWOROLA

September, 1997.

CERTIFICATION

This thesis entitled "Madness and Violence in the novels of Bessie Head: A Critical Evaluation" by Kayode Gboyega Kofoworola meets the regulations governing the award of the degree of Master of Arts in literature of the Ahmadu Bello University, and is approved for its contribution to knowledge and literary presentation.

Chairman, Supervisory Committee	8/6/98 Date
Member, Supervisory Committee	10/6/98 Date
Member, Supervisory Committee	Date
Head, Department of English	10/6/98 Date
Dean, Postgraduate School	18/11/98 Date

DEDICATION

To Ba'ami and Ma'ami

Professor and Mrs. E. O. Kofoworola.

You have planted palm trees

and harvested kernels,

when they are crushed

you will drink oil.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I wish to acknowledge with deep gratitude the support of those who made the successful completion of this study possible. I am grateful to my first supervisor, Dr (Mrs) Omokore, who encouraged the start of the work and went through the proposal. Inspite of her busy schedule as the departmental examination officer she found the time to read the drafts and made useful suggestions. I am also grateful for all the materials she made available to me.

My Second supervisor, Dr Tanimu Abubakar was a great inspiration to the work. His pungent criticism and practical suggestions made a lot of difference to the work. I cherish his brilliant academic guidance . Inspite of his tight schedule as Head, Department of English and Dean, Faculty of Arts, he found time to read, correct and return my drafts promptly. I am sincerely thankful.

I also wish to acknowledge with thanks Dr (Mrs) Sophia O. Ogwude for her immense interest in the work. She made available to me vital books and helpful comments. I will always remember her concern that the work be done in the proper manner.

My profound gratitude goes to Dr A. A. Bamikunle, Mr Tony Yange, Mr Edward Abah, Dr Adebayo Joshua, Dr (Mrs) Gani-Ikilama, Mr Gbenga Ibileye, Mr Joe udoh (the secretary),Mr Joel Department Librarian), all staff of the English department for

their interest, encouragement and contributions to the completion of this study.

I wish to acknowledge the encouragement I received from Dr (Mrs) Adegbite of Institute of Education, Dr and Mrs O. O. Oni & family of NAPRI, Pastor Paul Bolorunduro of NAERLS, Pastor & Mrs Oyeneye, Pastor T.Shikaan , Dr & Mrs Ajibola, Mrs F. L. Durojaiye & family, Pastor & Mrs Eseagwu and my friends; Josephine Adejoh, Henry E. Igbadun, Wilson Maikano, Late Idowu Isehunwa,Ruth Bello, Tunde Jatto,Collins Lakoju, Moji Gabriel, Ele Aduku, Sam Achejeh, Edgar Agubamah, Arch Jide Johnson, Arch & Mrs Olumide Bankole, Clement Oyewole and many others too numerous to mention. Your insistence through prayers, counselling, personal encouragements, gifts and visits has borne this fruit. God bless you.

I thank my brothers,sisters and parents for their spiritual, moral, financial and practical support. I appreciate deeply your concerns and fears ,that I finish on time and move forward.

I also wish to thank Rev. David Bakare, the General Overseer of JAWOM ministries, and his wife for steering my spiritual boat with a grave sense of duty and responsibility. I have been strengthened and encouraged by your counsels, God bless you richly.

My deep appreciation goes to Mrs Morenike Olugbemi who undertook the typing of this work at a very short notice, within the shortest possible time at a bargain available, in very few places.

Finally, from the depths of my heart, I thank my father, God almighty himself. The faithful and true witness, who spoke and confirmed this. Thank you for never giving up on me. It has been you and you alone. You alone is enough for me even now. I give you praise.

ABSTRACT

This study posits that apartheid has influenced Black literature in South Africa. Its violence and oppression truncate the blackman into neurosis. Madness and violence are intricately linked,they create chains of reaction amongst individuals and communities in South Africa. It is these experiences which this study evaluates in Bessie Head's novels. Many Critical studies have often glossed over this deep seated dimension and manifestations of Head's discourse.

This study postulates that madness and violence are a vital, integral aspect of the discourse in Head's novels; that they need not be destructive alone, but through them an ordered psyche can be distilled to individuals and society: that they manifest in diverse forms and conjure differing images.

Chapter one examines the relationship between politics and black literature in south Africa. It examines critical discourses on Head's reflection of her socio-political milieu. It unveils the experience of madness and violence in this milieu. It concludes by giving a conceptual and polemical background statement for the study.

Chapter two studies the epistemology of neurosis in Head's novels. It focuses on the sources, strands, manifestations and purgation of madness in relation to the search for self identity.

Chapter Three evaluates various forms of violence and its

manifestations in inter-personal relationships. In chapter four, we examine the points of convergence and divergence between madness and violence in Head's novels.

Chapter five, which is the conclusion, summarizes the major arguments of the thesis.

Table of Contents

	Page
Title page	i
Declaration	ii
Certification	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgement	v
Abstract	viii
Table of Contents	x
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION	1
Preamble	1
Literature review	8
Thesis	18
Polemical and conceptual background	18
CHAPTER TWO	24
THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF NEUROSIS	24
CHAPTER THREE	74
THE CONFIGURATION OF VIOLENCE	74
CHAPTER FOUR	97
MADNESS AND VIOLENCE	97

CHAPTER FIVE 122

CONCLUSION 122

BIBLIOGRAPHY 126

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Preamble

The direction of literature in any society is determined by the movement of events in that society. Afterall, literatures basic function has been and still is to monitor and artistically portray, present and report society to influence or change it. Since literature does not exist in isolation, Black South African literatures is a great reflection of the black experience of apartheid in South Africa and the peoples reaction to it.

The concretisation of the apartheid institution and its impact on the black people population, has brought South Africa to the fore of world attention. Apartheid as a racial policy has its origin in the discrimination perpetrated against the original black owners of the land. Around the 17th century when the first set of Dutch settlers set their foot on black soil, their mission was to oppress, subjugate and deprive blacks of their land, which was their major means of livelihood and to which they had a great attachment. This dispossession was carried out in an awesome, fearful and mind bending manner. Several years after, the British took over the whole area of South Africa as protectorate. When South Africa was granted independence, the British handed over to the Dutch. In 1949, the apartheid policy was made into law by Dutch nationalists who came to power. Consequently, it

became a subject of protest and resistance by blacks from all fronts, (social, economic, and political), literature inclusive.

The apartheid policy in its entirety is a negation of life. The system ensured that white supremacy was preached and enforced in all spheres of life. The intention was to keep the blackman permanently despoiled through violence. Serote (1989) "The abnormality of apartheid lie in its having imposed on us a condition which requires that as human beings we had to reject life so that we can accept life. We have not known how to live as human beings". P13

The racist government created this condition through various acts of law, the most notorious being the pass laws. The pass law was the erudite symbol of black oppression; the signpost of his dehumanization. As a result of its rigid and brutal enforcement, the black man ceased to be a man, lost his identity and became a simple book. This carried from place to place became the essential guarantor of his movement. His survival endangered by the atrocities of the white oppressor, the black had no alternative than to rise up in resistance. Since no blackman is spared the oppression; the entirety of the black community: Men, Women, children, old and young were all involved in the resistance and efforts to demobilize and dismantle apartheid. This led to violent clashes between them and the racist authorities, the result is a catastrophic destruction of property and great loss of life.

The bottom line of the black struggle is the slogan: "freedom or death". It was this slogan that made South Africa a dungeon for the perpetration of violent acts. Serote again -

> It is a slogan which like the sharpest blade, has cut with extreme precision and ruthlessness, between the old and young, women and men, black and white, leaving a deep wound, leaving everything very bloody! it is our history which has put this blade into our collective hand as a people; this slogan is lived and died every minute of our life as we think and search for what it means to be free therefore, it is our contribution to the world to redefine the meaning of freedom. P14

Since the maintenance of the hopes, aspirations and normal life of whites is predicated on the permanent destruction of Blacks - the end result was a permanent state of insecurity.

As the state became more callous, and the instruments of oppression more sophisticated and gruesome, Blacks sought for more deliberate response. Consequently, black response to apartheid moved from passive resistance, as manifest in the formation of the A. N. C. and its subsequent organisation of the defiance campaign, to active resistance spare headed by the military wing of the A. N. C.; the Umkhonto We Sizwe. Passive resistance created a lot of division amongst blacks, since it could not provide adequate response to the firepower of the white South African and defence forces. Blacks were gunned down in the name of curbing demonstrations against the state. The stage of active resistance brought the struggle for freedom properly into

center - stage and sent out signals that insisted that no man had a monopoly of the instrument of violence.

The violence that pervaded the South African landscape created psychological and social stress which pushed men to the precipe of madness. These black writers in South Africa reflect in their creative works in addition to capturing the struggle for liberation. The immense influence of the physical experience of life on black writings created a body of protest literature and reflects changes in the tempo of the struggle. Denied of other means of self expression the black writer becomes the voice of the people, paints their problems and proffers a way forward. Consequently, this brings him in conflict with the apartheid institution as symbolic of oppressors.

In line with the change in direction of black resistance against apartheid from passive to active, the writings of Black South Africa had to co-toe, in order to maintain its relevance. For example, at the passive phase of the struggle, writers were principally concerned with portraying, presenting and exposing the mass suffering, squalor rejection and despair that shrouded the lives of black people. In Peter Abraham's Mineboy and Paths of Thunder, the plight of black South Africans is dramatized. In the former Xuma undergoes several brutal experiences but refuses to be brutalized by his ordeals. Alex La Guma's A Walk in the Night which tells of inter - racial love and violence also falls into the protest passive tradition.

The shift from the protest passive tradition to the violent active phase was necessitated by the ineffectiveness of the earlier tradition in arousing consciousness of the situation both in whites and Blacks. The endorsement of violence is reflected in black south African writings like Mongane Serote's To Every Birth its Blood, Simpho Sepamla's A Ride on the Whirlwind, and La Guma's Time of the Butcher Bird.

Black South African literature therefore complements, relates and responds to the liberation struggle. There may be diversities of response in the literary works of black writers but the aim remains one; freedom. The concern for the past was no more, only the present was important and the present then was apartheid. It was natural for it to preoccupy the attention of all writers; white and black.

The proximity between the liberation struggle and literature in South Africa has made some critics question the aesthetic relevance of the works produced by Black writers in south Africa. Nkosi (1981) asserts.

> ... It is impossible to detect in the fiction of black south Africa any significant complex talent which responds with both the vigour of the imagination and sufficient technical resources to problems posed by conditions in south Africa.
> What we do get from south Africa
> ....is the Journalistic fact parading as imaginative literature
> ...without any attempt to transcend or transmute these given social facts into artistically persuasive works of fiction.

I. A. Richards rightly says that the starting point for an

inquiry into the values of art is certainly not the aesthetic state. Rather, it is the state of actual reality artistically captured to impact the readership with an experience. Arts-for-arts sake had no place in the canons of black south African literature neither was there the kind of experimentation with technique as found in West Africa. Arts here had to bear social relevance to societal situations and circumstances.

In Black south Africa literature therefore the desire is largely to create a communal aesthetic, which portrayed a group felt experience, as opposed to individualistic aesthetic, as commonly found in Europe and even some parts of Africa. This desire was achieved by adopting the autobiography as a natural literary form of self-assertion and consciously turning it into a representative genre of Black South African writings. The problem with critics like Nkosi has been expressed by Tanimu Abubakar (1986).

> The dominant assumption in the works of these formalists in varying degrees of intensity is that African literature is an extension of an emerging cosmopolitan World culture in which Europe is centre. The business of literary criticism for the critic is to establish the organic link between African literature and 'World' western literature. Thus the study of African literature must use borrowed western criteria because the symbolic value of art is essentially "universal". p59[sic]

This undue pressure on the African writer to abdicate his

artistic responsibility to his community for the whims and caprices of attaining 'universal' aesthetic relevance is to say the least parochial. The African writer was only passing through a stage of literary development which most advanced literatures, especially English literature, have had to grapple with and pass through. Nwoga supports this assertion by arguing that there were periods in English literary history when the artist became more of a communal being and the voice of it than just an individual. Literature, consequently, as an intellectual tool complements the physical liberation struggle of black south Africans. It became the instrument through which the writer identifies, empathizes and challenges the people in his community to action against oppression.

Literature Review.

A great majority of the criticism of the works of Bessie Head have often merely glossed over deep - seated dimensions and manifestation of her discourse on madness and violence. It is unfortunate that little attention has been paid to the underlying under currents of redefinition, Head gives to the issues of madness and violence as factors rather than as indexes of color differentiation.

Criticisms has been carried out at various levels. Some critics have tried to tuck her into the feminist mould. Frank (1984) in examining the relevance of feminist criticism to the African novel regrets the neglect suffered by women writers in Africa until recently. She is however, consoled that women writers are beginning to receive due attention. She particularly singles out two of them; Rebecca Njau and Bessie Head - whose works she describes as psychological gothics, mind bending and flight of African women profoundly alienated from what she calls "the domestic worlds" of the Emecheta's and Nwapa's whose thematic concern is women's private family life. p38

However, all these writers (mentioned by Frank) were united in their concern for women and the improvement of their lot. Yet inspite of the strength and the logic of Franks assertion, the exact point of Head's creative endeavour which is not strictly speaking feminism but humanism is missed. Certainly, Head cannot be included in the group of women writers of whom, according to

Frank (1984) Stageman had this to write.

> The new woman or feminist rebels against such traditionalism because she evinces a theory of personhood where the individual exists as independent entity rather than a group member where she is defined by her experiences rather than kinship relations, where she has responsibility to realize her potential for happiness rather than accept her role here she has indefinable value rather than qualitative financial worth. and where she must reason about her own values rather than fit into stereotyped tradition. p46

Certainly Bessie Head is more concerned about the individual only within the context of the communal, where the individuals destiny is an index of and only of communal destiny. The individual is not immuned to his community, rather he is subject to it. It is through an acceptance and recognition of this, that individuals will attain any measure of fulfillment, living in such a community. In Head's communities, a significant attempt was made to inextricably weave the destiny of the male and female characters. Head also refrains from employing only female protagonists.

The measure of individual heroism which Nkosi generously ascribes to the characters in When Rain Clouds Gather is not as Omokore (1993) tried to make us believe, in her effort to convince us of the feminist endeavour of Bessie Head, exhibited by women alone. Any individual can be a hero only in so far as the community sees him and calls him so. Yet as Omokore contend, without the women Heads works would collapse, because as she

argues, the possibility of Heads option is demonstrated by the women and their role in the novel. Missing from these critical excursions is the fact that both men and women are locked in combat with circumstances (in this case the south African social, political and economic milieux) greater than themselves. Negated by pressures, individuals are pushed into the corridors of madness and onto the balconies of violence. A study of psychological imbalances and modifications in character emanating from harsh socio - political climate was seen to be a rather more profiting adventure than mere commentaries which some earlier critics had embarked upon.

Rukmini Vanamali (1988) and Tanimu Abubakar (1989) give to A Question of Power, a religious interpretation. They argue that man has capacity both for good and evil. These constants in enmity and competition, create an ambivalence in the natural manifestation of day to day character. Commendable as this efforts were, it fell short of presenting the states of madness and violence which the struggle between good and evil engendered. They did little justice to the intentions of Head to show that these states are found across racial boundaries and therefore transcend questions of color. Instead, they explain the state of the soul which is severely coloured with a propensity towards evil.

Kolawole Ogungbesan "the Cape Gooseberry also grows in Botswana" shows that Heads very experience in living in exile in

Botswana affected her "distinctive Vision of alienation. This would have been different had she spent time in Europe. Her estrangement resulted from her rejection of all religious, social, political and intellectual alternatives posited by fellow African writers in exile. Her projection of solutions and the inability to see physical results creates in the individual a split personality - struggling within itself. Man's problem is not then in colour but rather his lack of humanity. The individual human soul has firmly spread over it the roots of evil. Heads comment on her social milieu is instructive.

> We are all really startled alive by the liberation of Africa, but we have been living in exclusive compartments for so long that we are all afraid of each other. Southern Africa isn't like the rest of Africa and is never going to be. Here, we are going to have to make an extreme effort to find a deep faith to help us to live together. Inspite of what the politicians say, people are not going to be destroyed. Not now. There is all these force, hatred and it is real. There are the huge armies prepared for war against unarmed people and we are all overwhelmed with fear and agony not knowing where it will end. Some of us cannot battle this conflict anymore. I cannot. But wherever I go I shall leave a chunk of myself here because I think of myself as a woman of Southern Africa not as a black woman but as an ordinary and wryly humble woman. There was this inner conflict, pressure uncertainty and insecurity that I have lived with for so long. I have solved nothing. I am like everyone else-perplexed, bewildered and desperate.

For Head, people are first humans before they are races or males or females. Through this approach, Head alienated herself

from South African literatures obsession with color. Rather she concentrates, says Ogungbesan, on the sufferings caused by alienation and the impulses that make it difficult for the exile to settle unnoticed. Men often withdraw into their shell of loneliness and become alienated from general society not only when they fight a losing battle with nature, poverty and oppression but also when they seem to be winning. Rural Africa inspite of its communal identity - still has individuals within it who are intensely alienated. This general pre-occupation with alienation runs through the works of Head from When Rain Clouds Gather to A Question of Power. Ogungbesan, however, falls short of situating in madness and violence the end result of an alienated disjointed psyche which he so poignantly describes in "the cape Gooseberry also grows in Botswana".

Writers like Alex La Guma have also been concerned with the issues and nuances of violence. The description of violent acts (Physical violence state) form a large percentage of La Gumas repertoire on violence in the South African society. For La Guma, slum conditions and poverty resulting from racial discrimination produce men (such as Michael Adonis), whose survival is dependent on the defensive capabilities they acquire, to overcome the violence in their environment. Eventually this capabilities become in themselves a weapon for the offensive. Friendship in La Guma as well as Head was thus defined by a necessity to survive as a race against the onslaught of a common

enemy. This is seen in the relationship between Michael Adonis and Willieboy in A Walk in the Night. "They were not very close friends but had been thrown together in the whirlpool world of poverty, petty crime and violence of which that cafe was an outpost".

Head is also concerned about relationships, but relationships not tainted by the bias of color. Rather, as it relates to man's need of the other, in order, to satisfy a deeper heart longing for communion, self actualization and fulfillment. These are the levels of relationships that an attempt is made to evaluate. Men are brought together not simply because they are of the same colour but much more because of certain innate supernatural qualities they possess and which they are ready to share generously with others. However, one force at play to make or mar relationships is the self ego which is violent in its manifestation.

Omokore and Ogungbesan have argued that work especially in the form of communal self help projects creates a network of human relationships. This accounts for the interdependence of people in African societies such as Botswana. Omokore (1993)

> Working with people involves moving among people with whom one works. This helps in purging oneself of alienation and in reaching out in love to others. Thus there is a free flow of feelings, not like the hatred in the south African society. Where one lives "on the soul of the other, like a ghoul". But Head defines the mutual love that comes with working with others as "two people mutually feeding each other".

From this perspective, work is an outlet for emotional expression and a qualitative therapeutic weapon against symptoms that inspire despair. In fact Head sees work as a key to "regain one's worth which in turn helps the oppressed people to confront the oppressor". Consequently, the denial of work to the black man robbed him of relationships, dignity, respect and confidence - which he required to attain a measure of political independence and power. In this study we would slightly depart from arguments above by insisting that when relationships cannot be cultivated in a natural manner alienation results and this eventually will lead to either "madness" or violence.

While La Guma, Nortje, Brutus, Themba and other south African writers in exile project racism and racialism as the prime motivators of violence, Head situates violence as a seed in the human soul, and thus immediately universalizes her themes. Heads choice of Botswana as the background setting for her writings was influenced by her motivation and desire to explicate it. Head skill and ability to keep her characters at an arms length from herself, even though she writes from an autobiographical approach, deserves attention.

Heads panacea to the problem of evil in the human soul has great psychological and social implications for the societies she captures, subsequently therefore what she calls "a kind of universal thesis on racialism" as presented in Maru need be carefully explored.

Cecil Abrahams (1978) study pushes the discourse of Head into paths yet untreated as he examined the context of Bessie Head's fiction. He argues that Head's themes are of "political and spiritual exile, racial hatred and the source of corrupting power and authority" which reflects south Africa's "bitter world of inhumanity and racism". According to him the physical landscape is coloured with her own history of exile, race confusion and her search for "an illusion of freedom".

We refuse to accept that Heads writing fully subscribes as Abrahams (1978) will want us believe to Mphalele's description of the tyranny of place" or that her works are concerned with the racial question as it pertains to her mixed blood status. This assertion may be true of La Guma or Brutus but Certainly not of Head.

Joyce Johnson (1990) writing on A Bewitched Crossroad describes Head herself as a novelist at the crossroad. According to him her thematic concern with what path an individual caught in a cycle of violence or the society arriving at a turning point in history, should take, has gotten her into a delicate experimentation with form, that has made the work both bizarre and rewarding at the same time. Head fuses fiction and history on one hand and African and Western literary traditions on the other in her concern with social evolution. Head captures the communal fate (through the eye of individuals) rather than individual experiences. There is a mythic quality to A Bewitched

Crossroad. Hence "Head is not engaged in ideological debate or defending a particular political system or course of action. She searches for meaningful mental patterns within the rapid and often uncontrollable current of recent history and their links with patterns in the past". p129

One of these "currents of recent history which Johnson apparently did not pay much attention to, are the factors cum events that cause violence and madness and eventually make it the wheel that hinder or move society forward.

Virginia Ola (1986), however, argues that Head's main aim is not only to explore social harmony or the lack of it as Johnson's use of materials from "the current or recent history and their links with patterns in the past" would want to suggest but more importantly ,it is to explore the uniqueness of each individual character, temperaments and experience which contributes to social harmony or the lack of it. According to Ola, the central issues of all Head's novels are the vital issues of power and identity.

This work aims to show violence and madness as key ingredients in the experience of individuals in a racist and psychically dislocated society, in search of innate power and self identity. This is crucial to Heads exploration of the individuals and communities she projects in her writings. More often than not they are achieved through seemingly peaceful but violent dynamics of change. Men achieve power and self identity

only after walking through continuous highways of loneliness, exile, alienation, rejection and many times the extreme of insanity.

C. O. Ogunyemi in her article titled "The hidden dimensions of Bessie Head's novels" takes a study of Head's work closer to this present study on violence and madness as she comments on Head's exploration of the metaphysical dimensions of African life. These dimensions are the incorporation of African myths and that of other peoples into her corpus. According to her, it is Head's concern with the primitive tendencies of these people that constitute the hidden dimensions of their lives, marked as it were,by a pervasive presence of the supernatural, the mystical, the mythical, the mysterious, the magical, witchcraft and fantasy.

Thesis

This present study fills a gap that exists in the appreciation of the novels of Bessie Head, with regards to the place of madness and violence. This thesis will open up these secret cellars that contain these hidden dimensions for appreciation and interpretation. We shall explore the progression of the characters into madness and violence. The activities that take place, the manifestations of these in the descent and the carthatic expiation of the evil experience that produces a regenerating and healing effect on the subject will be examined. Suffice to say that, we shall view the purging of the soul, as required and needed for change in societal attitudes especially with regards to racism, as a violent and maddening exercise.

Polemical and Conceptual Background.

In treating the subject of violence and madness, the basis for the choice of the literary text to be studied is that the issues of madness and violence are essential to their theme and structure. This study will draw generously from psycho, analytic criticism. The psychoanalytic perspective is concerned with both latent and manifest meaning. It also investigates the manner in which the ego manages transformation of fantasy materials. Character analysis and biographical study, which are two areas associated with psychoanalysis will also be examined. Since

there is a significant relationship between the texts and its cultural and historical reality, an investigation of the historical location of a text is a necessary aspect of psychoanalytic reading. Its recognised in this background that Mrs Head's characters are products of their environment, so their characters must be viewed within the context of their world.

In addition the study will also draw from literary, religious and social history which help elucidate the varying symbolic movement, by which the human mind transforms experience. Feder, 1980, says

> Although the mad characters or personae of literature may be modelled on actual persons or the authors themselves, it is also true that literary constructs of extreme possibilities of mental experience differ in important respects from actual manifestations of madness. The very distortions of powerful visionaries or isolated victims of the literature of madness are designed to portray the mind constructing and exposing its own symbolic framework out of fragments that all readers recognize as familiar customs, attitudes, places, institution, traits of characters, desires and fears they have encountered in their lives. The mind of the mad protagonist or persona of literature discloses the transformation of these into the ultimate sources of psychic disintegration or survival. p8[sic]

This study argues that the mad protagonist and personae of literature, convey the intricate connection between psychic requirement and the social and cultural milieu in which these however obliquely are expressed. Political analysis for this work is however not expedient . It is the inward that influence

the outward and if not properly managed ultimately controls it.

In the same vein, violence (or violent behaviours) is not just simply spontaneous display of or reaction to oppression, but arise out of a soul filled with hatred and evil. It is the over flow of this filling, that produces the physical action, that inflicts hurt on the subject or recipient of the force. Dick (1979) defines violence as

> acts that exceed certain bounds of normality and propriety where these bounds lies varies from time to time and place to place as social needs and the way of life in which they fit vary. But the norms that define violence are not purely subjective or culturally variant. "The fact that men are about equally concerned with and susceptible to injury and pains... probably gives the words 'violent' and cruelty a relatively stable core of application inspite of their logical characteristics. p1

Violence may differ in type, scope and source. Private citizens and agent of the state may engage in violent acts. In this thesis, we shall be concerned primarily with the former.

NOTES

1. Serote, Mongane Wally(1989) "Now We enter History" in culture in another South Africa. William Campschreon and Joost Divendal eds London: Zed books Ltd p13 - 18.
2. Nkosi, Lewis(1981) Tasks and Masks, Themes and Style of African literature Harlow: Longman.
3. Abubakar, Tanimu(1986) Black South African Fiction and the National Liberation Struggle 1969 - 1984: A problem of criticism in work in progress No. 4 ed Yakubu Nasidi, John Haynes and Mbulelo Mzamane p57 - 65.
4. Frank, Katherine(1984) "Feminist Criticism and the African Novel". African literature Today 14. Ed. E.D. Jones London: Heinemann.
5. Omokore, Olusola Sade(1983) "Women in the Liberation Struggle: A Study of Discourse on the Status and Role of Women in the South African Novel by Blacks (1960 - 1984)". Unpublished Ph. D. thesis Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.
6. Vanamali, Rukmini(1988) "Bessie Head's A Question of Power: The Mythic Dimension" in the literary criterion Vol XXIII, Nos. 1 and 2, p154 - 171.
7. Abubakar, Tanimu(1989) "The Repudiation of the Hideous Roots of Hatred and the Affirmation of Human Essence in the Novels of Bessie Head". An English Departmental Seminar, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

8. Ogungbesan, Kolawole(1979) "The Cape Gooseberry Also Grows in Botswana" Alienation and Commitment in the writings of Bessie Head", Presence Africaine. No. 109.

9. La Guma, Alex(1967) A Walk in the Night and other Stories London: Heinemann.

10. Abraham, Cecil(1978) "The Tyranny of Place: The Context of Bessie Heads Fiction" in World literature written in English Vol 17 No. 1, April.

11. Johnson, Joyce(1990) "A Novelist at the Crossroad: Bessie Head's A Bewitched Crossroad in Kunapipi" Vol xii No.3.

12. Ola, Virginia " Women's Role in Bessie Head's Ideal World" Ariel Vol 17 No. 4, Oct,p39 - 47.

13. Ogunyemi, C. O.(1986) "The Hidden Dimensions of Bessie Head's Novel" Studies in the African Novel Ed S. O. Asien & A. O. Ashaolu Ibadan: Ibadan University press.

14. Feder,Lillian(1980) Madness in Literature (Princeton, New jersey: Princeton University press.

15. Dick,James C(1979) Violence and Oppression (Athens: The university of Georgia press.

16. King, B. and Ogungbesan, K. (eds).(1975) A Celebration of Black and African writing. Zaria: A. B. U. press.

17. Abraham, Peter(1946) Mineboy London: Faber and Faber.

18. Abraham, Peter(1948) Paths of Thunder Newyork: Harpers and Bros.

19. Serote, Mongane, To Every Birth its Blood.

20. Sempala, Sipho(1981) A Ride on the Whirlwind Oxford: Heinemann.

21. La Guma, Alex.(1979) Time of a Butcherbird London: Heinemann .

Madness is violence
Violence is madness

Chapter 2

THE EPISTEMOLOGY OF NEUROSIS

> I have found that the novel form is like a large rag bag into which one can stuff anything all ones philosophical, social and romantic speculations.I have always reserved a special category for myself,as a writer - that of a pioneer blazing a new trail into the future. p224

This statement by Bessie Head herself according to Mzamane (1987) signifies the new trail she blazed while she was alive, which has not died with her. Her incursion into and presentation of madness in day-to-day existence, has become a subject of further inquiry. This has become one of her most memorable legacy. One of the central concerns of Head has been the discovery of the very essence of human co-existence, the friction it endangers and its results on life in southern Africa. Head addresses these issues in When Rain Clouds Gather, Maru, A Question of Power and A Bewitched Crossroad: An African Saga.

In A Question of Power and Maru, which are autobiographical, racism catalyses insanity and catapults it to the parameter for judging individual experiences. Here racism and prevailing cultural experiences are factors in determining the neurotic and whether an individual manifest a superior or inferior complex. According to Fanon, the colonial encounter rather than some supposedly universal oedipus complex accounts for the psychopathology of the blacks. As Fanon observes "the colonized

every neurosis ... is the product of his cultural situation". It is out of this condition of violence, war, destruction, treachery and so on presented so graphically in the historical saga A Bewitched crossroad and the autobiographical When Rain Clouds Gather, that order and societal progress are fashioned out of an African society held down by colonially induced psychological limitations. Fanon shows that the quickest resort and the result of the weakness of black psychic is the collapse of ego and the ultimate result is nothing else than a neurotic breakdown.

Each of these text has strands of the mad world in them. Consequently they can be referred to as the "insanity quartet". The distinction between autobiography and historical fiction is succinctly put by Ogwude(1989) who categorizes Heads creative endeavour into autobiography, utopian writing, historical fiction and short story.

The autobiography possesses the power and ability to open up to the reader an integral part of a historical personality. This it does by capturing the personal pressures suffered by the autobiographer, and the consequent metamorphosis and emergence of his final personality.The literary technique of the autobiography as a distinct form of prose, that is, the process by which experience is transformed into literature is also quite important. Together they elicit our sympathy and involvement in each particular dilemma of human life which is the major subject of the genre. If the autobiography attempts to depict historical

realities, the utopia on the other hand seek to transcend the present and transpose into the ideal. It is a genre rooted in political and social issue.

The term historical novel is used to distinguish all novels which take their settings and some of their characters and events from history; "the term is usually applied only if the historical milieu and events are fairly elaborately developed and important to the central narrative". It is used to solve social and psychological problems visited on the people. This shows the relationship between history and literature. The short story on the other hand thrives on its brevity. It can be read at one sitting. It thrives on few characters and limited settings. It is composed so that during the hour of perusal the soul of the reader is at the writers control".

This thesis is concerned with the first and third categories - precisely because our chosen texts fall into these categories. It is from within this genres that the issue of madness and violence is expiated.

The different forms of the autobiographical mode are not particularly expedient for our purpose in this work. However a cursory look at the form itself is essential. The autobiographical mode is essentially concerned with the transformation of real life experiences into literature by the individual who undergoes such experiences. The aim is to get the reader to emphathise with the persons involved. James Olney

(1973) puts it more clearly

> autobiography is the literature that most immediately and deeply engages our interest and holds it and that in the end seems to mean the most to us because it brings an increased awareness, through an understanding of another life in another time and place, of the nature of our own selves and our share in the human condition. p37

For Head the importance of autobiography lies in its virility in signifying life and in projecting a vision through which "life" is sustained. A close look at the first three texts shows they bear a close resemblance to the life history of Head herself. In Paulina Sebeso, Black Margaret Cadmore and Elizabeth is seen the life of Head, who sets them up as a wheeler to push forward her story. The texts are more of her story than their stories. She presents her own experience through their own individual experiences. In this way she delineates the manifestation of madness, herein lie the great significance of her work.

The fourth text A Bewitched Crossroad falls under the genre of historical fiction. It is concerned with the historical events of many southern African tribal communities. Omokore says this kind of novel reawakens the past greatness of Southern Africa and explains the communities arrival at present day social, political and economic relations. Its settings and characters are from the history of the Sebina clan in Botswana. It captures a period of ferment which saw the rise and fall of

diverse nations. It presents the dynamics that were responsible for building strong nation states over time. Because of its nature of stretching over time and the crisis cross in setting, there is no single protagonist method here.Rather, we have several protagonists who perform different functions, and are well rounded in their own way. These characters provide a wide spectrum of temperaments, their collision engineers a violently confused and mad world.

In the texts under study, there is a progression from the autobiographical texts, concerned with the psyche and psychic sufferings and mental breakdown of the individual, to the historical text. The historical text captures the same breakdown within the larger community. The insanity in the community is thus a reflection of the same in the individual. Heads endeavour in her art with regards to the subject of madness can be viewed at two levels; the social level and the individual level. These two levels, though independent however influence each other. At the social level, madness is pictured within the frame of shattered social values and the confusions that result form the crossbreed of African values with foreign ones. There is also an inbred clash of African beliefs and values among themselves. In Maru the Botswanian see the Marsawa's as inferior. The attempt to impinge and bridge this age old conception, ultimately lead to societal confusion and dissatisfaction. Oftentimes this is the outcome of racism which has deep psychic dimension to it. At the

individual level insanity has its foundation in a search for identity embarked upon from a sidewalk of an alienated consciousness. Individuals (as is evidenced in Elizabeth in A Question of Power) run mad as a result of pressure on their mental faculty. However, at the other times it is a result of inability to come to terms with themselves and the reality of their lives. Consequently this opens them up to unwholesome dominating influences.

This work is concerned with the prominence of one level above the other, in the texts under study rather than on the absence of one. Consequently, in this work When Rain Clouds Gather and A Bewitched Crossroad: An African Saga belong to the social level of Head's concern with madness. Maru and A Question of Power belong to the individual level. The issue of the source of good or evil and its manifestations cut across all the texts. A vital question asked in dealing with this texts is, how does the extremity of the one over the other truncate its victims to a state of madness?

Madness is a state in which unconscious processes predominate over conscious ones to the extent they control and determine perceptions of and responses to experiences. Such experiences, when judged by prevailing standards of logical thought and relevant emotion are confused and inappropriate. Yet the question that quickly arises is, who is sufficiently qualified to set standards for human psychological behaviour. A

person is said to be mad when he is no longer able to reason in accordance with societal accepted modes. Head through her characters shows that madness and reason are not irreconcilable opposites. In actual, fact as her character show, there is only a thin line between sanity and insanity as we are bound to see in the course of this work, the one never complete without the other. Society, Head seem to imply, loses its normality when it is overtly concerned with the abnormal which after all is the very basis of normality.

In When Rain Clouds Gather, the protagonist Makhaya escapes from the stifling socio political climate of south Africa because it became for him a huge prison where its inhabitants are trapped permanently. Yet his escape into Botswana gives him only "an illusion of freedom". The problem then is not the colour of the skin but that of the soul. Makhaya's exit from South Africa only opens a new door of psychic conflict to him. In south Africa, the conflict is between black and white, that is, between Makhaya and the apartheid system operated by whites. In Botswana, the conflict is between blackmen themselves. This condition of continual and pervasive conflict everywhere deteriorates the mind of Makhaya. Moving from south Africa where strains and tensions of living under apartheid disorders his mind, to Botswana where suspicion in personal relationships truncates it, gives rise to a "chaotic discord" and a "specter of confusion in him". For Gibert, Makhaya and some of the other characters what pushes them

into the abnormal manifests chiefly in self-withdrawal and self alienation. All these characters being exiled in Golema Mhidi experience another exile in their present abode from other exiles that have come to live there. No wonder they keep to themselves and thus become unreachable, as is the case with Makhaya, to others in the community. Suspicion becomes both a disease of self - protectiveness and a means to exploit people, unfamiliar with the societal hardship of the terrain. In such social climates as this, help is rendered only at a price, and a costly one at that.

In When Rain Clouds Gather, Head shows madness as a big sea with many social tributaries, one of which is poverty. Poverty has many faces and images. It brings men low and pushes them into unwholesome practices such as child prostitution. This depravity which ordinarily is abnormal is "normal" within the poverty malignant society. There is no question of morals or normality when issues of survival take center stage. This tributary affects Makhaya and other character's mental make up. It challenges his own already psychologically imbibed and accepted scales of values. For the old woman hag it's madness for a man to refuse a "woman" for a fee. For Makhaya it is madness to perceive and view a man "as nothing more than a grovelling sex organ". p15 Who then is mad and who is not?, as far as Head is concerned both are. Makhaya, because he has refused a condition that is accepted by this society and the old

woman hag for encouraging a universally unacceptable practice. Makhaya's experience at the border is only a fore taste in the continual manifestation of the difference in scales of values, with decided and definite impacts on his mental frame, which he would eventually see haunted and overcome by the events he encounters and participates in, in the interior.

The "city" of Golema -Mhidi consists of individuals who fled there to escape the tragedies of life. It is a town of exiles, a certified spot for likely cross - fertilization and conflict of differing ideas, perceptions of life or world view. Here the possibility of confusion ensuing leading to mental harassment and resulting in eventual madness is not remote at all. The conflict between Gilbert and chief Mantege is a point in case. Chief Mantege's obsession with maintaining his monopoly of wealth produced by and for the whole community is a point to an evil trait of greed. This pushes him to run down every programme that will emancipate his people from their poverty, and inadvertently from his grips. His apparent lack of success causes him to grow paranoid. Gilbert on the other hand experiences paranoia, for fear of seeing his labour over agriculture become in vain, through government cancellation. Both characters (Mantege and Gilbert) through their clash though not directly physical exert on each others mental and psychological balance. Breaking down each others defenses, they consequently enter into elementary stages of madness. Their example indicate that greed and self-

centeredness are streams that lead to madness. It is not reason that prevails in the end, it is madness.

There are similarities between what obtains in When Rain Clouds Gather and A Bewitched Crossroad In the latter, fragmentations and subsequent unifications of nations to form nation states was a continual exercise. These events are an off-shoot of an early accident, the emergence of the insane in an otherwise sane process of societal transformation."Then something happened to Mambo that caused rumours of doom and impending disaster to spread through out the land. He appeared to have produced a son and heir who was insane ...Vanambo Tumbale". p13

Tumbale is insane because of a tributary of madness that runs through his veins which is pride, mockery and scorn. This attributes make him defy the gods and thereby upset the communal psychic balance of the people. In this situation, an atmosphere of madness is set off when societal beliefs clashes with the beliefs of resolute individuals within the same society. The insanity of such individuals, Head seems to be saying is the very tonic the society needs to move forward. This is essentially because their actions often upset already established socio-spiritual order that clogs the wheels of societal development. The various inter-tribal wars fought in A Bewitched Crossroad and the manner of their prosecution are quite revealing and symptomatic of mans bestiality and preponderance towards the magical. Man in seeking to build an empire becomes paranoid with

opposition. This is worsened when they succeed. They thus become ruthless in dealing with opposition to their power. Consequently the issue of power and struggle for it becomes a key to the subject of madness and indeed unlocks the door of it in A Bewitched Crossroad. People with absolute power, Head seems to be saying, more often than not transgress the boundaries of normality into the abnormal extreme.

> The vistas of Shaka's power were now limitless; both by military conquest and personal rule. But, extremely popular as a ruler especially with the army, Shaka became unbalanced by the immense power he had seized for himself. He was assassinated in the year 1828, having become a capricious and unpredictable mass murder of his own people. p23

All the tributaries of madness in A Bewitched Crossroad and When the Rain Clouds Gather coalesce into a furious chaos out of which order and sanity is distilled out for society. Heads deployment of this paradox aims to capture the very contradictions that are responsive and responsible for societal and group transformation. In A Bewitched Crossroad Head says,

> The old order of the small, isolated clan based society had been completely destroyed. But out of this chaos a new order was slowly forming. The wars of calamity laid the base of a new era - the era of nation- building the large centralized kingdom replacing the small clan based tribes. Outstanding leaders were to emerge during this period with ability to unite many diverse people under them. Some of the states founded at this time would be military predatory and aggressive, a complete break with the past. Some would be the bridge between the past and the future with the accent on peace and

self-sufficiency. p23 - 24

Every experience of insanity is a search for the infinite good in man. It is this, that brings Makhaya, the hero of When the Rain Clouds Gather, and Khama III, the hero of A Bewitched crossroad, to the crossroad of their existence. Joyce Johnson's (1990) observation is instructive here.

> Head repeatedly used the image of the person arrived at a crossroad and wondering which direction to take to represent Makhaya's situation like Makhaya, Khama rejects a narrow 'tribal' outlook in order to discover a way of life more relevant to the changed environment in which contact with Europeans has placed him. Where Makhaya's concern was largely for himself as an individual Khama involves the fate of the nation. p127

However one would like to disagree with Johnson's assertion that Makhaya was largely concerned with himself. This is because Makhaya is simply representative of a type of the blackman (Negro) in a type of society which in this case happens to be an African society. Ultimately his good and fulfillment is an index for measuring same in the larger society. For within this societal matrix and its world view are all the elements that denote his chief psychic and psyche traits. According to Mphalele (1962), Senghor identifies two sources as responsible for these traits. These are,"The millenniums of his tropical experience and the agricultural nature of his existence, the heat and humidity of the tropical regions and a pastoral closeness to the earth and the rhythms of its . . . emotions, he finds is at the heart of Negritude emotion". p49

While this is true, Head's treatment of madness did not limit itself to these traits alone but expands it to accommodate all races. Universally, there are psyche and psychic traits in all men responsible for individual and societal depravity. It is in Head's ability to manipulate her art in this direction that she achieves a measure of greatness. This comment about conrad according to Mphalele (1962) also applies to Bessie Head.

> Conrads greatness as an artist lies in his disinclination to recognize boundaries in human character when he writes about malays and arabs. Mrs Almayer (Almayers folly) is Superstitious and depraved but has nothing to do with her half caste blood; anymore than it has anything with Nina's disillusionment in christian teaching. Nina is an individual, her mixed ancestry is incidental. p102 Emphasis Mine

This is exactly how Head relates with her characters Elizabeth in A Question of Power and Margaret in Maru. They are not just individuals, whose problems are externalized in terms of colour or race differences, but individuals shown as having problem with the seat of contending good and evil; the soul. In developing characters to elucidate this very vital issue of sanity, Head gives autonomy to her art by allowing it to "...order our experiences and responses and help resolve conflicts inside ourselves as individuals in such a way that we each bring to our groups a personality that could never justify race, colour and religious discrimination, intellectual dishonesty, poverty and inequality of privilege". p94

Head accomplishes these by throwing her characters down into the purgative Cauldron of madness. Psychic conflict resolution is a violently maddening process. The approaches to it are varied. Head's female characters; Elizabeth, Margaret, Paulina, Maria and others, contrast favourably to those in the novel of Atwood, Eyre, Woolf or Bronte. The characters in the writings of this European novelists are psychologically crippled, disinherited and culturally bereft because they have been denied the love of strong figures of their own sex and "tribe". What each of the protagonist discover is that they must find a mother figure, within themselves , and so begin the return from psychosis. Heads characters on the other hand are already aligned with strong mother figure influences that contribute to their psychosis and whose influence must be purged to return from psychosis (Rigney, 1980, p 11 - 12).

The struggle for place and position in the world as succinctly presented in A Bewitched Crossroad is often occasioned by the experience of insanity. Here rituals and mythic practices are employed to cling to power. Witchcraft, ancestor worship are also given prominence in the bid to violate human dignity and psyche defenses. Treachery, greed and avarice lead to great betrayals in the process of empire building. Murder is also wantonly carried out with survival as an excuse - Maroka is a ready example of this in A Bewitched Crossroad. The ensuing madness which attends the scramble for position and power Head

portrays as symptomatic of an illness and dominance of evil in the soul of numerous characters in the text. For instance, what justification can anyone adduce for Shaka's "policy of total war in Nguru land" ?"Campaigns in which whole village of men, women, and children were wiped off the face of the earth. Dungiswayo intention were kindly and paternal". p21

Shaka has a counterpart in Matenge in When Rain Clouds Gather. Matenge attempted to put his subjects in perpetual servitude and denied them any chance of self - actualization. This accounted for his vocal and vehement opposition to the agricultural project which threatened the status quo and the bastion of corrupted power. As a result of his stand"Matenge could not see this ... he found himself involved ...in the cauldron of hatred ...that reflected his traditional values". p45

Matenge's degeneration from one level of hatred (first of his brother chief Sekoto) to another (his subjects) fills his heart with paranoia. This also invariably depicts his descent into a state of madness from which he never recovers and in which he eventually commits suicide. For Head, Matenge is a waste. His insanity never led to his cleansing nor did it bring about a desire to love and to do good as it did in Maru and Moleka in Maru.

In examining the political landscape in When the Rain Clouds Gather and A Bewitched Crossroad, the political structure which had a large dose of the farce that projected the selfish motives

of the individual above that of the state must not be overlooked. the irony of the madness of this political landscape is captured in the comment by Head in When the rain clouds gather that there were four or five such liberation parties with little or no membership yet they had many under secretaries. In A Bewitched Crossroad political intrigues add to the chaotic psychic of the landscape. The instruments for measuring the mad state has no calibrations. For instance, in When the Rain Clouds Gather, Chief Sekoto has a disdain for people with gloomy pessimistic outlook on life. He categorizes such people as insane yet Sekoto own love for fast cars, Sumptuous dishes and pretty women are in themselves an indictment of his mental balance.

Khama III in A Bewitched Crossroad is viewed as insane by sections of the community he governs. He first abdicates his right to rule his people only to later bounce back. Taking his rightful position, he embraced christianity and began to implement christian based policies. This action bred certain degree of discontent in his subjects. Khama III had a pretense to being called a consultative leader, even though he often decided alone on what to say or do. He only sought the people's opinion as a rubber stamp to his own. Khama's language is no doubt enthralling

> I have provided my people with a new religion, and due to this many changes have come about in Bamangwato country. It is no longer permitted for all people whether my own people or those who come to dwell among us to observe certain customs. I wish my

laws obeyed. p65

The younger man, Maruapula, the son of Dalaunda, the famous rainmaker under Dambo at Damboshaba expressed his outrage at this "human faced" totalitarianism which held the people spell bound and taken up. This becomes an indicator of docility in the people. It is attitude like this that pushed Maruapula to the frontiers of madness.

> The young man was entirely absorbed in his own torments. There is nothing but a mess here! The Young man exclaimed, the dam of his bitterness and frustration finally flooding and reaching bursting point. But will you see disorder? No! The great man ordered peace for all the people. There is not a day when he does not order something and it did so. p67

Khama III's seemingly insane way of administration subverts and controverts, the spiritual essence of his people. His divers orders seem to cut them off their pristine source of existence. Yet through this self preservation and sanity was maintained in this society. Khama III ensures through his "mad methods" that the Bamangwato country was never at anytime occupied. These "mad methods" are a product of Khama's realization that crisis ridden political set ups, with potentials to degenerate into warfare, require entirely unorthodox methods to tackle.

This great feat testifies to the depth of psychic power deposited in the Khama's soul. This, he put to great use in order to maintain his grasp on the political structure and simply

modify it as the need arises. Unlike Matenge's madness that led to his death, Khama's ensured the continued existence of his nation polity. In the societies in Maru and A Bewitched Crossroad everyone is suspicious of the sanity of the others, it is difficult then to draw rigid lines. The beliefs and superstitions of the people in things like witchcraft, as a response to phenomenon for which they have no explanation, automatically draws out the abnormal worst in them. For example, the accusation that the old herbalist is a witch in When the Rain Clouds Gather, without any proof, other than that someone died under her roof is pity provoking and quite disgusting. Head employs events such as this to dismiss some age long beliefs as a " suffering from derangements of the brain". The madness here is manifested in the consumption of the people with irrational fear of the unknown. This creates suspicion and a schizophrenic state in the individuals or societies concerned.

In A Bewitched Crossroad and When the Rain Clouds Gather, there is a concern with the refugee situation. Head employs the issue of refugees as a metaphor to reflect a universally chaotic state , where being on the move but never attaining steals sanity from it's victims and pushes them down into madness. Sadly "the world is full of refugees, men and women who have lost a purpose for living; Makhaya's life in south Africa mirrors this type. In A Bewitched Crossroad, these "purposeless" individuals, thrown together by circumstances through migration, eventually unite to

form new nation states or through "wandering wars" break down existing ones. Most of Head's characters in the texts under study are exiles who had been refugees. Being a refugee is a very difficult condition of uncertainty, which affects the relationship between individuals, and makes love a burdensome load to carry. This is because suspicion moves people farther away from themselves. The result is an alienated boredom and consciousness which creates a distance between people and thus becomes a defence against as a matter of fact any breaches of the privacy of the soul and body. The search motif for the IDEAL thus cast shadows on their entire life and existence. It directs its meaning and determines the possibility of their future success. For Makhaya it's simple " I'm only looking for a woman". Many times it is this search for the neurotic ideal, that is at the root of neurotic aloofness, that afflicts the characters.

The aridity of the locale on the characters mind produces a psychological ambivalence, a love-hate situation, which is crucial to the peoples mental make-up as a determiner of their extent of progress. This accounts for the efforts of Gilbert, Makhaya, Dinorego and other in When the Rain Clouds Gather to change the people's attitude to age old outdated agricultural practices. Obsolete agricultural machinery also had to change for new and better ones. For this is the "modus operandi" of being delivered from oppression. The drift and directionlessness

in the government, is a reflection only of the same in the structure of the soul of the individuals who constitute the leadership in society, hence their inability t solve the plight of their people. The state authorities in When the Rain Cloud Gather knowing exactly what had to be done to grow millet but instead looked the other way, is an indication and evidence of madness. In the end,all the large sums of money spent on research amounted to a colossal waste of resources, since beneficiaries of this efforts are other countries. A factor that abetted this misnomer was the separation of races,which influenced and created a chaotic agricultural landscape. The involvement of Gilbert, Makhaya, Dinorego, Paulina amongst others in the agricultural mechanization and improvement programme give their mind focus and releases it from destructive psychological emotion, that the drudgery of manual labour and work create.

Hepburns mental breakdown in 1891 is another instance of Heads portrayal of insanity in A Bewitched Crossroad. Hepburns madness though attributed to "bouts of malaria fever which unknown to him had affected his brain" was only a culmination of a poor response to social stress and responsibilities which the malaria fever took advantage of. The manner of Hepburn's mental breakdown points to this

> Hepburn became ill but in a complicated way. The nights were torture for him with a pain in the head and ugly fever dreams; by day he was irritable, short tempered and quarrelsome. Strangely, his illness vented itself against Khama with whom he had a

> close friendly relationship for twenty years. Hepburn making irrational demands and behaving in an irrational way. p177

When religion for Hepburn became an obsession it also turned to insanity. The climate of madness is so prevalent in A Bewitched Crossroad that many characters have gotten caught in its web. For instance, Cecil Rhodes' response to black rebellion is filled only with a pathological hatred of blacks and a deep sadistic disposition towards them. "You should kill all you can", he advised the officers, "it serves as a lesson to them when they talk things over at night". The source of Rhodes' madness is an indiscreet racism, that sees blacks as qualified only for servanthood. This racism despises their culture, beliefs, dignity and land as mere objects for use by the white man. When this conception began to be pretendedly punctured by other white men not necessarily because they thought otherwise from Rhodes but rather out of other amalgamated and superior interest, Rhodes becomes berserk and loses all sensibility. He is drawn and transported into his final abode, the sea of madness.

Madness in A Bewitched Crossroad and When the Rain Clouds gather are responses to social disjointedness. Remarkably, however the characters of madness are united by their condition which allows room for social regeneration, regardless of whether they lived or died as they passed through the purifying fire of insanity. Madness must lead to social rebirth.

In A Question of Power and Maru a different approach to the

subject and manifestation of madness is utilised. There is a polarity between the twin characterization mode utilised in the text. In Maru the polarity is between Moleka and Maru, both sons of chiefs and between black Margaret Cadmore and Dikeledi. In A Question of Power it is between Dan and Sello on one hand and Elizabeth, the victim of their psychic clash on the other. There is also an intra-polarity. Madness in these two texts grossly emphasizes what happens to the individual caught in between the preponderance of good at one spectrum and evil at the other (spectrum). The individual is faced with making a choice from within the depths of their soul, which will supersede the other. The clash between this spectrums can clearly be conceived and imagined as the ignition of a state of insanity. Individual experiences of insanity have societal roots and significance, only as they are purged in the individuals to reform and make them better citizens. For the individual, it is purely a purgative process; a kind of the washing of the water by the word (Eph. 5:26) experience. No demarcations between the activator of madness, the participator in madness and the recipients of the result of madness exist here. All are found in a long continuum. They co-habit together to give the full construct of activities that portray sanity or insanity within the texts under discussion. The contention is that the madness experience is not limited to the main protagonists like Elizabeth and Margaret who are females. But, it also affects our twin polarity characters.

Through them, we achieve an introspection in character that ultimately exposes the deviation from the norm in these characters. All the characters carry within their bosoms the eggs and streaks of madness, against the background of racial hostility and difficulties. This has led to an undue and unwanted suspicion amongst the characters to create what Clara Thomas in her prognosis of Jean Rhys Wide Sargasso Sea referred to as a culturally determined "psycho - biography".

Head's division of A Question of Power and Maru into parts one and two is very significant. One part symbolizes good, the other evil. Her refusal to use a chapter by chapter division epitomizes her running concern with madness as an unpunctuated experience - a rushing stream of consciousness; An experiential method so to speak.

Head in a significant way introduces a new dimension to African writings, concerned with insanity, by giving the impression that insanity arises as a result of a genetic mutant passed from one generation to another. This is a biological construct for insanity which suggests that individual insanity is not simply socially and culturally determined. Men make conscious choices either of good or evil and this affects their sanity or otherwise. This is clearly what takes place in A Question of Power and Maru. The question then is how much influence or domination of another individual psyche is required to make men insane and in what dimensions and measures.

Like their creator, both Margaret and Elizabeth in Maru and A Question of Power respectively were born and rejected in childhood. Both were born under mysterious circumstances barely knew any of their biological parents and were taken care of by foster parents. Roger A. Berger (1990) argues

> ..., most important is not the white insistence of his mother's madness, rather what is most troubling is Elizabeth's internalizing the race fantasy that insanity is in some way hereditary. It must be made clear immediately that hereditary insanity, along with other myths of ethno-psychiatry (e.g. the savagery of the native, his or her innate childishness) that fanon explicitly explodes in the wretched of the earth, has no basic reality and reflects merely the extension of racism into psychoanalysis. p36

Since the origins and birth of Elizabeth in A Question of power and Margaret in Maru was shrouded in controversy, Madness thus becomes a process of rebirth, a kind of "born again" experience with the attendant birth pangs and pains. This rebirth experience requires grace and ability to endure . There is a quality of pain to this experience. It is in the ferment of this rebirth process that the twin character polarities of Dan/Sello, and Moleka/Maru, come in and are significant.

A synopsis of this rebirth process indicates a great big creative force and energies within the souls of individuals which enables them see far beyond the ordinary. According to Virginia Woolf, mad people know things which normally sane people cannot know; they grapple with monsters of the mind that sane people

suppress. This truism is manifest in Margaret Cadmore's skill manifest in her drawing images that imprints on her sub-conscious. These images truly reflect her soul's composition and desire (even though she wouldn't admit it) in Maru."She had an unexplored gift. half consciously, her hand moved to a sheet of paper and a pencil, and without any faltering, concentrated on capturing that loving expression". p87

Elizabeth's discovery

> That no one was the be all and end all of creation, that no one had the power of assertion and dominance to the exclusion of the other life ...that people, in their souls were forces, energies, stars, planets, universe and all kinds of swirling magic and mystery ...an awakening of her own powers corresponded to an awakening love of mankind.

These "Holy Powers" within are released by Head's characters in Maru and A Question of Power through a descent into the abyss of madness. From these deep recesses, they tap to make themselves better persons to affect their world. This is the result of collisions principally of good and evil elements within the soul of the characters competing for supremacy. Creative energies and forces imprisoned in the soul must be let loose by breaking through the walls of the soul. Their eventual release dominates the individual, so that outside situations and circumstances lose their effect.

One man says " I might have died before I found the freedom of heart". another says "I might have died under the illusion

that I loved him". Death here is symbolic of the madness experience. Two statements by Sello and Elizabeth who held "conversations with death". This indicates the afflictions of the mind and the purgation of the soul. This is a purgation of the overpowering presence of lunacy first in the inner man (soul life of an individual) and then in the outward society. How often was a learner dependent on his society for his soul evolution? How often was a society at fault and conclusions drawn at the end of each life in opposition to the social trends. p11

Though there are social determinants of the state of madness, Maru's madness was the means by which he acted out his own strange inner perceptions, independent of the praise or blame of men No wonder, Head in a purely surrealistic endeavour breaches encroaches and escorts his readers into the mind recesses of Maru, to present the depths of secret activities in him. This is manifest in his fear of losing Margaret, the woman his heart was after, to Moleka. His "wife's" inner love for Moleka pushes him to behave contrary to his normal disposition and consequently makes him paranoid.

The issues involved are played out in another tributary of madness which is dreams. Quite often the result is jealousy on the verge of insanity. In portraying Elizabeth in A Question of Power and Margaret in Maru as the character before whom lies the choice between one (Sello/Maru) and the other (Dan/Moleka). Head sufficiently captures the inner conflict that characterize these

women when over powered by dominant powerful personalities. The end result of the carthasis of the inner conflict Elizabeth and Margaret experience enable them to delineate between evil and good and then make their choice.

Though both A Question of Power and Maru have racism as a catalyst to insanity, insanity itself is the measuring parameter of the social relevance of the experiences within the individual madness is an alternative set of questions of power, this issue Head raises in A Question of Power and Maru. For instance, what is the inherent quality in Moleka that fascinates Margaret that even after she's manipulated into marriage to Maru, she retained a strong love and longing for moleka, inspite his being evil? What are these innate qualities in Elizabeth in A Question of Power that makes her susceptible to domination by an alternate set of powers first Sello, then Dan. In Maru, Head visualizes racism as a problem of "mental outlook". The superiority or inferiority of the races is an issue and condition of the mind, which suggests, accepts and manifests as a result of prevailing cultural exigencies, either a superiority or inferiority complex. According to Fanon (1967) the colonial encounter rather than some supposedly universal oedipus complex,accounts for the psychopathology of the black colonialism which affected even the culture of the people profoundly. Consequently, every neurosis of the colonized is a product of his colonial situation. Fanon notes that the Negroes contact with the white world imparts his

psychic structure and lead to a collapse of ego, which manifest chiefly in attempts by blackmen to become white. But the blackman can never in the estimation of the white Europeans attain white-titude,since his black skin already casts him as the image and symbol of dirtiness and evil, and an associate of satan.

The exposition Head makes in Maru in contrast to Fanon's assertion is that the problem of mental outlook is as profoundly present and prevalent in black on black relationship as it is in relationship between whites and other races. It is this problem of outlook that can strip a man of his humanity

> And if the whiteman thought that Asians were a low, filthy nation, Asians could still smile with relief, at least, they were not Africans. And if the whiteman thought Africans were a low filthy nation Africans in Southern Africa could still smile at least, they were not bushmen. p11

The mental composition of an individual affects his disposition to the issues of race and interracial relationships. This composition is of necessity a subject of prevailing societal prejudices and preferences. For example, children from marriages between whites and Africans are often categorized as bushmen, though in character, outward appearance and learning, a girl like Margaret Cadmore was in every way more white than black. Since inferiority complex and shame originates within, more like the biblical "as a man thinks in his heart so is he", Margaret rejects it by asserting her Masarwa origin to the chagrin of her

friend Dikeledi and her admirer Moleka. In doing this she takes on the look of and canonises herself a "Goddess". When this condition of self consolidation through self acceptance is fulfilled, all human beings are equal and are able to fully express themselves. Otherwise as in Maru all else is sham "...called racism in which others believe they are better". Through this alternate sets of psychic discovery and manifestations of madness can be found answers to the question what role does the power of relationship play. The end result of madness is enhancement and realization of the importance of relationships based on genuine love which is crucial in either maintaining or destroying the psychic balance not only of the individual but also that of society. In A Question of Power, "love isn't like that (domination and undue exploitation of another), love is two people mutually feeding each other ...". This is opposed to eroticism which satisfies one and not the other. Behold the boastful Dan "when I go with a woman I go one hour you can't do that you haven't got a vagina", or what about the erotic Moleka whose specialty is putting different girls in the family way and then leaving the responsibility to his mother. Such erotic and animalistic behaviour are possible when and if the characters involved are yet to discover true love. When they do it, always brought about a decided change. For example, Moleka's character of prejudice is melted and remoulded at the sight of Margaret. His fling with several women and the tenacity

of Dikeledi's passion for him are instructive hindrances to his perpetuation of emotional attachment until Moleka met Margaret his amorous life style was simply a sanity preserving measure. This is Dikeledi's experience"As she mentioned the name Moleka ...she had been in love with Moleka since doomsday ...Moleka had taken his heart out of his body and hidden it in some secret place while he made love to all the women in the village". p29

Maru on the other hand always fell in love with his women and manifests a nature that reeks with the aroma of love. He too is changed to a difficult and seemingly evil personality because of his love for Margaret. This is also a sanity preserving measure. Heywood's observation is pertinent here.

> Here lies a typical Bessie Head irony. Maru's method, 'cold calculating and ruthless are the normal methods of those who seek and wield power. Yet Maru's rule in the novel is the very antithesis of power wielding. He renounces the kingdom of political power in favour of the kingdom of love, out manourves Moleka and manourves Margaret to marry and love him. pp 174 - 175

Consequently, Maru's love bears fruit because of his ability to identify publicly with the out casts; the Marsawa's, as symbolized by Margaret. Moleka's "love" on the other hand is truncated by his inability to do same. Maru unlike Moleka saw relationships in its true light. As suggested by Heywood the

Moleka - Maru praxis are representative of characters within the same personality. One intensely and passionately good, the other intensely evil. This is a split personality experience where the attitudes of the characters involved interchange between the good and the evil, the sane and the insane. In the mentally afflicted there is often a perfect blend in movement between the normal and abnormal state, for there is normality in insanity.

In A Question of Power, Sello epitomizes a dominance of good, love and the human need for mutual relationships. Dan represents a dominance of evil that seeks to oppress other. The configuration of this power (lies in its source described as "a concentrated atmosphere of wealth and power") which is the strength of his mind. An immense soul power that walks into and over powers the mind of others to exploit them. He had deep insight "but he never said he was going to use all his insight for his own ends". In opening up the cellars of her mind to the invading Dan, Elizabeth like many others become the victims of illusions and hallucinations, Veritable stages of the descent into madness. This lopsides her relationship with him in his favour. Shut up in the prison of an erotic experience with Dan she wakes up tired and weaned. For the mad protagonist relationships are very crucial and must not be seen to be remote controlled from a "god" somewhere. This raises the issue of Head's vision of God. "God is people" she says, "There is nothing up there. Its all down here". Everyman's physical and

outward perception of life is conditioned not by any unseen force or "God" so to speak but by the state of their innerman. Head makes this point clearer through Tom the American volunteer who is so taken up with cultivating relationships. Through this characters we learn that it is a sense of insecurity, loneliness and inadequacy that makes men seek after relationships with "Gods" when unable to penetrate "earthly barriers" that separate men.

In both A Question of Power and Maru the issues of race, initiates and triggers off the boots of insanity among the characters. Elizabeth in A Question of Power experiences lunacy as result of her further alienation, from meaningful livelihood as well as from "reality". Margaret in Maru by virtue of her Marsawa background is rejected within the community and alienated by all except Dikeledi. In school this experience harasses her consciousness and lead to her blanking out, a symptom of insanity which has to do with withdrawal into the self. Her mind introspects into itself and contemplates disfiguredly unimaginable response to her situation. This is symbolized by her quietness in the face of wrongful accusation and hostility. It is indicative of the throw back strength of shock impacting a consciousness."Why did you keep quiet?" She asked pointedly "I was surprised", she replied quietly ..." p57. She is jolted and pushed more into this abyss of madness by her loss in concentrations and by a penchant for the fantasia locked in her

imagination.

The psychic dislocation of Elizabeth from the community for her is a source of unparalleled pain. Her coloured skin completely excluded her from being "initiated" into the African mysteries. This forced her to beg acceptance from the dominating race and consequently makes her an easy prey to them.

> He believed as though he were giving her a supreme education into facts of life that had totally escaped her notice. A persistent theme was that she was not genuinely African, he had to give her the real African insight. People in her daily life were vividly reintroduced through imagery at night.

For Elizabeth the gulf of mental confusion is identified in who we are and why we do what we do and the root of what we do. And we ask,"What would you do if you were both God and satan at the same time?" p19. Puzzled already about the heat that emanates from the questions of colour and then by this "god question". Elizabeth's sane and active disposition succumbs to tensions and strains built up within her, and she crosses the brink of sanity into insanity.

The greatness of Heads narrative lies in her linking the issue of the manifestation of innate madness in her protagonist with the same forms in the larger society. This gives her social relevance. This extract from A Question of Power puts it more clearly,

> ...Inspite of her inability to like or understand political ideologies, she had

> also lived the back breaking life of all black people in South Africa ...There wasn't any kind of social evolution beyond that there wasn't any lift to the heart, just this vehement vicious struggle between two sets of people with different looks; and like Dan ...once you stared the important power maniacs in the face. You saw that he never saw people, humanity, compassionate, tenderness ...what did they gain the power people, while they lived off other peoples souls like vultures? ..Elizabeth felt that some of the answers lay in her experience in Botswana.

For the mad protagonist death performs a creative function within a social milieu that attempts to keep the individuals life but in the end takes it. Turning into one's self(or dying) thus becomes a way of preserving ones life. This process of dying often begins (as was the case of Elizabeth) with religion, then migration, alienation and certain degrees of hallucinatory conditions. The period of darkness to the mad "man" character thus becomes a period of light and dense activity.

> She had the sudden feeling that someone entered the room. The full impact of it seemed to come from the roof, and was so strong that she jerked up in bed.... This recurred for several nights and she simply reasoned that whatever, it was not a danger to her life ...it gave her a strange feeling of things being there right inside her and yet projected at the same time at a distance from her. She was not sure if she were awake or asleep, and often after that the dividing line between dream perceptions and waking reality was to become confused. Ibid 22

These were Elizabeth initiation into madness. The characters before her were not only symbolic of purity (the soft white

flowing robes of a monk) but also of bondage (prison garments). This juxtaposition of symbolic images stretches her mind to a state of turmoil as she names her experiences. Once the turmoil in her mind establishes itself, the hallucinating activities that keeps in touch "with the monk figure" becomes a full time activity and transposes the unreal into reality for her.

> The faint silvery white outline of his robe and his face were clearly discernable to her at all times, and so overpowering was the experience at first that in the early morning as she poured out a cup of tea, she would pour a second cup and absentmindedly walk towards the chair and say "here's a cup of tea for you, and then jolt back to reality shaking her head". Agh. I must be mad! that's just an intangible form. Ibid 23

In this state of madness, the intangible becomes tangible and is accepted without much questions. Though the monk figure has a real life counterpart, it is the monk figure as a phantom personality within the soul of Elizabeth that is of any true significance. It is her attempt to keep up with the figure within that casts doubt on her sanity outside.

This monk figure represents good? and is contrasted with Dan who represents evil. It is the latter part of Elizabeth's soul that has struggled to gain domination over her. In her state of insanity, it is her evil aspect that prompts, urges and commands the manifestation of the alter ego. The Sello in the physical, the living Sello was already married "to a large Motswana woman with strangely uncomprehending eye ..." yet the sello in her minds casting and function is single, desirable and a good

company. The truth,however, is that there is hardly any relationship with the physical sello. Head's employment of the comparative; that is the spiritual contextualized against the physical helps to elucidate her subjects as she presents insanity in her work.

Matters of immense social significance are ordinary and simple to the insane. Head points this out when she writes in A Question of Power."Her slowly unfolding internal drama was more absorbing and demanding that any drama she could encounter in Motabeng".p29

In A Question of Power and Maru Head employs the medium of Elizabeth's and Margaret's insanity to question the established concept of God. For her "the title God, in its absolute all powerful form is a disaster to its holder, the all seeing eye is the greatest temptation". As far as Head is concerned there are several hundred thousand people who are God. No one was the be-all and end-all of creation. This is a tacit reference to the christian concept of God and creation. The real gods are

> Ordinary, practical, sane people, seemingly their only distinction being that they had consciously concentrated on spiritual earnings. All the push and direction was towards the equality of man in his soul, as though, if it were not fixed up there, it never would be anywhere else; and her most vivid memories of those souls who stated this with the most impact. Ibid 43

Head ascribes much power to the human heart. She sees it as the seat of God and the heaven of men. In calling this heaven by

different names she redefines the concept of "God", It is the ability to love that makes a "God" out of a man unlike the supreme God who had "the power of assertion and the dominance to the exclusion of other life". There is no God outside man. Head shows in Maru that sanity is often impaired when the gods in the heart of the characters are in conflict rather than in concert. When in conflict a man can be reduced to an innocent three year old. The soul of man as the source of all goodness and evil is not subject to any external God. This accounts for why Maru could receive "a message from the gods who talked to him in his heart". In the opinion of Dikeledi "he was good enough to be God but half the glitter and impact of him in her mind was his earthly position".

Maru understood "the language of the voices of the gods" through this voices

> New kings were arising indeed. The stature and majesty would always be there, but the kings who arose now were those of the soul who could never betray their gods of goodness, compassion, justice and truth. The downtrodden were hearing the message of their humanity who could contain the fury of centuries of oppression and despising? Certainly not the morafis of the world. But people like himself, to whom a little bit of goodness was incompatible with a little bit of greed. There had to be perfection. It had to be almost ready made for use.

The God the whiteman brought denied the people of love as men. This is because "he" excuses their evil by allowing them delegate their responsibilities to him and thus abstain themselves from

blame. Love reconciles the projected split images into a whole healed psyche. The oddness of the human heart is captured in maru's mind, by the activities of Ranko. The mind of men like Moleka, who had been a hateful arrogant man ...", whenever able to transcend the racist divide as he does, appreciate the worth of human life, even if it is for self reasons, have a "heart of gold" the source of which is love. In her thematic explication of love, there is no level, no limit, no boundary to the creative tendencies and the abilities of a distorted psyche. It is only in psychic ambivalence that love is deeply sought, found and appreciated. Creation being a continual process is consequently best exemplified by the continuum of unyielding fragmentary and momentary activities of the demented mind. The juxtaposition of images in the mind of the (demented) characters, hence approaches a unique climatic state, codified for example in medusa."Then from out of himself he projected a man, his replica except that the man is clothed in brown suit out of the fainting away women stepped a powerfully built woman". p 57

Insanity remoulds and remakes people better than they've been through a "god like" engineering which takes place in the soul. In the process of this creation, mystery mixed with magic, hysteria and fantasy are part of the atmosphere in which the insane experience is played out daily.

The introduction of medusa into Elizabeth's congested subconscious is to delineate the unappeasable evil that is a seed

in the human past. The purgation of this evil is achieved not by handling out the responsibility to another but by accepting this evil nature as part of man that needs to be put to death and doing it. In A Question of Power and Maru, the mind is the operating theater of the medusa. The mind is a cauldron of evil yet "how could someone run away from their own mind?", since each time the mind runs away, nervous breakdown results. This is because the individual involved is no longer able to dictate the limit to his actions. The mind of the individual as portrayed in Heads characters are a mirror of actual reality in different spheres of life.

Evil in man underlines and acts as a springboard for the manifestations of racism. The mind is unable to shake it off, for the issue of race or color transcends the physical boundaries between nations. It envelopes the mind with an over-powering sense of fear that paralyses the person involved."People only function well when their lives are secure and peaceful she was like a person driven out of her house while demons rampaged within, turning everything upside down". p49

The issue of race and the inferiority of one to the other not only dehumanized but reduced the blackman to a "boy" and the whiteman to a "boss tyrant". It limits black productive spiritual energy and capacities, this eventually eliminates him physically and spiritually from those essences that emphasizes

his humanism. It is this humanism that Head is concerned with. No wonder she universalizes the issue of race by bringing the African experience to a parallel with that of the German/Jewish debacle.

One of Heads basic endeavour in both A Question of Power and Maru is to "Journey into the soul" of her characters to discover madness as a revelational experience. Through it the future is to be adequately comprehended. The physical manifestation of this experience in outbursts are only a result of long held pent up emotions. The peak is the condition of insanity. Colour bar led to the emergence of defence mechanism that balks at other colours. So each time there is about to be a reapproachment between the races in the text, there is an emergence of deep seated suspicions. This particular observation bears relevance to When the Rain Clouds Gather where Head exposed the inner discord in the heart.

Madness could be therapeutic unlike the general perception and assumption that it is unwholesome and damaging. By turning inward man is able to submerge and defeat external forces that try to push them under.

> Elizabeth looked at the nurse and laughed. She had been thrown powerful life line as though by turning inward, she had found the center of herself was still sane and secure, and that the evils which had began to dominate her mind had a parallel of goodness. p55

In the state of madness "its midnight all time", at this period the mad protagonist is surrounded "by so many fantastic images. Their talking and moving blurs and eventually obliterates the world of real living people. This state of solitariness and alienation from all around is the evidence of what the protagonist need, which only the inner figure can provide.

In elucidating her themes, Head employs the technique of juxtaposition quite often. For instance, she juxtaposes Elizabeth with Eugene. Elizabeth is bound to colour and the inferiority it conferred on her. Eugene on the other hand is able to build a bridge across the racial divide to oppose "death and evil and greed". She juxtaposes constantly the rural with the urban. The rural areas with its life giving and creative ferment is symbolized by Thoko. It gives meaning to life and maintain sanity. The urban areas on the other hand kills and swallows its inhabitants by "picking from them every morsel of sanity".

> Sometimes the horizon rain come sweeping over Motabeng in one enormous white packed cumulus cloud driven by high wind and suddenly emptied itself in one violent, tainting and deafening roar over the village. It seemed to heighten and deepen the rambling labyrinth of her inner life, Which, like the sky of Motabeng in the summer time, swayed and swirled with subterranean upheavals. In moments of vast expansive peace like that evening, she liked to imagine that she was gathering all the threads of life together and holding them in her hands. There was an added touch of

> sound, solid sanity through that one almost day long contact with the family life of the man Eugene.p61

Activities or work serve as mental relievers for Elizabeth in A Question of Power and Margaret in Maru. Elizabeth is involved in the agricultural project, while Margaret is a teacher. Yet this relievers do not suffice to hold their sanity due to racism that tries to put blacks down and pushes them to hatred. The outburst of which is madness.

The relationship between Elizabeth and Camilla in A Question of Power and between Margaret and Dikeledi in Maru exemplifies racism as a minus "to the rightness of the inner life of a person" upon which their own inner life is dependent. In these four characters Head shows that wherever human beings are present, whether white or black, those elements of abnormality; or what is sometimes grossly and unpatronizinly called madness results. These elements accounts for the sometimes quick change in character from friendliness to violence, etc. Madness, therefore, is not an index of racism but could be a response to it

> 'Elizabeth, she panted why don't you wait for me? I've been keeping a look out for you the whole morning. She looked so crazily pathetic that Elizabeth burst out laughing. Camilla nodded her head eagerly and laughed too...
> This veering in feeling - one minute she really loved the half mad woman, the next, she loathed her had a strange parallel in the notes she made in her notebook. p78

Madness is only truly and grandly manifested vis-a-vis relationships that go on between people from different cultures and backgrounds. Without the network of human relationships, like that at the Motabeng Secondary project, it becomes impossible especially in literature to gauge madness. A great implication of being a mad protagonist is that the character experiences societal alienation. This is due to abnormal behaviours unacceptable to society, which the protagonist is unwilling to give up. Elizabeth's alienation is the physical parallels same in her inner man. The results are mythical and mystical figures such as medusa who surreptiously creep in and dominate her mind to fill the isolation. This domination portends only evil since it propels Elizabeth into what Head calls "black unconsciousness". When a character is isolated and alienated as Elizabeth and maru were (for example) and madness results; a dream state is created, this state manifests in the fusion of the state of consciousness and that of unconsciousness into a single state. For the mad protagonist there is no dividing line between unreality and reality, truth and untruth as both fuse into a long continuum of existence.

This continuum forms the basis for any poetic activity. She refers to the mumblings, mutterings etc, from this state of madness as poetry."'poetry' she said, she found that poetry excused any mental ramblings and her understood. He was supposed to say jack and jill went up the hill, out loud. She said it was

all poetry only hers was complicated". p94

By this simplistic statement Head redefines poetry. True poetry is a cross therefore between two paradigms; the sane and the insane, the conscious and the unconscious state. These states are eternally locked in battle in the poetic process and accounts for the criss cross of personalities from the physical to the spiritual realm. To be balanced poetry must contain elements of both. Hence, we have the actual physical sello and his spiritual self. True poetry emerges when the latter dominates the former.

Unfortunately, it is in the dominant aspect of mans fatal personalities that the seeds of evil are sown and nurtured. Offcourse "you don't realize the point at which you become evil. Most of the time the characters alienation and isolation from others make them an open prey to mind dominance by external forces of evil. More importantly, the struggle between good and evil lead to a mental explosion in the characters involved. However the balance of the two in the sane individual helps to maintain sanity.

> But that night, as she brooded on the logic of goodness alone she seemed to think it justified suffering: yes she thought. He has performed some delicate operations. He has seen that evil and good times side by side in the same personality. He has diagnosed the evil, isolated it and ended it. There is no more medusa. p98

It is the achievement of this balance that is sanity. However whether the characters can main such balance most of the time if

not all the time is the big question that Head leaves unanswered.

One tributary of madness in this society is the image of perverse sexual activity such as rape, homosexuality, erotism, orgiastic explosions, etc, that have been accepted as normal. Sexual extrovertism becomes a refuge for an harassed psyche and a defence mechanism.

> It was the nightmare of the slums she had grown up in south Africa, but it never dominated life. Usually small girls got raped, but the men were known. The law caught up with them. Homosexuals were laughing accepted as one of the oddities of life but they never duly disturbed people, perhaps totally normal people don't think about it at all because it isn't their problem. p112

Sexual starvation and the contemplation of the intercourse process are some of the prime reasons for Elizabeth's madness. Because of the social stratification and racial bias this sexual urge which could not be satisfied in the physical realm had to be transposed to a higher supernatural realm where the desire for it becomes an obsession. Her madness becomes a rebellion and a defence against the chauvinistic tendencies of men who were committed to relationships because "they had prostitutes in the background". This is a social metaphor, Head employs, to show that breaks in social relationships creates a mind suffering that evoke pain. Consequently, she embarks on a sampling of the chauvinistic figures (apart from Dan and Sello who were dominant) like father, Half mad Asian man and their effect on the psyche of

Elizabeth.

Sello's green truck which is a symbol of high fertility, is a graphic summary of this sexual tendencies -- in metaphoric tones. Each name head adopts for Dan's seventy one nice time girls have symbolic significance (see Kenneth Little). These are a few of them; Madame loose Bottom, Body beautiful, Madame Squelch Squelch, sugar plum fairy, the womb, Miss pink sugar icing, Miss sewing machine, Miss chopper. So many interpretations to these names are possible but this is not the precinct of this work. Suffice to say, they are a pointer to a relationship between sex and insanity. The price paid for love and sexual commitment is insanity and death; the loss of self. It is deducible that the need of the Dans and Sellos of this world to exploit and reduce the Elizabeth's to the state of object in turn implies an insecurity of their own. This statement about Rochester in Jane Eyre's also applies to Dan and Sello."To preserve his own sexual identity Rochester must rob Jane of hers. He insists on associating Jane with the supernatural then the natural, that is, the sexual" p24

There is a danger of the loss of self when self love and self preservation become secondary to love for another. Marriage and sex for Head as well as Atwood, Bronte, Woolf and Lessings are linked not only to psychological death of the self but it's physical death - this death process proceeds through the beakers of affliction. By the conclusion of Surfacing, however, the protagonist is able to understand that sex includes life as well

as death, that it can at least theoretically be natural and positive as well as mechanically destructive and negative. Head's novels definitely belong in the latter category.

Witchcraft, occult and ritual practices are presented in A Question of Power, A Bewitched Crossroad, and When Rain Clouds Gather. They are an horrific means to madness, since they subject their victims to a cruel and sustained mental eclipse.

> The second social defect is a form of cruelty, really spite, that seems to have its origin in witchcraft practices. It is a sustained pressure of mental torture that reduces its victims to a state of permanent terror and once they start on you they don't know where to stop until you became stark raving mad. Then they just grin. p137

Dan as an instrument of this form is a symbol of the very elements that combine to affect Elizabeth's mental balance. This is concretized in sex, homosexuality, perversions of all kinds, witchcraft and a super staying power of his elemental soul. Now when such personality as this dominates an individual's soul what takes place can better be imagined. Witchcraft and the paranoia it creates are a veritable source of madness, for they assault the mind. Mrs Jones so called visitation and care of others is presented only as a camouflage to impart others with her evil schemes. She is the mother of prostitute figures (in the mode of the seventy one nice-time girls) that prey on Elizabeth's sex stained subconscious mind. Prostitution is encouraged by a

witchcraft spiritually engineered evil process.

In conclusion all this activities are withdrawal from the norm, the normal, yet Laing commends this, in his book The Politics of Experience, for him if the world is in truth inhospitable and unhomelike then perhaps withdrawal, in essence, madness, from and in that world is a sane and reasonable method of self preservation. Many African writers majoring on the madness genre(and Head is no exception) seem to agree with this prognosis.

NOTES

1. Mzamane, Mbulelo(1987)"Feminism in House of Hunger". Eldred Durosimi Jones ed African Literature Today (ALT). Vol 13, Heinemann Educational Books.

2. Ogwude, Sophie O.(1989)"An Exile writing on Home: Protest commitment and liberation in the works of Bessie Head". Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

3. Olney, James(1972)Tell me Africa. An approach to African Literature. New Jersey: Princeton University press.

4. Head, Bessie(1972)When the Rain Clouds Gather London: Heinemann.

5. Head, Bessie(1984)A Bewitched Crossroad: An African Saga. Craighall: A. D. Donker (PTY) Ltd.

6. Johnson,Joyce(1990)"A Novelist at the Crossroad: Bessie Head's A Bewitched Crossroad in Kunapipi". Vol 12, No. 3 Pp125-132.

7. Mphalele, Ezekiel(1962)"The African Image". London: Faber and Faber.

8. Rigney, Barbara Hill(1980)"Madness and Sexual Politics in the Feminist Novel". Winconsin: University of Winconsin press.

9.Berger, Roger A(1990)"The Politics of Madness in Bessie Head" in the Tragic life: Bessie Head and Literature in Southern Africa Ed C. Abraham. New Jersey: Africa

World press Inc Pp36-46.

10. Head, Bessie(1971) Maru. New York: The McCall Publishing Company.

11. Head, Bessie(1985) A Question of Power. London: Heinemann.

Ravenscroft.(1976) "The Novels of Bessie Head" in Aspects of South African literature ed Christopher Heywood.London: Heinemann Pp 174 - 186.

The Holy Bible. Ephesians 5:26 P46.

Chapter 3

THE CONFIGURATION OF VIOLENCE

Violence is a grand term that covers every sphere of human endeavour. Violence can be defined as the exertion of psychological or physical force to inflict injury or damage to persons or property. It can also be referred to as the force of strength of psychological or physical action with destructive capacities. The African experience of colonialism inflicted upon the continent's people, a psychological violence. It did this by creating an atmosphere of violence which often degenerated to violent action. This psychological violence was often carried out in collaboration with the elites intellectual and ruling classes who claim to be the guardian of the people's revolutionary intentions. According to Fanon, the psychological dimensions of the violence inflicted by colonialism was much more acute than that of the physical. When the physical damage has been contained or repaired, the psychological damage continues to reverberate within the consciousness of those who had suffered it. However it is crucial and valid to note that not all harmful or destructive acts are violent. Demolishing an old hotel or slapping an hysterical patient cannot fairly be called violent acts. As far as Dick (1979) is concerned, "those acts are violent that exceed certain bounds of normality or propriety.

Where these lies varies from time to time and place to place as social needs and the way of life in which they fit vary". p1[sic]

Violence in this view of things demonstrates the 'real' nature of man, his fundamental disorderliness and will to destruction, his hatred of constraints, his resentment of ideas and ideals and all other artificial construction. Hence the artist, who deals honestly with violence becomes a kind of nose-rubber or mirror holder, someone rubbing the spectators nose in the disagreeable, and holding up a mirror in which he can contemplate the essential filthiness, nastiness and beastliness of mankind or at least unregenerated bourgeois mankind. Violence has many faces, many tributaries. There is the physical, psychological and natural dimensions to the subject of violence. The physical form of violence here manifests itself especially through state of violence and crime. The psychology dimension of violence manifests itself chiefly in the emotional torture (psyche) to which the characters are cornered by forces superior to themselves. Most often, psychological violence is established in human relationships, while natural violence deals with the negative effects of nature on man and his environment.

The origin, source and foundation of violence in Head's texts understudy is located in the political structure. It is from there that violence in other socio-economic spheres of life are motivated and activated. A political set up marked by

oppression and injustice will only naturally keep a hold on power by violence. This statement applies to the physical and psychological manifestations of violence and excludes the natural. Violent acts may be engaged in both by private citizens and agents of the state. As it happens, the sanity of human life is more often violated by the agents of the state than by private citizens. This fact, Mrs Head poignantly depicts in her novels. In A Bewitched Crossroad, a state and situation of physical violence is pervasive. Life is not only violated but it is sustained by violence. Here acts of violence are uncompromisingly brutal. A pecking order form is adopted to carry out this acts. Strong tribes engaged in warfare with weaker ones over-run and defeat them, then subjugate and begin to rule over them. In this state of ferment when nation states were being formed, violence can be viewed as an instrument of change. Killing and being killed were normal in this process. Head does not intentionally glorify violence rather her aesthetic violence is a response and a reflection of the prevailing political violence. Fusion was only possible first via confusion. In A Bewitched Crossroad

> it seemed an unexpected formality but an era of violent changes and upheaval lay ahead for all the tribes. The Sebina were to change their name and place of abode many times. Their lives and destinies were to mirror the anguish and wonder of a new era. p4

Innocence is dead where violence vividly manifest itself. But it is nevertheless not without moral significance that the victims of violence- such as children, mothers, aged people - may very often not deserve to die. violence in A Bewitched Crossroad is quite revolutionary, for without the violence in the text peace will only be a mirage. The establishment of a large empire reduced inter-tribal warfare and concomitantly the casualties from it. In A Bewitched Crossroad, people who were able to carry out violence were either victims of violence themselves or had subjected themselves to self inflicted pain. The truism of this is evident in Shaka's training of his soldiers "Military drill was practiced on a parade ground strewn with spiky thorns to harden and toughen the feet of the warriors who had to stamp these thorns out of sight" p20. He separated his soldiers from normal family life and contact with women, by encamping them in military barracks. This ensured they lost every form of human attachment and relationships able to dullen or weaken their killer instinct. Men alienated, as it were, from all that is able to make life worth living and wholesome are reduced to mere beast without restraint in inflicting harm on others.

Not only Shaka but many of the other tribes led by their leaders such as MaNthatsi of the Batlokwa, amongst others, practiced a scorch earth policy in their war campaigns. They left in their trail blood and destruction. This was the period when "People began to rush upon people and cannibalism became a

way of life". The older of the small, isolated clan based society had been completely destroyed, but out of the chaos, a new order was slowly forming. No matter the degeneracy of this violence, it is essential for social change. The point is that to be morally justified, violence for the purpose of social change must succeed in producing that change. According to Mphalele, for the African blood and violence must attend the birth of a nation or change as they do the birth of every thing else.

Head in her treatment of violence employs the technique of contrast to project the revolutionary capacities of violence; both positive and negative. This comment by Johnson (1990) is enlightening

> The Southern African societies are brought to the foregrounds of the narratives. These represent two different types of social organization and their leaders two opposite ways of exercising power. At once pole are the Ndebele, warlike and violent, and, at the other, are the Bamangwato who under the leadership of Khama III are learning to modify aggressive forms of behaviour and to channel their energies into the creation of a stable polity. The cruelties of the Ndebele leader Mzilikazi visited upon those who lay in his path ...have been highlighted in popular tradition and the Ndebele are thus 'widely feared, hated and despised by all surrounding nations'. p128

Wherever an individual, nation or society is oppressed by another there is bound to be a manifestation of violence. The resultant

effect is often bloodshed, fear, suspicion, hunger and migration amongst others. These effects are very prominent in A Bewitched Crossroad as well as in When Rain Clouds Gather which is concerned with state violence and the response of the people - the victims. The Matenge's, Sekoto's et al will employ the instrument of the state, especially the police, to ensure the loyalty of the people while dispossessing and denying them their rights as citizens. This is a violence perpetrated by the rich and powerful against the weak and the poor. Without anyone to stand up to the status quo for them the masses accept their subjective state.

Later on the entrance of the English man Gilbert Balfour with his emancipating ideas punches hole in the inflated ego of the ruling class. Gilbert's ideas encouraged violence albeit psychological violence in three main directions. Firstly, it gave Sekoto an ample room and opportunity to wage a psychological war against his erstwhile rival and brother; by permitting and legalizing Gilbert intended projects; secondly the intended projects at full and successful implementation means a depletion in the power and Wealth of Matenge and finally it meant absolute loyalty to and support for Sekoto who would have succeeded in monopolizing power and overcoming treachery. It is the people's conscientization, through the knowledge Gilbert makes available to them, that provokes the reaction of the oppressed to the oppressor"Its not colour that divides us, it is an idea - the

goodness of the heart that is lacked". p27

Here again societal transformation is being espoused. The people's reaction was only a natural release, from an unjust social arrangement which stunted and deformed their lives, and denies them liberty and opportunity to enjoy fully their innate skills and power. It is a realization of these that knowledge grants them. This in turn exposes as Jenkwe (1979) puts it.

> The inordinate concern with material acquisition among the south African bourgeois, and the corresponding paucity of humaneness, ...is high-handed violence, and is symptomatic of a society steeped in a quagmire of moral decay p85

The peoples march on the palace of chief Matenge to protest his intransigence, high handedness and his inability to come to terms with the shame it portends, pushes him to commit suicide. In this text, there is a move from psychological violence to actual physical violence. There is no contradictions in the direction of violent actions or activities. The depth or degree of violence in the text is only a reflection of the depth or degree of oppression.

Ofcourse without being unnecessarily ambiguous, it wouldn't be wrong to insist and argue that natural violence such as draught, infertile soils etc - as prominent as in When Rain

Clouds Gather lead to a psychological harassment that becomes an excuse for trying to exercise physical violence. It was Matenges lack of co-operation with Gilbert in the introduction of new grazing technique that made Paulina Sebeso allow her young son go unprotected into the wilderness to graze, there he succumbs to death. Matenges attempt to cover up for this negligence and wickedness of his pushes him to activate the oppressive instrument of state to harass Paulina. His harassment and intimidation of an innocent, evokes the outrage of the people which led to his own violently self inflicted death. He eliminates himself in the public glare. The source of his death? - breakdown in social cohesion due to natural violence. This excerpt from When Rain Clouds Gather make the issues under discussion clearer.

> They had been straining together in one direction for years and Matenge had been straining in the opposite direction, always pulling them down. Because of this they had politely avoided him but today they wanted to see his face when their cattle were dying while his cattle were safe, way up the northern border where a river flowed the year round and the grass was good, salty and green. They wanted to see this man who had all the privilege who had never known a day of starvation in this country of two years of good rain and seven years of drought. They wanted to know what his mood was like after these years of silence and mute disagreement ...He was there through their tolerance ...but they were the people of Golema Mmidi to whom too many tyrant and unscrupulous men had said no, no, no and people like the people of Golema Mmidi could not be hunted, hounded, banished and persecuted forever and forever. p175

This kind of event - the storming of Matenge's palace - that involves violence is seldom justifiable, except in quite extra - ordinary circumstances; this, one would like to submit is one. Violence, whether perpetrated by the oppressed on the oppressor or by the oppressor on himself, as a result of pressure from the oppressed, can only be justified by appealing to some off-setting good that results, since taken by itself, it is merely harmful and aberrant. It is in fulfilling this that Fanon's grandiose claim for the virtues of violence can be assimilated to this scheme and said to have When Rain Clouds Gather in mind.

Violence then ought to be a means to an end. In many cases however, as is quite evident in A Bewitched Crossroad, its continuity and its unappeasable spread, shows it is not. When violence becomes a norm - as in A Bewitched Crossroad where the reader is besieged with images of bloodshed, chaos, destruction, wars, psychological violence; such as witchcraft, terror, disruption of daily rhythm of ploughing, cattle - herding, and hunting - it becomes incompatible with social cohesion.

In A Bewitched Crossroad as well as in When Rain Clouds Gather, each victim of violence becomes momentarily a sort of hero himself, in that behind the surface of a good deal of intense feeling, must be presumed to be going on that which underlines, not his differences from the reader but his kinship. Heads effort in this direction elicits from and achieves an immediacy of response from the reader. It is important to note

that the leaders of these destructive wars were desperate heroes intent only on the preservation and survival of their clans. Head presents in this two texts what Rowland Smith (1976) calls victim stasis and victor stasis - psychological fixations which perpetuate themselves by constant projection outward - 'victim projecting out of himself the making of monster/victor, victor projecting out of himself the making of monstrous victim'. In this environment, where role switching is not hard victim now could become victor the next minute and vice versa. Hero now could become villain the next moment and vice versa. Makhaya in When Rain Clouds Gather fits squarely into this frame in his conflict with Matenge, this also applies to Paulina Sebeso.

The quest for power invariably dictates and approve of the use of violence, not only to attain but also to maintain power.

This excerpts from When the Rain Clouds Gather

> What had made Matenge unpopular in his brothers household - an overwhelming avariciousness and unpleasant personality - soon made him intensely disliked by the villagers, who were, after all, a wayward lot of misfits. Thus, appeal cases from Golema Mmidi were forever appearing on the court roll of the paramount chief - appeals against banishment, appeals against sentences for using threatening and insulting language to a paramount chief. p23

> One thing he was sure of either the young man would be completely destroyed, or he would completely destroy his brother, and he wanted his brother destroyed for all the family feuds and intrigues he had instigated. p24

Sekoto's positioning of Matenge in a volatile society where ideas were crossbreeding; rural/urban, traditional/modern, ensures that he is eventually destroyed. This pictures is also true of A Bewitched Crossroad as it is of When Rain Clouds Gather. In A Bewitched Crossroad different tribes come to a crossroad, while seeking for direction and which road to take to the next stage of their destiny, are arrayed in conflict against other tribes seeking for same."War, and it seemed unending, became the order of the day. Men once said they counted their years by the number of harvest they reaped. Now they counted their years by the wars they fought" p22.

The physical violence that is manifested in gross destruction and annihilation of properties and lives is only a reflection of a perversely dark evil in the psyche of many of the characters; Moshoeshoe, Shaka, Dingiswayo, Mzilikazi etc. Generally until the emergence of Khama III in A Bewitched Crossroad, all the treaties and agreements signed were only documents to perpetrate further violence. It was this desire to achieve powerful nation states status that brought most of the nation states into agreement with the colonialist and eventually ensnared them. The violence of the whiteman on the blackman (apart from its physical dimension) is then carried out with great subtlety. One of these subtle means was the imposition of christianity on the people thus violating their psyche world view balance. The inaccessibility of this new religion to many

sentiments of the people and the emotional attachments to the sentiments that had existed as well as the force by which it was imposed on the people raised many questions regarding its rightness. The use of christianity to perpetuate heinous human right abuses, atrocities and violence called to question its sincerity and created an undercurrent of opposition to state power as is symbolized in Maruapula's detestation of Khama III

> The service was often conducted by the chief himself. The gospels and the life of Jesus were the parts of the bible most favoured by the chief. The oldman would follow the proceedings and discourse in silent fascination and wonder, ...but unlike Maraupula, the son of Dalaunda, he did not view the chief as a traitor to custom but rather as one who had been inspired by a new doctrine and clung to it with an unanswering and steady devotion. P98

Inspite of this seemingly disagreeable perceptions of Khama III, Head projects and protects him in her narrative in order to show through his rule of forty eight years (1875 - 1923) the triumph of innate goodness over evil and suggestively the triumph of non-violence over violence.

Change in social order, Head seems to be saying, is absolutely necessary, however it may or may not be violent. It may or can begin with violence but it must not remain violent. Johnson (1990] states that Head

> ... takes the reader only as far as is

> necessary to suggest the emergence of a nation under Khama's guidance and to demonstrate Khama's achievement of the triumph of intellect over passion. Where many African writers have celebrated Shaka, Head projects Khama III, a leader who inclined towards non-violence p127

In When Rain Clouds Gather Makhaya tasted so much violence that his subconscious is saturated with and prepared for same. This violence has its foundation in the apartheid system he had left in South Africa. His was a search to the resolution of violence and the replacement of same with Khama's sort of non-violence. The real violence of the apartheid system lies mainly not in the physical acts of human violation but rather in the psychological. There is a torture of the human heart and mind foisted by the denial of mans inherent right to self - existence, self-fulfillment and self-perpetuation that amounts to, not a lesser degree of violence as the physical act of violence itself. This kind of "violence breeds hatred and hatred breeds violence. Hatred can only be defeated by love and peace," yet the actualization of love and peace seems a farfetched ideal. Here lies the ambiguity of Heads attempt to resolve the conflicts of violence. For if the resolutions in these texts are anything to go by, they are resolutions that carry with them revolutionary dimensions. Kamenka's definition of a revolution, according to Fraser (1974) is

> ... any sharp, sudden change or attempted

> change in the location of political power which involved either the use or threat of violence and, if successful, expressed itself in the manifest and perhaps radical transformation of the process of government, the accepted foundations of sovereignty or legitimacy and the conception of the political and/or social order. p135-136

Nevertheless, there is an important paradox that must be kept in mind here. Bessie Head's art can indeed help to alert one to alarming possibilities, both in groups and individuals. Her presentations of violence can help us understand more fully the nature of various kinds of violators and of attitudes that make for violation: in the long run she helps us to be better able to deal with them. But an essential condition is that we empathize with the perpetrators of violence, however much we may deplore the violences themselves. In concluding, the discussion on violence in A Bewitched Crossroad and When Rain Clouds Gather, one would like to say that there is another form of violence in the texts that is no less important, though it may be less significant than others. This is natural violence. Natural violence is a factor of the harsh environmental condition, in terms of weather and rainfall conditions, in which the people had no choice than to live. The unsuitability of the land for farming or grazing places a lot of pressure on the food production outputs and grazing reserves available to the people. This in turn has the tendency to create friction in social relationships. We see this clearly as the reason for Gilbert's

conflict with Matenge; for the resolution of the problem which nature had created implies the use of equity laws - with regards to agricultural practices, in order that the people's survival might be guaranteed. This is unacceptable to the ruling class. yet the violence that nature wrecks on the people, land and cattle became a strong impetus and encouragement for change. Nature's action on the inhabitants of the communities in the text, tyrannizes their mind - what with all the aridity and barrenness which is symbolic of society - and pushes it into a colossal psychological cul de sac, that culminates in actual physical violence. This kind of violence is not very prominent in Maru and A Question of Power. However, the concern with the process of social evolution, which is a violent one, is central to all of Heads work. Joyce Johtomnson (1990) says

> A Bewitched Crossroad may thus be seen as the final in a series of explorations of Head's major concerns. Moving beyond the problems of the displaced individual in a hostile environment, Head goes on to contemplate the struggle between opposed principles, using whole societies rather than single individuals as her chief protagonist. The preoccupation here is the same as in the novels - the problem of achieving a balance between intellect and passion and between material and spiritual well being. p131

In Maru and A Question of Power, the principal concern of this thesis is not with violence as it reverberates within a social framework as we've seen in A Bewitched Crossroad and When Rain Clouds Gather, but with violence as it lines the inner

recesses and consciousness of the characters that people the texts. Violence is provoked here, first not from an outward spark, but by an inner one that revolts at being psychologically deprived. However, whether in the latter or former the ultimate aim is social evolution.

Fraser (1974) agrees that Hans Toch's observation in violent men is very crucial and significant for the present endeavour in unveiling violence in Maru and A Question of Power. According to him "the concern with violence is directed at a myth. It demands an ocean where there are islands; it constructs a monolith in place of diversity, it calls for formulas to cover complexities; and it presumes cure-alls where we have no diagnosis". Head persistently endeavoured to present her characters in these novels in such a way that we empathize both with the victims (Elizabeth in A Question of Power and Margaret Cadmore in Maru) and the victimizers (Dan/Sello in A Question of Power and Maru/Moleka in Maru). This is aimed at exploring the myth that is violence. The basic idea, it seems in adopting this method of explicating violence is to show that both victims and victimizers are products of a clash between the good and evil strains/streams which both (victim and victimizers) possess. For it would not be possible for the victims to be preyed upon, if there were no flaws that connote "evil" in them, whether natural or man-foisted. Neither will it be possible for the victimizers to "devour" if they had not been saturated with evil. Each time

evil overwhelms good violence will automatically result.

Consequently, in Maru and A Question of Power there is a threatened and often carried out gross invasion of the private lives of these individuals through their psyche, by violent men. More often than not, the characters psyche are raped and murder and suicide become a real possibility. Sex is the one key instrument through which psychological violence is birthed, and visited on the unwary characters (especially the victims Elizabeth and Margaret) in the text. Moleka's wanton approach towards sex manifests in his boastfulness as to his sexual prowess and the number of paternity cases in which he is involved. His sexual recklessness becomes an instigator for actual physical combat among his women, who are overtaken by a spirit of jealousy. It must be borne in mind that the truth about sex violence, like politics, is that it offers a false - lifeline to man as it afflicts him.

> Look I'm going to show you how I sleep with B ... she has a womb I can't forget. When I go with a woman I go for one hour. You can't do that you haven't got a vagina .... the panic stricken Dan pulled up his pants too late. He said: look, I'm uplifted I'm changed. p13

Here the characters indulge in violent, tedious sordid sexual intercourse; (in A Question of Power this extends to the dream and hallucinatory states) as if their very life depended on it. Through sex the character "seek release, to purge himself of

all the pent-up emotions wrought by hunger, deprivation and oppression". This comment by Mzamane on Marechera's House of Hunger bears some relevance to our discourse.

> Despite the sexploitation in which most of his male characters gloat, Marechera himself seem to hold strong feminist views. The central character in 'House of Hunger' paints grim pictures of wife-beating, rape and other crimes against women which are rampant in the ghetto p207

In A Question of Power the direction of this sexploitation is inward rather than outward. It satisfies an outward insatiable physical sexual frustration which the female characters experience as a result of barriers in terms of race, wealth, e.t.c. Yet for the female characters, the male penis thus becomes the symbol of domination, of masculine violence and subjugation of the female gender. Sex becomes a way to die, and yet in this pain, the source of rebirth.

> Sello said some strange things about women. He said he killed them. Was it sheer coincidence. There was an unpleasant sort of man who constantly waylaid Elizabeth in the village, his eyes full of meaningful glance. He always began. I want to tell you something about Sello, then he'd look over his shoulders. I come from the same place as you, and they want to tell us we can't fight their people. I don't care. If I find a man in bed with my wife, I'll fight him ... Sello referred to the matter himself. Its quite true. He found me in bed with his wife. I felt sorry for the man but I had to kill his wife. She was like a raging beast. She's got harmless now.

Coition here is described as sordid activity likened to a "killing business". It robbed the woman of her dignity, takes away her humanity and reduces her to an object only. The psychology of the victim is affected "killed and killed and killed again". The rawness of Head's language in A Question of Power is parallel only by few writers on the African continent. Sex and the organs involved especially the vagina becomes a cauldron of violent collisions and activities. This inherent violence is responsible for the seeming obscurity and disjointedness in the narrative. Elizabeth's sexual violation in her mind conjures the most obscene scenes. Not only is Dan a protagonist of violence by virtue of his great "sexploitation", the factor of the females being sexually insatiable is also noteworthy. These insatiable females are a product of a society where the moral base is broken, where survival (emotional and financial) is struggled for through lesbianism, homosexuality and prostitution. The first is found in Medusa's phantoms on Elizabeth, the second is located in the character of Sello in the brown suit and Dan's seventy - one nice time girls symbolize the estate of prostitution. These act out on two levels, the surface and reality levels, as a form of violence on Elizabeth's psyche. The configuration of power in this texts lay in the harassment of the weak by the strong.

Isn't it strange that Margaret Cadmores; the Masarwas salvation came from a quarter least expected. Margaret's open

declaration and affirmation of her Masarwa origin pitches her against the whole community, and turns their hatred towards her. She is mocked, stoned, jeered, booed and spat upon as a result. Violently psychologically harassed and physically embarrassed, she is delivered only by a sexual desire of the chief's son Maru for her. Sex in this context as the progenitor and sustainer of violence and violent activities has several dimensions to it. Grover (1990) attempts to show this by explaining the difference in sexualism between Moleka and Maru.

> This test of the two heroes takes on interesting form. Moleka is the first to fall in love with Margaret but is in the need of the most reforming. He is widely known as a great womanizer in the village, and his passion for love is regarded as sexually dangerous, even violent. Moleka's danger comes from the fact his physical passion is not equalled by emotional commitment.
> ... This is not, however, the case with Maru. From the first he is described as the more emotional and soulful one ... "Maru always falls in love with his woman". Maru is also much patient when it comes to testing his love for Margaret against the racial prejudice in his society. p102

At both levels sex is threatening, mechanical and destructive - for it instead of fostering social cohesion becomes an instrument to break it down. What seems to be responsible for this depraved sexualities in the first instance is the factor of racism, whose walls have hindered blacks from sexual - self expression with peoples of other colours. Another factor is

racialism which had created suspicions in relationships amongst blacks as is evident in Maru. Elizabeth's background itself - starting from the circumstances of her birth - through to her growth to maturity in an insane society so vigorously violated her. For what greater violence can be inflicted on a child, like it was on Elizabeth, than being rejected, accepted and handed from one family to another simply because she was coloured - not pure. Her psyche was certainly violated - she lived in a beer Hall as a child and hungered for food, this is in addition to being picked on by other children and staff at school. Hers was a chequered childhood. At Adulthood still being trailed by sorrow and misfortune, she marries another product of apartheid violence. He was "a gangster just out of jail. He said he had thought deeply about life while in prison". His too was a chequered life marked by deprivation that pushed him to crime. Ezekiel Mphalele's comments about such a character as this is instructive and its implication on the projector (the writer) is no less significant.

> This kind of story is one of hundreds the South African underdog writes. He lives inside violence, breathes it, feed on it, whether it is vindictive or wanton robbery, murder, thuggery, sum up his environment, where Negro fights his own kind as well as against whites and even turns his violence on himself. p187

The sum total of this all was that Elizabeth was already

psychologically crushed and fine-tuned for the latter violation of her sexuality and mind. However it seems; the worst violence ever on the individuals were being pushed into self-hate, self-pity, self-denigration of the worst order.

> She was essentially a product of the slums and hovels of South Africa people there had an unwritten law. They hated any black person among them who "was important". They would say behind the person's back: "Oh, he thinks he's important", with awful scorn. She had seen too many people despised for self-importance, and it was something drilled into her: be the same as others in heart; just be a person.

The incompleteness creates a sense of insecurity that propagates violence in a pecking order. No wonder Elizabeth's husband and Dan are child molesters dissipating their ego on the weakness of children.

NOTES

1. Dick, James C(1979) Violence and Oppression Athens: University of Georgia Press.
2. Fraser, John(1974) Violence in the Arts London: Cambridge University Press.
3. Johnson, Joyce(1990)"A Novelist at the Crossroad: Bessie Head's A Bewitched Crossroad. Kunapipi Vol. 12 No. 3.
4. Head, Bessie(1972) When Rain Clouds Gather London: Heineman.
5. Head. Bessie, A Question of Power (London: Heinemann, 1985)

6. Head, Bessie(1971) Maru New York: The McCall Publishing Company.

7. Mphalele, Ezekiel(1962) The African Image London: Faber and Faber.

8. Grover, Daniel(1990) "The Fairy Tale and the Nightmare in the Tragic Life: Bessie Head and literature in South Africa ed C. Abraham New Jersey: Africa World Press Inc.

9. Jenkwe, Emmanuel T(1979) "Violence in Post-Sharpville South African Fiction unpublished M.A. Thesis, A.B.U. Zaria.

Chapter 4

MADNESS AND VIOLENCE

Madness and violence are intricately linked in the artistic endeavour of Bessie Head as evidenced in When Rain Clouds Gather, A Question of Power, Maru and A Bewitched Crossroad: An African saga, the various dimensions will be exhumed through an examination of the place of characterization and social background. This will indicate the points of convergence and departure between madness and violence.

This relationship between madness and violence can be appraised from four angles. Violence, at one level, can precipitate and activate madness, at another there is no recourse to madness. From a third angle, madness in a measure, can degenerate into a perpetration of violence. Finally, there are other forms of madness, that are mild and do not end in violence.

In the first category the violence is psychological as evidenced in A Question of Power, while in the second, violence may likely be physical as presented in A Bewitched Crossroad. In the third category, madness that lead to violence is often intensive, enervating and wild. Madness in the fourth category is often mild and neurotic, - the individual withdraws and wrecks psychological violence on himself.

All these categories are well represented in the texts under

study. The geographical and mental constraints on the south African, in an oppressive political climate, portends a tiresome notion and nature of life. Gradually, we become aware understandably in Bessie Heads art of an obsessive reliance on violence for the progress of the plot.

Her allegory of violence in "Ghetto life" give a concretely realized story of life in a particular Southern African society. This comment on La Guma's writing is relevant to this discourse on Head ...

> there is a difference between the use of violence for political comment in this work, and the glorification of violence for the sadistic pleasure of the reader which can only result in the cheapening and simplification of human emotions.

A contextual and even textual relationship exist between madness and violence in the political, cultural and socio-economic milieu in these texts. This is generated by individuals who unable to achieve self-expression become insane from time to time. It is this state of insanity that partitions society and causes them to wreck havoc and violence on themselves.

In A Bewitched Crossroad there is a link between the self-inflicted violence of the people and the collapse of their corporate psychic defence, which can be linked closely to the issue of land. Land occupies a central position in the cosmo-psychic relations of a people with their environment and other peoples. Being disposed of their land led to a cosmic

dislocation as evidenced in Tumbale's Madness. He challenges the "gods" and endangers the cosmic balance of their world. The result of his action is war precipitated among the different tribal groups by unseen forces.

The physical violence is often accentuated by madness in the individual life. For example, Shaka's utter disregard for both friends and foes pushes him into a state of absolute madness. He becomes hallucinated and paranoid about losing power, this increases his disregard for the lives and properties of his enemies. His scorch-earth policy, and his persistent murder of his political enemies are sufficient attestation to this. The desire for ownership and control of large tracts of land instigated him to further warfare. Violence as a fruit of Madness was a necessary tool in the emergence of kingdoms and in the building of nations.

Intrigues and treachery affected the power structure and often manifested in actual physical violence. As a result, mistrust, mental fatigue, hallucinations and phantasmagoria is created. The characters become intolerable and unresponsive to criticism, correction and the influence of others. Head in A Bewitched Crossroad writes "on the death of Malope, Kwena became chief. Kwena proved to be extremely jealous of his brothers, Ngwato and Ngwaketse. War and conflict broke out between them and Ngwato and Ngwaketse, together with their people seceded from the tribe to found independent Chiefdoms". p40

The madness of Cecil J. Rhodes is rooted in greed for wealth and power. His disregard for the "inferior" natives, who he saw as fit only to be used and killed, coupled with his use of treachery and trickery to become a power broker in the region are evidences of his greed. His collision with other interests in the mad-rush for gold and diamond rich lands turned the whole area into a field of blood-spilling and destruction. Rhodes "built a power base for himself as representing the unity of British and Afrikaner Boer interest in the Cape ... and it was his boast ... "I am worth twenty millions". p149

The prevalence of violence in a society as evidenced in the massacres of innocent peoples in A Bewitched Crossroad, created mental uproar for individuals through a "consistent" mental torture. Chaotic atmospheres like this often results in economic stagnation and its effects pushes men into strange and abnormal behaviour,"They started to eat their dogs, then they ate their sandals, then their cloaks. Desperate with anxiety Moshoeshoe appealed for help to former allies".

A complete state of mental impairment arose as the peoples psyche was adjusted to accommodate the violence. This injection of madness furthered violence. Not surprising therefore is the pervasiveness of violence in A Bewitched crossroad. The generations born into it are infected with madness and have to further the violence in order to ensure their own survival.

Khama IIIs reforms, though not outwardly carried out with

blood and fire, was in every way a violent one. It harassed, violated and undermined the culture and tradition of his people by subsuming it to his newly found christian faith. This psychological violence, through decrees had a great impact on existing traditions and institutions such as beer drinking and the bogadi. The people unable to understand what was happening become paranoid and suspicious of Khama's leadership and consequently broke the laws of the state. Yet out of this "violence" and the madness it "engendered" in some peoples psyche evolved a quiet revolution towards sanity and non-violence. However, inspite of its seemingly great advantages cultural realignment created new problems of societal directions.

> The whole town was divided into those who were in favour or against bogadi; but in a conciliatory way as the appeal of the chief had been thought provoking ... Bogadi is one of our oldest customs. I cannot see how we can abolish it without disruption to our national life. p167-168

The result is a nation divided and opinions do not concur anymore. Maruapula's inability to adapt himself to this wheel of change led to his eventual demise

> Maruapula died with unexpected suddenness. A day prior to his death he seemed in good health, busy with his everyday chores. During the night he awoke moaning with a fearful, stifling pain that gripped his chest. By dawn he was dead. p178

Another incident that clearly elucidates the relationship between violence and madness is the story of Hepburn's mental breakdown which affected the relationship between him and Khama. "Strangely his illness vented itself against Khama with whom he had been close and friendly for twenty years"

> Hepburn began making irrational demands and behaving in an irrational way. He approached Khama and abruptly demanded that the christians be separated form the heathens and live apart from the tribe ... he publicly denounced Khama for interference in church affair and for thwarting his wishes. The state had too much power and there should be separation between state and church. p177

Human nature is sometimes much more precarious than even those of the wild beast. Man's every motive no matter how thinly disguised is often first and foremost selfish. Hepburn's insanity and eventual death deprived Khama III of an astute adviser and friend. His absence quickly opened up holes of intrigues and treachery in the walls of the rulership of Khama, which had potentials to engender bloodshed and violence. In A Bewitched Crossroad Head writes

> There was never only one intrigue on the go in the Bamangwato capital but several at the same time ... Several of the royal brothers Raditladi, Seeletso, Mphoeng and others, declared themselves publicly ... and attempted to topple Khama. They hid their fang once it was ascertained that hepburn was ailing. Now they seized upon this period of uncertainty over the destiny of the protectorate to attempt to topple him once more.
> The year 1876 saw the introduction of major

> reforms in Bamangwato society. People became accustomed to that quiet, decisive voice announcing reform after reform ... The initiation ceremonies ... were abolished as were the rituals for rainmaking and the harvest thanksgiving ceremony ... There was humour and delight in the situation. The people appeared to be completely the victim of that stern, austere, ascetic man on the surface they presented a silent book of unquestioning support, saying neither yea or nay to each new abolition or reform. But the people were not extreme as their ruler...P55

Khama III's "madness" was reacted to by the peoples subtle rebellion against cultural uprootment and subjugation. Apart from their culture no matter how primitive, the people lost identity, and social order collapsed. The transposition of an individual's conception of political and social organization autocratically on the society, is a signal for an impending conflagration and doom. We equate Khama III with the 'mad' as we do Shaka, Mzilikazi, and other warrior kings. They all had a perchant for the dictatorial where the first advantage of power is to the dictator himself. This recourse as in A Bewitched Crossroad can portend some good for people under their rule.

In When Rain Clouds Gather the approach is different. Here a psychological warfare is carried out by the characters on each other often with neurotic consequences as the mental balance of the individual concerned is deeply upset. Insanity in relationships resulting from an attempt to maintain the status quo partitions and alienates men from each other causing them to

wreck violence on themselves. This is manifest in the class distinctions in the text. At the top we have the elite ruling class; the Sekotos, the Matenges, the George Appleby-smith, and the Joas Tsepes - these are the decision makers, who wield the instrument of state as an instrument of oppression. They exercised some measure of violence through the judiciary and the police. Matenge, uses the power conferred on him, by virtue of his position to punish, every opposition to his rule of greed and avarice. Joas Tsepe is a sycophant whose main means of livelihood is deception. The main thrusts of the argument is that violence is not an end in itself. The struggle for power amongst this class affects the economy, and the life of the people, of Golema Mmidi.

The proletariat class are not only economically incapacitated by the greed, self-aggrandisement and economic blunders of the aristocratic class but also bear the brunt of police intimidation and judicial violence. Consequently, the people undergo a mental torture that pushes them to dislodge the violent Matenge. A case of insanity leading to violence. Insanity in the sense of a split-second loss of mental obedience to the norms of state laws. They embark on a non-violent popular action against the violent Matenge. Their madness achieves its end. Matenges suicide in a fit of madness attests to this.

Men like Makhaya who had experienced neurotic afflictions and physical violence in South Africa often know the order of

violence. It is only for him a natural response and release for a psyche that is jolted and jagged by confusion and suspicion, that account for Heads disguised use of the private inner lives of the characters to give us an understanding of the outburst of physical violence, whether mild or severe.

The economic crisis that led to a breakdown in social order and societal cohesion - the massing together of the oppressed masses in response to Matenges judicial violence against Paulina Sebeso - is an attempt to bridge the psychic gulf that has emerged by the reason of this social partitionings. The attempt succeeds only to the extent that it wrecks a form of spiritual violence against Matenge's psyche that cuts off his psychic links and pushes him to commit suicide. By his death the community purges itself of its psychic confusion, though again Matenge's death only marks the beginning of the demise of the self-motivated aristocrats of his category. Ogunyemi (1986) comments

> The villagers confrontation stresses a community of feeling as they match Matenges sorcery with resilient inner power. They are not riotous (physical violence) yet they exercise their own mysterious power or plain will power (psychological violence) on Matenge with the result that in a moment of panic and insanity he hangs himself. As a scapegoat figure Matenge's hanging purges the land of the evil associated with droughts.

At the center are the middle class well represented in Gilbert, who, disillusioned and disenchanted with western ways of living and doing things, leaves his native England in search of

a closer kinship with nature as a volunteer in Botswana. He soon identifies himself with the people, their problems and aspirations. His search to bring about the needed changes unknown to him carries with it revolutionary implications. Consequently, he becomes an instigator - through his "insanity" or "abnormality" - for the initial breakdown in social cohesion between the ruled and the rulers. His arrival in Golema Mmidi also represented the beginning of an awakening in the people to new knowledge.

> Before Gilbert came .. the chief ... was the big cattle speculator of the village ... On this business our chief became very rich, then along came Gilbert with a new idea; the cattle co-operative belongs to the people and each member is to get a fair price. To get this fair price each beast is weighed on a scale and the owner is paid the same live weight as would be given the abattoir; seeing this good fortune the whole village formed the cattle co-operative putting our chief out of business. p26

The effort of Gilbert to liberate the people from their oppression and exploitation albeit unknowingly forces Matenge to exercise his judicial prerogative to banish Pelotona. Pelotona, protests to chief Sekoto who upholds his protest against Matenge as part of his own struggle to hold on to power. Matenge is humbled. But evil is like a cancer that grows bigger and bigger and bigger, and despite being humbled like this several times Matenge's push towards self-destruction is unhindered.

Makhaya's decision to join hands with Gilbert to address and

remove archaic farm practices in order to prevent and limit erosion and drought accelerates the society towards a long-awaited headlong collisions amongst the people. Dictatorship, here is less successful than as in A Bewitched Crossroad, ultimately by virtue of the nations independence the chiefs too were subject to higher authorities. Gilbert's insistence that only a dictatorship will move the society forward, is intriguing and contradicts his emancipatory activities. Dictatorship as far as Makhaya is concerned will often eventually degenerate to oppression. Makhaya's disagreement with Gilbert on this area marks a point of departure in their convergence.

Pertinent and noteworthy, in this study of the relationship between madness and violence, as offshoots one of the other, is that each society determines what constitutes madness and what constitutes violence.

Often the societal parameter for madness or abnormality is to the victims of such parameters a form of violence against them. The story of Mabo in A Bewitched Crossroad and the story of Mma - Baloi in When Rain Clouds Gather are two clear examples. Mabo is abandoned to die outside a town because of her nervous disorder. Mma-Baloi is accused of practicing witchcraft simply because she lived a secret "mysterious life" and received strangers who were secretive about their dealings. As a result she was almost "torn to pieces" - "Chief Sekoto was silent for sometimes. The insanity of mankind never ceased to amaze him".

Violence like this one are precipitated by ignorance rather than madness. It was later discovered that the deaths for which the old woman Mma Baloi is accused were actually caused by medical problems.

> ... the doctor arrived. His evidence was brief and to the point. Yes, it was true, he said. There had been a surprising number of child deaths in the village of Bodibeng and death in each case had been due to pneumonia; yes, he said, he had performed a post-mortem on the body of a young woman ... she died of a septic womb due to having procured an abortion with a hooked and unsterilized instrument. He would say that the septic condition of the womb had been of three months duration. p52

This medical report advises Sekoto's final judgement, that frees the old woman and indicted her enemies; the people of Bodibeng whom Sekoto describes as "suffering from the derangement of the brain"

In When Rain Clouds Gather as in A Bewitched Crossroad, Bessie Head is concerned with the issue of violence done to traditions and traditional beliefs of the people by Christianity which violated their psyche yet it is true that christianity produced some positive changes and freed the people from beliefs hitherto due to ignorance in the community. Aside from this, Head would want us to believe, the christian religion laid no new foundations rather it only "adorn and enrich her own originality of thought and expand the natural kindness of her heart". For

Head speaking through Makhaya, the madness of the christian religion lay in its "contradictions" which sanctions and permits unbridled utilisation of violence as an instrument of those subject to it.

> The philosophy of love and peace strangely overlooked who was in possession of the guns. There had been love and peace for sometime on the continent of Africa because ... the blackman had been captivated by the doctrines of christianity. It took them centuries to realize its contradictions, and Mma-millipede's generation was the last of the captivated generations. The contradictions were apparent to Makhaya, and perhaps there was no greater crime as yet than all the lies western civilization had told in the name of Jesus Christ. It seemed to Makhaya far preferable if it did without christianity and christian double talk, fat priests, golden images, and looked around at all the thin naked old men who sat under the trees weaving baskets with shaking hands. People could do without religions and Gods who died for the sins of the world and thereby left men without any feeling of self-responsibility for the crimes they committed. This seemed to Makhaya the greatest irony of christianity. It meant that a whiteman could forever go on slaughtering blackmen simply because Jesus Christ could save him from his sins. Africa could do without a religion like that. p134

This passage summarizes Heads basic conception of the christian religion as a factor in madness and a generator of violence.

Madness and violence intricately linked have a strong bearing in the relationship between men and women. One often leads to the other as men and women interact. Strains in

relationships occasioned by suspicions and the perchant for polygamy among the men and polyandry among the women - creates a psyche disturbance for individuals here. Here sex is a free-for-all-affair and marriage "vows" are not considered breached as a result of the "act".

Against this background of insanity through sexual perversion, Head counterpoises, the fidelity of and unwillingness to share their men, of Paulina and Maria with the general promiscuity prevailing in Golema Mmidi community. No wonder Maria is seen as hard to get and her father asks the question, would Maria never love a man? And about Paulina, Head says "they all had permanent lovers or husbands while Paulina Sebeso had none, and even a tradition was formed about her. A few men had said she was too bossy. Their character is set up as commendable and worthy of emulation, considering that infidelity in the political and social structure had become a norm rather than an exception. Mma Millipedes illustrates this graphically

> Over the years, Mma-millipede had traced two distinct relationship women had with men in her country. The one was purely physical relationship, it caused no mental breakdown and was free and casual, ... The other was more serious and more rare. It could lead to mental breakdown and suicide on the part of the woman, because, on the one hand, it assumed that the man was worthy of adoration, while in reality he was full of shocks and disappointments; and on the other, this adoration assumed the proportions of a daily diet of a most dangerous nature. Since Mma Millipede had

> to sew the funeral garments, she had come to dread the latter type of relationship and gave preference, against her conscience to the former. Surely she reasoned, it was far better to have a country of promiscuous women than a country of dead women? p100

Paulina's search for an end to her physical frustrations, her blindingly strong desire to own a man exclusively, prevented her from having lovers and asserted itself over her physical desires. Head vitrolises on the relationship between men and women underscores her concern with the characteristics of insanity that accompany love relationships. "And even all the excessive lovemaking was purposeless, aimless, just like tipping everything into an awful cesspit where no one really cared to take a second look. And Paulina was too proud a woman to be treated like a cesspit".

A Question of Power attempts to elucidate the configuration of power. It touched on the fundamental relationship in offshoot dimensions of madness and violence. Violence is the instrument of power whether physical, spiritual or material. Madness is often the effect of the experience of power. In A Question of Power the relationship are sadistic masochistic and certainly not mutual. Their foundations is built on the domination of on by the other pushing the other into a state of insanity - which is in itself not an end but rather a means to an end; the purgation of the soul. Whenever power becomes an issue - psyche and psychic forces are released and come into conflict amongst those

individuals who established contact one with the other. The sparks from the conflagration ignite the madness of the subsequent character whose psyche ground is the theater for the on-going warfare for domination. This is clearly exemplified in the characters of Dan and Sello, this two represent good and evil respectively, locked in battle for supremacy over their victim. Elizabeth is imparted with the "mad virus". Elizabeth is a woman abandoned by her husband, and with a child to take care of. she is thus a physically sexually starved and frustrated individual, whose only craving becomes a cancer to her psyche and alienates her from actual physical reality. This desires becomes a door through which psychic influences from Dan/Sello are channeled to wreck domination on her. Sex, which naturally speaking is the source of life, in the case of Elizabeth thus becomes the source of her "death".

Consequently, the sexually starved droughty psyche of Elizabeth becomes the stage for acting out her physical sexual frustration and satisfying it at the elemental level. The means to ensuring this satisfaction are the thunderbolts of Medusa, hurled at her from time to time. This violates her and ensures her compliance to it. These thunderbolts which Medusa inflicts on Elizabeth are also indicative of lesbianic tendencies in the sexually starved woman.

> Medusa was smiling. She had some top secret information to impart to Elizabeth. It was

> about her vagina. Without any bother for decencies she sprawled her long black legs in the air; and the most exquisite sensation travelled out from her towards Elizabeth. It enveloped Elizabeth from Head to toe like a slow, deep sensors bomb. It was like falling into deep, warm waters, lazily raising one hand and resting in an heaven of bliss ... Medusa's next assault pulled the ground from right under Elizabeth's feet. She fell into deep hole of such excruciating torture, that, briefly, she was stark raving mad. p44.

Violence and madness in intercourse, are prerequisite for the evolution of the soul. (The text, is replete with examples of such foisted on Elizabeth.) The maintenance of the power of these forces over the souls of their victims, along with the insanity of the victim become a metaphor of actual political power within the Motabeng community as a microcosm of the African Society after independence. In the unfolding of this metaphor, the poor and ruled become the victims of the thunderbolts - Judiciary, p greedy rulers. The former experience the madness unleashed by the violence of the latter. Violence and madness in inter-course have deep mythical origins with profound connotations to our physical world.

> There was a strange parallel in her observations to mankind's myth - they began to seem vividly true. Nearly every nation had that background of mythology - looming, monstrous personalties called the Gods; personalities who formed the base of their attitudes to royalty and class personalities whose deeds are hideous and yet who assumed powerful positions presumably because they

> were in possession of thunderbolts, like the Medusa. P.40.

Elizabeth from childhood becomes a victim of violence as a result of the insanity of her mother. Elizabeth's own insanity is not genetic or inherited. It is rather an off shoot of violence. In Elizabeth's insanity - a picture of the violence that reverberates through the corridors of power is produced. This violence creates in the mind of the subjects mental torture. The unparalleled psychological violence in Elizabeth's psyche thus parallels same in the larger society.

The social background in the text is very important for the enunciation of this parallels, hence its significance to this study. The apartheid policy in south Africa and its effect on other southern African societies, especially Botswana, cannot be over emphasized. This policy of racial discrimination which permitted and encourage segregation in the Motabeng locale put the coloured person (with Elizabeth as a parody of Head) at the crossroad. Hybrided by her origin she fitted in neither with blacks nor whites. Racial discrimination then is in itself a form of violence which invites a two-prong response in the text; further violence or madness or both.

> So many deeper insights had been unfolding before her which provided clues as to what moved men like Eugene to oppose deaths and evils and greed, and surround themselves with a creative ferment ... Had the man, too, looked on a deep evil of racial hatred

> and broken down and cried? ...; the evils overwhelming her were beginning to sound like South Africa from which she fled. The reasonings, the viciousness were the same, but this time the faces were black and it was not local people it was large looming, soul personalities p.57

Since the social background produces hatred and strains in inter-racial relationships, "the real battle front was living people, their personalities, their treatment of each other. A real living battle of jealousy, hate and greed was more easily understood and resolved under pressure than soaring mystical flight of the soul".

> Elizabeth looked at her with anguish. Human relationships with her were starkly black and white. She hated in a final way, loved in a final way. She had spent all her life running away from the type white person like Camilla. They drew all the attention of life to themselves, greedily, hungrily. Her inner life was very dependent on the rightness of the inner life of another, and she had been wilting under the strain of Camilla's company. p77

Maru one of Heads most intriguing and brilliantly woven novel is a thesis on racialism and racial discrimination amongst people of the same colour who claim superiority one over the other. Basically we are concerned with madness and violence that ensues as a result of the relationship between peoples of different caste, class and social background.

The insinuation by other ethnic Botswanians that the

Marsawas were an inferior race, dictated their actions towards them. This act of violence on the psyche of the Marsawa people can be perceived from the psychological to the physical continuum, especially in violence as exemplified in the experiences of Margaret. The state of alienation that results from violence inadvertently also lead to self-withdrawal as evidenced by Margaret's unusual question. In condition like this energies are released to propel the emergence of the creative muse. Head introspects into her characters to reveal the veins of madness that resulted from racial violence. Outright discrimination based on their tribal origin or skin lead to violence. It is a factor of fear and lack of self confidence, incubated in madness

> ... of all things that are said of oppressed people the worst things are said and done to the Bushmen. Ask the scientists. Haven't they yet written a treatise on how Bushmen are an oddity of the human race, who are half the head of a man and half the body of a donkey? Because you don't go poking into the origins of people unless they are animals or dead.
> Sometimes ago it might have been believed that words like 'kaffar' and 'nigger' defined a tribe or else how can a tribe of people be called Bushman or Marsawa? Marsawa is the equivalent of 'nigger' a term of contempt which means, obliquely, a low filthy nation. p11-12

Margaret's "madness" so to speak lies in her identification with this "contemptible" and highly despised "sub human beings". Her identification with her people and her preference to being

classified with them rather than with the coloured or white, invokes violence against her, and alienates her from the mainstream of society with which she is initially classified by virtue of her background. She becomes an object of abuse and persecution. These abuses become for her a detergent that purges and cleanses her of the stigma of inferiority, into which her identification with her people has marked her. In this way, she begins to apprehend her own humanity. Through her action, though unknown to her, she causes Maru and Moleka,s malevolent spiritual capacity for violence to wreck their cosmic world, to change its course. Maru jettisons his right to the throne for Margaret only to later reclaim it. We can safely submit that one act of insanity becomes a trigger for a series of violent acts, action and statement.

> It was like slap in the face. The statement was so final, as though she did not want to be anything else. I had given her a loophole. Coloureds are just trash, but at least could pass as one. It would've saved an awful lot of bother. p44

There is a note of finality and fatality in this comment by Ranko over Margaret's attitude to her persecution and abuse. Through the sexual attitudes of the characters Moleka and Maru especially in their relationship with women, Head makes a rather gruesome commentary about madness and violence as off-shoot of the other. Sex, here, has a strong link to the psychological imbalance which the characters suffers and thus become a means of assuaging it.

> The clue to Moleka and Maru lay in their relationship with women. They were notorious in Dilepe village for their love affairs and the opposing nature of their temperaments as clearly revealed in the way they conducted this affairs. The result was the same: their victims exploded like bombs, for differing reasons. p35

The sex lives of this characters unveil, their mystery and hidden dreams, their tender smile and scheming mind which goes hand in hand, with a beautiful voice turned into a viperous impart that confused their inner man. Consequently especially for Maru "who was a king of heaven" his inner self conflicted with his outer self and his earthly position of a future paramount chief of his tribe. The sensual and the sexual - the moving thighs, the seductively inviting eyes - find a place in Heads reconciliation of madness and violence, that often results from Maru or Moleka's relationship with women and its impact on their relationship as friends. It is the paranoia that grips Moleka, as a result of his relationship that pushes him to the precipint of murder and suicide.

Head employs the goat metaphor in Maru and When Rain Clouds Gather to reflect on the state of man in relationship vis-a-vis their reaction to madness and violence. The idea is that man like the goat could be "a beggar" and at the same time a vicious "blackmailer" ofcourse this creates a need for supernatural means of transformation, "the witch vehicle".

"I have a funny feeling about Sheba",

> Dikeledi would often observe. I think she is a human being in disguise. Have you heard about the witches in this country? They can turn themselves into lions and buffalos. Sheba was once a witch who was starving and turned herself into a goat. She behaves just like a beggar who also is a blackmailer.

This comment by Lieder about the Motifs that occur in the literature of madness is also relevant for our explication of the animal metaphor which head employs:

> Certain motifs that occur in the literature of madness from the fifth century B.C to the present - the identification of the mad with animals by society and by the mad themselves, the hunt as a symbol of their persecution, the concept of reason or insight in madness, the incorporation of an accusing or sustaining deity - are originally symbol portrayals of adaptive psychic mechanisms in the development of the self in its relation to communal life.

The animal motif employed to also generate humour, becomes a tension - releasing technique from the great acidity of her thought, with regards to the points of convergence and divergence of madness and violence.

NOTES

1. Head, Bessie(1984) A Bewitched Crossroad. An African Saga A. D. Donker(PTY) Ltd Craighall .

2. Head, Bessie(1971) Maru New York. The McCall publishing Company.

3. Head, Bessie(1968) When Rain Clouds Gather London: Heinemann Educational books.

4. Head, Bessie(1974) A Question of Power. London: Heinemann Educational books.

5. Ogunyemi, Chikwenje Okonjo(1986) "The Hidden Dimensions of Bessie Heads Novels in Studies in the African Novel ed S. O. Asien and A. O. Ashaolu Ibadan: Ibadan University press.

6. Feder, Lillian(1980) Madness in Literature (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Chapter 5

CONCLUSION

The content of literature in any society is determined by events in that society. Black South African literature mirrors the blackman's experience. It captures the atrocities of apartheid and black response to it. Black literature shows how oppression has created a relational dichotomy between blacks and whites. It is in capturing this actions and reactions conjectured by apartheid that black South African literature becomes an instrument in the liberation struggle. Often the reactions to the preponderance of chaos, discrimination and inequality which apartheid engendered, was neurotical and violent.

Madness and violence emerge as a result of harassed and dislocated psyche/psychic. In Bessie Head's novels many critics have glossed over the deep-seated dimensions to and manifestations of these experiences, thus creating a critical gap which the present study attempts to fill. In this study madness and violence are shown to be distinct but interactive experiences with strong consequences on character revelation. Head's introspection into the inner recesses of the characters, and her neatly engineered social milieu exposes the characters individual experience. In showing the shift from outward to inward, good to

evil, non-violent to violent and vice-versa, we comprehend the structure of madness more easily. This thesis shows that a psyche/psychic breakdown in the individual resulting from this shifts can lead to same in the larger community.

In this study madness and reason are complements rather than irreconcilable opposites. Society loses its normality when overly concerned with the abnormal. Madness is envisaged as a purgative cauldron for the inner psychic conflicts - that results in order - to the purged. The state of the character's soul determines whether a return from psychosis is possible. Some like Matenge and Hepburn never return and they perish. In Head's novels, it has been shown how dictatorial and totalitarian tendencies in individuals are evidences of madness that often destroys social cohesion and led to wars. The refugees, victims of these wars, Head employs as a metaphor of the general insanity of mankind.

Madness manifests as men relate one with the other. These relationships must be mutual to be beneficial, whenever exploited madness results. In examining the issue of relationship, Head introduces a new concept of God; man as "God". This logically bears influence on Head's perception of christianity, as a religion employed by the whiteman in the name of "God", to perpetuate racism, exploitation and dehumanisation of blacks, in order to condition them mentally to accept their inferiority. In this study love, sex and withdrawal into self are articulated as

sanity preserving measures employed by the characters. Consequently, images of perverse sexual activities pervade the novels especially in A Question of Power and Maru, sexual extrovertism becomes a refuge for the harassed psyche.

The manifestation of violence is examined in this study. This study establishes violence as a necessary tool for birth and rebirth in society and shows that psychological violence is much more active in relationship than other forms. The thesis captures the images of violence conjured in Heads novels. In A Bewitched Crossroad and When Rain Clouds Gather violence assume revolutionary proportions. Without effecting any social change violence is useless. Head subscribes to Fanon's argument that the psychological violence inflicted by colonialism on Africa was much more acute than the physical. Head through her presentation of violence exposes the nature of various kinds of violators and attitudes that make for violation.

It has been established that madness and violence have several points of convergence and divergence. Four points of intersection between madness and violence was used to analyse the relationship between them. Head shows that mental collapse indexes the amount of violence that permeates the society. The individual's loss of sanity becomes a catalyst for physical or psychological violence. Several evidences of this relationship are given due attention . Economic stagnation and neurosis are the end-product of the prevalence of violence. Violence itself,

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Section I: Primary Sources

Head, Bessie.1972 When Rain clouds Gather. London: Heinemann New windmill series.

Head, Bessie.1972 Maru. London: Heinemann. Rpt. 1980.

Head, Bessie.1974 A Question of Power. London: Heinemann.

Head, Bessie.1984 A Bewitched Crossroad: An African Saga. Craighall: A. D. Donker (PTY) Ltd.

La Guma, Alex.1967 A Walk in the Night and Other Stories. London: Heinemann.

Section 2: Secondary materials

A Journal/Reviews/Seminars

Abubakar, Tanimu. Black South African Fiction and the national Liberation Struggle. 1969-1984: A Problem of Criticism in Work in Progress No. 4 ed Yakubu Nasidi, J. Haynes and M.Mzamane, Department of English, Ahmadu Bello University,Zaria.

Abubakar, Tanimu.1989"The Repudiation of the Hideous Roots of Hatred and the Affirmation of Human Essence in the Novels of Bessie Head" An English Departmental Seminar. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Abraham, Cecil. 1978 "The Tyranny of Place: The Context of Bessie Heads Fiction" World Literature Written in English (WLWE) Vol. 117 No. 1 April. .

Frank, Katherine.1984 "Feminist Criticism and The African Novel" African Literature Today(ALT) No.14 Ed E.D Jones. London: Heinemann.

John et al ed Sawa.1985 A Journal of Communications No. 3. English Department, Ahmadu Bello University,Zaria.

Mzamane, Mbulelo.1987 "Feminism in House of Hunger" African Literature Today (ALT) No. 13 Ed. E. D. Jones, London: Heinemann Educational Books.

Ola, Virginia. 1986 "Women's Role in Bessie Head's Ideal world" ARIEL. Vol 17 No.4

Ogungbesan, Kolawole 1979 "The Cape Gooseberry Also Grows in Botswana: Alienation and Commitment in the Writings of Bessie Head" Presence Africaine No. 109.

Vanamali, Rukmini "Bessie Head's A Question of Power: The Mythic Dimension" in the Literary Criterion Vol XXIII. and Nos. 1 and 2

B. BOOKS: CRITICAL/POLEMICAL

Abraham, Cecil The Tragic Life: Bessie Head and Literature in Southern Africa. Trenton : Africa World Press Inc. 1990.

Afolalu, Raphael Olu 1972 A History of Africa Since 1800. Ibadan: Onibonoje Press.

Haynes, John et al 1986 Sawa: A Journal of Communication: Issue 3 Department of English. Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Herdeck, Donald E.1973 African Authors: A Companion to Black African Writing. Washington, D.C.: Black orpheus press.

Heywood, Christopher ed 1976 Aspects of South African Literature London: Heinemann.

Jones, Eldred Durosimi ed.1979 African Literature Today Vol 10 London: Heinemann educational books Ltd.

Ker, David et al. Work in Progress No. 6 1988 Department of English, Ahmadu Bello University Press Ltd.

Killam, G. D.1973 African Writers on African Writing. London: Heinemann.

King, Bruce and Kolawole Ogungbesan ed.1975 A Celebration of Black and African Writing. Zaria: Ahmadu Bello University Press.

La Guma, Alex.1967 The Stone Country. London: Heinemann.

La Guma, Alex. 1979 Time of the Butcher Bird. London: Heinemann.

Lindfors, Bernth.1979 Black African Literature. A Guide to Information Sources. Detroit Michigan: Gale Research.

Little, Kenneth.1980 The Sociology of Urban Women's Image in African Literature. Hongkong: The Macmillan Press Ltd.

Mandela, Nelson.1986 The Struggle is My Life. New York: pathfinder press.

Martin, Philip W.1987 Mad Women in Romantic Writing. Sussex: The Harvesters Press.

Moi, Toril.1985 Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminist Literary Theory. New York: Methuen and Co Ltd.

Mphalele, Ezekiel.1962 The African Image. Faber and Faber: London.

Mphalele,Ezekiel.1967 African Writing Today. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Ngugi Wa Thiongo.1972 Home Coming: Essays on African and Caribbean Culture and Politics. London: Heinemann.

Nichols, Lee ed.1981 Conversations with African Writers. Voice of America, Washington D.C.

Nkosi, Lewis. 1981 Tasks and Masks, Themes and Style of African Literature. Harlow: Longman.

Olney, James.1973 Tell Me Africa: An Approach to African Literature. New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

Povey, John F. Black Literature in English Since 1952

Richard, I. A.1958 Principles of Literary Criticism. New York: Harcourt Brace Javanovich.

Rigney, Barbara Hill.1978 Madness and Sexual Politics in the Feminist novel. Studies in Bronte, Woolf, Lessing and Atwood. Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Sempala, Sipho.1981 A Ride on The Whirlwind. Oxford: Heinemann.

Smith, Rowland ed.1976 Exile and Tradition. London: Longman and Dalhouse University Press.

Songolo, Aliko. The Writer, The Audience and The Critics Responsibility. The Case of Bound to Violence. University of California.

Wauthier, Claude.1967 The Literature and Thought of Modern Africa. N.York: Praeger.

Wollheim, Richard.1991Freud. London: Fontana Press.

C.THESES

Abubakar, T. A. N.1987 "South African Literature and The Changing Tempo of Politics: A Study of Prose Fiction by South African Writers (1960 - 1986)." Unpublished Ph.D Thesis Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Jenkwe, Emmanuel Toryima.1979 Violence in Post-Sharpville South African Literature. Unpublished M.A. Thesis Ahmadu Bello University Zaria.

Mustapha, Ismail. "Madness and Violence in Dambudzo Marechera's House of Hunger and Black Sunlight" Unpublished B.A. Thesis Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria.

Ogwude, Sophia-O.1989 "An Exile Writing on Home: Protest, Commitment and Liberation in The Works of Bessie Head" Unpublished Ph.D Thesis Ahmadu Bello University,Zaria.

Omokore, Olusola 'Sade.1993 Women in The Liberation Struggle: A Study of the Discourse on the Status and Role of Women in the South African Novel by Blacks (1960 - 1984) Unpublished Ph.D Thesis Ahmadu Bello University,Zaria.