AFRICAN IDENTITY: THE STUDY

OF ZAKES MDA'S *THE MADONNA OF EXCELSIOR* AND BESSIE HEAD'S *MARU*

by

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DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my parents, Ngwako (Sebolayaphuti) and Mamaropeng Mahasha, whose loving-kindness ushered and sustained me over the years. You have, by example, taught me to soil my hands and toil to the bone for the things I cherish and aspire to achieve.

DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation, **AFRICAN IDENTITY: THE STUDY OF ZAKES MDA'S** *THE MADONNA OF EXCELSIOR* **AND BESSIE HEAD'S** *MARU* hereby submitted to the University of Limpopo, for the degree of **Master of Arts** in **English Studies** has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other university; that it is my work in design and in execution, and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

....

Surname, Initials (title)   **Date**

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- Finally, though my name appears on the cover page of this dissertation, my wife, Veronicca, deserves equal credit. You did everything humanly possible to see me to the completion of this study. Thanks for being an anchor, a helper and a best friend.

ABSTRACT

This study discusses African identity as portrayed in Zakes Mda's *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002) and Bessie Head's *Maru* (1971). It explores identity and its sub-components within the South African context as asserted in these novels. Mda employs a retrospective communal voice that blends historical accounts with fiction in order to subvert and satirise apartheid nationalism. Head, on the other hand, constructs a positive image of feminine identity in the world characterised by tribalism, patriarchal system and stereotypical subjugation of women. She dismantles established racial and ethnic prejudice against minority groups and the underprivileged. The study applies a trilogy of theoretical framework to analyse and interpret selected data: Discourse Analysis, Text Analysis and Afrocentricity. It further examines a fluidity of identities in both social and political spheres and demonstrates how suppression of these identities affects individuals and nation states. It reveals that, as a microcosm of Africa, South Africa reflects atrocious injustices of the past, carried out in the form of colonisation and apartheid, bringing about a different kind of identity of the African people. These two novels take us back to the past so that we can understand the present and subsequently build Africa's identity of the future.

KEY CONCEPTS

Afrocentricity; Identity; Discrimination; Miscegenation; Otherness; Hybridity; Animalistic Dehumanisation.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

1.1.   Introduction

Africa is a continent of hybrid identity. The complex history of individual ethnic groups and nation states, the discrepancies and similarities among their experiences, the cultural and religious overlaps, make Africa a continent of multiple diversity. The people who constitute African nations have a profound individual and collective history. They were equally disintegrated and downtrodden by colonial systems which marred their identity and eroded their self-worth. The starting point for discussion of African identity in this study is, therefore, underpinned by pluralism, *ubuntu*, pan-African culture and validation of African aesthetic values which characterise the African people.

This chapter lays a foundation on which this study is grounded. It explores African identity from variety of literary theories. The study applies a trilogy of theoretical framework: Discourse Analysis, Text Analysis and Afrocentricity in order to unravel aspects of identity as portrayed in the primary sources, Zakes Mda's *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002) and Bessie Head's *Maru* (1971). These authors epitomise the discourse of African identity in both South Africa and Botswana. Mda has chosen two political eras in South Africa, during apartheid and after it, while Head portrays a subversive consciousness that undercuts women's subjugation by a patriarchal system in Botswana. However, the study is not confined to these writers alone, a variety of critical works by prominent writers such as Asante (2009), Ngugi (1993) and Homi Bhabha (1994), among others, is applied.

Colonisation, apartheid and imperialism viewed African identity in a negative light while elevating Eurocentric ideas. This caused social tension and jeopardised Africa's diverse identity. The study digs deeper into the past and the present, excavating social ills planted by the colonial dispensation. It aims to make a mark in contributing towards a creation of a future which Africans will be proud to identify with. It sustains the belief that

African people, both on the continent and in the Diaspora, share not only a common history, but also a common destiny.

The following aspects are discussed in this chapter: the concept of identity; background of the study, research problem, purpose of the study, theoretical framework and the significance of the research project.

1.2. Conceptualising Identity: Definitions and Perspectives

Identity is a concept that has captured scholarly attention for decades. Scholars in social science and humanities disciplines have taken a keen interest in questions concerning identity. In comparative politics, identity plays a central role in work on nationalism and ethnic conflict. Racial and ethnic identities are manifested in conscious ways and form an important part of the overall framework of individual and collective identity. This manifestation is influenced by two conflicting social and cultural influences. First, deep conscious immersion into cultural traditions and values through religious, familial, neighbourhood, and educational communities instils a positive sense of ethnic identity and confidence. Second, and in contrast, individuals filter ethnic identity through negative treatment and media messages received from others because of their race and ethnicity (Chavez and Debrito, 1999: 13).

Minority groups are usually suppressed by the mainstream society and are compelled to uphold their culture and traditions. The dominant group manifests ethnic and racial identity in unconscious ways through their behaviours, values, beliefs, and assumptions. For them, ethnicity is invisible and unconscious because societal norms are constructed around their racial, ethnic, cultural frameworks, values, and priorities and then referred to as "standard culture" rather than "ethnic identity." This unconscious ethnic identity manifests itself in daily behaviours, attitudes, and ways of doing things in general. Unlike many minority cultures, there is little conscious instilling of specific ethnic identity through dominant communities, nor is differential ethnic treatment often identified in the media of dominant cultures (Chavez and Debrito, 1999: 13).

Smith (1991: 25) explores the origins of nations and national identity. He identifies ethnic identity as a pre-modern form of "collective cultural identity". In his view, collective cultural identity refers to a uniformity of elements over generations, but to a sense of continuity on the part of successive generations of a given cultural unit of population, to share memories of earlier events and periods entertained by each generation about the collective destiny of that unit and its culture. He defines a nation as "a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths, and historical memories as mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members" (Smith, 1991: 14). Contrary to this initial definition, Smith later defined the same concept (nation) as "a named community possessing an historic territory, shared myths and memories, a common public culture and customs" (Smith, 2002: 15). There are three major alterations in this latter definition: (1) the mass character of public culture has been omitted; (2) a reference to 'a common economy has also been eliminated; and (3) 'common legal rights and duties for all members' have been replaced by 'common laws and customs'.

Why has Smith altered his initial definition of a nation? According to Connor (1994: 159), the main challenge faced by scholars when dating the emergence of nations is that national consciousness is a mass, not an elite phenomenon, and the masses, until recently, isolated in rural pockets and being semi or completely illiterate, were not vocal with regard to their sense of identities. The elites' conception of the nation was extended and imposed to the masses.

Definitions of identity in social science circles are opaque and sometimes contradictory as seen in Smith's definitions above. This is because of its heavily contested nature. Another factor hindering the establishment of a clear definition of the term is that identity is always in a state of flux. Individuals often redefine ethnic identities that describe them. When many people do this, the result is the large scale changes in the distribution of identities in the population as a whole. Ethnic categories activated earlier disappear (Weiner, 1973). The newly activated categories at times appear to have been created out of unknown sources; this is called ethno-genesis (Weiner, 1973). In other words,

Weiner perceives social identity as a dynamic process which is variable over time. Contrary to this notion, Tajfel (1978) argues that identity is static. He asserts that people acquire both a positive sense of who they are and a clear understanding of how they should act towards *in-group* and *out-group* members. He constructs identity as a stable, consistent, and reliable sense of who one is and what one stands for in the world. Moreover, identity integrates one's meaning to oneself and one's meaning to others; it provides a match between what one regards as central to oneself and how one is viewed by significant others in one's life. It is a way of preserving the continuity of the self, linking the past and the present (Tajfel, 1978: 63). That is to say, people inherit attributes of identity from their ancestors and pass them forward to the future generations. For example, human ability to follow rhythm in big groups, to sing together in harmony, to dance for many hours and enter the ecstatic state, as well as the tradition of body painting, were all the parts of the first universal rituals. They were primarily developed as a means to synchronise each individual group-member's neural activity in order to reach the state of collective identity called 'transcendence' (Jordania 2011: 92). While Tajfel maintains consistency of identity in his argument, identity may change when people's culture and traditions develop.

According to Bornman (2003: 24), identity is a social construction through which people acquire meaning and a sense of belonging. Common platforms for identity are seen in gender, race, ethnicity, language, religion, history, class and geography. Identities may exist within personal, sub-national, national as well as supra-national spheres (international realm). This denotes that identity is not confined to an individual, but can transcend beyond established boundaries of influence held by separate individuals and nations. However, while shared interests may encourage the formation or acceptance of group identity, the fact that an individual shares these interests, ideologies or traits with others, does not mean that he or she will adopt a sense of collective identity based on these factors (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 298). Collective identity refers to individuals' "cognitive, moral, and emotional connection with a broader community, category, practice, or institution" (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 285). It is the shared sense of belonging to a group.

Melucci (1989: 12) defines as an interactive and shared definition produced by several interacting individuals who are concerned with the orientation of their action as well as the field of opportunities and constraints in which their action takes place. Concerned with the gap between theories on how collective actions form and how individuals find motivation, Melucci defines an intermediate process, in which individuals recognise that they share certain orientations in common and on that basis, decide to act together. He considers collective identity as a process that is negotiated over time with three parts: cognitive definition, active relationship and emotional investments. These parts can be described as follows:

1. Cognitive Definitions: it is the formulation of a cognitive framework concerning goals, means and environment of action.
2. Active Relationship: this is the activation of relationships among participants.
3. Emotional Investments: it denotes emotional recognition between individuals (Melucci, 1995: 46).

Groups are actively engaged in the construction and reconstruction of identities. Identities are created, elaborated, and re-created in the interaction between circumstances and actions. These interactions are ongoing. Ethnic, racial, and national identities change over time as historical conditions change. Interactions between circumstances and groups form the core of these processes. As such, socially constructed models of ethnicity stress the fluid, situational, volitional, and dynamic character of ethnic identification, organisation, and action (Nagel, 1998: 237). Ethnic groups are constantly recreating themselves and ethnicity is continuously being reinvented in response to changing realities both with the group and the host society (Neils, 1992: 2).

As much as group identities may exist in terms of similar interests, traits, values and worldviews, they can also be artificially constructed (Polletta and Jasper, 2001: 285). During the apartheid era in South Africa, people of mixed African and European descent

were classified as "Coloured." Under the National Party's rigid system of racial segregation, specific laws and rights were given to each racial category so that a distinct Coloured community developed, different from both Black and White identities. In contrast, racial segregation in the United States existed in terms of the division of Black and White. Since no formal system of classification existed for people of mixed race, a similar "coloured" community failed to develop in the United States.

Cultural organisations, repertoires, laws, education and other institutions of socialisation can, therefore, be used to either create or strengthen perceptions of identity. In this way, an individual's understanding of identity is also reflective of others' perceptions of their identity. For example, though the elderly man may feel younger than his age, if the law arbitrarily advantages or disadvantages him on this basis, and/or if other individuals treat him accordingly, he may be forced to adopt a stronger identification with other senior citizens. This example highlights the very fluid and socially constructed nature of identity (Stinson, 2009: 8).

Cultural beliefs and practices often form the basis of collective identities. Culture creates a system of meaning which people use in their daily lives. It provides a "framework for organising the world" which collectively guides individual action and behaviour (Ross, 1997: 42). In this way, group identities help to reinforce individual self-perceptions, resulting in feelings of inclusion as well as potential exclusion (Joseph, 2004: 5). Ultimately, identity is a "dialectic between similarity and difference" (Jenkins, 2004: 5). Perceptions of "who we are" as well as "who we are not" are important for the creation and acceptance of group identities. However, these identities are never static and are always being re-examined and re-evaluated. Thus, identity formation is "an interactive process that involves *"becoming"* as well as *"being"* and belongs to the future as well as the past (Bornman, 2003: 26).

It is from this understanding of group identity that one can begin to analyse the existence and formation of national identity. Oommen (1997: 33) defines nationality as "the collective identity which the people of the nation acquire by identifying with the nation." Thus, nationality refers to a sense of identifying with and belonging to the

national community. However, far more contested than a modern understanding of the state, the concept of a "nation" continues to evoke controversy. Though the term is often misused in place of "state" or in reference to aspects of citizenship or territorial sovereignty, a "nation" is also commonly associated with various other markers or definitions.

In an attempt to resolve the dispute on what constitutes a nation, Day and Thompson, (2004: 34) propose that "a nation is a historically evolved, stable community of language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a community of culture." While this definition seems appropriately inclusive of the many different aspects of nationality, it seems as if very few nations could simultaneously display all these criteria as Day and Thompson (2004) imply. Instead of one single definition of what constitutes a nation, perhaps a more realistic approach would be to aim for an understanding of the many factors which influence concepts of nationhood, while also recognising the ultimate fluidity of the term. While concepts of nationality are influenced by a broad range of markers, it appears that the most common criteria advanced as to what constitutes a nation are territory, a shared culture and shared ethnicity.

Oommen (1997) draws distinctions between the nation, the state and ethnic groups on the basis of shared culture and territorial attachment. In his view, the state is a legally constituted territorial entity in possession of authority and power. Nations are also territorial entities, but to which the people have an emotional attachment and invest a moral meaning (Oommen, 1997: 33). In addition to territory, nations are built upon a shared culture and language. Oommen believes that ethnic groups are similar to nations with regard to shared culture, but differ when it comes to territorial attachment. Consequently, "ethnicity is a product of dissociation between territory and culture" (Oommen, 1997: 34). In this view, ethnic groups are born when they lose their homeland status, but may be reformed as nations with the adoption of a new homeland.

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1.3. Background to the Study

In order to demystify misconceptions about identity, in terms of its significance in Africa and as to why the research was formulated around this particular topic, it is imperative that some kind of background be given. This section looks at the background against which the study was conceived and sheds light on the importance of undertaking the research of this magnitude.

Identity is a very important aspect in the lives of people as well as in nation states. It has emerged as an interesting object of scholarly inquiry over the past years. It is through identity that people know who they are, and once this is achieved, they will be able to define their present as well as their future. In other words, identity helps people to build their future on the basis of their past. However, in South Africa the debates over identity have been minimal. Bekker (1999: 3) notes that during the 1970s and 1980s most South African scholars avoided questions relating to cultural, ethnic and racial identities. It was so because apartheid laws suppressed freedom of expression and scholars were confined to the ideas that sustained and supported the apartheid regime.

South Africa's quest for national identity was always characterised by catastrophic events that left the country divided into racial, ethnic, religious and gender stereotypes. The apartheid policies sustained white domination and marginalised Black communities, their culture, customs and political freedom among, other things. The apartheid system justified atrocious living conditions, exploitation and deprivation of human rights among black people and non-whites such as Coloureds and Indians.

The oppressed people engaged in political protests and activism against the apartheid government. Most African writers used literature, theatre and other art forms as tools for liberation from both colonialism and the brutality of the apartheid government in South Africa. The authors depicted scenarios where characters wrestle with racial dilemmas in order to elicit national awareness about apartheid. For example, authors such as Es'kia Mphahlele, Nadine Gordimer, Mbongeni Ngema, André Brink, Bessie Head, Wally Serote, Mary Benson and many others had their works banned in South Africa.

Post apartheid dispensation saw a transformation of cultural, ethnic, racial, social and political expression among other important aspects of nation building. The issue of ideology politics and the relevance of patriotism have elicited renewed interest in a number of academics and professionals. Bekker (1999: 7) observes that the early 1990s saw the academic conferences on identity being held in South Africa. This went some way in re-establishing the legitimacy of the subject in intellectual circles.

Colonisation has not only degraded the integrity of the African people, but it has also disintegrated their cohesive culture and identity. Craig, Graham and Kagan (2007: 690) assert that colonisation has fuelled anarchy, genocide, racial exploitation and abject poverty within and across the continent. They posit that without colonial interference, the continent would have developed its own unique education system rich in intellectual property that promotes and upholds indigenous knowledge, medical treatment and systems of government pertinent to the culture and traditions of the African people. Perhaps a unified continent without strife or racial tension would have developed, with a strong economy and peaceful government. The independence of Africa from European rule should be regarded as a milestone on which the identity and renaissance of the continent should be established.

The African continent remains a geographical, political, and socio-cultural entity. For this reason, African in this study is not limited to race but also covers the totality of a diverse continent. As mentioned in the introductory passages, identity of the African continent is multifaceted and this makes it difficult to define. Tiyambe (2006: 12) asserts that:

> Many academic and popular discourses of African identities and languages are quite challenging. The idea of "Africa" is a complex one with multiple genealogies and meanings, so that extrapolations of African culture, identity or nationality, in the singular or plural, any explorations of what makes Africa "African," are often quite slippery as these notions tend to swing unsteadily between the poles of essentialism and contingency. Describing and defining "Africa" and all tropes prefixed by its problematic commandments entails engaging discourses about "Africa," the paradigms and politics through which

the idea of "Africa" has been constructed and consumed, and sometimes celebrated and condemned.

The complexity of the African continent has been exacerbated by colonisation. It has denaturalised cultural artefacts and practices, stripping them of primordial authenticity and essentialism. Mudimbe (1988: 64) interrogates the construction of African identity through Eurocentric categories and conceptual systems, from anthropology and missionary discourses to philosophy, an order of knowledge constituted in the socio-historical context of colonialism, which produced enduring dichotomies between Europe and Africa, investing the latter's societies, cultures, and bodies with the representational marginalities or even pathologies of alterity. He is critical of the subservience of African intellectuals to western ideologies.

Africa has always been imagined, represented and performed as a "fiction" by colonial powers. They imposed their whiteness, religion, literacy, development, and technology among other things to reflect Africa in a peculiar way, reducing the continent to particular images, to a state of lack a mockery of the world (Mudimbe, 1994).

It is imperative to note that Africa as a continent and its vast identities are in both the processes and states of *being* and of *becoming*. These are dynamic historical processes that are subject to change, which is not always easy to perceive or predict. Historians have been in the forefront of constructing Africa as a coherent and complex object of study, investing the continent with a distinctive civilisational identity. They were among the first to take up the Eurocentric fallacy that Africans were a people "without history," an indictment intended to devalue their humanity (Lewis, 1998: 24).

Brar (2011) asserts that the search for African identity is one of the fundamental concerns in the majority of significant works of African fiction hence it occupies a central place in the writers' quest for exposing the African personality and the pressing influences on the psyche.

1.4. Research Problem

Colonisation and apartheid have ruined and distorted African identity. The colonisers have degraded the traditional order and reduced humanity into objects of colour symbolism: *white* symbolised "holiness", "purity" and "superiority" while *black* was a symbol of "evil", "abomination" and "inferiority". This black and white dichotomy perpetuated racism and generalised people irrespective of their morals and values (Halladay, 2008).

Two decades into democracy, South Africa is still divided along the notion of *blackness*, *whiteness* and inequality. For example, more than 80% of private land and most prestigious estate are still owned by whites. A vast land was taken away from black people using forced removals and the 1913 Land Act (Dlanga, 2013). Who are still overcrowding the slums in South Africa? Who are still using the bucket system for sanitation? The issue is not about racism anymore, but racism is still haunting South Africans because resources are still divided along racial lines. The past has direct correlation to resources and access to some of them. Mda shows how these resources are embezzled and how racial identity is used to abuse them at the expense of the destitute.

This dissertation seeks to examine African identity as portrayed in Mda's *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002) and Head's *Maru* (1971). These writers explore the notion of identity in their novels from personal identity to collective identity. Both of them address the concept of African identity during the apartheid epoch. It is interesting to find out how a young South African treats the idea of identity and how an older generation writer does the same. Head wrote her work, *Maru*, during the apartheid period, while Mda wrote *The Madonna of Excelsior* in the post-apartheid era.

 African identity is not confined to superficial aspects such as skin pigmentation, hair texture, physical features, accent and a place of origin. It is a sense of belonging embedded in the values, ethos, norms, culture and traditions of a people. The study further seeks to explore the indigenous African culture of *ubuntu* (humanity: "I am, because we are") to find out what happens when the identity of the African is threatened

by other people's cultures through oppression and humiliation. This exploration of identity also intends to inspire Africans to think and act in ways that transcend their political, cultural and religious diversities. As portrayed by Achebe (1965: 204), it is aimed at helping people regain belief in themselves and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-abasement.

1.5.   Purpose of the Study (Aim and Objectives)

1.5.1.   Aim of the Study

The aim of this study is to explore African identity in South Africa as portrayed by Zakes Mda in *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002) and Bessie Head's *Maru* (1971) and to examine the following fundamental aspects that construct African identity: values, ethos, norms, culture and tradition as posited in African literary works.

1.5.2. Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

- To analyse the theoretical construct of African identity as asserted by Zakes Mda in *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002) and Bessie Head in *Maru*(1971).
- To provide a definition of national identity and its subcomponents within the South African context as portrayed in the novels under study.
- To evaluate elements which define distinct characteristics of a particular culture in a society.
- To add value and insight to the subject of national identity through literary contribution in order to provide and strengthen communal harmony which is necessary to the arduous process of societal cohesion and nation-building, and;
- To explore the detrimental effects of racial discrimination during the apartheid era in South Africa as depicted in the novels in order to draw life lessons.

1.6. Theoretical Framework

This research project is concerned primarily with African identity in its broader sense and more specifically with social, political, racial and cultural identities. A trilogy of theoretical approaches is applied in this study. The first two, Discourse Analysis and Text Analysis theories, are intended to provide the tools with which to explore, analyse, evaluate and interpret information and ideas in the literary works of Mda, Head and other African and international writers. The third theory, Afrocentricity, forms the primary ideology on which this study is grounded. It enhances and sheds light on the notion of both Africanism and African Renaissance. This project uses the qualitative literary approach which is based on the textual critical analysis of Mda and Head's novels in order to understand African identity as a literary phenomenon.

1.6.1. Discourse Analysis Theory

The Discourse Analysis Theory is applied in this study as a tool of approaching and thinking about a problem. Rather than providing a particular method, Discourse Analysis Theory is neither a qualitative nor a quantitative research theory, but a manner of questioning the basic assumptions of quantitative and qualitative research theories (Frohmann, 1992). It is perceived as a way of exploring the way in which social reality is made possible through discourses which shape social interactions (Phillips and Handy, 2002).

Discourse analysis is related to structuralism in many of its linguistic presuppositions and goals. It is, however, important to distinguish between the two. Structuralism focuses exclusively on the structure of the text and not its authors or readers. Discourse analysis also focuses on the structure, but it does more by linking the writer and the reader to enhance communication between the two.

Black (1992: 97) affirms the significance of Discourse Analysis approach as follows:

As long as scholars direct attention to isolated structures of a text, they will encourage the view of the text as an autonomous object. Discourse analysis corrects this view by requiring that a text be viewed not only as an object of grammatical analysis, but as an act of communication between a writer and a reader.

According to Fontana (1994), Discourse Analysis Theory reveals the hidden motivations behind a text and provides a critical analysis of that text. It is primarily based on a deconstructive reading of a problem or a text. Discourse Analysis does not provide absolute answers to a specific problem, but enables the researchers to understand the conditions behind a specific "problem" and makes them realise that the essence of that "problem", and its resolution, lie in its assumptions; the very assumptions that enable the existence of that "problem". By enabling the researchers to make this assumption explicit, Discourse Analysis seeks to allow them to view the "problem" from a higher stance and to gain its comprehensive view and how they relate to that "problem". Discourse Analysis is meant to provide a higher awareness of the hidden motivations in researchers and in other people and, therefore, enables them to solve concrete problems, not by providing unequivocal answers, but by making them ask searching ontological and epistemological questions.

The contribution of the postmodern Discourse Analysis is the application of critical thought to social situations and the unveiling of hidden politics within the socially dominant as well as all other discourses (interpretations of the world, belief systems). Discourse Analysis can be applied to any text, that is, to any problem or situation. Since Discourse Analysis is basically an interpretative and deconstructing reading, there are no specific guidelines to follow. In other words, the purpose of Discourse Analysis is not to provide definite answers, but to expand people's personal horizons and experiences and make them realise their own shortcomings and unacknowledged motivations as well as those of others. In short, critical analysis reveals what is going on behind people's backs and those of others and which determines our actions (Poster, 1990).

Seven Dimensions of Discourse Analysis Theory (DAT)

- An interest in the properties of *'naturally occurring' language use* by real language users (instead of a study of abstract language systems and invented examples).
- A focus on larger units than isolated words and sentences and, hence, new basic units of analysis: texts, discourses, conversations, speech acts, or communicative events.
- The extension of linguistics *beyond sentence grammar* towards a study of action and interaction.
- The extension to *non-verbal (semiotic, multimodal, visual) aspects* of interaction and communication: gestures, images, film, the internet, and multimedia.
- A focus on dynamic (socio)-cognitive or interactional moves and strategies.
- The study of the functions of (social, cultural, and cognitive) *contexts of language use.*
- An analysis of a vast number of *phenomena of text grammar and language use*: coherence, anaphora, topics, macrostructures, speech acts, interactions, turn-taking, signs, politeness, argumentation, rhetoric, mental models, and many other aspects of text and discourse (Van Dijk and Wodak, 2008).

The Notion of Discourse

Discourse Analysis sees 'language as social practice' (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997), and considers the 'context of language use to be crucial. The following definition has become popular' among Discourse Analysis researchers:

> Discourse Analysis sees discourse – language use in speech and writing – as a form of 'social practice'. Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned – it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the social status quo, and in

the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power. Discursive practices may have major ideological effects – that is, they can help produce and reproduce unequal power relations between (for instance) social classes, women and men, and ethnic/cultural majorities and minorities through the ways in which they represent things and position people (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997: 258).

What is rarely reflected in this understanding of critique is the analyst's position. The social embeddedness of research and science, the fact that the research system and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) are dependent on social structures, and that criticism cannot draw on an outside position but integrated within social fields, has been emphasised by Bourdieu (1984). Researchers, scientists and philosophers are not outside the societal hierarchy of power and status, but are subject to this structure. They occupy 'superior' positions in society (Wodak and Meyer, 2008: 7).

Critical theories such as DTA and CDA want to produce and convey critical knowledge that enables human beings to emancipate themselves from forms of domination through self-reflection. It is for this reason that they are aimed at producing 'enlightenment and emancipation'. Such theories seek not only to describe and explain, but also to root out a particular kind of delusion. Even with differing concepts of ideology, Critical Theory seeks to create awareness in agents of their own needs and interests (Bourdieu, 1989).

In agreement with its Critical Theory predecessors, Discourse Analysis Approach emphasises the need for interdisciplinary work in order to gain a proper understanding of how language functions in constituting and transmitting knowledge, in organising social institutions or in exercising power (Martin and Wodak, 2003). In any case, Discourse Analysis researchers have to be aware that their own work is driven by social, economic and political motives like any other academic work and that they are not in any superior position. Naming oneself as 'critical' only implies superior ethical standards: an intention to make their position, research interests and values explicit and their criteria as transparent as possible, without feeling the need to apologise for the critical stance of their work (Van Leeuwen, 2006: 293).

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Discourse Analysis can be defined as analysis of opaque and transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. In other words, Discourse Analysis aims to investigate critical social inequality as it is expressed, constituted, legitimised, and so on, by language use (or in discourse). Most critical discourse analysts would thus endorse Habermas' (1967) claim that 'language is also a medium of domination and social force. It serves to legitimise relations of organised power (Habermas, 1967: 259).

1.6.2. The Text Analysis Theory

Another vital theory to be applied in this study is the Textual Analysis Theory. This method is not just a theory, it is the study of literature which includes analysis, interpretation, and evaluation of literary works. One of the tasks of a literary critic is to challenge the dominant definitions of literature and literary criticism that seem too general, too narrow, or unworkable for any other reason (Escote, 2008).

Shklovsky (2001) indicates that a literary critic pays special attention to one of several aspects: its intended purpose, its effect on an audience, its language and structure, and the information and worldview it conveys. When studying the formal characteristics of a text, a critic usually recognises the variability of performances of dramatic works and the variability of the readers' mental interpretation of the texts. When it comes to the purpose of the author, a critic acknowledges the forces beyond the conscious intentions of the writer that can affect what he or she actually communicates. When examining what a literary work is about, a critic explores the complex relationship between truth and fiction in various types of storytelling. When studying the impact of the literature on its audience, a critic should be keenly aware of how cultural expectations shape experience.

Since works of literature can be studied after their first publication, awareness of historical and theoretical context contributes to the readers' understanding, appreciation, and their enjoyment. Historical research relates a work to the life and times of its author. Attention to the nature, functions, and categories of literature

provides a theoretical framework which joins the past text to the experience of present readers (Escote, 2008).

According to McGee (2009: 2), the Text Analysis Theory guides the critic about the text. It allows him or her to make a claim about the work and to support it with evidence from the text as well as reasoning and analysis. The purpose of a response to literature in this manner is to persuade the readers that the analysis and interpretation of the work are valid, reasonable, and logical. This approach to text makes the reader an active participant in the construction of new knowledge and meaning. That is to say, the text itself creates only a part of its message. The writer of the work has done his or her part to convey its meaning by using symbols, language, setting, plot, character, foreshadowing, and so forth, to suggest the text's message.

Unlike "hard sciences," literature as a human science cannot be empirically tested in the laboratory; its meaning comes from its readers. In fact, literature *begs* for *readers* to read, react to, think about, and interpret the text. Having engaged in those steps, the process continues with another step: communicating to others the meaning constructed and conclusion reached from the text. The interpretation and analysis, then, add to the body of meaning about the text hence the Text Analysis Theory embraces the Constructionist Approach which suggests that social meanings and identities are created, elaborated, and re-created in the interaction between circumstances and actions. These interactions are ongoing. Ethnic, racial, and national identities change over time as historical conditions change. Interactions between circumstances and groups form the core of these processes. As such, socially constructed models of groups stress the fluid, situational, volitional, and dynamic character of ethnic identification, organisation, and action (Nagel 1998: 237).

The Text Analysis Theory further suggests that it is erroneous to think that meanings or identities are historically fixed or culturally given. While they may seem so at first glance, they are perpetually shifting, changing and evolving with space and time (Nagel 1998: 240).

Racial and national identities, like meanings, are constructed in an ongoing process of interaction between circumstances and action. As such, identities are fluid and dynamic; however, they are also historically embedded and inextricably linked to the power dynamics at work within a given context. Individuals have multiple, sometimes overlapping identities and circumstances affect the salience of one or another identity at any given time and place. For migrants, exiles, refugees, and other displaced subjects, there are added layers of identity as most such subjects occupy two or more cultural spaces (Park, 2005: 27).

1.6.3. Afrocentricity Approach

Afrocentricity is a theoretical approach dealing with the question of identity from the perspective of the African people. It addresses the need for African people to historically, economically, socially, politically and philosophically reassert themselves without infringing on identities of other nation states. Asante (1998: 6), who is a pioneer of Afrocentricity posits that:

> One of the key assumptions of the Afrocentrist is that all relationships are based on centres and margins and the distance from either the centre or the margin. When black people view themselves as centred and central, in their own history then they see themselves as agents, actors, and participants rather than as marginals on the periphery of political or economic experience. Using this paradigm, human beings have discovered that all phenomena are expressed in the fundamental categories of *space* and *time*…relationships develop and knowledge increases to the extent we are able to appreciate the issues of space and time.

According to Asante (1998), there are mainly five general characteristics of Afrocentric theory:

1. The Afrocentric theory considers that no phenomena can be apprehended adequately without locating it first. A *phenom* must be studied and analysed in relation to psychological time and space. It must always be located. This is

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the only way to investigate the complex interrelationships of science and art, design and execution, creation and maintenance, generation and tradition, and other areas bypassed by theory.

2. The Afrocentric theory considers phenomena to be diverse, dynamic, and in motion and therefore, it is necessary for a person to accurately note and record the location of phenomena even in the midst of fluctuations. This means that the investigator must know where he or she is standing in the process.

3. The Afrocentric theory is a form of cultural criticism that examines etymological uses of words and terms in order to know the source of an author's location. This allows readers to intersect ideas with actions and actions with ideas on the basis of what is pejorative and ineffective and what is creative and transformative at the political and economic levels.

4. The Afrocentric method seeks to uncover the masks behind the rhetoric of power, privilege, and position in order to establish how principal myths create place. The theory enthrones critical reflection that reveals the perception of monolithic power as nothing but projection of a cadre of adventures.

5. The Afrocentric theory locates the imaginative structure of a system of economics, bureau of politics, policy of government, expression of cultural form in the attitude, direction, and language of the *phenom*, be it text, institution, personality, interaction, or event.

Afrocentricity aims to challenge social ills such as racism, group marginalisation, prejudice, genocide and subjugation of black people by Europeans among other injustices. It argues that Western dogma which contends that Europeans gave the world rationalism marginalises those who are not European and becomes the leading cause of the disbelief about African achievements. The Afrocentrists contend that the dogma that the Greeks gave the world rational thought is historically inaccurate and that the

construction of the Western notions of knowledge based on the Greek model is a relatively recent construction beginning with the European Renaissance (Asante, 1998).

The dominance of power based ideologies within the Western world, have allowed Eurocentric values to maintain their privileged assumptions in which differences between Africa and Europe are erroneously accentuated (Smith, 2008: 88). In the standard Western view, neither the Africans nor the Chinese had rational thinking. Only the Europeans had the ability to construct rational thought. Thus, the Afrocentrists contend that the Eurocentric view has become an ethnocentric view which elevates the European experience and downgrades all others. Afrocentricity is not the reverse of Eurocentricity but a particular perspective for analysis which does not seek to occupy all space and time as Eurocentrism has often done. Unlike Eurocentricity which claims to be the innovative force behind intellectual and artistic creativity, Afrocentricity advocates pluralism in philosophical views without hierarchy. It upholds and respects all cultural centres (Asante, 1998).

Metaphors of location and dislocation are the principal tools of analysis as events, situations, texts, buildings, dreams, authors are seen as displaying various forms of centeredness. To be centred is to be located as an agent instead of as the "Other." Such a critical shift in thinking means that the Afrocentric perspective provides new insights and dimensions to the understanding of phenomena (Asante, 1998).

Analytic Afrocentricity

Asante (2009: 9) articulates Analytic Afrocentricity as:

> The application of the principles of the Afrocentric method to textual analysis. An Afrocentrist seeks to understand the principles of the Afrocentric method in order to use them as a guide in analysis and discourse. Afrocentrist cannot function properly as a scientist or humanist if he or she does not adequately locate the *phenom* in time and space. This means that chronology is as important in some situations as location. The two aspects of

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analysis are central to any proper understanding of society, history, or personality.

The Afrocentric method requires the scientists to focus on accurate notations and recording of space and time because *phenoms* are active, dynamic, and diverse in the society. The best way to apprehend location of a text is to determine where the researcher is located in time and space first. Once the location and time of the researcher or author is known, it is fairly easy to establish the parameters for the *phenom* itself. The value of etymology, that is, the origin of terms and words is in the proper identification and location of concepts. The Afrocentrist seeks to demonstrate clarity by exposing dislocations, disorientations, and decenterness. One of the simplest ways of accessing textual clarity is through etymology (Asante, 2009).

Afrocentricity cannot be reconciled with any hegemonic or idealistic philosophy. The latter has marginalised the competency and expertise of the African people. Afrocentricity is opposed to radical individualism as expressed in the postmodern approach. The Afrocentrist asks the question: "Why have Africans been shut out of global development?" (Asante, 2009). The answer to this question is found in European philosophy and perception towards Africa and its people: control of the hegemonic global economy, marginalisation, and power positions are keys to understand the underdevelopment of Africans.

1.7. Significance of Research Project

This study seeks to add value and insight to the subject of identity in South Africa and Africa at large. This is necessary for the enhancement of societal cohesion and nation-building. It promotes nationalism and patriotism which are the core values of national unity and democracy. It further acknowledges the significant role played by women, especially those who were previously marginalised by racism, colonisation and the patriarchal system.

South Africa remains a nation affected by the oppressive regime of the past while at the same time it is involved in an unfolding movement towards transformation. This has inevitable consequences for the national identity and therefore, for the identity of the citizens who are represented by this category. For white South Africans, a minority group with historically high status, the changes have resulted in a loss of power and the recognition of their disproportionate privilege (Billig and Tajfel, 1988).

Democracy operates more effectively when there is a strong sense of national identity. Neuberger (2000) provides four reasons why strong ethnic identification is detrimental to democracy. First, with no overarching identity, there is very little consensus on what is in the state's best interest. Second, ethnic identification can lead to ethnic bloc voting; but, for democracy to be successful, individuals need to vote on policy and not along ethnic (or other sub-national) lines (Horowitz, 1982). Third, ethnic bloc voting means that there is no chance for election losers to win next time, delegitimising peaceful pursuits of power. Last, ethnic minorities have no incentive to support the success or persistence of democratisation, suggesting that support for democracy will be low among ethnic minorities in states with low levels of nationalism. The impact of nationalism on democracy is vitally important in Africa, as the majority of African states have become at least nominal democracies in the last twenty years. Finally, the salience of a national identity may be important for understanding the risk of intra-state conflict (Fearon, 2003).

1.8. Conclusion

This chapter has explored and introduced African identity both as a concept and as a social phenomenon. It shows how colonisation and apartheid degraded the integrity, culture, norms and values of the African society through marginalisation and other exploitive means. The chapter has discussed Discourse Analysis, Text Analysis and Afrocentricity as a trilogy of theoretical framework applied in the study. It ends by outlining the significance of the study which is a deliberate attempt to add value and insight on the subject of identity in the African continent. The next chapter explores literature review on identity from a variety of literary works in order to lay a foundation

on which the primary sources (*Maru* and *The Madonna of Excelsior*) should be analysed and discussed.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1.   Introduction

Literature across ages and continents has functioned as an embodiment and interpreter of a peoples' culture, a conveyor of a people's language as well as their philosophy, politics, psychology and national character. This is essentially a literary tradition influenced by the search for identity. Literature whether cast in the mode of agitation, negotiation or based on historical reconstruction or mythological recreation has a touch of identity. The quest for distinctiveness makes literature an epistemological body for contest and negotiation and as a carrier of eccentricity. Across the world, works have been written based on peoples' culture (Binebai, 2012: 204).

This chapter examines the ideas on African literary canon through the creative and critical works of African writers, their criticism by African literary scholars, and the validation of African aesthetic values. Taking note of the premise that literature is a cultural production, modern African literature expresses the socio-cultural, historical, and other experiences as well as the sensibility of its people. The following identity aspects are discussed: social and political identity, language in African literature, South African national identity and cultural identity in the African context.

2.2.   Social and Political Identity

According to Gutierrez (1988), an arm or product of resistance expresses the aspirations of the oppressed people and social classes, with emphasis put on the conflict aspects of the economic, social and political processes which put them at odds with wealthy nations and oppressive classes. Liberation is attained when people are truly free, when they control all the tools and instruments which serve as the means of their physical, economic, political, cultural and psychological being. Put differently, when people control the means and the context of their integrated survival and development, they are considered to be liberated. But in the Africa of the 21st century, this free integrated self-development has not been allowed to materialise.

Ngugi (1993: 36) has provided an explanation for the existence of the above condition:

> First it has been the external factor of foreign invasion, occupation, and control, and second, the internal factor of collaboration with the external threat. Whether under Western slavery and the slave trade, under colonialism and today under neo-colonialism, the two factors have interacted to the detriment of our being. The greedy Chief and other elements bred by the new colonial overlords, collaborated with the main external imperialist factor. The storm repeats itself, in a more painful way under neo-colonialism.

Despite several decades postcolonisation, Ngugi still sees the relevance of fighting against racism and the alien ideologies of the West. In his interview with Cantalupo, he categorically posits:

> I believe that what I say about racism as ideology in the third section of *Moving the Centre* is still pertinent today. Racism has been so much a part of the Western World, so much a part, an integral part, of the twentieth centaury, that it's something which has to be continually fought against consciously and deliberately. Obviously there is a difference in a sense. Racism is recognised more and more as a social evil that has to be addressed, and that's very important. But as I said, it's been so much part of structures of domination and subjugation that it cannot be really eliminated until those structures of economic, political, and cultural domination have been altered sufficiently to the real base for group and social quality (Ngugi, 1993: 211).

One of Africa's most prestigious novelists, poet and critic, Chinua Achebe states, in his satirical second novel entitled *A Man of the People* (1966): "I wanted the novel to be a denunciation of the kind of independence we were experiencing in postcolonial Nigeria and many other countries in the 1960s, and I intended it to scare my countrymen into good behaviour with a frightening cautionary tale." Achebe acknowledges that his literature is a deliberate attempt to engage his identity and his international audience, and he depicts this same categorical determination in *Things Fall Apart* (1958). He establishes himself as a postcolonial author who chooses to "wound" his countrymen with his pen before they sink into anarchy and disillusionment. He also fiercely resents

the stereotypes of Africa as an undifferentiated "primitive" land, "the heart of darkness," as Conrad calls it (Brians, 1994).

Soyinka (1963: 48), a Nobel laureate, has this to say about his Nigerian experience: "The earliest instance of the new Nigerian writer gathering multifarious experience under the two cultures and exploiting them in one extravagant confident whole". He protests against the forcibly imposed conditions on their society by colonisers which ultimately impacted negatively on the African identity. He also shows a deep sense of rejection towards White people: "We object to outsiders' imposition of their European world, and their history, their social neurosis and their value system."

2.3.   Language Identity in African Literature

The way in which the vision of a national identity is articulated is closely related to language (Thomas, 1997: 4). Language plays a significant role both as an identity maker and a medium of national symbol (Palmerg, 1998: 8). Majority of African literature during and post colonialism was written in European languages, predominantly English, French and Portuguese. The Kenyan writer, Ngugi (1993: 26 – 27) argues that to rid African literature of the legacy of colonialism, African writers must begin writing in their native languages and that literature written by Africans in a colonial language is not African literature but Afro-European literature. He also argues that:

> Language, any language, has a dual character: it is both a means of communication and a career of culture (1994: 13).

Language and culture are inseparable entities. The loss of the former has direct impact on the latter. Culture is acquired through language. A specific culture is not transmitted through language in its universality, but in its particularity as the language of the specific community with a specific history. Written literature and orature are the main means by which a particular language transmits the images of the world contained in the culture it carries. Language as communication and language as culture are products of each other. Language carries culture and culture carries, particularly through orature and

literature, the entire body of values by which people perceive themselves and their place in the world. Language is thus inseparable from people as a community of human beings with a specific form and character, a specific history, a specific relationship to the world (Pinker, 1995: 108–109). The dominance of European languages over indigenous African languages devalues the culture, tradition and the being of the African people. Language and culture are interwoven in such a way that suppressing another, while promoting the other may lead to alienation from the self. Marechera (1978: 48) affirms this notion:

> I was being severed from my own voice. I would listen to it as to a still, small voice coming from the huge distance of the mind. It was like this: English is my second language, Shona my first. When I talked it was in the form of an interminable argument, one side of which was always expressed in English and another side always in Shona. At the same time I would be aware of myself as something distinct but separate from both cultures.

Marechera's education at Oxford University worsened this alienation from his African background. In Britain, he came face to face with his "otherness" as he was not only an outsider within the British culture which he was drawn to, but found himself also estranged from fellow exiled Africans (Buuk, 1997: 123).

Pinker (1991: 260) notes that words determine thought and language and its structures are entirely dependent on the cultural context in which they exist. Language is not only the medium of culture but part of culture, hence, it is common for immigrants in new countries to retain their old customs and to speak their first language. This happens because the immigrants are eager to preserve their own heritage which includes not only customs and traditions but also language. Writing African literature in European languages underestimates the norms, values, culture and tradition of African people. Unlike Marechera who feels alienated in Europe, Africans become alienated within the boundaries of their own continent, while preserving and upholding the languages of the foreigners. Continuing to write in European languages at the expense of African languages may leave the unwanted legacy of inferiority complex which African children will always loathe and hold their forefathers accountable.

Ngugi further argues that using European languages inherently makes African literature the literature of an elite class of Africans which cannot relate to the majority of African people who do not necessarily speak or read European languages but rather speak variety of indigenous African languages. Ngugi started to write in Gikuyu, one of the languages of Kenya in an endeavour to accommodate the African means (Megan, 1997: 3).

Ngugi and his supporters were opposed by several African writers such as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka who challenged the usefulness of such a stance. In contrast, Ngugi theorised that by writing in English or French and other European languages, African authors are continuing to enrich those cultures at the expense of their own. Writers who support African-language literature are also concerned that European languages are unable to express the complexity of African experience and culture in those languages, along with the fact that they exclude a majority of Africans, who are unable to read in these languages (Megan, 1997).

The debate of African literature and the question of literary identity indigenous to Africa is one that has persisted for a long time and many scholars have made their inputs and positions. For Nasisidi (2001), African literature is an enclave of freedom where the African re-conquers his lost identity and dignity. This position seems to vividly capture the overwhelming impulses that characterise the early modern African writers. The question of identity in African literature in the writings of regional and national writers persists because of the prevailing socio-economic and political conditions in the continent and among the countries of the continent (Binebai, 2012: 206).

At the University of Nairobi, Ngugi was at the centre of the politics of English Departments in Africa, championing the change of name from English to Department of African Literature and Languages in order to reflect world literature with African and third world literatures at the centre. Ngugi, with Africa's well-known poet and writer of fiction and literary criticism, Lo-Liyong, and Anyumba, authored the polemical declaration: *On the Abolition of the English Department* (1968), setting in motion a continental and global debate and practices that later became the essence of

postcolonial theories. They questioned the value of an English Department in an African context:

> We have eyes, but we don't see. We have ears but we don't hear. We can read, but we don't understand what we read (Ngugi, Liyong and Anyumba, 1968: 4).

They persistently asked:

> If there is need for a study of the historic continuity of a single culture, why can't this be African? Why can't African literature be at the centre so that we can view our culture in relationship to it? (Ngugi *et al*. 1968).

The argument was designed to establish African identity in postcolonial literature. Ngugi's idea of a postcolonial African Literary identity is radical and bristles with revolutionary temperature. This obsessive identity drive in him led him to write in his native Gikuyu language. The strong desire to articulate an African literary aesthetic by Ngugi and other African writers is identity politics itself.

Ngugi contends that indigenous African languages should be the cornerstone of African literary culture and aesthetic. He vehemently asserts that:

> But our continuing to write in foreign languages, paying homage to them, are we not on the cultural level continuing that neo-colonial slavish and cringing spirit? What is the difference between a politician who says Africa cannot do without imperialism and the writer who says Africa cannot do without European language? (Ngugi, 1986: 26).

Ngugi does not strive for eradication of European languages but for an open and free linguistic platform where languages interact on an equal basis. Eurocentric approaches on the African continent were aimed at elevating the European languages and to downgrade the Indigenous languages of the continent. Ngugi does not seek to reverse the process by replacing European languages with African languages, which European languages have always done, but brings forth a perspective for equality. He argues for pluralism in linguistic assimilation without hierarchy or dominance. He argues that all

languages should be respected and should be encouraged to grow within and across their respective cultures. In *Moving the Centre* (1993), Ngugi argues for equal interaction of global languages where they can borrow from each other as they grow together within a given time in history:

> African languages will borrow from one another; they will borrow from their classical heritages; they will borrow from the world−from the Caribbean, from Afroamerica, from Latin America, from the Asian−and from the European worlds. In this, the new writing in African languages will do the opposite of the Europhone practice: instead of being appropriated by the world, it will appropriate the world and one hopes on terms of equal exchange, at the very least, borrow on its own terms and needs (Ngugi, 1993: 23).

Wali (1963: 10) declares that:

> The uncritical acceptance of English and French as the medium of educated writing in Africa is largely misdirected and that it will not advance the cause of African Literature and Culture…until African literatures are written in African languages, African writers are merely pursuing a dead end.

Ngugi and Wali indicate, through the above citation, that European languages have marginalised and continue to do so, the growth and development of African culture. They have been the linear tongues of the colonial discoveries, racial cruelties, invented names, destroyed the tribal culture and silenced indigenous communities.

Chinweizu (1983: 55) indicates that the use of European languages in African literature is a perpetuation of the neo-colonialist tendencies that seem so pervasive in African economies, politics and culture. Arguing along similar lines is Ngugi who avers that there is no difference between a politician who argues that Africa cannot dispense without imperialism and an African writer who believes that European languages are indispensable. He continues to show that writing in Gikuyu language is part and parcel of the anti-imperialist struggle of Kenyan and African people.

European languages which have been maintained in African literary works marginalise the expertise and creativity of African writers. For example, literature in all its forms

does not only carry linguistic characteristics, it also expresses human identity and cultural diversity. European languages can only succeed in narrating an African story, but cannot fathom the roots and cultural complexities on which the story is grounded. Most African writers who write in English find themselves compelled to use original African words to express certain ideas and to describe objects and situations. For example, Achebe, (1958: 151–152) wrote a glossary of Ibo words and phrases (*chi, efulefu, ekwe, obodo dike, tufia* and *Uri* among others) and defines their meaning in English. He chooses to use the indigenous word because it carries both the concrete and abstract meanings, it has communicative and cultural significance. In another example, no word or phrase in English can define the word "*malaita*" as used by Mphahlele in *Down Second Avenue*, (1959: 35). Any English definition of the word would erode its original connotative meaning.

Language, as West (1926) sees it, is the most powerful component of group identity. Using European languages at the expense of indigenous languages is an action aimed at ruining group identity. Like West, Fishman (1983: 129) also shows that language is powerful in bringing the elite and the masses together for strengthening social and national integration. It makes a scientific and technical knowledge easily accessible to the people in their own languages and thus, helps in the process of democratisation, as well as the creation of new political and scientific outlook, Khuller (1995: 115 – 124).

The scientific and technological knowledge that Khuller shows is only available in European languages such as English and the masses of Africans cannot access it hence, the power is retained in the colonist camp many decades after colonisation. Writing in indigenous languages seems to be an insurmountable task but it seems to be the only way and the right step towards getting rid of post colonial exploitation in linguistic affairs. It is a challenging quest that needs determination, time and close interaction between African linguists, scholars, professionals and prolific writers.

Furthermore, teaching reading in foreign language such as English is more challenging than in African indigenous languages. For example, indigenous languages have direct correspondence between the alphabetical letters and the sound they represent. The names and the sounds are generally the same, and letter sounds do not vary depending

on what other letters are near it. For example, any person who is an average Sepedi reader can easily read words such as "*lebone*" which means *"*light*" and* "*morena*" meaning "lord*".*

In the English language, there are 26 letters of alphabet, 44 phonemes (sounds) and 120 graphemes (letters and combination of letters). These variations explain why teaching of phonemic awareness and phonics take so much longer in English than in African languages (DePree, 1994). For example, the sequence of letters "ough" can sound differently depending on whether they are used in "ought" or "through".   In English each letter has a name, but it may have a number of different sounds. For example, the letter "a*"* stands for different sounds in words such as "cat", "car*"* and "cake".

Dutcher (2004) affirms that children learn better in their mother tongues than in foreign languages. According to Bokamba (1991), Francophone African countries that maintained the French colonial language policy and its legacies in education had higher rates of illiteracy and wastage than their Aglophone counterparts that promoted instruction in African languages in the early grades. Moreover, the regional *lingua francas* in these countries were among the least developed (Bokamba, 1991: 175 – 213). It can, therefore, be accepted that education systems that sustain second language acquisition do so in order to "fit" their learners in the economic circles dominated by the European languages.

Language confers symbolic power or cultural capital. In the language market, privileges and exclusions are offered according to one's possession of linguistic capital; those without it are not only marginalised but also effectively censored. In the South African context, denying African students to learn and staff to teach in their indigenous languages is to curtail their academic freedom and to continue privileging white students and teachers whose mother tongues are used as the languages of tuition (Alexander, 2001).

Regardless of attempts by Ngugi and Wali who strive for development and establishment of African languages in literary works, economy, social and educational affairs, Gabriel Okara and others find a sense of identity in writing African literature in English by recognising the English Language as a medium of literary expression, giving it an African colour and characterisation. Okara states that:

> Some may regard this way of writing in English as discretion of the language. This is of course not true. Living languages grow like living things, and English is far from a dead language. There are American, West Indian, Australian, Canadian and New Zealand versions of English. All of them add life and vigour to the language while reflecting their own respective cultures. Why shouldn't there be a Nigerian or West African English which we can use to express our own ideas, thinking and philosophy in our way (cited in Ngugi, 1993: 9).

Okara's argument graphically portrays elements of despondency. To him, the future of indigenous languages is bleak. The implication of the above citation is that nothing can be done to change the *status quo* in the linguistic realm. His claim that English is alive suggests that indigenous languages are dead and Africans have to adjust themselves to swim with the English tide because they are already beaten. This is not true. Should Africans continue to grovel towards their colonial masters by nourishing, enhancing and hailing their languages at the expense of their own? Are they going to persistently contend that indigenous languages are trivial and unintelligible worth of language death? Are they not downtrodden, spat on and despised long enough? If they are illegitimate within their own boundaries and backyards where on earth are they going to be accepted? It is expedient that Africans assert themselves by using their own languages the way they deem fit. Those who find them unintelligible should find ways and means to understand them, just like the way they did during the colonial dispensation. Ngugi interrogates Okara's perspective:

> How did we arrive at this acceptance of the 'fatalistic logic of the unassailable position of English in our literature', in our culture and in our politics? What was the route from the Berlin of 1884 via the Makerere of 1962 to what is still the prevailing and dominant logic a hundred years later? How did we, as

African writers, come to be so feeble towards the claims of our languages on us and so aggressive in our claims on other languages, particularly the languages of our colonisation? (1994: 9).

Grappling with the issue of language identity, Achebe presented a speech entitled: *The African Writer and the English Language.* He introspects himself this way:

Is it right that a man should abandon his mother tongue for someone else's? It looks like a dreadful betrayal and produces a guilty feeling. But for me there is no other choice. I have been given the language and I intend to use it (1975: 285).

Achebe uses paradoxical phrases to maintain his stance to use the English language. Phrases such as "dreadful betrayal" and "a guilty feeling" are strong deterrents to dissuade him to continue writing in English. He, however, discards what seems to be his intrinsic convictions in order to persuade his literary ambitions, more like Macbeth in Shakespeare's play of the same name. Betrayal and guilt are "lock and chain". They bind a person's consciousness and make him a lifetime captive. But Achebe does not seem to worry. He is "given the language and intends to use it". This prompts a morality question: Should Africans continually betray their cultures, customs and values and live in guilt consciousness because it gives them what they want, economic power for instance? African writers and critics will judge for themselves. Whatever verdict they reach, future generations will hold them accountable for it, condemning or vindicating them.

Achebe perceives the English language as a pliable medium with which to communicate his thoughts, experiences and African culture. But at what cost? He continues his argument:

I feel that the English language will be able to carry the weight of my African experience. But it will have to be a new English, still in full communion with its ancestral home but altered to suit new African surroundings (1975: 286).

Ngugi disagrees with Achebe's perception in that he sees it as a self-contradictory manoeuvre intended to impoverish the indigenous languages by "stealing" from them. He interrogates this notion:

> Why, we may ask, should an African writer, or any writer, become so obsessed by taking from his mother-tongue to enrich other tongues? Why should he see it as his particular mission? We never asked ourselves: how can we enrich our languages? How can we 'prey' on the rich humanist and democratic heritage in the struggle of other peoples in other times and other places to enrich our own? […] And why not create literary monuments in our own languages? (Ngugi, 1993: 8).

Ojaide (2009) argues that Africa is a geographical, political, and socio-cultural entity. For this reason the *African* is not limited to the racial but also covers the totality of a diverse continent. He maintains that African writers are those writers who express the African sensibility in their works irrespective of racial and social background. According to him, this is significant as critics have been shy to address the position in African literature of non-black writers of South Africa and also of Arab writers in North Africa. He posits that:

> If Nadine Gordimer has been a life-long member of the ANC and expresses the concerns of Africans, she is an African writer. There is also no doubt of the Africanity of Dennis Brutus, Breyten Breytenbach, and Athol Fugard. Brutus is popular in African literary circles, especially the African Literature Association, and for his antiapartheid struggle. Breytenbach has also suffered incarceration for his anti-apartheid views. Some dispute may arise on the African-ness of J.M. Coetzee, but he is a South African even though he currently lives in Australia. Similarly, being Africans politically and geographically, North African writers are African despite their Arab or Muslim affiliations. Simply put, any writer who is a citizen of any African country is an African writer (Ojaide, 2009: 2).

Ojaide's assumptions are conclusive and loaded with subtle deception. But one has to come clear on this. African literature, which constitute the identity of the African people, is embedded in indigenous languages such as seSotho, isiZulu, Ibo, kiSwahili, Gikuyu, Shona, Lingala; Yoruba, Ndebele or Kimbundu. It cannot be denied that prolific writers

such as Nadine Gordimer, Zakes Mda, Bessie Head, Athol Fugard, Dennis Brutus, Es'kia Mphahlele, Chinua Achebe, Tsisi Dangaremba and Buchi Amecheta have fought vigorously against apartheid and colonisation. These are men and women with a piercing pen. Regardless of the battles they fought and prowess they epitomised and still do, their work belongs to "*Afro-European literature*" as defined by Ngugi (1993: 27). According to him, Afro-European literature is "literature written in European languages in the era of imperialism."

Wali (1963: 69) declares it even clearer: "African Literature can only be written in African languages, that is, the languages of the African peasantry and working class, the major alliance of classes in each of our nationalities and the agency for the coming inevitable revolutionary break with neo-colonialism."

2.4.   Linguistic Imperialism

Phillipson (1992: 36) defines linguistic imperialism as the dominance asserted and retained by establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages. Phillipson's theory critiques the historic spread of English as an international language and the language's continued dominance, particularly in postcolonial settings. A central theme of Phillipson's theory is the complex hegemonic process which he asserts, continue to sustain pre-eminence of English in the world today. Linguistic imperialism is a concept that involves the transfer of a dominant language to other people. The transfer is essentially the demonstration of power, traditional military power. Economic power and aspects of the dominant culture are usually transferred with the language.

The Organisation of African Unity (OAU), which is now called the African Union (AU), came up with measures to eliminate elements of Linguistic Imperialism in African states. They introduced the Language Plan of Action and set up priorities regarding indigenous languages. The language plan aimed:

- to encourage every Member State to have a clearly defined language policy;
- to ensure that all languages within the boundaries of Member States are recognised and accepted as a source of mutual enrichment;
- to liberate the African peoples from undue reliance on the utilisation of non-indigenous languages as the dominant, official languages of the state in favour of the gradual takeover of appropriate and carefully selected indigenous African languages in this domain;
- to ensure that African languages, by appropriate provision and practical promotions, assume their rightful role as the means of official communication in the public affairs of each Member State in replacement of European languages which have hitherto played this role;
- to encourage the increased use of African languages as vehicles of instruction at all educational levels (Phillipson, 1996: 161).

Most African policies, such as constitutions and legislations, look excellent on paper than in practice. Many countries take little or no effort to implement agreements, social contracts and international political resolutions. The Language Plan of Action as propounded by OAU did not take a different route. Twahirwa (1994) as cited by Phillipson (1996) indicates that:

> Even if states and international and regional organizations devote substantial human and financial resources to the sector, without doubt African leaders have not yet become sufficiently conscious of what is fundamentally at issue in the promotion of African languages and the importance of these in the general development of the country. Such an awareness is the *sine qua non* condition for a true take-off of an effective language policy for the continent (Twahirwa, 1994: 102).

This assessment applies to many African countries, in East Africa, in southern Africa, and West Africa, where Nigeria clearly fits into this pattern (Phillipson, 1996):

> There is a general feeling that language problems are not urgent and hence solutions to them can wait. Language policies in African countries are characterized by one or more of the following problems: avoidance,

vagueness, arbitrariness, fluctuation and declaration without Implementation (Bamgbose, 1991: 111).

South Africa is a multilingual society. What is particularly useful for the analysis of principles of multilingualism at the individual and societal levels is a description, based on several pieces of research, of how 'multilingualism is the African *lingua franca* (Desai 1995: 20). South Africans are multilingual productively and receptively, and draw on this competence for a range of interactions (Phillipson, 1996).

The South African Constitution (Act 108 of 1996) states that: "The official languages of the Republic are sePedi, seSotho, seTswana, siSwati, tshiVenda, xiTsonga, Afrikaans, English, isiNdebele, isiXhosa and isiZulu". It further directs that "the state must take practical and positive measures to elevate the status and advance the use of these languages…promote, and create conditions for, the development and use of the Khoi, Nama, San and sign languages." (Chapter 1, section 6 (1), (2) and 5 (4). It is further indicated in the constitution that German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Portuguese, Tamil, Telegu, Urdu, Arabic, Hebrew and Sanskrit which are mainly foreign languages must be promoted and respected.

Western notions of discrete languages, and a single dominant mother tongue, are unable to capture the essence of this reality, and contribute to the disabling process that many experience in formal education, hence the need for radical change to uproot linguistic imperialism. The same is probably true in many multilingual situations, for example, in India (Phillipson, 1996: 163).

Blaming the West is, however, not necessarily a solution. African states should take the necessary initiatives to implement their democratically and beautifully crafted constitutions in order to promote the culture and the identity of their constituencies, communities and future generations. Until now, this is still a dream yet to be realised. For example, South African government has nine Provincial Legislatures, National Council of Provinces, and the National Assembly. All of them conduct their meetings and address their audience in English. Municipalities, which are a seat of the local

government, are not exception to the rule in this regard. Who is behind the curtain that Africans feel so much obliged to appease?

According to census (2011), Whites currently make only 9% of the total population in South Arica which is not ethnically homogeneous. One wonders how the language of such a small minority dominates over 90% of the indigenous languages after so many decades post colonisation and apartheid. Perhaps Africans need 'decolonisation of their minds' as contemplated by Ngugi (1994: xiv).

2.5.   South African National Identity

South African history is characterised by racial discrimination and dehumanisation of black people. Apartheid policies condoned White domination and marginalised Black communities their culture, customs and freedom. The origins of racism in South Africa are more complex and varied. They are founded in the history of Dutch imperialism as much as British policies, ideologies and discourses (Mhlahlo, 2002: 11). Evans (2001: 1–10) sheds light on the following apartheid legislations which the Nationalist Government formulated in 1948 to ensure the "purity" and dominance of the Afrikaners in South Africa: Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, Act No. 55 of 1949 prohibited marriages between white people and the people of other races. Immorality Amendment Act, Act No.21 of 1950, amended in 1957 (Act 23), prohibited adultery, attempted adultery or related immoral acts (extra-marital sex) between whites and black people. This study explores the dimensions of this Act as depicted by Zakes Mda in *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002).

In the same vein, Population Registration Act, Act No. 30 of 1950 led to the creation of a national register in which every person's race was recorded. A Race Classification Board took the final decision on what a person's race was in disputed cases. The Group Areas Act, Act No. 41 of 1950 forced physical separation between races by creating different residential areas for different races. This led to forced removals of people living in "wrong" areas. The result was that over three million Blacks, Indians and Coloureds

were forcibly and at times violently removed from their original hometowns. These removals were exacerbated by the fact that The Natives (Prohibition of Interdict) Act, Act No.64 of 1956, dictated that the Black people had no right to appeal to the courts against forced removals. As far as voting for political parties was concerned, Separate Representation of Voters Act, Act No. 46 of 1951 together with 1956 as amendment, led to the removal of Coloureds from the common voters roll to ensure that Whites decided the fate of all South Africans.

Apartheid created a scenario in which members of the same family would be classified according to racial groups that constitute South Africa. For example, some were classified as Coloured, while others White or Black resulting in splitting of families along racial lines (Mhlahlo, 2002: 11).

National identity in South Africa is still perceived through racial, political and economic stereotypes irrespective of two decades of democracy. Gounden (2010: 11) indicates that post-apartheid South Africa has seen a noticeable transformation of the notion of identity. Cluster identities of Black and White, created by apartheid, have evolved to reflect the real racial and ethnic character of the country. South Africa consists of indigenous Black, White, Indian and Coloured communities, in addition to an increasing African immigrant population. Contemporary identity conflicts in South Africa emerge as these various identities seek to assert and re-assert themselves in the context of a hybrid post-apartheid society.

Gounden (Founder and Executive Director of the African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes) further elaborates on South Africa's conflicting identity as follows:

> The end of apartheid in 1994, and the attendant changes in the economic, political and socio-cultural fronts saw the transformation of the concept of identity in South Africa. Contemporary identity conflicts in South Africa are to be understood within the context of competing identities seeking to assert or re-assert themselves in line with the new dispensation. For instance, some indigenous black ethnic groups have been advocating for Black Nationalism

based on communalism through concepts such as *ubuntu*. On the other hand some white nationalist groups have also been advocating for exclusive racial privileges. However, in a multicultural society such as South Africa, Black Nationalism or White Nationalism can be exclusionary.

Identity conflicts are by definition a clash between the concepts of *national* and *communal* identities. It is important to outline from the outset that current identities found in South Africa were inherited from the apartheid era. However, there have been marked changes among some of the identities with the end of apartheid. Cluster identities of black (where "black" included indigenous Africans, Indians and Coloureds communities) and white, created by apartheid, have also evolved to reflect the real racial and ethnic character of South Africa, with the Indian and Coloured identities emerging as distinct identities from the previous generic "black identity" forged during the apartheid struggle.

Identities found in South Africa today are, the indigenous black community with various identities denoting the various indigenous ethnic groups found in South Africa, white community (Afrikaner and English), Indian and Coloured. An ever increasing African immigrant population also weighs in heavily on contemporary identities found in South Africa (Gounden, 2010: 1 – 2).

In 1988, Slovo, the former General Secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP), wrote that "despite the existence of cultural and racial diversity, South Africa is not a multi-national country. It is a nation in the making […] the concept of one united nation, embracing all our ethnic communities, remains the virtually undisputed liberation objective" (Slovo, 1988: 4). These words are highly reflective of the non-racial political philosophy which characterised the African National Congress (ANC) in the struggle to end apartheid.

Following the establishment of non-racial democracy in 1994, the ANC adopted a "unity through diversity" approach to the national question reflecting the liberal principle of interculturalism. In pursuit of a new national consciousness, the ANC reasoned that "we must seek to provide people with the space to express their multiple identities in ways that foster the evolution of a broader South Africanism as their primary identity" (ANC, 1997: 55). The existence of these multiple identities, along with the powerful meanings and sentiments attached to them, has challenged the formation of a new South African

national consensus. Products of history and social reality as well as apartheid era construction, represent real and important sources of personal meaning and understanding for many people. As such, attempts at nation-building and national identity formation have been forced to address the multitude of identities present in South African society (Stinson, 2009: 17).

Whiteness in Post-Apartheid South Africa

The white privilege (or white skin privilege) refers to societal advantages that white people are argued to benefit from beyond those commonly experienced by black people in the same social, political or economic spaces. For example, nation, community, work place, income and so forth (Theodore, 2006). The term connotes both obvious and less obvious unspoken advantages that white individuals may not recognise that they have. The concept of white privilege also implies the right to assume the universality of one's own experiences, marking others as different or exceptional while perceiving oneself as normal (Theodore, 2006).

White people who resist transformation in post-apartheid South Africa grapple with the notion of maintaining privilege in a situation where black people have achieved political power. They develop subtle strategies in which they seek to sustain the legacies of apartheid and colonisation. Christi van der Westhuizen, a research associate with the Institute for Reconciliation and Social Justice at the University of the Free State, exposes some of the strategies concealed in South African whiteness:

> Five years ago at a discussion on race and redress, Associate professor of Sociology Zimitri Erasmus issued the following admonition: "white people should do the white work." The reasoning behind this was simple: why should it always be up to black people to confront yet another demonstration of white privilege – something masquerading as ignorance; something as just plain garden-variety racist impunity?
>
> Given that all white people still accrue benefits from their whiteness, even if they distance themselves from the racist systems of dispossession that

underpin white privilege, it cannot be enough for a white person to merely renounce racism. My research shows that even outright expressions of white supremacy are nowadays preceded by a vehement disclaimer of: "I'm not a racist but [...]

Open displays of racism have mostly retreated to private spaces. But in their place one finds more insidious racial justifications of white advantage. While discourses of white superiority may be more camouflaged (complaints about corruption or the state of education for example), they continue to produce very real unequal relations of power and associated distribution of resources.

The relations have been captured to some extend by the description that while white South Africans have lost political power, economically and culturally whiteness still prevails. The issue of what is at stake when studying whiteness came up at the first academic conference on whiteness held in South Africa.

The host of the "Whitewash" conference was the Visual Identities in Arts and Design Research Centre at the University of Johannesburg. Difficult conversations were heard at the conference about whiteness as a focus of scholarly endeavour. It has been a feature of whiteness studies to continually interrogate its raison d'être, as whiteness scholars are alive to the danger of degenerating into reproducing whiteness.

One would argue that whiteness studies and debates are only justifiable if firmly focused on power relations. The *proviso* for studies of whiteness should be to contribute to the dismantling of whiteness as part of a larger political project against race and racism... While the international scholarship on centres of power is useful, there are significant differences with the South African context. Whiteness has been established locally since the end of white political rule in ways that are not true of the US, for example. The other centres of power are also dislocated, albeit not to the same extent. This moment in time present South Africans with an unusual opportunity to undo the identities that have historically produced authoritarian power relations and continue to do so. But one cannot dismantle something if one does not know its workings. This is especially true as oppressive identities from the previous year attempt to revive themselves by rolling out new strategies. For example, since 1990s, the denial of the political sources of white privilege has been a primary strategy to maintain it. Another strategy is to claim victimhood, especially to prove "discrimination" against Afrikaner men, the

group that benefited most under apartheid. These strategies have to be exposed not only to refute them, but to shift resources to those people who are in reality suffering the greatest in equalities in post apartheid South Africa as well" (van der Westhuizen, 2013: 25).

The dominance of whiteness as an idea and a social reality embodied with immense power (and the exploitation that is associated with this whiteness) is not a thing of the past as some people may assume (De Vos, 2007). White South Africans have unknowingly become used to an uncritical way of living in their white skins; which means they cannot even acknowledge that being white is still equated with social capital. However, few white people make an effort to acknowledge that certain benefits are still wrapped up in being White. As argued in van der Westhuizen article, some would even have the audacity to claim that they are the victims, the new "*blacks*" of South Africa. But when the cold hard facts around poverty, inequality, and unemployment are looked into from vantage point of race, whiteness still represents unfair advantage in the post apartheid South Africa. Whiteness is still a social norm (De Vos 2007).

2.6.   Cultural Hybridity in Postcolonial Discourse

The concept of hybridity occupies a central place in postcolonial discourse. It is "celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweeness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (Hoogvelt, 1997: 158).

Postcolonial criticism is influential in the process of redefining postcolonial and minority structures. Bhabha (1994: 64) posits that cultural differences are based on hybridities created in moments of historical transformation and therefore, people should not be classified in groups based on "organic" pre-existing traits attributed to ethnic groups. He asserts that people must move to the "beyond" to understand these differences. This is the place where the crossing over of time occurs and where new signs of identity are

formed. He shows that people's characteristics are not limited to their ethnic heritage, but rather are subject to change and modification through experience.

In his literary criticism, Bhabha (1994) cites repetition as a mode of resistance to today's neocolonialism, particularly the recolonisation of migrants within the contemporary Western metropolis. For Bhabha, the human subject is not grounded in a fixed identity but rather is a discursive effect generated in the act of enunciation. When migrants, refugees, and the decolonised take up positions in Western discourse, they divide it from itself and create new hybrid subjectivities. The hybrid postcolonial subject negotiates the interstices of Western discursive systems, operating in-between the dichotomies of coloniser and colonised, self and other, East and West. Once a mode of Western discourse is altered through repetition, moreover, it loses its "Westness" and exposes itself to difference. Iteration is therefore a way of translating between cultures. It opens the possibility of an international culture of hybridity generated through discursive activity (Bracken, 1999: 506).

It is Bhabha's usage of the concept of hybridity that has been the most influential and controversial within recent postcolonial studies. Bhabha goes back to Fanon to suggest that liminality and hybridity are necessary attributes of the colonial condition. For Fanon (1989: 73), psychic trauma results when the colonial subject realises that he can never attain the whiteness he has been taught to desire, to shed the blackness that he has learnt to devalue. Bhabha amplifies this argument by suggesting that colonial identities are always a matter of flux and agony. It is always, writes Bhabha in an essay about Fanon's importance of our time, in relation to the place of the other that colonial desire is articulated, correct (Loomba, 1998: 148).

The concept of: *hybridity of cultures* was generated by Bhabha referring to "mixedness" or "impurity" of cultures to assert that no culture is really pure. According to Bhabha, every culture is an original "mixedness" within every form of identity. He states that the cultures are not discrete phenomena, but being always in contact with one another, we find mixedness in cultures. Bhabha insists on hybridity's ongoing process- hybridisation.

He further asserts that no cultures that come together lead to hybrid forms, but cultures are the consequence of attempts to still the flux of cultural hybridities. He directs the reader's attention to what happens on the borderlines of cultures, and in-between cultures. He used the term, liminal on the border or the threshold that stresses the idea that what is in between settled cultural forms or identities is central to the creation of new cultural meaning. He further states that the location of culture is both spatial and temporal: so the terms, hybridity and liminality do not refer only to space, but also to time. So he asserts that the people living in different spaces are living at different stages of progress (Huddart, 2006: 6 – 7).

Bhabha suggests that stereotypical knowledges are recognised as a means of practical control, and are also kept separate from the philosophical "civilizing" justifications of the colonial mission. According to Bhabha, a stereotype has a problem of fixing individuals or groups in one place, denying their own sense of identity, and presuming to understand them on the basis of prior knowledge, usually knowledge that is, at best, defective. Bhabha states further that all forms of colonial identification need to be seen as modes of differentiation, realised as multiple, cross-cutting determinations, polymorphous and perverse, always demanding a specific calculations of their effects (Bhabha, 1994: 67).

Bhabha points out that realism is inadequate to analyse the colonial discourse. He tries to connect realism and colonial discourse, stating if realism is not always colonial discourse then colonial discourse is always a form of realism. In other words, not all realistic narratives have connections with colonialism, but colonial discourse is always claiming to directly represent colonial reality. Bhabha argues that the stereotype is not a simplification because it is a false representation of a given reality. He further indicates that stereotype impedes the circulation and articulation of the signifier of race as anything than its fixity as racism He believes that the mirror stage encapsulates what happens in colonial discourse's stereotyping productions: the mirror stage is at least a good model for the colonial situation. He further suggests that like the mirror phase the "fullness" of the stereotype, its image as identity, is always threatened by lack (Bhabha, 1994: 75 – 77).

According to Bhabha, visual identification might always hold out the fantasy of full and stable identity, but that identity is immediately threatened by loss because visual identification is part of a circulation of relations rather than a one way fixed relation. He states that the self and other are locked together. For Bhabha, there is no fact of blackness, and there is no fact of whiteness, not if those facts or identities are imagined as permanent. He observes that whiteness is transparent but whiteness studies make whiteness opaque. Whiteness is made visible for what it has been and continues to be a strategy of authority. Whiteness seems to have a coherence, stability and finality that justify its authority, in contrast to the coherence and instability that explain why whiteness will always be inferior.

Stereotypes function to enable colonial authority, providing the justification that the coloniser rules the colonised due to innate superiority. The authority recognises its bases in stereotypes, producing prejudiced and discriminatory structures of governance and colonial rule is informed by supposedly "civilising" ideals. The modern forms of Western political and economic institutions coexist with the ideologies of superiority. The coexistence enables the real exercise of colonial power, but at the same time that anxiety troubles the source of colonial authority. Bhabha states that this ambivalence or anxiety is necessary for the production of new stereotypes, but is also the space for counter-knowledge and strategies of resistance and contestation. Bhabha suggests that authority is only ever complete if we take it at its word something that colonised peoples obviously resisted, and that the postcolonial critic must continue to resist it too (Bhabha, 1994: 107–108).

In relation to nationality, Bhabha argues that people's sense of nationhood is discursively constructed because it is "narrativised". In other words, Individuals and groups define themselves and are defined by others on the basis of race, ethnicity religion, language and culture. He also points out that the colonial authority, the power of the national narrative seems entirely confidence of its consistency and coherence, but is all the while undermined by its inability to really fix the identity of the people, which would be to limit their identity to a single overpowering nationality. He further

adds that the narrative of nationality is continually displaced by other identities, like sexuality, class, or race, and there can be no end to this displacement (Bhabha, 1994:157).

2.7.   Cultural Identity

According to Hall (1990: 223), there are at least two different ways of thinking about 'cultural identity'. The first position defines 'cultural identity' in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves', which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. Within the terms of this definition, people's cultural identities reflect the common historical experiences and shared cultural codes which provide them, as 'one people', with stable, unchanging and continuous frames of reference and meaning, beneath the shifting divisions and vicissitudes of their actual history. This 'oneness', which underlies all the other, is the essence, of the black experience. It is this identity which black diasporas must discover and bring to light and express through artistic representation.

There is, however, a second, related but different view of cultural identity. This second position recognises that, as much as there are many points of similarity, there are also critical points of deep and significant difference which constitute 'what we really are'; or rather - since history has intervened - 'what we have become'. People cannot speak for a long time, with any exactness, about 'one experience, one identity', without acknowledging its other side - the ruptures and discontinuities which constitute, precisely, the Blacks 'uniqueness'. Cultural identity, in this second sense, is a matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being' (Hall, 1990: 225). It is from this second position that people can understand the traumatic character of 'the colonial experience'. The ways in which black people were positioned and subjected in the dominant regimes of representation were the effects of a critical exercise of cultural power and normalisation. They had the power to make Black people see and experience themselves as 'Other' (Hall, 1990: 225). This inner expropriation of cultural identity cripples and deforms

people. If its silences are not resisted, they produce, in Fanon's (1963: 17) phrase, "individuals without an anchor, without horizon, colourless, stateless and rootless, a race of angels."

Fanon (1963: 170) further shows that "Colonisation is not satisfied merely with holding a people in its grip and emptying the native's brain of all form and content. By a kind of perverted logic, it turns to the past of oppressed people, and distorts, disfigures and destroys it." In other words, victims of colonisation should undertake a profound research in order to discover the hidden representations cultivated by the coloniser. It is only through the process of unearthing that which the colonial experience buried that can make people rediscover themselves. This discovery sheds light to the hidden elements of colonial experience which are still sustained among the people.

According to Nyasani (1997: 56 – 57), African, Asian and European minds are products of unique edifices and cultural streams that arose from environmental conditioning and long-standing cultural traditions. Within the African cultural stream, Nyasani claims there are psychological and moral characteristics pertaining to African identity. Makgoba (1997: 197–198) contends that throughout the African Diaspora, people of African of descent "are linked by shared values that are fundamental features of African identity and culture. These include for example, *ubuntu*, hospitality, friendliness, common frame-work seeking principles and the emphasis on community rather than the individual. These features typically underpin the variations of African culture and identity everywhere. He further identifies the motives behind the Eurocentric approach towards African people as follows:

> Knowledge about African people is always political, useful in maintaining intellectual neo-colonialism, propagates Western culture, helps generate and perpetuate an inferiority complex (in Africans), fosters individualism amongst Africans, disrupts organisation and unity in the (African) community because there is inherent fear of a united, organised Afrocentric community, or a combination of all of the above. In short, we are (regarded to be) a people who can only succeed, realise our potential and destiny by being controlled,

policed, nursed and guided by Europeans. We are (therefore) incapable of being masters of our own destiny (Makgoba, 1997: 205).

Nyasani (1997: 57) indicates that personality characteristics inherent in the African mind are sociality, patience, tolerance, sympathy and acceptance. These are:

> Areas in which the African mind seems to reveal itself in a somewhat dramatic way. It reveals itself through what may rightly be called a *congenital trait of sociality* or *sociability*. It further reveals itself as a *virtuous natural endowment* of patience and tolerance. And lastly it manifests itself as a *natural disposition* for mutual sympathy and acceptance. These three areas then appear to serve as important landmarks in the general description of the phenomenology of the African mind.

The nodal point that Nyasani articulates is that self-centeredness and egocentrism are alien to the African context. He contends that, "everything boils down to the 'me' in the 'we' or rather to the survival of the self through the enhancement and consolidation of the 'we' as a generic whole [...]. Thus, in Africa, the individual will go to great lengths to ascertain the condition of the corporate 'we' and to play his part, if necessary, to restore the balance of wholesomeness" (Nyasani, 1997– 852).

Drawing from African identity theory, Mbiti (1969: 109) believes that the individual has little latitude for self determination outside the context of the traditional African family and community:

> Whatever happens to the individual happens to the whole group, and whatever happens to the whole group happens to the individual. The individual can only say: 'I am, because we are; and since we are; therefore I am.' This is a cardinal point in the understanding of the African view of man.

Shutter (1993: 46 – 47), a South African philosophy professor, citing the Xhosa proverb *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, literally translated: '*a person is a person through other persons,*' states:

This (proverb) is the Xhosa expression of a notion that is common to all African languages and traditional cultures...it is concerned both with the peculiar interdependence of persons on others for exercise, development and fulfilment of their powers that is recognised in African traditional thought, and also with the understanding of what it is to be a person that underlines this... In European philosophy, of whatever kind, the self is always envisaged as something "inside" a person, or at least as a kind of container of mental properties and powers. In African thought it is seen as "outside" subsisting in relationship to what is other, the natural and social environment. In fact the sharp distinction between self and world, a self that controls and changes the world and is in some sense "above" it, this distinction so characteristic of European philosophy, disappears. Self and world are united and intermingled in a web of reciprocal relations.

This African proverb (*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu)* expresses a profound identity truth embedded deep within the core of traditional African values. According to African tradition, personhood is understood as a process and the product of interconnectedness experienced and or achieved in the context of the community.

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter sought to assert both overt and covert strategies of colonial legacy. It exposes the ongoing external interference and endemic intense African admiration of Western culture over African culture. It interrogates the *status quo* in numerous core values such as language, tradition, and patterns of cultural adaptation in Africa as identified in the writings of selected African scholars and critics such as Ngugi, Wali, Achebe, Okara and Bhabha.

Fay (1971: 243) affirms:

This novel demands that we reactivate our senses, our hearts, and our minds; that we respond again to what is simple and understated, to what is poetic and strange, to what is good and bad in the world, and to the possibility of a new age in which our lives and the lives of all people will be transformed.

CHAPTER THREE: MISCEGENATION AND RACIAL IDENTITY IN MDA'S *THE MADONNA OF EXCELSIOR* (2002)

3.1. Introduction

Interracial marriages and sexual relationships were prohibited during South Africa's apartheid government. The White population was considered a 'pure breed' which, according to the Afrikaners, could be defiled by other races in interracial marriages. In postcolonial discourse, the notion that any culture or identity is pure or essential is disputable (Ashcroft, 1995). This chapter discusses miscegenation in South Africa as depicted by Mda in *The Madonna of Excelsio*r (2002) looking at the following aspects: definition of the concept of miscegenation, a brief background of miscegenation, miscegenation in South Africa, the plight of the sensual madonnas, racial dehumanisation and vengeance, towards a new South African political identity and identity crisis. The chapter also looks at social ostracism experienced by individuals born from interracial relationships.

3.2. Definition of Miscegenation

The *Oxford Reference Dictionary* (1986) defines miscegenation as "sexual relations between people from different racial groups." It stems from the Latin words "miscere" and "genus" which mean "to mix" and "race" respectively. The term has been used to refer to interracial marriage and interracial sex, and more generally, to the global process of racial admixture that has taken place since ancient history. Historically, the term was used in the context of laws banning interracial marriages and sex. They were known as anti-miscegenation laws (Downing, 2005: 9). Today, the term is rarely used or totally avoided as it is considered offensive because it suggests a distinct biological phenomenon rather than a categorisation imposed on certain relationships. Other terms such as "interracial", "interethnic" or "cross-cultural" are more common in contemporary usage (Newman, 1999). However, the term is still used by scholars and historians when referring to past practices concerning multiracialism such as anti-miscegenation laws that banned interracial marriages (Pascoe,1996), as it is the case with this study.

3.3. A Brief Background of Miscegenation

The word "miscegenation" was initially coined in the United States of America (USA) in an anonymous propaganda pamphlet published in New York City in December 1863, during the American Civil War. The pamphlet was entitled *Miscegenation: The Theory of the Blending of the Races, Applied to the American White Man and Negro*. It aimed to promote intermarriage among Whites and Blacks until they were indistinguishably mixed. It further asserted that this was the goal of the Republican Party. However, it was later discovered that the pamphlet was a hoax concocted by Democrats to discredit the Republicans by imputing to them what were then radical views that offended the attitudes of majority of White people, including those who opposed slavery. The pamphlet and variations on it were reprinted widely in both the north and south by Democrats and Confederates. It was in November 1864 when the pamphlet was exposed as a hoax. It was written by David Goodman Croly, managing editor of *The New York World*, a Democratic Party paper, and George Wakeman, a *World* reporter (Hollinger, 2003).

In the USA, the concept of miscegenation was used to focus primarily on the intermarriage of White people and non-Whites, especially Black people. The etymology of miscegenation is tied up with political conflicts during the American Civil War over the abolition of slavery and over racial segregation of African-Americans. Reference to "genus" was made to emphasise the supposedly distinct biological differences between Whites and non-Whites. In essence, all humans belong to the same "genus" (homo), to the same species (Homo-sapiens) and to the same subspecies (Homo sapiens sapience) (Hollinger, 2003).

Most of American states (at one stage forty out of fifty) enacted laws against racially mixed unions and marriages (Phoenix and Owen, 2000). The categories of who was forbidden to marry varied among states, but all forbade marriage among Black and White people. These laws were only declared unconstitutional as late as 1967 (Phoenix and Owen, 2000). Census data from 1980 to 1987 show a small but consistent increase

in interracial marriages in the United States since 1970 (Lewis, Yancey and Bletzer, 1997).

3.4.   Miscegenation in South Africa

In the early period of Dutch settlement at the Cape in the seventeenth century, White men frequently married Black women. MacCrone (1937) notes that race and skin-colour played little part in determining the attitude of Europeans to non-Europeans, and that the baptism of women of colour resulted in the rise in their legal and social status, which often led to marriage with European men.

The topic of mixed marriage assumed a central place in South African political discourse in the 1930s. The contest between the Purified National Party (Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party/GNP) of D.F. Malan, and the United Party (UP), of Hertzog and Smuts, in the 1938 election revolved around "which party was most opposed to mixed marriage, and which policy was best equipped to prevent it" (Hyslop, 1993: 2). The GNP advocated for legislation banning mixed marriage in order to maintain racial boundaries hence, "racial purity". The UP criticised the GNP for the insinuation that White women would marry Black men and consequently needed legislation to prevent them from doing so. The GNP contradicted themselves by, on the one hand, declaring that Whites had an innate or instinctual aversion to racial 'mixing', and on the other hand, campaigning for legislation to prevent sexual relations between the race groups.

Interracial unions in South Africa have been indelibly shaped by apartheid legislation.The government introduced numerous laws that discriminated against Black, Indian and the Coloured communities. Among those laws were miscegenation laws that enforced racial segregation at the level of marriage and intimate relationships by criminalising interracial marriages and sex among members of different races. Such laws were: The Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act, enacted in 1949, which banned intermarriage between whites and non-whites and Immorality Act, enacted in 1950

which also made it a criminal offence for a white person to have any sexual relations with a person of a different race (Byrnes, 1996). Both laws were repealed in 1985.

Prior to the victory of the National Party and subsequent apartheid government, particularly throughout the nineteenth and the early part of the twentieth century, interracial relationships were far more tolerated than during the years to follow (Jacobson, Amoateng, and Heaton, 2004). In the early history of South Africa, some prominent Afrikaner males such as Pieter Meerhoff and Jan Woutersz intermarried with non-white women. Thus some White Afrikaner families have mixed racial ancestry (Jacobson *et al.*, 2004). According to Heese (1971), approximately 7.2% of Afrikaner ancestry is non-white.

Although interracial marriages are now legal, they are still a highly controversial topic. Attitudes towards interracial marriages and intimate relationships among people from different racial backgrounds in South Africa may represent some kind of a yardstick to measure the degree of transition from apartheid to democracy the country has achieved thus far (Morrall, 1994).

The Population Registration Act (No. 30) of 1950 provided the basis for separating the population of South Africa into different races. Under the terms of this act, all residents were to be classified as white, coloured, or native people. Indians were included under the category "Asians" in 1959 (Byrnes, 1996).

3.5.   The Plight of the Sensual Madonnas

In *The Madonna of Excelsio*r (2002), Mda satirises apartheid policies on interracial sexual relationships during the apartheid era. These policies were superficially grounded on race and skin pigmentation. They were used to trivialise crucial aspects such as values, culture, belief system and the spirit of *ubuntu* which constitute the identity of the African people. Mda outlines historical sexual events which embarrassed Excelsior Afrikaners although these actions were generally common in the whole

country. In this novel, the central concern is the copulation between African women and Afrikaners.

Given that apartheid based its principles on the separation of races, Excelsior case came as a major embarrassment for the ruling Nationalist Party for whom miscegenation was an anathema (Raditlhalo, 2011: 12) hence, the mysterious withdrawal of the case to protect the dignity of the white Afrikaners which was already ruined and defamed.

Mda employs the power of seductive language, irony, puns and sarcasm to subvert and ridicule apartheid miscegenation laws and the Afrikaner males who legislated and executed these laws while concurrently contravening them. He notes this as "a battle between lust and loathing" (p. 87). He deliberately uses female characters to serve as both construction and destruction forces to subvert the apartheid male dominated society. In the same manner of fate, Head uses a woman to knock down the stereotype of racial discrimination in *Maru* (1971).

Mda's novel exposes fornication, adultery, suicide, corruption and outrageous behaviour of the Afrikaners in Excelsior. The dramatic tale of Excelsior unfolded in 1971 when nineteen local women were tried for miscegenation. They are the "madonnas" of the little farming town of Excelsior. Mda particularly traces the sorrow and travails of Niki, one of the accused, and her children, Viliki and Popi. Viliki is the son of a miner who dies from phthisis and Popi, his half-sister, is the child that Niki bore after vengefully bedding one Afrikaner farmer, Stephanus Cronje, in order to humiliate his wife. Interracial sex is the main offence committed in Excelsior. The "sin" of these mothers, as Mda asserts, was to break the Immorality Act. In essence, the Afrikaners lusted on these women and copulated them in exchange for small cash and in some instances brutally raped them.

Mda opens his novel with a catchy ironic statement which is also echoed in the last line: "All these things flow from the sins of our mothers" (p. 1) "From the sins of our mothers

all these things flow" (p. 268). This sentence is loaded with irony that runs throughout the novel. The novel attacks the prejudice and injustice of the apartheid government. The black women of Mahlatswetsa township were lured into illicit sex by Afrikaner males but when charges were made and culprits arrested, the Afrikaners paid bail while black women were remanded in custody with the babies of their co-accused. The "sins of our mothers", that Mda slams here, are actually the sins of "our fathers" because the novel attacks prejudice by male Afrikaners and partiality they show when executing justice.

Mda complicates the whole notion of sin, weaving it inextricably into a big messy tangle of race and religion, repression and exploitation. He succeeds in locating desire in its rightful place at the centre of history (Raditlhalo, 2011). It is further worth noting to observe how custodians of religion such as Father Frans Claerhout are put side by side with an erotic and seductive phrase such as "big hands and big breasts" (p. 2). This suggests their lustfulness and infidelity, two notions that run throughout the novel.

Mda takes a strategy of pulling on the slippery string of sexual desire to unravel the knot of apartheid era race relations. Despite his opening sentence, he begins every chapter, like any impartial judge, with the presumption of innocence. Each chapter starts with a description of a painting by the artist, Father Frans Claerhout, depicting a vital sensuality of colour and light, yet loaded with cunning tactics and cruelty:

> Colour explodes. Green, yellow, red and blue. Sleepy eyed women are walking among sunflowers. Naked women are chasing white doves among sunflowers. True atonement of rhythm and line. A boy is riding a donkey backwards among sunflowers. The ground is red. The sky is blue. The boy is red. The faces of the women are blue. Their hats are yellow and their dresses are blue. Women are harvesting wheat…Big-breasted figures tower over the reapers, their ghostly faces showing only displeasure (p. 1).

The depiction of colours plays a significant role in this novel and cannot go without notice. These colours have both cultural and political significance. They add a different dimension and contrast with a concern for human skin colour. In South Africa today, different colours signify the "rainbow nation" which South Africans proudly parade in the

international arena. However, under apartheid regime, there was an "explosion" of colour. The word "explode" as applied in the citation above, suggests an abrupt burst as a result of internal pressure, a nation in despair. The order was disturbed as Yeats' poem (1920) asserts:

> Turning and turning in the widening gyre;
> The falcon cannot hear the falconer;
> Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold;
> Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world.

A line is torn across "God-given apartheid laws" (p. 23). Afrikaners defy and subvert the social order of whiteness. Dark secrets are revealed in a broad daylight, in full view of the cosmos. As expressed by Killian (2007: 40), interracial intimate relationships challenge racial polarity on a broader societal level by transgressing racist expectations of homogamy, social conformity, and segregation.

Who are these naked women and white doves among the sunflowers? Why are the women chasing the white doves? What game are they playing in the setting of the sunflowers? Mda's characters emerge from these bright canvases into a spiritually dimmer world:

> Deep in the sunflower field, Johannes Smit pulled off Niki's Terylene skirt. She tried to hold on to it, but he had the strength of ten demons. He threw her on the damp ground. Then he pulled down her panties and took them off. He sniffed them, which seemed to raise more demons in his quivering body. He stuffed the panties in his pocket. Yellowness ran amok. Yellowness dripped down with her screams. He slapped her and ordered her to shut up. Her screams were now muffled with his hand on her mouth. …He lay on top of her and pleaded, "I am sorry, I didn't mean to hurt you. But if you make noise, people will come and spoil *our fun*" [My emphasis] (p. 16).

Young Niki, naïve, proud and "pretty as doll" (p. 13) is raped by an Afrikaner farmer, Johannes Smit. An action perpetuated with impunity among the Black women. The disillusionment she experiences after this act is well expressed in the sentence: "He just

lay there like a plastic bag of decaying tripe on top of her" (p. 16). The naked women postulated in the former paragraph are the "three naïve girls" (p. 13): Niki, Mmampe and Maria who firstly appear in chapter four of the novel. "Three naïve girls walked out of the trinity's naïve world" (p. 13), only to be devoured by doves, white doves. Irony deepens here because under normal circumstances, vulnerable and innocent creatures are devoured by wolves and not doves. White doves are symbolic to holiness and purity and not aggression and brutality.

Niki's rape by Johannes Smit exemplifies the poor and vulnerable status of women in Africa. African society generally portrays women as foolish, weak, dependent, frivolous, and seductive. It tends to cultivate "men's prerogatives to the allegiance and subservience of women, and legitimatise men to exercise their power over women to sustain the latter's subordination and marginality" (Hussein, 2005: 60).

It is also imperative to reveal the Eurocentric sexual stereotypes that engulf and inform the White man's lustfulness on black women. Concomitant with the belief that Black people are intellectually inferior, is the belief that Black people are sexually superior. Black women are held to have "increased lubricity and an unbounded and indiscriminate sexual appetite", while Black men are held to have "enormous penises and sexual appetites" (Katz, 1996: 25). The accompanying stereotypes are those of White women as chaste and virginal and White men as protectors of their women (Childs, 2005). White women are unable to resist the advances of Black men, and once they succumb to the advances of Black men, they are corrupted.

The stereotyping of Black women reduces them to objects of sexual molestation. They serve as a driving force behind the demons that induce sexual desires of the Smits, the Cronjes and the Bornmans who choose to preserve their wives for chastity and virginity. They preach against adultery, miscegenation and fornication but cannot resist temptations behind these sins. While it is human to err, they are expected to repent after the fall. However, they apportion blame on the devil when they get caught eating the same forbidden fruit:

The devil had sent black women to tempt him [Afrikaner] and to move him away from the path of righteousness. The devil had always used the black female to tempt the Afrikaner. It was a battle that was raging within individual Afrikaner men. A battle between lust and loathing. A battle that Afrikaner must win. The devil made the Afrikaner to covertly covet the black woman while publicly detesting her. It was his fault that he had not been strong enough to resist the temptation. The devil made him do it. The devil had weakened his heart, making it open to temptation (p. 87).

The extract shows that the Afrikaner justifies and exonerates himself from all responsibilities of breaking both the law of God and of man. He seeks pity by presenting himself as a helpless and vulnerable victim of the Black woman and the devil. In other words, he cannot resist temptations because he is deprived of power to do so by these two. Does this also imply that the devil and the Black woman should be punished on his behalf? Apartheid condoned it. It was always the Black woman who was punished. The devil and the Afrikaner walked free to commit more sins for which the Black woman had to bear the consequences. This is contrary to how the general public sees religious people. They are perceived as role models, "light of the world", "salt of the world" and saints. They are people of good morals and have self-control. When Reverend Francois Bornman appeared before the court with his co-accused, he was presumed and declared innocent by everyone. He still had unanimous public defence around him:

If ever there was a person who had been framed, then it had to be the dominee, we all agreed. We knew of him as a man of God who preached obedience to His laws. Laws against adultery and miscegenation (p .75).

The circumstances prior to the trial paint a different picture of the Reverend. He was involved in sex partner-swapping orgies together with his *volk*, admonishing and threatening Stephanus Cronje for his refusal to share his partner, "He will not be allowed here if he does not want to share," said Reverend Francois Bornman, fondling Mmampe's breasts" (p. 53).

These are mysterious works of the pure white doves, Gesuiwerde Nasionale Party (Purified National Party). They combine light with darkness. The white doves fail to

sustain the purity and holiness they represent but engage in orgies, law breaking and immorality, the very social ills they condemn in public. Mda questions their double standards in this regard. He subverts, ridicules and overthrow apartheid policies because they act against human nature and freedom of association among humanity.

It was not only the lay man who struggled with the "battle between lust and loathing" (p .87), but every Afrikaner male, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, the single and the married. Even the magistrates, who were expected to be the custodians of law and justice, were not spared. Mda exposes them:

> In various platteland towns Afrikaner magistrates were sitting at their benches, listening to salacious details, and concealing painful erections under their black magistrate gowns. Afrikaners prosecuting fellow Afrikaners with cannibalistic zeal. Afrikaners sending fellow Afrikaners to serve term of imprisonment. All because of a black body parts (p. 94).

Mda posits that Immorality Act was only an imaginary wishful thought that obsessed the mind of the Afrikaner because of apartheid but not realistic to human nature. It exacerbated the problem it was designed to solve. The more Afrikaners were prohibited, arrested, charged and sentenced for contravening this Act, the more their virgins yearned to unveil their white bodies to grace the black ones.

> Young Afrikaners boys were eager to taste what their fathers were eating on the sly. They went out on hunting expeditions for what they called swart poes. In the fields. In the veld. In the byways of one-street towns. In the farm villages. And in the kitchens of their very homes, where maids and nannies cooked them their dinners (p. 94).

By criminalising sex among races, the Immorality Act manifested as the white people's fear of deracination as they did not want to be transformed into the feared 'Other'. In short, the Afrikaners of Excelsior and many others in the country fail to recognise aspects of themselves in the 'Other', and inversely, aspects of the 'Other' in themselves, when taken as proponents of Occidental practice. This means the denial of a shared

humanity with the black women who are reduced to no more than objects of curiosity, sexual experimentation and gratification (Ngara, 2007: 25).

3.6.   Racial Dehumanisation and Vengeance

The Afrikaner has limitless power. Power to order servants in their daily chores and power to copulate any Black woman with or without consent. It cannot be disputed that he has a lot of power, but power comes with a lot of responsibility. Lack of responsibility in the execution of power can be a thorn in one's own flesh. Cornelia Cronje crosses the line of power and strips naked a servant (Niki) in full view of other servants, her son Tjaart and her husband Stephanus. She does this out of sheer suspicion of pilfering:

> Madam Cornelia was determined to teach her a lesson […] She ordered her to strip. Right there in front of everyone. When she hesitated, Madam Cornelia threatened to lock her up in the cold room with all the carcases, as it was obvious that she loved meat so much that she had now become a meat thief. Niki peeled off her pink overall and then her mauve dress…Then she peeled off the petticoat and stood in her pink knickers and fawn bra…She stood there like the day she was born. Except that when she was born, there was no shame in her (p. 41).

Mda indicates that by stripping off Niki's clothes, Cornelia does not only plant a seed of lust in her husband and son's minds, she also plants a detrimental seed of death. They immediately started "raping her with their eyes" (p. 42). "From that day he only saw Niki as body parts rather than as one whole person. He saw her as breasts, pubes, lips and buttocks" (p. 42).

Cornelia's humiliation of Niki is particularly striking but not unimaginable as she cannot think of the workers as human. She takes the incident lightly, while, for Niki, the incident gradually accumulates "dark motives of vengeance" (p. 42) […]. "A storm was brewing. Quietly. Calmly…she was nursing ungodly grudge" (p. 42).

Madam Cornelia is guided by animalistic dehumanisation, which normally occurs when one social group denies that another social group has the same set of uniquely human attributes (Haslam, 2006). This form of dehumanisation is called animalistic dehumanisation because it is often characterised by the explicit application of animalistic characteristics to the other social group.

Animalistic dehumanisation takes place primarily in an intergroup context, especially in the context of interethnic or interracial relations and with groups of persons with disabilities. This dehumanisation is typically accompanied by the harbouring of bad emotions such as disgust and contempt for the members of the other social group. It is consistent with the attitudes expressed against the dehumanised group in earlier social psychological research (Bandura, Underwood, and Fromson, 1975). French philosopher Redeker, applies distinctions between forms of dehumanisation. This involves the denial that those in the other group have a soul (Redeker, 2007). To humiliate a person the way Madam Cornelia does can only happen when one thinks that the other person has neither soul nor emotions.

Mda portrays Niki as a symbol of torture, subjugation and exploitation. Her soul and emotions are hurting and a justifiable anger creeps into her life. She is not only weighed and stripped naked by Madam Cornelia, Johannes Smit occasionally uses her as a "masturbation gadget" (p. 19) and she is stuck in a loveless marriage to an absentee abusive and jealous husband, Pule, who beats her up over trivial matters hence her deep emotional and physical hurt. Her reactions to her feelings have far-reaching consequences when she chooses Stephanus Cronje, Madam Cornelia's husband as her nearest target. She proves that she also possesses some kind of power, vengeful power against men and women of Excelsior. This time she is in charge, preying on him: "gobbling him up" and "chewing him to pieces" (p. 50), on Madam's bed, and in Johannes Smit's barn during carnivalesque communal copulation sessions in which the women, for a petty financial gain, reduce the clergy men of Excelsior to a cacophony of relentless 'squealing', 'bleating' 'babbling' and 'heaving'. She meets him amongst the very sunflowers which were the site of her violent deflowering, where Niki now claims to

have Stephanus Cronje "entirely in her power" (p. 50), "under the stars […] in the light of the moon" (p. 50). She shares power with Madam Cornelia, "power of life and death" (p. 50), and the worst was still to come.

Stephanus Cronje's "stolen pleasures" (p. 73) did not last long before they were exposed in the glare of the day. And when it happened, he was exiled into a guest room and never shared a conjugal life with his wife until a catastrophic event befell her:

> When she returned from work that day, something made her suspect that all was not well with her husband. She had asked the gardener to break down the bedroom door. And there he was. Stephanus Cronje. Bloody-faced. A rivulet of blood tracing its way from his temple to the foot of the bed. The shotgun with which he used to threaten us lying between his legs (p. 73). He had taken the easy way out […] Leaving her to face the wrath of the law alone (p. 70).

Stephanus Cronje is dead. A line drawn between Black and White people by apartheid administration penetrates deeper to separate life and death. Who would have anticipated that when Madam Cornelia was ripping Niki's underwear off she was at the same time ripping her husband's and digging his early grave in the process?

3.7. Towards a New South African Political Identity

In 1994 South Africa underwent the most profound political and constitutional transformation. The country conducted its first provincial and national democratic elections which culminated in the triumph of the previously banned African National Congress (ANC). Prior to 1994, the country's main political antagonists, the National Party (NP) and the ANC agreed on multiparty Transitional Executive Council (TEC) to govern the country jointly until the elections were held. They also agreed that after the elections, a transitional Government of National Unity would be established and that a transitional bicameral parliament would form a constitutional assembly to draft a final constitution (Adler and Webster, 1994).

This political transition from apartheid to a democratic dispensation was traumatic to the Afrikaners. They felt betrayed by their own leaders who gave up political power without bloodshed. They thought transformation initiatives such as affirmative action, equity and Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) were designed to deprive them of their businesses, professions and careers (Mulder, 2002: 1). They did not want to serve as subordinates under black leadership. Their dominance over South Africa for three centuries dictated to their consciences that South Africa could not be governed without them, let alone by black people. When it happened, they were frustrated, angered and disillusioned as seen in Tjaart's Cronje reaction below.

Mda elaborates on transitional process in vivid details. Using omniscient narrative style, he exposes political intolerance in which former masters are compelled to work together with their former 'slaves'. Emotional turmoil erupts as they engage in meeting proceedings in the town council. Mda illustrates the dilemma that the young people encounter when they attempt to reassert themselves socially and politically. The appalling political conditions created by apartheid are echoed through generations inflicting more pain and worsening social and political ills. "From the sins of our mothers all these things flow" (p. 268). Mda notes that in political circles, there are no real new beginnings or a fresh start. Life is interrelated and intertwined. Infidelity, apartheid and greed committed in the previous political era shape the future and fate of the democratic society. For example, the South African "born frees" (children born after 1994) are directly affected by apartheid even though the laws are completely repealed.

In the second part of the novel, children born under apartheid are now leaders of the society. Popi is actively involved in politics and she is elected as a town councillor. She serves the city council with her two half-brothers, Viliki and Tjaart Cronje. Although their primary objective is to provide leadership in bringing quality services to the people of Excelsior, all three are obsessed with hatred, anger and pain which originated in the apartheid dispensation.

Viliki cannot forget his people's oppression and exploitation in the hands of Afrikaners while his sister is haunted by perpetual self-resentment and anger. However, she denies that there is anger in her. She seems immature and incomplete in her transition from girlhood to womanhood (Farah, 2004: 4). Tjaart is more honest. He does not make a secret of his anger. "His people had been sold out by their leaders […]" (p. 213). He wants to have a separate homeland for the Afrikaners and constantly laments over their downfall and calls the blacks "affirmative action people" (p. 172). When he is reprimanded from uttering such spiteful remarks, he gains momentum:

> Have I spoken a lie? Are you not here because of affirmative action? Aren't you people everywhere because of affirmative action? Didn't I leave the army because it was absorbing terrorists into its ranks? The very people I had been taught were the enemy of the Afrikaner race […] I worked hard in that army. I deserved a promotion. But did I get it? No! Instead, a black terrorist was promoted. I couldn't stay in an affirmative action army and salute an affirmative action general (p. 172).

In the aftermath of apartheid, White men, and in particular the Afrikaner men associated with the National Party apparatus of the state, lost their privileged positions. In the new dispensation, a distinct loss of political power is experienced, especially by older members of this group (but not necessarily a loss of economic power) while the younger generation of white males tend to feel threatened by affirmative action and gender equality (Pisani, 2001: 171).

Swart (2001: 77) agrees with Pisani on the frustrations of the Afrikaner community in South Africa. He posits that:

> Being a white male meant being kept from poverty, with jobs in the traditional Afrikaner preserves like the mines, the railways, the police and the civil being handed down "from father to son". Now fathers are retrenched and sons face competition from the blacks in the work place.

Affirmative action in the job market, retrenchments and loss of political power frustrated and crippled Afrikaner males. Tjaart reflects their painful sentiments during that period. They were compelled to relinquish power to black people and knowing how they

exploited and treated them like slaves, they were not only frustrated, they were also haunted by fear and some of them temporarily fled the country. Nevertheless, the brave ones acknowledged their wrongdoing and how they directly benefited from the exploitation of the young generation. Gys Uys is one of the Afrikaner elders who frankly admits it:

> We all know. Let's not pretend […]. We all know that we used these children to fight our wars. And then we discarded them. All of a sudden they find that they live in a new world in which they do not belong. We, on the other hand, have simply blended into this new dispensation. We were already established in our careers and in our businesses. We have the wealth and the influence and are now in cahoots with the new elite. Things like affirmative action do not affect us at all. But what about these young men who had to kill and be prepared to be killed on our behalf? They suffer the consequences (p. 257).

Young people indeed suffer the consequences of the "sins" of their fathers (apartheid). They are "on the receiving end of affirmative action" (p. 257). With all their military skills, they find no reason to defend the country that "discards" them and treats them as second class citizens. Tjaart tries hard to fight and defend the Afrikaner legacy but he finally gives in and breaks with it. This happens in a more pathetic way. He breaks down and starts hallucinating. Mda shows that the "sin" of racial discrimination does not only hurt its victims, it also hurts its perpetrators.

Acknowledging the pain they felt, De Klerk, the last Afrikaner president of South Africa, said the following during a speech he made in London on the process of the transition from white to black rule:

> The decision to surrender the right to national sovereignty is certainly one of the most painful any leader can be asked to take. Most nations are prepared to risk war and catastrophe rather than to surrender this right. Yet this was the decision we had to take. We had to accept the necessity of giving up on the ideal on which we had been nurtured and the dream for which so many generations had struggled for and for which so many of our people had died (cited in Visser, 2004: 1).

Considering the remorseless killings and repression of black people under the apartheid government, to suggest that the Afrikaners have struggled and grossly died for any political course in South Africa is an understatement. Among all racial groups, they were the sole beneficiaries of the political system constructed to marginalise and exploit the Black majority. Moreover, according to Knight (1990), the Afrikaners did not willingly give up power. They did not take a decision to surrender power as de Klerk claims. They were under domestic, regional and international pressure. Knight indicates that:

> In a total rejection of apartheid, black South Africans mobilised to make the townships ungovernable, black local officials resigned in droves, and the government declared a State of Emergency in 1985 and used thousands of troops to quell "unrest." Television audiences throughout the world were to watch almost nightly reports of massive resistance to apartheid, the growth of a democratic movement, and the savage police and military response (1990: 17).

Since the 1960s, the banned ANC, South African Communist Party (SACP) and Pan Africanist Congress (PAC) waged an armed struggle from their basis in neighbouring countries. The armed struggle intensified during the 1980s and expanded into a "people's war" involving mass demonstrations against the apartheid state (Wilderson, 2008: 500).

Expanding it further, de Klerk's speech is contradictory to Mandela's motivation for launching Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the military wing of the ANC. He declares that:

> At the beginning of June 1961, after a long and anxious assessment of the South African situation, I, and some colleagues, came to the conclusion that as violence in this country was inevitable; it would be unrealistic and wrong for African leaders to continue preaching peace and non-violence at a time when the government met our peaceful demands with force. This conclusion was not easily arrived at. It was only when all else had failed, when all channels of peaceful protest had been barred to us, that the decision was made to embark on violent forms of political struggle, and to form Umkhonto we Sizwe. We did so not because we desired such a course, but solely

because the government had left us with no other choice. In the Manifesto of Umkhonto published on 16 December 1961 […] we said: 'The time comes in the life of any nation when there remain only two choices – submit or fight. That time has now come to South Africa. We shall not submit and we have no choice but to hit back by all means in our power in defence of our people, our future, and our freedom (cited in Douglas, 2010: 3).

According to Mandela, without violence it would be difficult for African people to succeed in their struggle against the principle of white supremacy. All lawful modes of expressing opposition to this principle had been closed by legislation, and the freedom fighters were placed in a position in which they had either to accept a permanent state of inferiority, or take over the government. They chose to defy the law. They first broke the law in a way which avoided any recourse to violence. When this form was legislated against, and then the government resorted to a show of force to crush opposition to its policies, they decided to answer with violence (Douglas, 2010: 4).

International pressure, in the form of economic and political sanctions, and diplomatic pressure by the United States also played a pivotal role in forcing the Nationalist apartheid establishment to start bilateral negotiations with the ANC. This ultimately led to the democratic elections in 1994 (Knight, 1990).

Mda confirms this local and international pressure in the conversation between Viliki and Adam de Vries:

"[…] People like de Klerk and I changed the National Party from within. That is why today the National Party is the party that brought about the new dispensation in South Africa." Viliki laughed for a long time. Until Adam de Vries got irritated. "So it's really you who brought us this freedom we are enjoying today?" asked Viliki still laughing. "All this time we thought it was the [ANC] and the other organisations. What were we doing fighting for freedom in the underground when you and de Klerk were here all along to free us?" (p. 222).

Mda mocks and ridicules the Afrikaners' claim that they voluntarily and willingly surrendered political power. It is true that many countries and nations engage in war and catastrophe to see their freedom rather than to surrender power. It is also true that South Africa was not an exception in this regard. The ANC, through its armed wing, engaged in the armed struggle, which operated underground and used guerrilla attacks against government installations. This is the type of war that confused the National Party and its heavily armed South African Defence Force (SADF). However, one has to acknowledge that the greatest and the most successful war ever fought in South African politics was the negotiations which ushered in the democratic dispensation in 1994. Nobody ever thought that apartheid could be negotiated. Maharaj (2008: 32) expresses it this way:

> The outcome in South Africa has been a victory for non-racism, non-sexism, unity and democracy. In a hard-nosed world where power is measured by the size of the economy and military capacity, South Africa's transition from apartheid to democracy through negotiations clothed it with the status of a moral superpower.

In spite of despondency and despair, Afrikaners found themselves after the elections and constructed mythical hope. Johannes Smit and Tjaart Cronje, who represent conservative Afrikaner thinking, wished the worst for the newly established government. They thought that black people would fail dismally in governing the country and when it happens, they would reclaim the land and sustain their egocentric ambitions.

> Soon the town would be bankrupt, the two agreed. Sewage would be so bad that the Afrikaner would seize power again to put things in order. He was eagerly waiting for that moment. Perhaps the election of Lizette de Vries to the mayoral position, after the affirmative action people had failed to run the town efficiently, was a step in that direction (p. 215).

The bankruptcy did not happen. South African towns became more inclusive and economic growth occurred. Confusion mounted among Afrikaners. However, they had a

second plan in hand, a separate homeland for the Afrikaners, a *"Volkstaad"* (nation state) (Schönteich and Boshoff, 2003).

In December 1990, about forty Afrikaner pessimists headed by Carel Boshoff, the son in-law of former South African Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd bought the dilapidated town along the Orange River in the Northern Cape Province. This was a few months after the repeal of apartheid laws and the release of political activists from prison. They named this town Orania. The population is almost entirely Afrikaner (Du Toit, 1991: 647). The primary aim of Orania is to sustain the ambitions of the Afrikaners and to create a stronghold for Afrikaans and Afrikaner identity by keeping their culture and language alive. They call this *"selfwerkstaamheid"* (self reliance). In 2004, Orania introduced its currency, the *Ora* (Du Toit, 1991: 638).

Oranians, as Tjaart and Johannes Smit do, categorically deny accusations of racism. In contrast, the town is inhabited by Afrikaners only and blacks are not welcome. These descendants of Dutch-speaking migrants, who arrived in the country in 1652 with Jan Van Riebeeck, now make up less than six percent of South Africa's population but 100 percent of rural Orania. These are the same Afrikaners who formed the backbone of the National Party that architected and sustained apartheid laws. They are now raging against black majority rule and hide their apartheid and resentment for the blacks behind phrases like "preservation of Afrikaner culture" and "self-determination" (Schönteich and Boshoff, 2003).

Mda does not only expose political strife during the transition but he also exposes fraud and corruption. Inexperience, greed and self-centredness dominated many government departments as individuals sought to advance their own wellbeing at the expense of the needy and the destitute. Viliki, a town mayor, "had allocated himself a house quite early, and so did the four other members of the council" (p. 176). "Popi had refused a house and continued to stay in her shack with her mother" (p. 177). Here Mda shows conflict of character and interests. Although Popi is a victim of mockery and name-calling, she has the African spirit of *ubuntu* and qualities of servant leadership. She deliberately

chooses to identify with the poor and prioritises their needs above herself. She strives for service delivery and poverty alleviation. Her brother is the opposite:

> Viliki had allocated himself a second house, which he was renting out to some houseless family. He felt that as the mayor, he deserved a second house in order to supplement his meagre income from the council. That was the source of one of the Pule's Siblings' many disagreements. Popi felt that it was immoral for Viliki to give himself a second house when there were still so many on the list, desperately waiting for government-subsidised houses […] she had heard that some of them had even allocated houses to girlfriends… (p. 177).

The Vilikis who take advantage of their political power did not end in the transitional period. They are still misusing on government resources with impunity. The government's initiative to provide housing for poor people of South Africa is suffering massive abuse by unscrupulous home owners who, after turning their fortunes around, cash in on the houses by selling or renting them off. Some of them stay in posh mansions in some of the most affluent suburban areas.

3.8. Identity Crisis

Poverty and apartheid compel Niki to succumb to sexual temptations when confronted with seductive moves of the white Afrikaners who take advantage of her situation. She gives birth to a baby who turns out to be both a burden and an embarrassment; Popi. Her birth contravenes the Immorality Act which protects white people against "contamination" from other races. Knowing that she has to face full might of the law, she commits the unimaginable act to save her skin:

> Niki took the smoking brazier into the shack and placed it on the floor. She held a naked Popi above the fire, smoking the pinkness out of her. Both heat and smoke would surely brown her and no one would say she was a light-skinned child again. The baby whooped, then yelled, as the heat of the brazier roasted her little body and the smoke stung her eyes and nostrils. Cow-dung smoke is gentle in reasonable doses. There was so much that it made even Niki's eyes stream. She assured the baby that it was for her own

good. She sang a lullaby as she swung her over the fire […]. Turning her round and round so that she would be browned on all sides […]. Until the baby's skin began to peel from her chest right up to her neck" (p. 66).

Niki's wild desperation reveals more irony. She claims that she has committed this despicable act for her (Popi's) "own good," while singing a lullaby. The truth is, she attempts to disguise and conceal Popi's identity for her (Niki's) own benefit. She wants to avoid prosecution. A lullaby is a song of mother's warmth and love, ushering the baby to a gentle deep sleep. Here it is sung while the baby is "roasting" "whooping" and "yelling." This may also signify the cruelty of apartheid laws. They were interpreted and perceived by Afrikaners as a medium through which peace could be attained among people, yet the nation wailed and gnashed its teeth under the ruthlessness of those laws.

Just like Popi, the nation never slept to that strange "lullaby". Niki does not achieve her desired goal of making her baby brown, instead, the child turns red and her skin peels off. Likewise, the Immorality Act did not produce the results originally intended. It brought disgrace to the Afrikaners both in the national and international realms, hence, "all the charges against Excelsior 19 were […] withdrawn" (p. 96) but enormous damage to the integrity and reputation of the Afrikaners was already done.

Both Niki and Popi are oblivious to their own physical beauty. They are blinded by how society superficially constructs and interprets their identity. Niki has a black skin while Popi is light-skinned. They are disillusioned by their appearances and strive to change in order to measure-up with the expectations of their society. This hurts them physically and emotionally. Niki loathes her black skin while Popi hates her being. People call her "boesman" and she is ashamed of her blonde hair, blue eyes and hairy legs. Colonisation and apartheid ideologies view white as a colour of purity and holiness while black signifies evil and demonic deeds. Niki takes drastic measures to change her blackness to whiteness:

A sunburnt Christ. Like Niki's face. Although hers was not burnt by the sun. It had been devoured by the chemicals that the Krok brothers put into their Super Rose skin-lightening lotion. The Krok brothers were diminutive identical twins from Johannesburg who used doses of hydroquinone to turn black South Africans into white South Africans. They were reaping great rewards in the process, since millions of black people had taken to their skin-lightening products like bees to nectar and pollen. Niki was no exception. For even quicker results, she had changed from the regular Super Rose skin-lightener to Super Rose He-man, especially brewed by the twins to lighten the tough skins of black men… Hydroquinone did lighten the skin. But only for a while. Then it fried it until it became discoloured and hard like the skin of an alligator (pp. 80 – 81).

Why is Niki obsessed with whiteness? Why is she not content with her natural skin pigmentation? She is trapped between blackness and whiteness and her beauty is fading in the process. It is noteworthy that the product she uses to "brew" and "fry" her facial skin is manufactured by White males. Mda indicates that these males benefit both financially and sexually. Again, he subverts and satirises the notion of 'whiteness' and 'blackness' as portrayed by colonialism and apartheid. The White Afrikaners who symbolise 'purity' and 'holiness', rape and abuse 'evil and demonic' Black women. These women are real victims in Excelsior 19; not only that, they breast-feed, cherish and nourish the white men's babies irrespective of their abject poverty while the Afrikaners deliberately deny and neglect their duty-bound responsibilities of raising their own children.

Popi lives consistently with internal and external forces that belittle and devalue her self-worth. Her identity is confused; mocked and degraded. She then stands aloof and fragile:

When other children saw her in the street, they shouted, "Boesman! Boesman!" And then they ran away laughing. At first she used to cry. Then she decided that she would not play in the street again. She would play alone in her mother's yard […]. Popi's withdrawal from the world of her age-mates had been an escape from their snide remarks. Even at school, she kept to herself. And when she did, they said she was too proud to mix with

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them because she was a misis – a white woman. But when she tried to associate with them, they called her a morwa – a coloured girl. Jokingly, of course. But still it stung (pp. 110 and 117).

What Mda conscientiously does with the derogatory term, *boesman*, is to undercut the smugness of those who persist in the mindset of racial purity occasioned as far back as the colonial era. He notes that colonial epistemologies curtail agency, but they may also provoke unwitting collusion: the offensive word *boesman* is perpetuated by those who are also trapped in colonial discourse, but do not bear the brunt of the outward configuration of miscegenation as Popi does. The post-colonial goal in this instance is to redefine identity as open-ended, denying the existence and discursive usefulness of a stable, unitary signification and offering instead a complex of ambivalent discourses (Raditlhlalo, 2011). Above all, *The Madonna of Excelsior* is an expose of the evils that arise in a society in which "race" is used as the primary and official marker of identity (Goodman, 2009: 309 – 310).

Popi experiences social ostracism at a very young age. The persecution of the outside world obsesses her and tortures her, right from childhood to full maturity. In such a small community, there are no avenues of escape, and she grows up in isolation (Raditlhlalo, 2011).

Popi endures rejection and resentment usually experienced by the outcasts and the slaves. Her identity is rejected by family, friends, community and the state. For example, not only was she "roasted" over an open fire to "smok[e] the pinkness out of her" (p. 166), she is also subjected to derogatory name-calling by community members. Names such as "morwa", (p. 117), "hotnot", (9) and "boesman" characterise her daily interaction with the community. She is a victim of apartheid laws such as Immorality Act and Prohibition of Mixed Marriages Act which prohibit miscegenation. This labels her an outcast from birth.

The frequent use of derogatory names forces her into the category of "Other". She is not an accepted member of society, and is forced into a "social definition through mutually

exclusive positions" (Cross, 1998: 551). Society dictates that she has to be either Black or White person, however, she is neither of the two. From the society's point of view, it is unacceptable to be a mixture of the two races. Thus, she cannot fit into the society due to her appearance and hybrid origin, she is compelled to define herself as "the Other", or as a "thing" (Cross, 1998: 551) different from the usual. Popi's awareness of being the "Other" brings out a split identity marked by an experience of unstable cultural identity characterised by transformation and hybridity (Sandten, 2000: 99). Fanon (1970: 38) asserts that a woman of colour cannot be "accepted in this society because she is viewed as "artificial" and can never altogether be respectable in a White man's eyes as the course of mutation is from Black to White. That is to say, it is not regarded as natural to be born of a black mother but still have "traces of whiteness" (p. 67).

Popi's predicament is exacerbated by self-hate. She resents her hair which is an instant marker of who she is. Her mother shaves it off in order to conceal it. However, the community mocks her as "bald-headed girl" (p. 111) and "*cheesekop tamati la misisi. Head that looks like a white woman's buttock*" (p. 111). Her ordeal is shown here:

> Niki unwrapped the turban from Popi's head and exposed the locks that flowed to her waist. She caressed her daughter's hair. "While you are at it, why don't you scratch my scalp," said Popi. "It is always itching." "It is because of dandruff. It is all over your head like flakes of snow. You don't wash your hair often enough." "This hair is a curse," said Popi. "I never know what to do with it." After thirty years, she had still not learnt how to deal with her hair… "The pain of my whole life is locked in my hair," said Popi bitterly (pp. 233 – 234).

Popi's freedom from her entrapment lies with the acknowledgement of who she is (her coloured identity) and forgiveness of those who emotionally hurt her. After long years of self-denial and inferiority complex, she abruptly manages to accept her colouredness and jokes about it: "A least as a coloured person I can complain that in the old apartheid days I was not white enough, and now in the new dispensation I am not black enough […]" (p. 259). This statement marks the beginning of her emancipation from self-hate, shame and despondency to self-esteem and self-admiration. She bursts out of her lifetime cocoon and stands out proud and beautiful. Niki also delights in her daughter's

sudden development and "[she] laughed until tears ran from her eyes and disappeared into the cracks of her face… for the first time in many years" (p. 260). Popi does not liberate herself alone, she harbours her mother with her:

> You are free Popi and you have made me free too. For a long time I felt guilty that I had failed you […] that I had made you coloured! Every time they mocked and insulted you, it ate my heart and increased my guilt (p. 260).

Popi's ability to accept herself enables her to reconcile with Tjaart Cronje, her arch rival and half-brother who is deranged by the political changes in the country. Not only that, she also accepts Stephanus Cronje, Tjaart's father as her own father. Mda shows that real freedom comes from within, in accepting oneself. When this happens, it becomes easy to stretch-out and liberate others. When Popi begins to admire herself, anger dissipates:

> [She] spent all her mornings looking at herself in the mirror, admiring her blue eyes, and brushing her long golden-brown hair. She no longer hid it under huge turbans. She wondered why she had been ashamed of it all these years, why she had never noticed its beauty. She brushed it and combed it over and over again. It was so long that it reached behind her knees when she stood up straight. She did not only admire her hair and her eyes. She loved her yellow-coloured face and her long neck…she loved her body and everything about it. She had taken to wearing the isigqebhezana, the micro-miniskirt of the new millennium, displaying her long yellow-coloured legs that bristled with golden-yellow hair […] She would not shave her hairy legs. Her hairy arms. Even her armpits. She rejoiced in her hair and her hairiness. (p. 266).

Unlike Popi, Tjaart Cronje is permanently immersed in his anger and frustration. He is self-imprisoned in isolation. He is withdrawn from the community of Excelsior to focus on his butchery and on "planning for the return of the Afrikaner to his rightful place" (p. 233). If the Afrikaner's "rightful place" means the reversal of apartheid, he has a long and agonising waiting ahead of him, perhaps a lifetime waiting. The day for Afrikaner's rule in South Africa may never dawn and if by any chance it does, the future black

majority may not be gracious enough to take exploitation and manipulation like their forefathers.

3.9. Conclusion

From this analysis, it is clear that apartheid policies marginalised and deprived South African people of their values, culture and humanity. It distorted their identity and made mockery of its proponents. Miscegenation laws failed to sustain identity of whiteness and contributed to their dismay and downfall. Those who claimed to abide by apartheid principles were found to be hypocritical as they only professed them and contravened them in practice. It has been proven in this chapter that the new political dispensation in South Africa did not only bring freedom and equality to the previously disadvantaged groups but it also brought self-worth and confidence to them, paving a pathway and platform for new voices to be heard.

Mda observes that apartheid and criminalisation of interracial marriages culminated into national catastrophic consequences that left the country widowed, orphaned and disintegrated. He notes that discrimination does not only hurt the 'other' as the perpetrator intends, but it also hurts the perpetrator himself and flows down to the future generations.

CHAPTER FOUR: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL IDENTITY IN HEAD'S *MARU* (1971)

4.1.   Introduction

Discrimination has been and still is a nightmare and a social threat in various nation states around the world. Even though it is a common practice among people of different races universally, South Africa was the only country that formalised it through legislation. In *Maru* (1971), Head challenges racism and discrimination in general and exposes the stereotype of the mixed-race character.

Maru is set in Botswana but portrays a South African experience. The South African state contributed ideologies of miscegenation and segregation as cornerstones of Head's life story (Starfield, 1997: 157). Whereas this chapter draws attention to characterisation and portrayal of dehumanisation of the Bushmen in *Maru*, it also takes cognisance of the fact that there is a connection between Head's characters and aspects of her own biography. Olaussen (1997: 18 – 19) affirms that Head writes autobiographically. She creates characters as a means of exploring her own identity, nature and potential hence, the layer between Head as an author and her characters is thin and permeable (Thusi, 1998). For example, the circumstances around Head's life and her protagonist Margret Cadmore share the same characteristics and are juxtaposed in this chapter to show this parallel similarity. In nutshell, this chapter discusses the following aspects: a note on terminology, who are the Bushmen? racial discrimination and identity, the narrator's self-reflection, Margret as a tool and a symbol of liberation, the theory of otherness and finally focuses on the effects of racial stereotypes on marginalised groups.

4.2.   A Note on Terminology

In *Maru*, Head applies the terms, "Bushmen" and "Masarwa" interchangeably. These collective names suggest how these people are often seen without identity. Are they really "Bushmen" as Head calls them? Is "Masarwa" an acceptable name? Are they

"San" or "Khoisan"? Or can one apply a double-barrel term, "Khoisan" in order to be more liberal and accommodative?

The word "Masarwa" in Setswana is both ungrammatical and derogatory. Head's correspondence proves that she knew the term was derogatory and she used it deliberately to expose common attitudes among higher-status Batswana (people of Botswana). "Bushman" is commonly understood to be derogatory. "San" and "Khoisan" are more general terms that have been accepted internationally and "Mosarwa/Basarwa" (singular/plural) is a derogatory term used by Batswana tribe (Lederer, 2009: 158). Leepang (2009: 176) further highlights the following:

> At Itekeng Junior Secondary School in Ghanzi, there was an expression common amongst our Setswana-speaking classmates: *'Mosarwa ke Mosarwa hela'* ("Mosarwa is nothing"). This implied that a Mosarwa will go to school (up to junior secondary school level) and still go back to his settlement and do his hunting. '*Mosarwa' could [mean]* '*mo-sa-rua'* (a person who owns nothing, has no property and no language). '*Ga wa rua, o ruilwe,'* means you own nothing, but you are owned [as a slave] by someone else.

This study applies all these terms: "San", "Masarwa"/"Basarwa" or "Bushman" as used by Head and other critics for discussion purposes only. This is neither prescriptive, definitive nor intended to defame or devalue these people through derogatory labelling.

4.3.   Who are the Bushmen?

Despite afore-mentioned prejudice that trivialises the Bushmen community, this study argues that there is no nation in the world without identity. The Bushmen are the oldest inhabitants of southern Africa, where they have lived for at least 20,000 years. Their home is in the vast expanse of the Kalahari Desert. They are hunters, with traditionally about 70% of their diet consisting of plant food, including berries, nuts, roots and melons gathered primarily by the women. The remaining 30% is meat (mostly antelopes), hunted by men using poisoned arrows and spears on hunts that could last several days. They make their own temporary homes from wood that they gather. Their

social structure is not tribal because they have no paramount leader and their ties of kinship are fairly relaxed. They have a loosely knit family culture where decisions are made by universal discussion and agreement by consensus. An individual's opinion is naturally weighted according to their level of skill and experience in the particular field of discussion (Issacson, 2003).

The Bushmen had their homelands invaded by cattle herding Bantu tribes from around 1,500 years ago, and by white colonists over the last few hundred years. From that time they faced discrimination, eviction from their ancestral lands, murder and oppression amounting to a massive though concealed genocide, which reduced them in numbers from several million to 100,000. Today many people perceive them as a community with a primitive lifestyle and that they need to be made to live like the majority of cattle-herding tribes though specific problems vary according to where they live. In South Africa, for example, the San now have most of their land rights recognised, but many other Bushman tribes have no land rights at all (Issacson, 2003: 12).

Given the above brief historical account, it becomes imperative to assert that the Bushmen community, like any other nation in the world, has all dynamics that constitute a nation with identity, integrity and history. Head indicates that to argue that the Bushmen are a nation without identity is not only demeaning to their humanity, it is also another way of sustaining the colonial perception that classifies them with wild animals. Their identity may be alien to other human groups and nations but this should not serve as a ground to justify prejudice. They also find other cultures strange and incongruous but remain silent and respectful.

4.4. Racial Discrimination and Social Identity

Identity forms the basis of individual personhood, self-image as well as the collective self-image shared by members of social groups and communities (Rousse, 1995). It is a primary concept for understanding the relationship between the personal and the social realms, the individual and the group; the cultural and the political, the

relationships between the social groups and the influence of the media on social relations (Zegeye and Harris, (2002: 242). It incorporates the emotional attachments or bonds that individuals often have as a result of their shared membership in social groups (Tajfel, 1978). Group membership influences the way in which individuals see themselves, especially if the group is reviled or esteemed.

Given the above perspectives on identity, it is important to understand that identity is not an accomplished fact. It is a dynamic production which is always growing and constituted within and not outside representation (Hall, 1994: 392). Hall further posits that identities are consistently in a state of flux rather than being primordial essences. Therefore, it makes sense to postulate that in societies that underwent brutal slavery (such as the Bushmen as portrayed by Head in *Maru*), apartheid and colonisation (as depicted by Mda), group or social identity has been distorted and disintegrated.

There are many theories of social identity. Cantle (2009: 2) articulates the following contribution in relation to social identity:

> Social identity takes into account the several social identities people adopt in their lives and how this influences their sense of belonging to a community. Interculturalism also draws on the theories around social identity, which was originally developed to understand the psychological basis of intergroup discrimination. The theory is based on the idea that a person has not one 'personal self', but instead is made up of "several selves", which depending on the context are more or less prominent. An individual also has multiple "social identities", which are the individual's self-concept derived from perceived membership of social groups.

In other words, Cantle asserts that group cohesion is indispensable in order to build a strong and united community. Thus, if a member of a particular community is alienated or discriminated, it is not only that member who falls victim to alienation but the entire community as it will be disturbed and affected and communal unity will not be attained.

Social identity is an important aspect that has inspired Head's novel, *Maru* (1971). In *Maru,* Head interrogates the prejudice and racial discrimination against the Bushmen in

Botswana. This is compared and contrasted with how she manages to transcend the intractable conditions of her birth, her social experience as a Coloured South African and dehumanising circumstances in Botswana. The conditions around her birth, her early life and harsh realities of life as an exile in Botswana are mirrored in the main character, Margaret Cadmore junior and the Bushmen in this novel. A cursory glance at her background concurrently reflects on South Africa's atrocious past where people were oppressed and condemned on the basis of trivial aspects such as colour, race and ethnicity.

To affirm Head's predicament in a society ruled by both apartheid and patriarchal systems, Birch, Head's family member, depicts conditions around her birth as follows:

> On the 6th of July 1937 Bessie Amelia "Emery" was born to Bessie Amelia "Toby" Emery [...] Mrs Birch, then in Pietermaritzburg, arranged with her solicitor put in train an adoption procedure [...]. How the naming of the child came about nobody knows... Who the father was is completely unknown, and speculation is a waste of time. The event must have taken place in Johannesburg when Toby was out on a parole from the family home; a brief encounter; a misuse of her mental state? Was she waylaid? Was she enticed somewhere? We do not know [...] When young Bessie was pronounced coloured by the first foster parents and rejected, the shock was even greater, and more bewildering [...] (1995: 1 – 8).

Gardner (1985) notes that the circumstances of Head's biography appear to be so idiosyncratically inauspicious it can seem miraculous that her creativity flowered in the first place. In her own words, Head narrates the predicament of her life story as follows:

> I was born on the sixth of July, 1937, in Pietermaritzburg Mental Hospital […] The reason for my peculiar birthplace was that my mother was white, and she had acquired me from a black man. She was judged insane, and committed to the mental hospital while pregnant. Her name was Bessie Emery and I consider it the only honour South Africans ever did me – naming me after the unknown, lovely, and unpredictable woman (cited in Gardner, 1985: 227).

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Head claims to have no relatives apart from her husband (divorced) and her son. "I have always just been me, with no frame of reference to anything beyond myself" (Head, 1990: 35).

In the mid-thirties, bills were tabled under the United Party government to amend the Immorality Act to prevent marriages between Whites and all 'non-Europeans'. From 1948, the National Party took over the task of promulgating such legislation: the Mixed Marriages Act and Immorality Act were both law by 1950, the time at which Head was uncovering the mystery of her birth. When, in that year, she entered the educational care of the Pietermaritzburg missionaries, the headmistress casted her as the product of an insane and criminal activity (Starfield, 1997):

> Your mother was insane. If you're not careful you'll get insane just like your mother. Your mother was a White woman. They had to lock her up as she was having a child by the stable boy who was a native (cited in Cooper, 1994: 73).

This complete absence of sympathy visited on the orphaned child a moral retribution for her unknown parents' 'sin': miscegenation. Moreover, Bessie's mother's illness was deliberately explained as a sociopathy rather than a psychological illness (Starfield, 1997). The missionaries also tried to overwrite any sense of her history with that of the official history of apartheid South Africa:

> [...] it was to be a history of skin colour, [...] the white skin being a passport to paradise and many privileges; the black skin being a kind of rhinoceros hide at which are hurled tear gas, batons, bullets and ferocious police dogs (Head, 1990: 73).

Decades after the headmistress' ruthless and humiliating pronouncement, Head revealed the truth behind her mother's claimed insanity by the Birch family.

> I don't think I told you this but my mother's family locked her up in a mental asylum for sleeping with a black man. I feel they did this to save the family name from scandal and she was in the asylum by the time I was born. I

carried this with me for a long time. There is a terrible depth of loneliness in supposed or even evident insanity (Head, 1965: 64 – 65).

These powerful and punitive evocations of the discourse of segregation became major themes in many narrative versions of Head's autobiography that she constructed over the years, some of them for friends, and others for the growing numbers of academic interviewers who flocked to see her in Serowe (Starfield, 1997: 659).

Head's hybridity suggests that her doubleness, her sense of self, as split and incapable of belonging, is endemic to her existence as part of a colonised people. Her upbringing was characterised by rejection and resentment imposed and justified by the apartheid system. She was born and bred in appalling social conditions in which alienation and dehumanisation were part of her daily existence eroding both her self-worth and self-image (Smith, 1999: 69). She grew up in a community in transit. Coloured people throughout South Africa were increasingly subject to the National Party's social engineering policies (Goldin, 1995: 156). She became aware that Coloured people were, by reason of their diverse origins, hardly a homogeneous population group, but were lumped together for administrative purposes by the white supremacist state. She perceives herself as a person without identity: "Nothing I am, of no tribe or race, and because of it full of a childish arrogance to defend myself against all of you" (Head, 1993: 121).

Both in South Africa and in her chosen country of exile, Botswana, she felt inadequate and isolated in an African society. As a woman, she felt more alienated and compared Africa to: "men all over" who will "kill and destroy in the struggle for position and place" (Head, 1993: 122). As she saw it, Africa basked in a masculinity covered by layers of restraint and tradition. This masculinity was opposed to her own deficiencies of femininity. Africa became an intellectual and emotional problem for her. She did not know how to break down the barriers and spaces that separate her depth from that of Africa (Starfield, 1997: 656). MacKenzie (990: x) writes:

As a South Mrican-bom 'Coloured', Bessie Head was subjected to all the brutalities meted out to those citizens not born white, and she, as a 'first generation' child of bi-racial origin, bore the full brunt of South Afiica's discriminatory legislation. Her place of birth, foster childhood, adolescence as an orphan, her failed marriage and experiences as a 'nonwhite' in the various ghettos around the cities of South Africa form [her] background.

Ola (1994: 72) describes Head's resilience by indicating that "she was the underdog among underdogs, but refused to stay under; born a victim but lived a survivor." Head expresses her own adversity as follows:

I could say that I have the stamina to survive the sort of situations only wild alley cats encounter, but would not want to take another birth in South Africa and end up in Botswana […] No one cares. Why the hell did you come here in the first place, they say? We don't want you. And behind you is such hell and calamity that one simply asks: Oh God why was I born? What other effort do I make to survive? Where do I go? Or on which day do I die? (cited in Ola, 1994: 66)

In the opening chapter of *Maru* (1971), Head paints a portrait of how the Bushmen are perceived by other human races. They are dehumanised in such a way that there is no distinction between them and the wild animals. This is Head's depiction of the mind of the coloniser towards the African people. She portrays this outrageous perception as follows:

The white man found only too many people who looked different. That was all that outraged the receivers of his discrimination, that he applied the technique of the wild jiggling dance and the rattling tin cans to anyone who was not a white man. And if the white man thought that Asians were a low, filthy nation, Asians could still smile with relief – at least, they were not Africans. And if the white man thought Africans were a low, filthy nation, Africans in Southern Africa could still smile – at least they were not Bushmen. They all have their monsters[...] then seemingly anything can be said and done to you as your outer appearance reduces you to the status of a non human being. In Botswana they say: Zebras, Lions, Buffalos and Bushmen live in Kalahari Desert. If you can catch a Zebra, you can walk up to it, forcefully open its mouth and examine its teeth. The Zebra is not

supposed to mind because it is an animal. Scientists do the same with the Bushmen and they are not suppose to mind, because there is no one they can still turn around to and say, 'At least I am not a ___' (p. 11).

Comparing the Bushmen with animals denies them basic humanity. As in other contemporary narratives of mixed-blood experience, the temporal frame of reference here stretches back to the historic encounter between European and non-European. It is a reflection of the initial contact between coloniser and colonised (Miller, 1995).

The remonstrations on behalf of the Bushmen by Head are not only against the identity that Batswana have foisted on them in order to exploit them, it is also against the constructions of the Bushmen by the world of science and scholarship which objectifies them as scientific curiosities, remnants of a bygone stone-age culture and race whose authentic lifestyle must be preserved in asocial reserves. The Bushmen can do little to contest this derogatory construction about them because it is undertaken in faraway places in discourses to which they have no access (Mwikisa, 2009: 167).

The colonist treated the Bushmen community with sheer contempt and absolute prejudice and perceived them as "non humans", the lowest of the low, mere "living organisms" without human identity.

4.5. Head's Self-Reflection

Throughout history the Bushmen were perceived as an embodiment of humiliation and subjugation. Head, being a Coloured herself, went through the same exploitative experience in the apartheid South Africa and witnessed the oppression of the Bushmen in Botswana. It does not spring any surprise to see her creating a character reflecting her own ordeals, degradation and utter dejection, Margaret Cadmore. Ola (1994: 15) notes her (Margaret) as 'a woman without identity.' In *Maru* (1971), Head applies what Bakhtin calls heteroglossia or dialogism which means that there is always more than one voice or meaning inherent in a story or any other literary genre. He asserts that:

> We actually sense two levels at each moment in [a story], one, the level of the narrator, a belief system filled with his objects, meanings and emotional

expressions, and the other, the level of the author who speaks (albeit in a reflected way) by means of [the story] . The narrator himself, with his own discourse, enters into this authorial belief system along with what is actually being told […] (Bakhtin, 1981: 314).

Head thematises and fictionalises her own search for identity: a search for an African identity on the part of a woman who does not belong to the dominant race in the community in which she dwells. The protagonist experiences a lived blankness in which lack of identity is yoked to being a woman, being a Coloured or Mosarwa and being silent. Margaret is characterised by silence and marginality to the community in which she comes to live (Starfield, 1997).

Everything that Margaret is, her personality, her proficiency in the English language, and her being are that of her English foster mother, Margaret Cadmore senior. She purposefully instilled a positive self-image in Margaret which later on enabled her to survive marginalisation imposed on her by the political and social systems of the day. Margaret's identity is a composite of legacy derived, on the one hand, from her natural mother and on the other hand, created for her by her foster mother. Margret is thus a fluidity and hybridity of identities (Mhlahlo, 2002: 24). Balseiro (1992: 79) also posits that the younger Margaret absorbs much of her adoptive mother's personality. Her resourcefulness, resilience, education and artistic skills are all the constructed inheritance from Margret Cadmore senior.

The only Masarwa identity that Margaret has is her biological composition. Amazingly, her positive self-image pursues her, contrary to this notion. On arrival at Dilepe, Margret's firm and confident answer to Dikeledi's enquiry whether or not she is Coloured marks her coming into her own, her sense of self identity (Mhlahlo, 2002: 25). She simply answers, "I am a Masarwa" (p. 24).

Margaret seems defiant and wants to maintain her Basarwa identity more than anything else. She could have claimed a Coloured identity and no one would have been sceptical about it. Dikeledi affirms this: "If you keep silent about the matter, people will simply assume you are a Coloured. I mistook you for a Coloured until you brought up the *other matter*" [my emphasis] (p. 24). It is interesting to note how prejudice deepens when

Dikeledi evades to pronounce the word "Masarwa," by adamantly referring to it as the "other matter" (p. 24) and subtly encouraging Margaret to detach herself from such a 'humiliating' identity. The reason is that: "Dilepe village was the stronghold of some of the most powerful and wealthy chiefs in the country, all of whom owned innumerable Masarwa as slaves" (p. 24), hence, she advises Margret to hide her ethnic identity.

It is not only to her companion to whom she affirms her Masarwa identity but she also vehemently introduces herself to the school principal as such irrespective of his leading question: "Excuse the question, but are you a Coloured?" (p. 40). The answer to the principal is a categorical 'no'. "No" […] "I am a Masarwa" (p. 40). This is an assertion of determination and purpose which reflects how ready she is to take control of her mind, her inner world and her identity.

Margaret is portrayed as a victim of discrimination, alienation and oppression. She represents what it means to be discriminated against. She is a medium through which the author conveys the dreadfulness of prejudice and oppression to the reader. The school principal later conveys his frustration and confusion to the education supervisor:

> "There's a real mystery about that one at the school," he said. "They don't look you in the face and say, 'I am a Masarwa.' It was like a 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 she could pass as one. It would have saved us an awful lot of bother (p. 44).

Throughout the novel, Head indicates that racism is evil irrespective of who practises it. She writes:

> How universal was the language of oppression! They had said of the Masarwa what every white man had said of every black man: 'They can't think of themselves. They don't know anything.' The matter never rested there. The strong man caught hold of the weaker man and a circus animal out of him, reducing him to the state of misery and subjection and non-humanity […]. The Batswana thought they were safer than the white man. He

had already awoken to the fact that the mistreated people are also furious people who could tear him to shreds (p. 109).

Head's quest for self-knowledge leads her to a painful self-examination. Her search is directed towards the centre of her consciousness to which she refers as the soul. Confronted with the pain of racial prejudice and oppression in Botswana, she comes to realise that these discriminatory attitudes are not confined to her past in South Africa, but exist also in the country she wishes to adopt (Thusi, 1998: 60).

Margaret is resilient and highly determined to rediscover her lost self. Eko (1986: 143) discerns that with her one sentence (I am a Masarwa) identification, Margret confronts herself, her past upbringing, her future and her society, burst out from the walls of her white foster mother's protection and stands aloof and vulnerable.

The vulnerability that Eko postulates is clearly seen when Dilepe society discovers that Margaret is a Mosarwa. She is then objectified by the intolerant Batswana society of Dilepe village. The education administrators attempt to force her out of the school by taking advantage of both her 'low status' and femininity. "She can be shoved out […] It's easy. She's a woman" (p. 41).

Margaret is determined to preserve and uphold her Basarwa identity but her inner person is waning. She shows elements of internalised inferiority complex. Racial pressure exerted on her by Dilepe community finds a way through her to drag her down. When anyone tries to communicate with her, "she slowly raised her hand as if to ward off a blow. Sometimes she winced, but the raised hand was always there as though she expected only blows from people" (p. 71). Even when she developed romantic feelings for Moleka, she finds neither strength nor audacity to fight for him. She suppresses her feelings and gives him up to Dikeledi. She does this because she thinks "Moleka can't possibly love [her]" (p. 114). She is "a Masarwa" […] She "ha[s] nothing and [she] want[s] nothing" (p. 114). Kamanga (1987: 23) notes: "ultimately her isolated existence and social rejection reduce her significance in the village to the level of obscurity".

According to Batswana culture, the Bushmen are confined to the bush and ineducable, let alone educate others. Therefore, by Dilepe logic, Margaret could not teach irrespective of her artistic prowess and professional credentials. The principal confirms that she has what matters most: "I only look at qualifications. She was top of the class the whole way through" (p. 41), "a teacher with [distinction] for every subject" (p. 51). Instead of earning respect and reputation for her professional outstanding achievements, she becomes a public spat, a victim of sarcasm, humiliation and degradation.

In the midst of these circumstances, she forges ahead to stand out as a symbol of transformation and a spokesperson for the voiceless. Head uses Margaret's character to expose the vacuity of ethnic and racial prejudice and to contest the insidious and entrenched arrogant patriotism endemic in dominant ethnic groups. Margaret, being depicted as an abject and pitiable victim like her mother who died while giving birth to her, is cast as a redeemer of her people. She possesses the resources to articulate the plight of her people. She is a representative of "the slaves and downtrodden dogs of the Batswana" (p. 18). She represents the vitality of Basarwa people who through their knowledge and creativity can contribute a revamped set of values to a world deformed by the perverted and toxic logic of intolerance and fanaticism (Tiro, 2009: 165).

4.6. Margaret as a Tool and a Symbol of Liberation

Margaret's arrival at Dilepe becomes the pinnacle and the driving force for change, both politically and socially. Her atrocities are rewarded by freedom for her people who were enslaved for decades and lost all hope.

> But the conditions which surrounded him [Maru] at the time forced him to think of her [Margaret] as a symbol of her tribe and through her he sought to gain an understanding of the eventual liberation of an oppressed people. There was this striking vitality and vigour in her work and yet, for who knew how long, people like her had lived faceless, voiceless, almost nameless in the county. That they had a life or soul to project and never been considered. At first they had been a conquered tribe, but the conquered were often

absorbed through marriage. Who could absorb the Masarwa, who hardly looked African, but Chinese? (p. 108)

Why does Maru marry Margret? This question begets questions: Does he marry her out of love or out of power and control? What if she utterly rejects him? Fortunately she does not. Accepting his love is tantamount to saving her own life. Critics such as Starfield (1997: 67) assert that the marriage of Maru to Margaret is "more equal" along gender and racial lines than those found among the Batswana. But this is not true as the following evidence from the novel indicates: From the moment he met her, he sees her as an object to possess. She is "gold" and he will "steal" it because he has "grown tired of the straw" (p. 84). She is the prize to a contest for which he is ready to cheat in order to win: "report the minute she mentions the name of anyone who has taken her fancy and I shall mess everything up" (p. 72). This is how Maru is determined to possess her as his own 'property'. The notion of "more equal" is meaningless in a relationship where one culture is dominant and its counterpart silenced.

Maru's plan is not to fall in love with her or even to convince her to fall in love with him. Instead he intends to threaten her: "if you do not agree to marry me, you will stare at the moon for the rest of your life" (p. 72). When Maru first expresses interest in Margret, he is not curious about who she is. There is no description of him being impassioned to her as it is the case with Moleka. There is little or no personal connection between the two. His appreciation of her art work is also centred on himself. He sees it as an extension of himself. When paintings are sent to him, those which he cannot relate to, he sends back: "No, you keep it. I don't like it" (p. 116). Those which he identifies with he hangs them up like mirrors in his room. Even though Maru says he loves Margret, the context reduces his professed love to covetousness: 'What will I do if she does not love me as much as I love her?' [...] 'Kill her' (p. 111).

The marriage between Maru and Margaret is also colonially inclined. Margaret and Maru's union is not one of coloniser and colonised, but between "high-born" and "low-born" African. What, then, does this example have to do with colonial history? First, the

placement of Africans at the center of the story is a conscious rejection of a tradition in which a white character dominates. The white man's presence is notable in its absence. Second, Head sees African prejudices towards the Masarwa as a colonial legacy. White deprecation of all peoples of colour in South Africa set into motion a chain of oppression in which ethnic, tribal and "racial" groups had their "monsters". Third, Head has explained that the oppression of Blacks by Whites, and of Masarwa by Africans, was so similar, that the two practices can be seen as interchangeable (Miller, 1995: 10).

Maru can be identified as a symbol of power and control. He is a 'go-getter' who is prepared to steal, kill and destroy to get what he covets. Given the circumstances, it seems, Margret will remain a lover, a prize in the traditional rivalry and power struggle that has characterised the relationship between Maru and Moleka and never a wife. She will remain an object that fills the void in his life. In a foul mood he affirms this notion: "I only married you because you were the only woman in the world who did not want to be important. But you are not important to me, as I sometimes say you are" (p. 10). How can these two be "more equal"? They are in what Buber (1923) calls *"I-It"* relationship.

According to Buber (1923), human beings may adopt two attitudes toward the world: *I-Thou* or *I-It*. *I-Thou* is a relation of subject-to-subject, while *I-It* is a relation of subject-to-object. In the *I-Thou* relationship, human beings are aware of each other as having a unity of being. In the *I-Thou* relationship, human beings do not perceive each other as consisting of specific, isolated qualities, but engage in a dialogue involving each other's whole being. In the *I-It* relationship, on the other hand, human beings perceive each other as consisting of specific, isolated qualities, and view themselves as part of a world which consists of things. *I-Thou* is a relationship of mutuality and reciprocity, while *I-It* is a relationship of separateness and detachment (Gregor, 1958: 26). Buber explains that human beings may try to convert the subject-to-subject relation to a subject-to-object relation, or vice versa. However, the being of a subject is a unity which cannot be analysed as an object. When a subject is analysed as an object, the subject is no longer a subject, but becomes an object. When a subject is analysed as an object, the subject

is no longer a *Thou*, but becomes an *It*. The being which is analysed as an object is the *It* in an *I-It* relation (Gregor, 1958: 26).

Regardless of their rootless relationship, both Maru and Margret are pioneers in breaking the virgin ground. Margret deliberately and openly identifies with the most despised group of people, the outcast of the Batswana tribe. She declines to associate with the Coloured community irrespective of social benefits she would attain by doing so. Prestige, social status and financial gain neither blind nor persuade her to fall into temptation of betrayal. Maru does a similar thing. Basarwa are highly disregarded by his peoples and the only way to relate to them is when they serve as slaves under the Batswana people. When Maru takes Margret as a wife, it is not only unthinkable on Batswana's side but also unimaginable as they regard it as an abomination. Regardless of all this, Maru is determined to "absorb" (p. 108) her (Mosarwa) into marriage.

Traditionally, African marriages do not only join two people, but they unify families into a single bond of love, mutual respect and equal partnership as well. In the case of Maru and Margret, the former and the latter qualities of an African marriage are lost. Instead, marriage is applied as a tool, a gluing power to merge the repelling contradictory forces. It amalgamates two different tribes founded upon binary opposites of the elite and the destitute, the slave and the master, the centre and the periphery , the 'self' and the 'other'… or even worse, the "downtrodden dogs" (p. 18) and the 'saints'. How will Batswana tribe accept this "abomination"? Head does not tell much. She cunningly leaves that to the readers to gather the smithereens of her narration in order to construct their own independent anticipations. However, the future looks bleak to those who relentlessly resist the winds of change:

> People like the Batswana, who did not know that the wind of freedom had also reached people of the Masarwa tribe, were in for an unpleasant surprise because it would be no longer possible to treat Masarwa people in an inhuman way without getting killed yourself (p. 127).

This sentence, which rings like prophecy, is epifocal - it is "over the focus, or center of disturbance" that miscegenation figures in the text. Maru and Margaret's revolutionary marriage is forged not as the scene of carnival, in which low is flip-flopped for high, but as an occasion of "unpleasant surprise," for practitioners of racial oppression, who will now find the object of their oppression armed. The weapon of the Masarwa and others like them is the consciousness of shared humanity, humanity that should be defended, even with violence (Miller, 1995: 9).

With Maru in control, one either obeys or gets killed. There is no middle position. His description of love and freedom is loaded with conditions, his egocentric conditions. While this happens, the oppressed Basarwa are elated. Margaret and Maru's marriage marks the dawn of their freedom as Head depicts it:

> When people of the Masarwa tribe heard about Maru's marriage to one of their own, a door silently opened on the small, dark, airless room in which their souls had been shut for a long time. The wind of freedom, which was blowing throughout the world for all people, turned and flowed into the room. As they breathed in the fresh, clear air their humanity awakened. They examined their condition. There was the fetid air, the excreta and the horror of being an oddity of the human race, with half the head of a man and half the body of a donkey. They laughed in an embarrassed way, scratching their heads. How had they fallen into this condition when, indeed, they were as human as everyone else? They started to run out into the sunlight, then they turned and looked at the dark, small room. They said: "We are not going back there" (pp.126 – 127).

The opening, but chronologically ending, scene of the novel, depicts Maru preparing flowerbeds to grow yellow daisies, "because they were the only flowers which resembled the face of his wife and the sun of his love" (p. 5). But Margaret is not different from those daisies. She too has been cultivated by Maru's care in Dilepe society, fertilised by the art supplies Maru provided and finally transplanted into his garden spot "a thousand miles away" (p. 121). She retains nothing of her Bushman heritage, and possibly little of her Englishness. Her identity remains opaque, regardless

of who she claims to be. Margaret's missionary training stripped her of her cultural heritage and left her with only the appearance, the physical trappings of a Bushman (Galloway, 2001).

4.7. The Theory of Otherness

"Othering" or "other" is a concept around which Postcolonial theory is centred. Head profoundly explores it in *Maru*. Bhabha (1994, 296) states that colonial discourse depends on the ideological construction of 'otherness'. He further indicates that it gives rise to the stereotype. The stereotype is dangerous not because it mischaracterises the 'other' but because it assumes a totalised fixity of the image (Bhabha, 1994, 162). The problem of difference is essentialised, seen as natural, preconditioned and historical. At the same time, the colonial subject is contained by a power apparatus that denies him or her knowledge that these stereotypes are constructed (Adams, 1993). Bhabha (1994: 163) asserts that: An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept the concept of "fixity" in the ideological construction of 'otherness'. He evaluates the question of colonisation, that is, how the colonisers came to build their colony and colonised, the native people, who are now, termed the 'other'. By studying this situation he states that the stereotype image of the colonised is a negative one. In other words, they are considered inferior to the colonisers in colour, race, knowledge and culture. He further asserts that:

> The objective of colonial discourse is to construe the colonised as a population of degenerate types on the basis of racial origin, in order to justify conquest and to establish systems of administration and instruction. Despite the play of power within colonial discourse and the shifting positionalities of its subjects (for example effects of class, gender, ideology, different social formations, varied systems of colonisation and so on). I am referring to a form of governing mentality that in making out a subject nation, appropriates, directs and dominates its various spheres of activity. Therefore, despite the play in the colonial system which is crucial to its exercise of power, colonial discourse produces the colonised as a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible (Bhabha, l994: 57).

Thor (2006: 22) asks crucial questions concerning the perception of the 'other' as contemplated by Head: "How do perception, culture formation and prejudice inform the way we relate to others? How does art force us to engage with issues of identity? In what way does perception implicate an ethical dimension at a primary level, foregoing the conscious elaboration of moral values?

Social Identity Theory provides a pathway to comprehend what Thor interrogates. It is a person's sense of who they are based on their group membership. Tajfel (2008: 1) asserts that the groups (social class, family or football team) which people belong to are an important source of pride and self-esteem. Groups give people a sense of social identity, a sense of belonging to the social world.

When people build their self-image, they enhance the status of their social group. For example, "Africa is the best continent in the world!" They can also increase their self-image by discriminating and holding prejudicial views against the out group or the "other", as Dikeledi posits. For example, "Black is beautiful and White is common." Therefore, we divide the world into "them", "us" and the "other" based on and through a process of categorisation, putting people into social groups. According to McLeod (2008), this is known as "in-group" (us) and "out-group" (them).

Social Identity Theory states that the 'in-group' will discriminate against the 'out-group' to enhance their self-image. The central hypothesis of Social Identity Theory is that group members of an 'in-group' will seek to find negative aspects of an 'out-group', thus enhancing their self image. For example, Batswana perceive Masarwa as "a low, filthy nation" (p. 12), "[in]decent people" (p. 14), and "downtrodden dogs" (p. 18).

Prejudicial views among people of different cultures may result in racism. In its extreme form racism may result in genocide, such as occurred in Rwanda between the Hutus and Tutsis, in Germany between the Germans and the Jews and more recently, xenophobic attacks in South Africa between South Africans and foreigners and Yugoslavia between the Bosnians and the Serbs. It is, therefore, significant to note that

prejudice, stereotyping and discrimination may not only degrade the "*other*" and exalt the "*us*", but may also lead to detrimental effects such as genocide. Turner (1998: 12) indicates that stereotyping is based on a cognitive process of a tendency to group things together. In doing so, we tend to exaggerate the difference between groups and the similarities of things in the same group.

In addition, Head further asserts that prejudice does not occur accidentally, it is learnt and the "students" exacerbate when they execute it. "Children learnt it from their parents. Their parents spat on the ground as a member of a filthy, low nation passed by. Children went a little further. They spat on you. They pinched you. They danced a wild jiggle, with tin cans rattling: Bushman! Low Breed! Bastard!" (pp. 10 – 11).

Children at the mission school literally spat on Margaret and "[...] she quietly wiped it away" (p. 17). She received more humiliation and persecution than conventional Bushmen who were readily available to serve as the slaves and "downtrodden dogs of the Batswana" (p.18). Traditionally Africans treat dead people with a deity respect, however, when Margaret's mother died, her corpse was abandoned: "There on the stone floor lay the dead woman, still in the loose shift dress, more soiled than ever from the birth of the child" (p. 14) and Margaret Cadmore senior does not know where to bury the body, "I wonder where these people are buried? They don't seem to be at all a part of the life of this country" (p. 13). Their identity is "othered" hence, "the worst things are said and done to [them]" (p. 11). Head notes further:

> 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 around into the organs of people unless they are animals or dead (pp. 11 – 12).

4.8.   The Effects of Racial Stereotypes on Marginalised Groups

Racial stereotype is a representation of a group or a certain ethnicity or race in a generalised manner, portraying all members to display certain typical characteristics

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(Nair, 2012: 1). It is the root of discrimination and prejudice. It unfairly indicates that a person has all the traits that members of the race are known to possess.

Hall (1997: 257) notes that contrast is a basic thought process which human beings use to understand the world around them. Examples of these contrasts are: tree/stone, day/night, black/white, male/female among others. The problem arises when one imposes a hierarchy on such contrasts so that they at one and the same time reflect and are a metaphor for power relations: where for example, white is a positive marker for purity, knowledge, experience, industry, and efficiency, and black a negative marker for contamination, ignorance, childishness, laziness, and incompetence; or where male is a positive marker for strength and leadership and female a negative marker for weakness and submissiveness; where one term, cancels out the other, and the negative marker in such a binary opposition spells "death" for those who are associated with it or who define themselves by it (Cixous,1997: 232).

The positive marker is an ideal that "functions as a standard and a goal" (Ruth, 1987: 18). The negative marker is a stereotype that exists where there is great inequality of power (Hall, 1997: 258). Stereotype also functions as a tool for entrenching power.

Hall (1997) goes further to give some characteristics of stereotype: it is reductionist, simplistic, and fixes its descriptions and prescriptions by associating them with nature. "Masarwa" in *Maru* (1971) are seen by some characters, for example, as being "contented with their low animal lives" (p. 44). In the case of apartheid South African, the fixing happened not only by way of association with nature (being a black person) but also with biblical reference:

> Then he [Noah] drank of the wine and was drunk, and became uncovered in his tent. And Ham the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment, laid it on both their shoulders, and went backward and covered the nakedness of their father. Their faces were turned away, and they did not see their father's nakedness. So Noah awoke from his wine and knew what his younger son had done to him. Then he said: "Cursed be Canaan a

servant of servants he shall be to his brethren […]. Blessed be the Lord the God of Shem and may Canaan be his servant" (Genesis 9: 21 – 26).

The apartheid administration perceived black people as descendants of Ham, rightfully punished by God. For this reason, they justified racial discrimination through misinterpretation of scriptures. They indoctrinated their children to uphold this erroneous dogma and continually belittled other races with sustained impunity. In their opinion, apartheid was divine and God ordained. They derived merriment from seeing perpetual suffering, hunger and poverty among black people. According to the South African apartheid government, the blacks were the descendants of Ham, whose father condemned and were destined to be hewers of wood and drawers of water for whites. One may pause and pose a question. What happened in 1994 when democratic government took over from white minority rule? Did God lift the curses like the way humans normally lift sanctions?

Stereotype splits those who belong from those who do not, thereby demarcating boundaries which it then polices not only with symbolic violence, but also with actual violence when such boundaries are crossed. On one hand, stereotype bonds ruling groups in solidarity and reinforces their hegemony. On the other hand, it sows seeds of self-hatred in those it attacks if they accept its terms (Kristeva, 1997: 258).

Stereotype, as described by Hall (1997), affects the behaviour of both those who uphold stereotype and those at whom stereotype is directed. Upholders of stereotype take their own perceived superiority for granted that they are oblivious of the effect of their actions on those whom they stereotype. Baldwin (1962: 5) notes that this kind of "innocence" is "criminal" because it neither knows nor cares to know that it destroys lives.

In *Maru* (1971), Head posits that "no oppressor believes in his own oppression. He always says he treats his slaves nicely. He never says that there ought not to be slaves" (p. 48). Equally so, upholders of stereotype never dream "that their victims [have] passions […] and that their passions [are] terrifying in their violence" (p. 46). Characters such as Pete, the principal of Leseding school in Dilepe village, and Seth, the education

supervisor, and Morafi, paramount chief, Maru's younger brother, are of this type and exhibit "criminal innocence" as contemplated by Baldwin (1962).

According to Molema (2009: 162 – 163), victims of stereotype such as Margaret have a choice of at least four responses. First, they can accept the stereotype's negative definition of themselves as worthless and relieve its enforcers of their policing duties. There is no such a character in *Maru*.

Second, they can be ambivalent to the *status quo,* inwardly and explicitly struggling and striving consistently for changes while desiring and appropriating the material and other benefits from the "high-ups" (Batswana of Dilepe village) (p. 53). Margaret falls in this category because instead of fighting a harder battle, including against Maru, she agrees to be his wife and goes off into exile with him. She is trapped between the love of her people and anxiety to be accepted instead of being loathed by everyone.

Third, they can resort to both symbolic and actual violence. Margaret Cadmore comes very close to combining the two:

> The room heaved a little and the whole classroom of children blanked out before her. Yet she still stood upright with wide open eyes. From a distance their voices sounded like a confused roar: "You are a Bushman," they chanted. "You are a Bushman" (pp. 45 – 46).

Despite what the phrase "blanked out" suggests, this is the symbolic part because she does not actually faint in shock and helplessness but she stands on her feet and is ready for battle. The thoughts she entertains whilst in that "upright" position are murderous:

> I thought I had a stick in my hands and was breaking their necks. I kept on thinking: How am I going to explain her death? I thought I had killed a little girl in the front desk who was laughing, because I clearly saw myself grab her and break her neck with a stick. It was only when you started shouting

that I realised I was still standing behind the table. I kept saying, 'Thank God, thank God! I haven't killed anyone' (p. 47).

Head indicates that exponents of stereotypes, both young and old, should be conscious of the hatred that they unleash on their victims, which can and does lead them to kill without thinking when counteracting the definition of themselves as a negative and worthless entity in society. In the end, stereotypes hurt both the victim and the perpetrator in more or less the same.

Finally, those on the receiving end of stereotype can mount a determined rebellion and exit the stereotypes or, better still, explode them by forcing them to be non-reductive, non-simplistic, and non-naturalising, thus rendering them useless tools of power, worthy only of being discarded forever in human affairs. This is where Head stands. It is the position taken by revolutionary organisations throughout Africa in fighting both apartheid and colonisation.

4.9. Conclusion

Maru (1971) serves as an embodiment of Head's identification with gender and race exploitation, oppression and dehumanisation facing countless women in Africa. It has been asserted in this chapter that Head identifies closely with her characters. They present part of her experience as well as unrealised yet fantasised fear about her existence (Starfield, 1997: 663).

CHAPTER FIVE: DEPICTION OF HYPOCRITICAL AFRIKANER'S RELIGIOUS IDENTITY IN *THE MADONNA OF EXCELSIOR* (2002) AND *MARU* (1971)

5.1. Introduction

Similar to other forms of identity formations such as ethnic and cultural identities, religion can also provide a perspective from which to view the world, opportunities to socialise with different individuals from different cultural, social and political background and may provide a set of fundamental principles to live out. These foundations can come to shape individual's identity (Visser, 2004: 7). This chapter examines the role of the church during the dark days of apartheid and reveals hypocritical actions which were condoned within some of the main churches in the country.

Among those churches was the Dutch Reformed Church (DRC). The DRC remains the largest and probably the most influential church in Afrikaner ranks. It comes a long way since its theological justification of apartheid since the 1960s (Visser, 2004: 11).

During the apartheid years the church, especially the DRC, and the state functioned as a unit. As a matter of fact, the DRC was often referred to as the 'National Party at prayer'. This complete assimilation of the church into the state had a profound influence, not only on the church and theology of the day, but also on its preaching (Cilliers, 2008: 1). This perception is strengthened by the fact that a number of prominent Afrikaner Nationalist politicians were former clergymen. One of the most prominent was D.F Malan, the first of the apartheid prime ministers and the only former Dutch Reformed minister to occupy the position of the head of government (Cilliers, 2008).

Malan exchanged the pulpit for the podium in order to preach to the entire *volk*, thus drawing party and church closer together. He supported the separation of the institutions of church and state but believed that both institutions were accountable to God and hence, had to adhere to the same belief-system: God-given Afrikaner Nationalism. Malan never explained this distinction to his followers. In his political

dealings, he refrained from interfering in church affairs but vaguely referred to cooperation between the institutions (Bos, 2003).

According to Vilikonja (2001: 29), religion is generally considered to be one of the earliest and most fundamental forms of collective distinction. The religious dimension also represents one of the most important factors in the creation of national consciousness and politics. Hence, the primary sources in this study are either directly or indirectly influenced by religion.

Mda has a strong sense of religious knowledge. Most of his literary works: *Ways of Dying* (1995)*, The Heart of Redness* (2000)*, We Shall Sing for the Fatherland* (1979), *The Madonna of Excelsior (2002*), and *Black Diamond* (2009) among others, are characterised by religious and theological terminology which plays a significant role in conveying the intended message. His readers and critics can easily identify with his use of religious jargon and phrases such as 'Father', 'trinity', 'hypocrisy', 'amen' 'the salt of the world', 'kingdom of heaven', 'Lord' and so forth. However, this chapter unravels how Mda uses religion to mock, satirise and subvert the established religious authorities based on apartheid principles.

5.2.   Afrikaners Theology

The Afrikaner theology in the DRC is primarily based on Calvinism. Calvinism, is also called the Reformed tradition or the Reformed faith. It is a major branch of Western Christianity that follows the theological tradition and forms of Christian practice of John Calvin and other Reformation-era theologians (Muller, 2006: 320). Calvinism is a misleading term because the religious tradition it denotes is and has always been diverse, with a wide range of influences rather than a single founder. The movement was first called "Calvinism" by Lutherans who opposed it, and many within the tradition would prefer to use the word "Reformed" rather than "Calvinist." (Hagglund, 2007).

The sermons in Afrikaners theology expressed the religious interpretation of the *volk* (the people/Afrikaners), state of emergency, expressed a search for religious anchors,

for consolation, and thus could be called "pastoral preaching to the people". Therefore, the broad coordinating system within which the sermons could be placed is the experience of threat and anxiety on the one hand, and on the other hand, the intention to define theologically the "people's" situation and justify it. The basic presumption of this was that the actuality of God's Word depends on the parallelism of historically comparable situations and the conformity of general anthropological structures. Therefore, preaching must seek similarities, identifications, comparisons and examples to serve as a current consolation and appeal (Cilliers, 2008: 2). Cilliers further notes that:

> Instead of (the eternal) God being proclaimed as the One who acts in new and surprising ways in relative times, He becomes bound and thus idolised in these relative times. By implication, He is divided into two. On the one hand, He is written into an ancient situation (e.g. 300 BC). On the other hand, He becomes trapped in the present day. Strictly speaking, He cannot act anew and differently. Ironically, by His being so trapped in history and in proclamation, He is taken from history and His sovereignty over history is taken from Him […] through this, He becomes an unhistorical principle (Cilliers, 2008: 4).

The above of analogy always escapes from time, from the continuation of time, and from God's self-revelation in time; it is a reaching back into history to avoid contemporary realities and the future. It represents a particular form of anti-prophecy that does not dare to jump ahead, but rather arrests time and reproduces history. In this arrest and reproduction, God becomes comparable and inactive. However, God is precisely the opposite: He is the 'incomparable, active One' (Wolf, 1969: 400), because He is distinct from all gods, powers of nature, historical events, or the world's primeval functions.

The Afrikaners modified and manipulated the scriptures to justify the appalling circumstances of apartheid. They elevated themselves as "God's chosen people" in order to exonerate their consciousness from guilt and shame of racial discrimination. By comparing themselves with the ancient Israelites, they gave themselves the audacity to

trample and violate human rights with both spiritual and political impunity (they could not be corrected by both the state and the church). They were always implying that as God was for Israel, so He was for them. God Himself becomes the personification of an idea, a mechanism by which national viewpoints are projected on a metaphysical level. God becomes nationalised. They resolutely thought:

> If we as Afrikaners can act again like the people of Israel, God will bless us exactly as He blessed Israel"; "If we as Afrikaners have faith like Abraham, God will lead us to our destiny, just as He led Abraham (Wolf, 1969: 19).

Because God is incorporated in the postulated image of history, He is also discussed in unreal, conditional terms (Bohren, 1991: 3). One could say that this form of moralistic preaching stems from a perspective of God's absence. In this sense nothing happens in this preaching: the congregation is informed about what happened in biblical times, but which does not happen today. What the congregation must do now to allow it to happen again? (Josuttis, 1966: 30).

In addition to their doctrine, they preached love, forgiveness and peace. Does this love include all humanity or is it confined to "love thy fellow Afrikaner as thyself"? The Afrikaners confined God within their own time and egocentric needs. Everything revolved around the pacification of their distorted faith and compromised Bible truth. Mda exposes their hypocritical attitude in a satiric mode of narration. Niki longs for spiritual fulfilment and Christian fellowship and walks a long way to the church in town. She is not alone, her son Viliki comes with her. However, they are prohibited to enter the church yard, let alone the church hall itself because the God of the Afrikaner does not want black people there. "Niki and Viliki stood outside the gate where they would remain for the rest of the service" (p. 30). It is worth noting how Mda ridicules both Afrikaner Calvinism and apartheid:

> Niki was able to catch waves of what was going on inside the church, and she became part of it. She joined the Afrikaners in singing about God's amazing grace that was also very sweet. The red amaryllis – belladonna lilies indigenous to this part of the world – attested to this grace. And so did the

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clean paved surroundings, sanctified by the organ that backed the angelic voices. The amaryllis bowed their heads along the knee-high wrought-iron fence that surrounded the church. Niki and Viliki bowed their heads too. They stood up when it was time to stand up. They sat when it was time for sitting (p. 30).

In the above citation, nature is juxtaposed to human behaviour. The flowering plants are personified. They are harmonious with the music played in the church irrespective of their distinctive colours. For example, amaryllis bloom red and white flowers while belladonna lilies produce yellow, pink and white petals. Inside the church yard, there are both indigenous and exotic flowering species praising and worshipping in God's presence. They complement each other and are perfected this way. On the contrary, people of different colours (black and white) are separated by the gate and fence made of iron. The barring hedge between them does not allow them to mix. The iron symbolises the hardness and the coldness of the White man's heart. A woman and her toddler are exposed to the scorching heat of the African sun and are determined to participate in church service activities, but the White man ignores them and shuts them out of the church premises. Regardless of this scornful ignorance, Niki worships enthusiastically.

Perceiving the darkness of the White man's heart, one is tempted to attach the element of truth in the following stereotyping: "Afrikaners have white skins and black hearts while Blacks have white hearts and black skins". It takes a pure heart to accept and admire people who despise and reject one as Niki does. She is an embodiment of Christian religion which the Afrikaners dismally fail to execute in principle and in practice.

Irony deepens in the "booming" (p. 30) sermon of Reverend Bornman. As seen in the previous chapter, he is the same Reverend who was involved in partner swapping orgies. The same man who craved for Niki's body so much while fondling Mmampe's black breasts. The man who reprimanded Stephanus Cronje for being selfish with Niki's body. The man who cannot satisfy his lustful sexual urges and blames the devil for it. He is now in the pulpit, "booming".

Reverend Bornman reads Saint Paul's letter to the Corinthians. He preaches about love: *"And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not [love], it profits me nothing.* Praise the Lord that the door had been mercifully left open so that the ears could feast on His Word!" (p. 30). The Reverend's sermon is contradictory to his conduct and that of his fellow Afrikaners. The scripture read vehemently admonishes the Afrikaner hypocrisy: "Love does not behave rudely, does not seek its own […] thinks no evil…bears all things […] endures all things" (1 Corinthians, 13: 5, 7).

Afrikaners behave rudely towards other races and are self-centred. They bear no one in love but themselves. They loathe black women in public and sexually devour them in private. They see the world as an extension of themselves and biblical scriptures do not change them a jot. After preaching these inspiring love sermons, they went on to pollute the country with signs like these:

http://www.unsahistory.org/av/photo/html

These signs were found in beaches, public toilets, bus stations, parks, restaurants and so forth. They formed a true reflection of the White man's heart and conveyed a simple message: Black and White do not relate, and those who contravene this rule pay with their lives. Blinded by this notion, the Afrikaners rapidly developed into ferocious savages and monsters instead of 'pure' and 'holy saints' as they always claimed be.

Their kind of love murdered people of other races and devoured their corpses. Their egocentrism is further portrayed in the following citation:

> J.G. Strydom [...] was the Prime Minister of South Africa from 1954 to 1958, and he made certain that he did not make equal what God had not make equal. He who confirmed to his people [The house of God]: As Calvinist people we Afrikaners have, in accordance with our faith in the Word of God, developed a policy condemning all equality and mongrelisation between White and Black. God's Word teaches us, after all, that He willed into being separate nations, colours and languages (pp. 29 – 30).

In the above extract, Afrikaner identity is loaded with self-justification that "drags" God to ordain its separateness as it stigmatises others as nonentities and enemies of God. Not only that, South Africa was also highly populated with people like Popi, the products of "mongrelisation between White and Black" that they condemned in public podiums and aided to multiply in private. They did not end there, they continued to mislead the young generation with their pervasive Christian dogmas:

> The elders of the church, led by the Reverend François Bornman [...] made a point of meeting Tjaart Cronje after the service on Sunday. They commended him for doing his bit for his country. He was a good Afrikaner whose vision had been shaped by Afrikaans newspapers and the Bible. And both these publications carried gospel truths: one about the secular world that the Afrikaner was trying to shape for his children and the other about the Kingdom that the Afrikaner was striving to enter and occupy in the hereafter... The Afrikaner was in the middle of a war [...] to destroy all the communists and terrorists [...] had [to fight] against the native tribes and (most importantly) against the British. The Afrikaner was fighting to preserve the laws of God, which were codified in South Africa into the set of laws that comprised apartheid. Apartheid was therefore prescribed by the Bible (p. 129).

Mda continues to satirise Afrikaner faith. He implies that the Afrikaners indoctrinated members of the DRC into believing that they had replaced the Jews as God's chosen people and therefore, deduced that they were free to persecute and extirpate non-whites and even that they were under a moral obligation to do so. Their members were

persuaded that the God of the Jews was on their side, approving their every move, especially apartheid, and helping to fight against their arch rivals, the natives and the British. Over many decades, and through innumerable sermons, this myth was crafted and kept intact. They were taught that if the Afrikaner household adhered to this biblical teaching, they would be rewarded, both in the physical and in the eternal spiritual world. Their hope was founded on this misunderstanding. They felt secured and rest assured in this fallacious faith that urged them to exploit and oppress their fellow humanity.

The world was watching as apartheid fathers elevated themselves and trivialised other races. International pressure mounted to the point where Afrikaners were haunted by self-pity instead of repentance. Their sermons continued to speak of themselves:

> The Afrikaner nation, indeed, finds itself in an unenviable position. We are eminently the target of hate-propaganda in virtually all countries worldwide. Many associations or complicities are busy inciting hatred and intolerance against us, apparently supported by virtually inexhaustible financial sources. In writings, newspapers, over the radio, by means of television, the crudest lies are exuberantly blazoned forth presenting our nation as evildoers […]The plan is clear. We must be isolated and then ultimately be liquidated (Cilliers, 2006: 60).

As they justified themselves, they projected guilt on others, creating a subtle scapegoat. A dualism was formed between the "inner group" (Afrikaners) and the "external group" (the enemies). Throughout this process the enemy was regarded as the active force, while the 'people' were seen as passive victims of those external forces. This active-passive dualism formed a fixed component in each "situational analysis" that was done: the future existence and identity of the nation were at risk; it experienced one of its greatest crises (Cilliers, 2008: 6).

Their "gospel truth" (p. 129) was established on two literary works, the Bible and Afrikaans newspapers. It is already detected that their biblical truth is an absolute construction of their selfish ambitions. What about the Afrikaans newspapers? Did they carry any element of truth as Reverend Francois Bornman claims? Were they apolitical

and free from pursuing any political agenda? Most of these newspapers proved to propagate Afrikaner Nationalism (Afrikaner Volkseenheid). Afrikaner Nationalism was a political ideology that sustained the history of the Afrikaners, their language and the Afrikaner Calvinism as key symbols. It was strongly influenced by anti-British sentiments that grew among the Afrikaners, especially because of the Boer Wars (Encarta, 2009).

5.3. Racism Reporting

The press "only carried news about white people" (p. 103) and was supportive of the state and its Afrikaner Nationalism, faithfully reporting news in a manner and discourse which overtly supported apartheid. Seldom in the Afrikaans media was the government criticised. There was no indication that apartheid and racism were wrong. This press turned a blind eye to the gross violation of human rights which was taking place. The strategies of criminalisation and demonisation of political activity, restrictions on information and the faithful regurgitation of government propaganda resulted in the Afrikaans press' support for the apartheid system (Van Dijk, 1991: 8). In the following report, Mda shows subjective reporting in the newspaper article:

> Anna Tsomela, a 36-year African woman with a light-skinned fair-haired baby of three months in her arms, who she said, was the child of the White man arrested with her, was found guilty under the Act and sentenced to nine months' imprisonment, suspended for three years […] When the light delivery van left Reddersburg, Tsomela was sitting in the back of the vehicle and the White man was driving. When they stopped the van both were sitting in the front and the baby, obviously of mixed blood, was with them. Tsomela's breasts were bared and her dress was pulled up high […]. In her statement to the magistrate Tsomela said she started to work for the white man and his family on a farm near Virginia some years ago. After some time the man's wife moved to Bloemfontein and she had to look after him on the farm. After they had been staying there alone for about two years, he started giving her some of the gin he drank and later they became intimate. About a year ago she became pregnant. The White man then move to Bloemfontein […]. In the statement Tsomela also said that she had no complaints about the White man […]. The magistrate said that Tsomela should realise the seriousness of her offence. She had been committing immorality with a White man over a

long period and there had been miscegenation, which was the purpose of the
Act to prevent (pp. 90–91).

It is worth noting how the two accused are presented in this report. The black woman, Anna Tsomela, is mentioned by name more frequently (seven times in the entire article) than her co-accused, Petrus Smit who is mainly referred to as a "White man" (also seven times in the article). Psychologically, memory gains strength through repetition (Jones, 2008). The readers of this article are likely to remember Tsomela's name than Smit's, this is the intention of discriminatory reporting and editing. Thus, the black woman's name is engraved in people's memories and her reputation is ruined. The report goes further to uncover Tsomela's nakedness: "her breasts were bared and her dress was pulled high" (p. 90). Neither Smit's body parts nor his reaction towards Tsomela's naked body is mentioned. This suggests that Tsomela is seducing Smit who seems indifferent and reluctant to give in. Stating that Tsomela does not complain about the White man is misleading. This exonerates the White man and incriminates Tsomela. The report also applies euphemism to protect the White man's dignity. For instance, the use of the phrase, "they became intimate" does not suggest anything about their sexual relationship. The reader is demystified when "she be[comes] pregnant".

The same manner of reporting was applied during 1976 Soweto uprisings. Unequal status of blacks and whites in South African society was unfairly articulated within press coverage. Whilst all deaths related to the uprising were clearly unfortunate, what was focused on were the deaths of two white people (out of eight who had died) who were named and whose lives and work were extensively reported on in a number of newspapers. The great number of black people killed was relegated to nameless beings. This demonstrated the unequal treatment of white "victims" compared to black "statistics," reducing them to an unidentifiable mass (Van Dijk, 1997). The students who were fighting for their educational rights and a choice for language of teaching and learning were labelled as a "mob" that was sent by the terrorists and communists to cause anarchy, looting and arson.

The Afrikaans press also perceived those pupils as "Swart gevaar" and "tsotsis", (black threat and thugs). The responsive action towards those "Swart gevaar" and "tsotsis" was always violence and intimidation by the police and the national army who ruthlessly killed the school children. The press painted them as subversive and dangerous crowd that threatened social order and justice, hence the state took the "necessary measures" to manage the *status quo*. (Wimmer and Dominick, 1994).

Alternative to Afrikaans press was the English press which was frequently at odds with the government over its racial policies, challenging them both editorially and in news reports. Mda cites the following article as an example of how the English press was questioned by the state:

> The Friend was criticised in the Free State Provincial Council yesterday afternoon for publishing a report last week that the Coloured population in the Free State village of Excelsior had more than doubled over the past two years. "Why did The Friend specifically mention Excelsior only?" Mr. P.W Nel asked. "The newspaper could also have noticed increases in the Coloured populations of towns like Boshof, Jagersfontein, Harrismith, Philippolis and Welkom" (p. 102).

However, the English press also failed to significantly challenge the restrictions of the state, it also frequently criminalised political protests and demonised the liberation struggle. This press was also often at fault for lenient reporting of the apartheid government. However, attempted to provide more balanced and informative coverage (Van Dijk, 1991).

The state viewed these unconventional observations and suggestions as a 'betrayal' of the Afrikaner *volk* and subsequently applied Publication bills on 'alternative' material. As a result, all publications could be banned if, after being reviewed, the content was found damaging or offensive to the concerns of the state 'and its citizens' (De Lange, 1997). The Publications and Entertainment Act was of the first censoring laws passed, and numerous restrictive laws were followed, aimed at 'protecting' the interests of the ruling party and in effect becoming the "offspring of political control" more than serving as

control of publications, films and theatre. Apart from the legislative restrictions implemented against the press, the government also used intimidation and manipulation as a means to control what was being published (Hachten and Giffard 1994). "The Afrikaner was in the middle of a war, which he had to win at all costs (p. 129).

5.4. Hypocrisy of the Christian Missionaries in Africa

Christianity and colonialism are closely associated because Catholicism and Protestantism were the religions of the European colonial powers, and acted in many ways as the "religious arm" of those powers (Melvin and Penny, 2003: 496). According to Andrews (2010: 663), Christian missionaries were initially portrayed as "visible saints, exemplars of ideal piety in a sea of persistent savagery". However, by the time the colonial era drew to a close in the last half of the twentieth century, missionaries became viewed as "ideological shock troops for colonial invasion whose zealotry blinded them" colonialism's "agent, scribe and moral alibi" (Comaroff, 2010: 32). In *Maru* (1971), Head mockingly indicates that even though the missionaries claim to be the wise saints, they are hypocrites and foolish:

> When no one wanted to bury a dead body, they called the missionaries; not that the missionaries really liked to be involved with mankind, but they had been known to go into queer places because of their occupation. They would do that but they did not often like you to walk into their yard. They preferred to walk to you outside the fence […] At that time the church and the school were run by a man and his wife. There is little to say about the man because he was naturally dull and stupid, only people never noticed because he was a priest and mercifully remained silent for hours on end. He had a long mournful face. His mouth was always wet with saliva and he frequently blinked his eyes, slowly like a cow (p. 12).

Head reveals the missionaries' mission in Africa. The statement: "not that the missionaries really liked to be involved with mankind, but they had been known to go into queer places because of their occupation" (p.12) is paradoxical. Firstly, it shows that the missionaries have no regard for humanity, in other words, they are not sincere

to people they claim to serve. If this is the case, why do they seem to care so much? Head shows that they are compelled to serve because of their occupation. They earn a living out of going to "queer places" like Africa. Secondly, they do not trust the people they serve. "They [do] not often like [them] to walk into their yard" (p. 12). "They preferred to walk to [them] outside the fence" (p. 12). The latter statement bears connotative meaning. The missionaries come to the African continent in order to fulfil their concealed missions. Can Africans intrude European countries and get the same welcome and naivety? Can the two continents exchange knowledge and skills without Africans experiencing prejudice and contempt? Head calls for mutual relationship, trust and interaction based on equal partnership. In other words, if the missionaries can stop "walk[ing] to [them]" and start inviting them (Africans) inside the "fence", (a symbol for their borders and political demarcations) there will be harmony and acceptance for diversity.

Christianity is targeted by critics of colonialism because the preachers of this religion were used to justify the actions of the colonists. For example, missionaries came not only for evangelism but also to pave way for economic activities which later resulted into colonisation of Africa. The traditional leaders were lured into signing treaties which eventually led them to lose their sovereignty (Andrews, 2010). The missionaries preached individualism against African Collectivism (*Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*) which emphasises the interdependence of every human being in a society. They went further to reduce people into "object[s] for [their] experiment[s]" (p.15). In this way, the foundations of African society were shaken and distorted. Lo Liyong (1969, 31–32) attacks the British mission in Africa as follows:

> I blame the British. The Education they came to offer was aimed at recruiting candidates for a Christian Heaven and eliminating others for a Christian Hell; they sought to teach clerks, teachers, servants and administrators. Culturally they stood aloof […] Not only that, the British went about castrating the Africans. Culturally our dances, including songs became Satanic […] Poetry writing and the art of fiction were not taught us though we debated and reasoned. This led to early writings which were of a quarrelsome nature;

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political grievances (about land mostly) and answering back the white racist charges through pamphlets, and biographies and anthropological works.

The missionaries glorified themselves as pioneers of education in Africa. However, Head indicates that they applied "pet theories" (p. 15) to humans. In essence, the origin of education can be traced back to man's history. This means that education existed for as long as human beings started living in their societies in Africa. This type of education was known as indigenous education or traditional African Education. It existed a long way back before the coming of the missionaries. The missionaries came with their education, Western education. They compared their education with the indigenous education and concluded that Africans were uneducated, ignoring all the merits of African indigenous education (Bray, 1986). Education is not the same as schooling, but is a lifelong process conducted by many agencies within and outside a given society (Kelly, 1998). To this effect, education can be categorised into formal, informal and non-formal.

The distinction between formal, informal and non-formal is important in understanding indigenous and Mission education. Formal education is the hierarchy structured, chronologically graded systems that runs from primary school to university or another form of higher education. Non-formal education is any organised education activity outside the establishment of formal system that is intended to serve identified learning objectives. For example, workshops, seminars or other forms of education intended to serve identified learning purposes. Informal education is a lifelong process whereby individual acquires attitudes, values, skills and knowledge from daily experiences and other educational influences in a person's environment (Kelly, 1998).

In *Maru*, (1971), Margaret Cadmore, "the wife of the missionary" (p. 13) in Botswana, succeeds to give her adopted child Margaret Cadmore junior all three forms of education (formal, informal and non-formal). For example, she attends formal schooling and becomes a teacher, she can make beautiful expressions through sketching and "her mind and heart were composed of a little bit of everything she had absorbed from Margret Cadmore" (p. 16). However, Margret Cadmore senior's generosity and

kindness are overshadowed by Western ideology of individualism and self-centredness. She sees Margret junior as "a real, living object for her experiment" (p. 15). She wants to create a "wonder" (p.15) out of her. This makes these two women interact a binary opposite type of relationship of "subject-object" or "master-slave." Head writes:

> The relationship between her and the woman was never that of a child and its mother. It was as though later she was a semi-servant in the house, yet at the same time treated as an equal, by being given things servants don't usually get: kisses on the cheeks and toes at bedtime, a bedtime story, long walks into the bush […] lots of reading material. Dancing through it all was a plump woman with twinkling eyes whose ideas and activities were like a permanent bubbling stream. The child used to watch it all with serious eyes. There was nothing she could ask for, only take what was given [...] (pp. 16 – 17).

Their relationship is subtle, close but not intimate enough to accomplish the missionary's mission of "saving Africa" from despair and "a sea of persistent savagery" as articulated by Andrews (2010: 663). When she started going to the mission school, she becomes aware that something is wrong with her relationship to the world. She is "slyly pinched" (p. 17) and she is a child "next to whom no one wanted to sit" (p. 17). She is shunned and rejected by the world and she is fully conscious of it.

There is also a major concern with her naming. All the time the English missionary stayed in Africa she did not find any appealing or interesting name to give her adopted child. She names her after her own – Margret Cadmore. The trend of naming, renaming or changing names of captives to those of their masters can be traced back to days of slavery. Slaves were named after their owners rather than their parents (Wagner, 2012).

The names people call themselves by are an important part of their identity. It is part of how they see themselves and often they resent it when someone pronounces their name in an odd way or makes a mockery of it. The Africans sold into slavery were repeatedly humiliated by the naming practices of their owners. In defiance of this, slaves continued to use their African names among themselves and also passed them to their

children. Some of these names can provide clues to a family's place of origin in Africa and the world (Deburg, 1997: 269). Margret junior's identity cannot be traced. She remains a daughter of a dead woman, whose body was "soiled than ever from the birth of her child" (p. 13). Her upbringing and social life was deeply affected by her "lack" of identity. Head affirms:

> There seemed to be a big hole in the child's mind between the time that she slowly became conscious of her life in the home of the missionaries and conscious of herself as a person. A big hole was there because, unlike other children, she was never able to say: 'I am this or that. My parents are this or that.' There was no one in later life who did not hesitate to tell her that she was a Bushman, a mixed breed, half breed, low breed or bastard (p. 16).

Margret is in a similar catastrophic experience with Popi in *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002). Unlike Popi who grows under the sincere love of her biological mother and brother, Margret does not have anyone to call a friend, let alone a parent or a relative. While Popi can escape name calling and arrogance of her friends into the privacy of her own room, Margret has no way out, at school she is surrounded by scolding and physical abuse and at home she is under the "twinkling eye" (p. 17) of her foster parent.

Margret Cadmore senior's behaviour is well expressed by Mda in *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002). He shows how difficult it is to discern and deal with the concealed attitude of the English people. He acknowledges that these are generalisations or stereotyping of people: "We never questioned what informed these generalisations" (p. 223). However, they serve as a model in shedding light towards comprehending the English missionary, Margret Cadmore senior. He states:

> We put them [Viliki and Adam de Vries] down to the old love affair between black people and Afrikaners that the English found so irritating. Even at the height of apartheid, blacks preferred dealing with Afrikaners to the English-speaking South Africans. The English, common wisdom stated, were hypocrites. They laughed with you, but immediately you turned, they stabbed you in the back. The Afrikaners, on the other hand, was honest. When he hated you, he showed you at once. He did not pretend to like you. If he hated

blacks, he said so publicly. So, when you dealt with him, you knew who you were dealing with. When he smiled you knew he was genuine. One could never trust the smile of the Englishman (p: 223).

Margret junior receives kisses on the cheeks, reading materials, bedtime stories and enjoys a fun walk. These delicacies are normally reserved for members of the family. Whoever receives this kind of treaties is undoubtedly loved and cherished. However, this is not the case with Margret.

5.5. Conclusion

Having articulated the pivotal role played by religious formations in shaping identities in a society, this chapter primarily sought to shed light on religious bigots who use their religion to extirpate people who are politically, economically and religiously less powerful than themselves. It has been established in this chapter that powerful groups such as Afrikaners and foreign missionaries took advantage of vulnerable members of society such as youths, women and the destitute to advance their treacherous agendas. For example, the missionaries paved way for the colonists by westernising African communities through individualism, profane dogmas and hypocritical subtlety. This disrupted the African people from their core values, customs and traditions.

The situation was exacerbated by Afrikaner Nationalism and Calvinism. It has been noted in this chapter that the Afrikaners held the pen, the Bible and the gun in the same hand. They fully made the press their mouth-piece, preached love on Sundays and murdered innocent citizens during protests. They did all these claiming and justifying it as God's inspiration and mission in their lives. Mda and critics such as Cilliers, Encarta and Comaroff openly attack this savagery and hypocrisy. They assert that injustice in a society is short lived and that future is bleak when inequality and egocentrism overshadow social justice and freedom for all.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter serves as a summary of the previous chapters and attempts to shed light on the following aspects: social, political and language identity; the effects of characterisation in *Maru* (1971); challenges and social threats in *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002) and finally, discusses recommendations as implied by two authors (Head and Mda).

It is established in this study that South Africa, as a microcosm of Africa, reflects the atrocious history characterised by colonisation, apartheid and imperialism. Having discussed African identity by looking at the latter historical epoch in both *The Madonna of Excelsior* (2002) and *Maru* (1975), the following questions need more answers in an attempt to attain social and political stability: For how long will racism, gender discrimination, ethnicity and Eurocentric ideologies continue to identify with African societies and nation states? Have the labels, meanings and stereotypes which were attached to ethnic groups in the old dispensation diminished, offensive and derogatory labels such as "kaffir", "hotnot", "coolie" "boesman" and so forth? Have South Africans practically developed new national identity based on the constitutional democracy and respect of fundamental human rights? If so, why do racial tensions and xenophobic attacks among various ethnic groups escalate?

Bekker (2000: 3) posits that the implication appears to be that South Africans can either belong together to a new nation or to remain divided by offensive cleavages inherited from an unjust past. If older racial and ethnic identities persist, a national identity cannot be sustained and if and when these former identities dissolve, pride and identification with South African nation will flourish (Bekker, 2000).

6.2.   A Final Note on Social, Political and Language Identity

Identity plays a significant role in individuals, social groups as well as nation states. It has been noted in this study how identity has captured scholarly inquiry over the past years and continues to do so even today. It is through identity that people may come to know their history, genealogy and self-worth. Once group identity is established and sustained within a particular nation, people can define themselves and develop positive aspirations for the future.

Tajfel (2008: 1) posits that groups to which people belong give them a sense of social identity, a sense of belonging to a social world. The problem emerges when people start to attach a particular status to their group and discriminate against others and prejudice them. In this way, the world is categorised into "them" and "us". McLeod (2008) calls this "in-group-us" and "out-group-them". The "in-group" discriminates against the "out-group" in order to enhance their self-worth. They persistently try to find negative aspects of the "out-group" to use as a tool with which to degrade, trivialise and suppress them. The "in-group" uses stereotype images to represent 'others'. The process of making some groups of people "other" has been used to disempower, subordinate, marginalise and denigrate the "out-group". These negative aspects develop into indelible prejudiced views of the "out-group" and further develop into racism and in its worst form, racism culminates into perpetual political strife and genocide.

Colonisation and apartheid were founded on the notion of "in-group us" and "out-group them". European colonisers became "us" and the indigenous population "them". They "othered" those they wanted to control and manipulate. "Others" were further labelled "non-whites" and "non-Europeans", and were called with derogatory terms as mentioned above and were in turn divided into different groups in an attempt to sow divisions and resentment among them. The coloniser deliberately developed this "divide and rule strategy" in order to permanently disintegrate the African society. Africans are now free from colonial and apartheid rule. They have a choice to remain entrapped in Eurocentric dogmas, influence and ideology or to rise above these limitations and claim their rightful place in Pan-Africanism which is founded on the spirit of *ubuntu* that embraces

humanity irrespective of differences in nationality, gender, colour, race, sexuality or creed.

Bhabha (1994: 64) asserts that cultural differences, as explored by McLeod (2008), are based on hybridities created in moments of historical transformation and, therefore, people should not be classified in groups based on "organic" pre-existing traits attributed to ethnic groups. He indicates that people must move to the "beyond" to understand these differences. This is the place where the crossing over of time occurs and where new signs of identity are formed. He shows that people's characteristics are not limited to their ethnic heritage, nor grounded in a fixed identity but generated in the act of enunciation subject to change and modification through experience.

Language plays a significant role both as an identity marker and a medium of national symbol (Palmerg, 1998). African languages suffered greatly under colonisation and apartheid. English, French and Portuguese enjoyed prestigious status of being official languages in Africa during the colonial dispensation. In South Africa, Afrikaans and English were at the centre of business, education and the media. If indigenous African languages have to play their role in the ever changing technological, economic and political world, conscious and deliberate actions need to be taken. For example, institutions of higher learning, especially universities, should cease teaching and assessing African languages in foreign languages such as Latin and English. Language committees in these institutions may preserve the *status quo* by arguing that the standard of education will be compromised as many concepts can only be articulated in foreign languages. This is not true because European languages also started from humble beginnings. They developed through many centuries and were once confronted with language death. Why should African languages be denied a fresh start? History has proven that they are resilient and can forge ahead irrespective of marginalisation and suppression. Language was and can still be used to build or to destroy the future of the African society. African languages should, just like English and Latin, be developed to a level of academic, technological and economic competency. They have been muted by colonisation and apartheid for many centuries and should be given an opportunity to grow. This can be achieved through conscious political will academic

intervention and continuous debates and seminars on the issue of indigenous languages.

African states fully accommodate the notion of multilingualism in their language policies, but fail to execute them in practical terms. Likewise, South Africa has an outstanding post-apartheid National Language Policy embedded in the constitution, one of the most attractive and respectable in the world. However, the policy is compromised because it runs counter to the social energies, the numerical pressure and the economic drivers which continue to propel South Africa's language dispensation in a different direction. The socio-linguistic dynamics at work in South Africa's linguistic ecology shape and maintain a language dispensation that follows what might be called a neo-colonial model (Wright, 2002). The model is one where the former colonial language such as English, is used in the central economy, in government and for national and international communication. It carries the burden of scientific and technical communication, an aspect of globalised discourse (Wright, 2002).

Indigenous languages, which are by no means under threat numerically, are primarily used within personal speech communications. They continue to play a politically subordinate role of social communication among members of the same or related ethnic groups. However, they carry important values of social identity, cultural effect, heritage, tradition and a rich historical legacy (Markdata, 2000). A profound initiative programme is required to bring implementation that will bring language revolution in schools, tertiary institutions, government departments and the corporate world. As Phillipson (1996: 161) asserts, this will ensure that African languages, by appropriate provision and practical promotions, assume their rightful role as the means of official communication in the public affairs of each member state in replacement of European languages which have, until now, played this role.

6.3. Challenges and Social Threats in *The Madonna Of Excelsior* (2002)

In The *Madonna of Excelsior* (2002), Mda satirically posits that the black community is locked in an "old love affair" with Afrikaners (Straus, 2004: 258). Despite the failure of many Afrikaners to ask for forgiveness for their decades of abuse and exploitation, they admit that they are African. Through characterisation in this novel, Mda juxtaposes anger experienced by both Afrikaners and black people. For example, Niki is angry because of torture, subjugation and exploitation by the white males. She gets raped while still young and naïve to the world of sexual molestation. She is weighed and stripped naked in full view of colleagues. Her jealous and abusive husband disappears for a long time and only comes back home to die. She conceives her second (Popi) child from a white man, Stephanus Cronje, who denies paternity in the court of law. This child becomes her nightmare and anathema to both society and the state. Niki tries to avoid prosecution by browning a naked Popi above the fire, smoking the pinkness out of her" (p. 66). Her plight as an abused woman leads her to anger and frustration. She becomes hateful and vengeful. Stephanus Cronje, Madam Cornelia's husband, falls victim to her rage and when his wife discovers his promiscuous activities, he commits suicide.

Just like her mother, Popi has battles to fight. She is haunted by consistent internal and external forces that degrade and devalue her self-worth. Her identity is despised, ridiculed and rejected by society. This affects her dignity as a person to the point of self-resentment:

> […] she hated the mirror. It exposed her to herself for what she really was. A boesman girl. A hotnot girl. Morwa towe! You bushman you! Or when the good neighbours wanted to be polite, a coloured girl. She had broken quite a few mirrors in her time. A mirror was an intrusive invention. An invention that pried into the pain of her face. Yet she looked at her freckled face in the morning, at midday and at night. Every day. She prayed that her freckles would join up, so that she could look like other black children of Mahlatswetsa Location (p. 113)

Popi suffers the pain of not belonging and rejection. She is identified as "other". She cannot accept her physical features either, especially her hair. "After thirty years, she had still not learnt how to deal with her hair" (p. 233). "She concealed it in a turban. The turban therefore, continued to be her saviour" (p. 234). She considers herself cursed and cannot be comforted. She declares that "the pain of [her] whole life is locked in [her] hair" (p. 234).

Popi's half-brother Tjaart is also entrapped in anger and disillusionment. He is an embodiment of both apartheid and Afrikaner identity. There are several factors that lead to his demise: He exemplifies the stereotypes traditionally associated with the Afrikaner and shows reluctance to accept changes in the new political dispensation. He tries to impose his cultural identity on others and is defensive of his linguistic identity as an Afrikaans speaking person. Moreover' Tjaart believes in Calvinism ideology which elevates Afrikaners above other races. He wants the establishment of a *Volkstaad* (homeland) for the Afrikaners and "plan[s] for the return of the Afrikaner to his rightful place" (p. 233) by "regain[ing] his power" (p. 243). He is angered by the loss of political power of the Afrikaner and affirmative action frustrates him as it serves as a direct indication of this loss of power. He ultimately "altogether [loses] control" (p. 255) and "jabber[s] and foam[s] at the mouth" (p. 255). His collapse symbolises the fall of the old apartheid order.

While Tjaart wanes away in bitterness and permanent anger insinuated by racism and hatred, Niki and Popi find their anger subsiding in self-acceptance, forgiveness and laughter.

> Niki laughed. For the first time in many years. She laughed for a very long time. Popi just stood there in amazement. She had not thought her joke was all that funny. Niki laughed until tears ran down from her eyes and disappeared into the cracks of her face… "I am so happy that at last you are so free of shame about being a coloured that you can even make a joke about it. "My shame went away with my anger, Niki" […] (p. 260).

Popi's acceptance of herself liberates her physically and emotionally. She starts admiring her body and embraces her colouredness. She breaks the apartheid spell that confines her into "otherness" and portrays her as a misrepresentation of blackness and whiteness. She is now herself. It is not herself alone that she sets free, she also draws her mother's conscious from the pool of guilt and shame: "you are free Popi, and you have made me free too" (p. 260). Popi goes a step further, she forgives Tjaart Cronje's wrongdoings so that instead of dying in bitterness like his father, he can die in peace.

Mda satirically and subversively indicates that apartheid and criminalisation of interracial marriages culminates into national catastrophic consequences that leave the country widowed, orphaned and disintegrated. He notes that discrimination does not only hurt the "other" as the perpetrator intends, but it also hurts the perpetrator himself or herself and flows down to the future generations.

6.4. The Effect of Characterisation in *Maru* (1971)

Maru (1971) embodies Head's identification with gender and race exploitation. She exposes oppression and dehumanisation facing countless women in Africa. One may conclude that Head expresses feministic ideas. She portrays atrocities faced by women who suffer under patriarchal social system because of their gender and racial orientation.

It is asserted in this study that Head identifies closely with her characters. Margaret, the protagonist in *Maru*, forges ahead as a reconciliatory force between the two tribes, the Batswana elite and the "othered" Basarwa regardless of alienation and suppression by Dilepe community. She is perceived as a true reflection of Head's life. At the beginning of the novel, Head sheds light on Batswana's racial discrimination against the Bushmen. Before she introduces Margaret, she states that the Batswana term for Bushmen, "Masarwa" is equivalent to "nigger", "a term of contempt which means a low filthy nation" (p. 8). From an early age, Margaret is treated differently from the Batswana and

develops, as a result, a very negative self-image. Head made of Margaret a parallel of her own experience. Like herself, Margaret is abandoned at birth.

Margaret's families (natural and foster) took drastic decisions about her from birth. The South African state intervened in legal and ideological ways to prescribe her racial identity and matters consequent to it. They dictated where and with whom she lived, and where she was educated and worked. She subsequently moved away from Pietermaritzburg and later went into a self-imposed. These unpleasant circumstances in her life compelled her to explore, through her protagonist, the position of a woman as a victim to its fullest extent (Starfield, 1997). Recurrent themes and situations in her literary works can be interpreted as narrative explorations of the nature of the self. Head discovers herself and carves out an identity through characterisation as a means of exploring her own nature and potential (Thusi, 1998).

Margaret spends her childhood and adolescent years trying to find out how Bushmen survive as an underclass to the ruling Batswana. Forces of racism are present in her school and in the village at large, because "Dilepe village was the stronghold of some of the most powerful and wealthy chiefs in the country, all of whom owned innumerable Masarwa as slaves" (p. 24). Almost all of the people she meets, including her pupils, believe that Margaret is, like other Basarwa, a slave who does not know her own position in society, she becomes a controversial teacher in Dilepe village because of her racial identity. On moving to Serowe in 1964, Head also became a teacher and experienced much of the harassment that she makes part of Margaret's experience (Starfield, 1997). Despite her qualifications, Margaret is a shy, silent woman:

> She had a way of looking at people with one quick, wide stare, then immediately looking away into a far-off distance as though she did not want anything from life or people. She had a long, thin, delicate face, with a small mouth, and when she smiled she seemed very shy. (p. 23)

What causes Margaret's shyness? Her development as a character involves a struggle between her inner strength and the shyness that she feels as a member of a "filthy

nation". It is difficult for a person to be treated as an outcast and still maintain emotional strength and confidence. Perpetual negative remarks break the soul and build up an inferiority complex, which ultimately, produce shyness, depression and loss of sanity. Head does not allow fictional removal of Batswana's racial discrimination. Maru, who has long felt uneasy about the position of the Basarwa in his community, abandons his patriarchal powers both as a chief and as a husband. Dilepe remains the heartland of anti-Masarwa feeling. Maru and Margaret have to move far away from the village in order to live free from prejudice and alienation.

Maru's predicament echoes the story of the Seretse Khama debacle. Khama, chief of the Bamangwato of Serowe, married a non-Tswana wife, Ruth Williams. On marriage to an outsider, he was compelled, as Maru, to relinquish his rights to the chieftainship. He then went into exile. Head, living in Serowe, Khama's traditional home, could not fail to be drawn into the prevalent shock at his treatment (Starfield, 1997: 663).
Traditional bigots such as those in Dilepe community should be confronted and their authority challenged in order to bring total freedom to humanity. Political freedom would remain a trivial matter if exercised within rigid and arrogant patriarchal systems that judges people on the basis of race and gender, ignoring the content of human character integrity and the spirit of *ubuntu*.

6.5. Recommendations

Mda is critical of apartheid policies and subjugation of women. He does not only subvert and satirise the apartheid order, but he also sustains a critical stance against new Black elites in post-apartheid South Africa. The result of the economic, political and cultural alienation of the majority from their post colonial rulers has been a replica of colonial practices (Crous, 2005: 122). Mda observes that the same culture of silencing one's opponents and acting in a greedy manner for self-enrichment, a behaviour that was associated with apartheid administration, still persists in post-apartheid South Africa. He attacks this political trend irrespective of who practises it. As a writer, Mda insists that he is "naturally a social critic" (cited in Taitz, 2002: 12) and his critique tempers with the

sensitivity of the fraught nature of race relations in post-apartheid South Africa, which explains his critical stance of people who "pretend that they are socialists" (p. 241) and trample on the human rights of their own people by "accumulate[ing] capital by looting the coffers of the state and by taking kickbacks from contractors" (p. 241) as Viliki does. Viliki is greedy and corrupt, ill practices mostly condemned by political leaders in South Africa yet formidable and recurrent.

Mda calls for the South Africans to embrace the incarnation of the spirit of *ubuntu,* the intrinsic motivation that propelled South Africans to fight for freedom and equality during the "days of sacrifice and death […] days of selfless service and hope" (p. 240). The days in which they fought the battle without monetary compensation, yet determined to carry on until the battle was won. Mda laments over those days:

> At least those days we were together fighting the same war as comrades in arms […] sharing suffering and moments of respite. Now others are up there and have forgotten about the rest. Survival of the fittest is the new ethos. Each one for himself or herself in the scramble for the accumulation of wealth (p. 241).

Mda indicates that just like the apartheid administration, the new democratic dispensation also has its social disorders. There are individuals who give primacy to property and possessions at the expense of the destitute and political veterans who sacrificed their lives to set the country free.

In the same manner of fate, in *Maru* (1971), Head posits that societal change in Botswana, through her South African experience, can be achieved by way of fundamentally dismantling apparatuses of prejudice, exclusivity and tribalism, under which the Bushmen fall victims of exploitation and alienation. Galloway (2001) notes three stage processes that would assist in the development of a unified society: birth, death, and rebirth. Drawing the Dilepe community into the picture, their birth stage is characterised by prejudice and indoctrinations instilled in the hearts of men, women and children. These are preconceived ideas about individuals, groups and races from which discrimination emerges. For a new society to start, prejudicial culture has to die. Like

Maru, leaders should have courage to challenge the *status quo* in their communities without fear. Head attempts to "kill" racial prejudice and discrimination through the written word.

In Botswana, Head confronts ethnic prejudice in a society rooted in tribalism. This is tantamount to descending into darkness and danger because oppressors are heartless and often choose to be ignorant of pain and emotional hurt they cause to their victims. Head is aware of these setbacks but carries on in order to liberate both mental and physical captives such as the Bushmen and the Batswana themselves. The latter need to be set free so that they can find a place in their hearts to accommodate cultural and ethnic diversity which forms part of African identity. They can only achieve this if they consciously abandon their inherited stereotypes and allow individual, societal and national rebirth. The awakening to a new life should be preceded by a symbolic death. In South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) played a significant role in the process of national rebirth. Testimonies, confessions and tears shed by the victims, helped to heal some of the wounds as offended people willingly forgave their villains. A similar process in Botswana would help the Basarwa community to reconcile with their former oppressors.

6.6. Conclusion

Given the discussion on African identity looking at various aspects and scholarly perceptions in this study, it is observed that no research, however wide its objectives are, can be exhaustive enough to explore all questions formulated around an issue as broad and complex as African identity. Central to this observation, this study sought to shed light on theoretical construct of African identity from a South African perspective as asserted in the literary works of Mda and Head. It is noted that both authors articulate the voice of the suppressed and the silenced, knocking down prejudice and stereotypical perceptions that preoccupy the privileged elite.

Based on how Mda and Head sketch and portray individual and national identity, and how social ills such as xenophobia and poverty continue to divide South African society according to racial lines, it is evident that a new form of imperialism has emerged. It continues to sustain colonial legacy both overtly and covertly, increasing the gap between the wealthy White and the poor Black. Thus, after fighting apartheid administration and repealing discriminatory laws from the judicial system, South Africans are faced with a new struggle against economic exploitation, corruption and Eurocentric ideas that perpetrate injustices of the past.

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