

Realistic Threats Versus Communal Order: A Study of Inter-Ethnic African Xenophobia in Bessie Head's *Maru*

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Abstract

This study is an analysis of intra-African bigotry and mutual segregation in Head's prose narrative *Maru*. It examines imaginary but sensible threats which occur among various tribal clusters. With its setting pitched on a rural Botswana culture of Dilepe village, the novel describes the historic degradation of the subjugated Masarwa (San) ethnic masses by the foremost and domineering Tswana tribal clusters. Initiated through a close reading of the novel, the objectives of this text-based and analytical study include probing into how the artist blends the fear-ridden but absolute discriminatory attitudes of the village masses against the fair democratic and creative life-styles of progressive characters like Moleka and Maru. The study employs the Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) in scrutinising the actions and life of Margaret Cadmore, an educated Masarwa woman. A South African exile who fled from the obnoxious laws of Apartheid regime and came to live and work in the xenophobic rural Botswana village, the novel probes into how her life and actions pressured the conventional socio-political order of the village. Being aware of the danger posed by her presence to their cultural purity as well as their special, well-established systemic privileges, power dynamics and class boundaries, the local leaders unleash on her their most horrible spate of intolerance. The reading concludes that *Maru* is a reflective condemnation of tribalism, affirming that genuine human liberty entails an elimination of communal prejudice and embracing a real collective identity.

Keywords: Realistic threat, xenophobia, communal order, inter-ethnic relations, Bessie Head.

Introduction

This investigation probes into the inter-ethnic discrimination in Head's novel *Maru*, questioning reality of reckless conservation of societal hierarchy based on ethnic intolerance. It employs a close reading of the novel to analyse these prejudice-based clashes that upset socio-humanistic harmony within the Botswana village of Dilepe. The

study is anchored on Integrated or Intergroup Threat Theory (ITT) propounded by Stephan and Stephan (1996). The theorists observed that apparent threats clarify intergroup intolerance. The study frame is supported by Social Identity Theory (SIT) propagated by Tajfel and Turner (1979).

The general aim of the paper is to investigate the portrayal of the apprehension involving

realistic social threats and preservation of communal order, underscoring the role of fear and intolerance in generating inter-tribal xenophobia in an African village community. However, the specific objectives of this study are to:

- i) identify the specific forms of inter-ethnic intolerance and systemic marginalisation directed at the Masarwa people by the dominant Tswana society within the text;
- ii) examine how the dread of the “other” generates and amplifies symbolic threats, inter-group anxieties and inter-ethnic conflicts, thereby determining character motivations in the text;
- iii) assess how the village maintains its deep-rooted traditional social hierarchies and rules especially in the face of supposed threats by egalitarian shifts and cross-caste relationships; and
- iv) investigate how the protagonist, Margaret Cadmore, utilises education and imaginative expression to challenge xenophobic stereotypes and reclaim her identity and dignity.

The analysis centres on the oppression of the Masarwa, historically but derogatorily termed the “Bushmen”, on the basis of which a contrast is contrived involving realistic threats against communal order in the village. The narrative setting is a hierarchically inflexible village, by means of which the novelist investigates the deep-rooted propensities of intra-African bigotry and inter-tribal xenophobia in Southern African sub-region. Having suffered from the traumatising circumstances as an exile from

South Africa living in Botswana, Head thoroughly understood the socio-political trauma of systemic isolation. Margaret Cadmore, an educated Masarwa woman, becomes a victim of this systemic bigotry in the narrative. With her mere presence being considered repulsive as it is deemed to upset the unshakable social and cultural structures of the village, novel showcases the diverse instances of this black-on-black injustice directed deliberately at her.

The narrative apprehension occurs owing to a conflict of the communal order that entails village social codes, its cultural chauvinism and the status quo upheld by tribal privileged class on the one hand, and the seeming sensible menace initiated by the out-group. The paper, hence, concentrates its analysis with the aid of ITT and SIT, showing how the leading Tswana society sees the Masarwa both as social second-rates and as threats to the purity of their culture, socio-economic resources and political supremacy. Among other things, the inquiry seeks to deconstruct the Masarwa as the “African Other” within the society of Dilepe village; assess the innovative prospects of love and personal rebellion (as exhibited in Maru’s marriage to Margaret) in dismantling long-standing systemic cultural subjugation; and envision the role of the narrative as a mirror for larger continental questions, bothering on the irrationality and emotional wreckage caused by fear, bigotry and other negative stereotypes associated with tribal sentiments and inter-ethnic xenophobia.

Research Questions

- i) Is there any significant relationship between inter-group prejudice and systemic marginalisation of the Masarwa people by the dominant Tswana society within the text?
- ii) How does the fear of the “other” create and intensify symbolic threats, inter-group anxieties and inter-ethnic conflicts in the text thereby influencing character motivations?
- iii) Is there any significant link between the village deep-rooted traditional social hierarchies and rules and the fight against supposed threats of egalitarian shifts and cross-caste relationships?
- iv) Is there any significant relationship between the protagonist’s (Margaret Cadmore’s) attainment of education and imaginative expression and confrontation of xenophobic stereotypes and reclaiming of her identity and dignity?

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive qualitative research design, which relies on an analysis of the selected prose text, *Maru* by Head (1971). This involves a close reading and interpretation of the said novel which serves as the primary source of data. The criterion for selecting this novel is the buoyancy of components of communal order, racial intolerance, inter-ethnic evidence to realistic threats and possible intra-tribal African xenophobia. The study adopts Integrated Threat Theory (ITT), harmonised with Social Identity Theory (SIT). Blending these study frameworks has assisted in efficiently dissecting how the leading Batswana society’s dread of losing cultural and

collective order engender and heighten the suppression of the degraded and exploited Masarwa ethnic group. Propounded by Walter G. Stephan and Cookie W. Stephan (1996), Integrated or Intergroup Threat Theory classifies intergroup bigotry into four different threats, involving the combination of “Realistic Threats” versus “Communal Order”.

First, realistic threats cover various problems threatening the monetary power, resource control or material safety, political supremacy, in addition to the physical well-being, of the within-group. In the narrative, realistic or perceived threats are seen in the dread that empowering the Masarwa will upset the entrenched tribal hierarchy and resource control in the traditional Dilepe village. Next are symbolic threats which centre on apparent conflicts relating to customs, standards, beliefs or worldviews, values as well as principles or moral order. Embedded in these risks are the perceptions of the villagers regarding Margaret Cadmore’s presence, education and progressive thoughts and initiatives, considering them an affront to their customary, stratified collective order. Third, the essence of intergroup anxieties lies on its individual anxiety or discomfort in projected cross-group relations. Lastly, negative stereotypical label is a function of cognitive codes presenting other-group behaviours in negative perspectives. Considering the last two threats, it is vital to note the emotional anxiety and harmful generalisations projected onto outsiders from leading groups, hence their treatment of the Masarwa

as sub-human or “untouchable” element within the society.

The study also incorporates Social Identity Theory (SIT), to achieve a robust analysis. Initiated by Tajfel and Turner (1979), the theory clarifies how social classification and comparison generate in-group both nepotism and helpful uniqueness. The SIT also investigates the emotional requirement of the leading group to classify people into “in-groups” (Batswana) and “out-groups” (Masarwa) to attain this helpful uniqueness. Applying this concept in the analysis of the novel demands demonstrating how the village of Dilepe depends on the suppression of the Masarwa to sustain communal stability. Moreover, the arrival of Margaret Cadmore, a Masarwa woman and a school teacher with dignity and intellect becomes a catalyst towards confronting the traditional order in Dilepe. Cadmore’s education and empowerment are considered both realistic and symbolic threats to the privileged class, revealing the vulnerability of their tribal chauvinism. The subversion of the xenophobic social arrangement manifests in Moleka and Maru, characters representing leaders and royalty. With Maru preferring love over his hereditary status confirms the humanity of the “outsider”. These instances affirm the applicability of Social Identity Theory (SIT) in the analysis of *Maru*. In the long run, the tasks performed in this section include locating and explaining crucial tools, involving theories and methods applied in the study.

Literature Review

The onus of this literature review is to

contextualise inter-tribal xenophobia and suppression in the selected novel. It pictures the equilibrium between conservation of customary communal social codes in the face of apparent practical out-group menace. Among other things, scholarly analysis on *Maru* (1971) focuses on i) thematic dimensions as racial intolerance and the Masarwa/San identity; ii) gender, politics and female agency; and iii) postcolonial power dynamics and visionary leadership. Cardinal critical responses on the first dimension include studies by Ibrahim (1996), Koul (2017) and Ward (1994). Ibrahim avows that Head’s successful attainment of social transformation in *Maru* does not come by combined political uprising but by an inner, emotional and religious change accomplished by brilliant characters like Margaret and Maru. Part of Ibrahim’s contribution is that he focused on the “eye of the beholder” motif, stressing that external racial hierarchies are destroyed through the shift of intuitive awareness. However, he seemed to idealise Maru’s scheming and paternalistic orchestrations of Margaret’s life, showing his elite involvement as a smooth design for emancipation. This visionary idealism of Ibrahim’s analysis gets balanced with Maru’s patriarchal influence being wielded over Margaret’s autonomy.

Another scholar who was concerned with racial intolerance and identity in *Maru* is Koul (2017). He engaged in intersectional readings of the novel, stressing how systemic ethnic intolerance is preserved by male power brokers within traditional hierarchies.

According to Koul, tribal repression against the Masarwa is inextricably intertwined with patriarchal codes that women experience a double-colonisation, involving gender and race. It is observed that he over-stretched the suppression of women, while diminishing the real public shifts launched by Dikeledi and other female characters. Ward (1994) discusses Margaret's emergence as an artist, intellectual and creator. He contends that she becomes a driving force in the subversion of the long-standing but haunting obnoxious idiom of ethnic untouchability, pushing for a re-examination of human value in her locality. Ward's artistic expression and emotional authenticity came to challenge and finally substitute inflexible immoral categorisations in the novel. However, like most scholars, he mistook Margaret's original passive withdrawal for a feeble, futile political declaration. This situation, Ward remedies by recasting her inner toughness as an insightful spiritual bulwark.

It is notable that recent scholarship like Bhebhe (2022), Adhikari (2023) and Ndlovu (2024) centre their discussion of Head's *Maru* deeply on native San/Masarwa identity, systemic tribalism along with the craving for and techniques prevailing over of internalised ethnic bigotry. These scholars generally investigate how customary socio-political leadership figures like Maru and Moleka replicate or undermine tribal hierarchies in Botswana especially during the 1960s. the onus of their analyses centre on how Head connects anti-Masarwa intolerance with systemic degradation and dehumanisation, pitching the protagonist

(Margaret Cadmore) as both a cultural representation and an educated personage.

Some other notable critics have worked on *Maru* emphasising gender, politics and female agency. These scholars frequently expose silencing fields of intersecting anti-feminine socio-cultural discriminating practices, patriarchal furnaces and class impulses as well as the corridors into autonomy. These critics include Koul (2017) and Lloyd-Owen (2012). Koul opines that the local community of Dilepe relies on deep-seated mental and cultural hierarchies intended to uphold male supremacy over women. Such a blueprint pushes major female characters like Margaret and Dikeledi into acute suppression by deep-rooted patriarchal systems. Based on Foucauldian reading codes aligned within local postcolonial and southern African collective traditions, Koul's analysis relies heavily on outer western codes of power, only rarely narrowed into the unique native mutual nuances of Batswana society. The work is crucial as it links Foucault's power-knowledge model with postcolonial gender investigation, revealing how smart but vicious social formations control female bodies the same way harsh racial discrimination pressures the Masarwa masses. Discussing erotic autonomy and the female body, Lloyd-Owen (2012) assert that the physical body and the "bed" turns into the principal arena for female self-assertion and autonomy (42) in the novel, as characters like Margaret and Dikeledi pass through warm possession in opposition to male power. With this, critical conversation

shifts unswervingly, tackling physical agency, sexual longing and politics in the text. This is beyond the normal race-based socio-political readings stand as the routine of past readers. Although, the discourse rarely revealed how entrenched bigotry surpasses pure sexual autonomy for a Masarwa woman, the dangers in these viewpoints lie in the over-eroticising of power vibrancy. The dangers of focusing on erotic politics are relieved by an intersectional approach that reduced the over-hollowing of racial caste structure.

According to Odhiambo, E. A., Ogembo, J. and Magak, K. (2013), another vital argument that hinges on gender, politics and female agency comes from study group on Third World Literary Commitment. It is an outlook stressing that the novel presents female characters who aggressively create an innovative, resilient counter-narrative that diminishes and even destroys men-centred African political tropes. This conversation relies on the premise that the female agency holds the foundation for the accurate democratisation and honest development of the society. Part of the contribution of this group is placing the novelist on a pedestal of a conscious political philosopher who applied prose fiction in the quest for gender equity as an obligatory pillar of Postcolonial state-building in Africa. The implication is that *Maru* and other political prose works of Head should not be read from the perspective of mere autobiographical exile treatise. Although laudable in critical inquisition, this position as Pangmeshi (2016) avows, also reveals the risky trend towards over-

romanticising female resistance by simply disregarding these female characters' passivity or even negotiation in the face patriarchal systemic codes. The remedy to this pitfall would be accepting a textual critical technique that acknowledges the persistent inner snares holding these characters in the fix as well as their triumphs in this resilient counter-narrative.

Remarkably, the most recent studies like those by Arora & Mehta (2026), Anike (2025), Kaur (2023), Eze (2021) and Ogene (2020) continue to centre their analysis of Head's *Maru* on gender, politics and female agency. These scholars usually consider how the interface of tribalism, gender and political power structures play out in the society, highlighting the role of female characters like Margaret Cadmore and Dikeledi as well as their education, silent resilience or solidarity, in subverting traditional hierarchies and dismantling patriarchal oppression.

This section has surveyed the general tempo of existing scholarship on Head's *Maru*. The focus has, among other things, been on the thematic dimensions concerning racial intolerance and the Masarwa/San identity, gender, politics and female agency, as well as the Postcolonial power dynamics and visionary leadership. The contributions of some of the prominent scholars have been noted, along with some of the key shortcomings of their critical positions. It is only imperative that some suggested remedies were given. Notably, Head's standing as a South African exile profoundly affected her fictional account of the black-

on-black chauvinism. It is logical that her novels, particularly *Maru*, drew unswervingly on her experience of apartheid-era bigotry along with the ethnic categorization she cautiously observed in Botswana society.

Understandably, most researchers observe that *Maru* is a denunciation of the historical intolerance and its traumatic impact on the exclusively targeted Masarwa (San/Bushman) masses by the leading Tswana ethnic group. Another burden of this review is in surveying the double-weights of the Masarwa woman in the face of gender inequity and ethnic suppression of imposed the implicit threats of her education. On the whole, literatures establish that dominant ethnic and elitist groups implemented inflexible but inhuman collective orders due to perceived realistic threats to their political control, economic resources and cultural purity. The paper posits that the codes of intolerance and xenophobia are universal and liable to be dwarfed through education. Hence, Head's recognition and re-positioning of art, personal ethical enlightenment along with common human feelings above tribal sentiments in *Maru* points to her faith that all forms of bigotry are primitive tendencies and transient properties of human primeval stage.

Results / Discussion of findings

This section presents a detailed analysis of realistic threats to communal order as landmarks of Black-to-Black xenophobia in Head's *Maru*. An analysis directly addressing the apprehension involving apparent out-group threats and traditional social order in *Maru*, it depicts text

deconstruction of inter-ethnic xenophobia, showing the Tswana caste codes and its perception of the oppressed San/Masarwa populace. The entrenched Batswana village bigotry is heightened by apparent realistic and symbolic threats are exposed the psychology of Inter-Group/Integrated Threat Theory. Generally, the mere presence of Margaret Cadmore generates an immense dread among the villagers in Dilepe, regarding moral and cultural contamination. A highly educated, dignified Masarwa woman, she is a veritable concern for the elite class over their social hierarchy, resource exploitation and loss of dominant group status. They are threatened because being educated as Margaret, the oppressed group gains symbolic power, which the dominant group tries to hinder to reduce such people to the typecast of their impoverished beginnings (Stephan and Stephan1996).

The man who slowly walked away from them was a king in their society. A day had come when he had decided that he did not need any kinship other than the kind of wife everybody would loathe from the bottom of their hearts. ... they had only one alternative: to keep their prejudice and pretend Maru had died (120).

Here, one finds the coping method of Dilepe villagers pretending that their paramount chief is dead. This is a cover-up aimed at dismantling the reality of symbolic threats. It shows a preference for a group rejection of naked reality, maintaining their intolerance and refusing to adjust their worldview to accept the parity with a Masarwa. Maru's

marital union with Margaret is ridiculous and unacceptable to the villagers, signifying the definitive symbolic threat to the tribal elite's endogamy, purity and societal classification. The hatred and rejection indicated in the above quotation is among the common defence mechanisms of the Batswana villagers in the face of threats to their communal identity. The novelist also presents dehumanisation as a means of rationalizing realistic threats: "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?" (19). This is an adroit satire, exposing how discriminatory majorities generate symbolic threats to validate economic deprivation. Succinctly, the "donkey" metaphor is a means of denying the Masarwa their humanity and dignity; hence, they merely exist as beasts of burden instead of accepted citizens with equal human rights.

This is also evident in: "There was a mass of people with no humanity to whom another mass referred: Why, they are naturally like that. They like to live in such filth. They have been doing it for centuries" (17). These highlight the emotional mechanisms of systemic deprivation. The leading class free themselves of ethical culpability, seeing their cruelty as a normal, constant order as against a man-made injustice through a projection of intrinsic filthiness and a lack of humanity onto the Masarwa tribe. The phrase "They have been doing it for centuries" is another typical validation applied by leading elitist groups to regularise economic inequality,

forcing the dominated group to be contented with unpaid labour and continued poverty. Put in another way, their effort to avoid ethical responsibility the Batswana villagers make the leaders validate their harsh caste structure and excuse realistic threats on the basis of pseudo-science. This forbids them in sharing socio-cultural, public or conjugal space with the Masarwa, who are seen to possess partial animalistic attributes.

The novel equally shows the villagers exhibiting symbolic and realistic threats to social hierarchy in the following expression: "Since when is a Bushy a teacher? ... We take him to the bush where he eat mealie pap, pap, pap" (11). This expression shows the commotion associated with the passive economic labour pool. It also points at a symbolic danger, the desecration of the strict caste scheme with the Masarwa seen strictly as inferior human entities. It is unthinkable for Margaret a Masarwa to gain access to a noble, professional and authoritative position: a teacher; this ultimately threatens the reasoning faculty of the Batswana. Her right to be educated is questionable. As a Masarwa, her place as a slave and degraded specie is permanent and necessary for the confirmation their own superiority and dignity. It will be a surprise to hear that a Masarwa is elevated like a Batswana, since economic expediency depends on rigid social class: "What will they do when they hear that a certain Masarwa in my village is treated as an equal of the Batswana and given a bed from my office?"(17).

Elevating a Masarwa to the status of a human being, signified by essential self-

respect of using a bed, and so on, is a menace to the very fabric of the community's free labour scheme. Taken in the context of the elitist prosperity, like Maru's massive wealth (owning thousands of cattle maintained by enslaved Masarwa), this statement underpins the economic apprehension of the wealthy.

The narrative continues to emphasise the socio-economic realities behind the "threats", a major one being institutionalised slavery and economic repression. The Batswana populace depended on the Masarwa as inferior tribesmen or underclass to justify the burdens of rural economic inadequacy. "There was only one thing left, to find out how bushmen were going to stay alive on the earth, because no one wanted them to, except perhaps as the slaves and downtrodden dogs of the Batswana". The foregoing assertion captures the heartbreaking veracity of systemic dispossession. It shows the epidemic of the literal or cultural erasure of the Bushmen as envisioned by the Batswana community, underscoring the brutal permission to their existence only when it directly profits the Tswana majority as an underclass of unpaid labour. It simply means that the society cannot visualise a purposeful role for the Masarwa outside of repression. The state of racial intolerance is so acutely hinged on survival and communal structure that the Masarwa are labeled simply as "downtrodden dogs" stripping them of land, agency and basic human rights.

The traditional leadership, hence, becomes the enforcer as well as the destroyer of

communal order. This is seen in the character of Maru, a supreme chief who intentionally employs his ultimate political power to destroy xenophobic structures in the Botswana society: "The man who slowly walked away from them was a king in their society. A day had come when he had decided that he did not need any kingship other than the kind of wife everybody would loathe from the bottom of their hearts" (126). Abandoning his throne to marry Margaret Cadmore (a Masarwa, or 'untouchable' outcast), Maru turns into a destroyer of the communal order, a system of racial and tribal purity, he was meant to uphold. He proves that the only way to dismantle the unjust traditional order is to wipe out the institutions that implement it. He discards his royal privilege for love, thus, nullifying centuries of ethnic discrimination and shatters the village's social hierarchy.

The maltreatment of the degraded underprivileged Masarwa (San) people is employed in *Maru* in the reflection of larger historical collapse and decay of Africa. The narratives of realistic threats, consisting in systemic ethnic bigotry, nepotism and arbitrary racial categorisation, depict how societies collapse along peripheral ambits of identity and unassailable physical disparities. The concomitant impact becomes the epidemic of displacement, exile, massive human misery on the broader African context. The novel recounts the internalisation of colonial racial bigotry: "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”(11). This extract exposes an intricate, chain of discrimination, underscoring how the historical fracturing of societies is continued not just by prevailing imperialist powers, but internally by colonised and oppressed groups who willingly create their own scapegoats to feel superior. Thus, African politicians replicate the exact systems of segregation that caused them intense suffering, simply by accepting the oppressor’s logic and structures. This proves that injustice is a cyclical, societal disease rather than an isolated incident.

The novel presents education as a key realistic threat to the communal order, operating as a catalyst for mobility, identity and dignity. Welding literacy and professional competence, parents and students are forced to disconnect tribe from competence, affirming the realisation that “prejudice is like the old skin of a snake”. Margaret Cadmore (the elder) realises that the communal order depends on persuading the subjugated of their own inferiority. Hence, she decided to educate the younger Margaret, insulating her intellect against the emotional toxin of caste. Education offers an inner fortress of self-worth and intellect that shelters the oppressed individual from outer communal cruelty.

Good sense and logical arguments would never be the sole solution to the difficulties the child would later encounter, but they would create a dedicated scholar and enable the child to gain control over the only part of life that would be hers, her mind and soul... [S]he would have the capacity, within herself, to survive both heaven and hell (8).

This generates an inner existential danger to the village’s inflexible social hierarchy and communal order. The fright and surprise of the villagers arise from the commotion witnessed in the socio-economic order. Education offers access to power that was entirely set aside for the elite Batswana. Hence, a literate Masarwa woman challenges the foundational principle that her people are second-rate human beings reserved merely for servitude:

They had never before seen a Masarwa who possessed a teacher’s training certificate. They had never seen a Masarwa who was not an unpaid servant. Suddenly, a door swung open and an untouchable walked through it, holding a book in her hand (12).

The attainment of formal credentials by an “untouchable”, Margaret, smashes the myth of racial and ethnic essentialism binding the communal order. Indeed, proper education widens the perspective beyond the parochial confines of ethnic bigotry and vicious village order, connecting the individual to timeless universal human reality: “She was a little bit of everything in the whole universe because the woman who had educated her was the whole universe itself” (12). Through her literacy, the young Margaret is distinguished from the village’s heritable anticipations, with this expansive worldview making her both an alien and a scary force against the traditional community. Margaret, hence, defies the collective tribal mind through her intellectual autonomy.

Conclusion

This study examines the role of prose fiction

in handling the apprehensions between inter-ethnic segregation and communal cohesion. Findings show that true social order relies on far-reaching empathy instead of deep-rooted intolerance. *Maru* demolishes the roots of inter-tribal xenophobia, confirming that communal harmony is only feasible when humanity replaces narrow-minded tribal classification. Moreover, this happens through the elevation of the oppressed Masarwa by means of education and empowerment. Maru's role in this whole chain of new reality is unprecedented. His abdication from inheritable kingdom rights and quiet revolution generate a blueprint for progressive leadership, underscoring that communal change is enunciated when power is support with universal brotherhood. His marital union with Margaret speaks volumes about his genuine and natural love which is an undeviating threat to the systemic humiliation and deprivation of the San/Masarwa marginal populace, signifying that institutional domination can be eliminated through right individual ethical choices. This study concludes that *Maru* is an enduring appraisal of Black-to-Black bigotry, offering societies opportunity of embracing individuals on the basis of their character instead of some blanket, absolute racial indicators. Moreover, it concludes that shielding "communal order" through segregation only raises more emotional hostility ensuring socio-cultural stagnation. It recommends the replication of the methods used in this study to investigate other works of Head and other African novels, particularly those that present inter-tribal

sentiments.

Recommendations

Based on the findings, many recommendations emanate from this study. Among other things, it is imperative that more inquiries are needed to deepen resolutions of intergroup aggression, enlarge character analysis involving systemic connivance and crash the fictional village of Dilepe which represent the broader post-colonial African realities. Again, there should be integration of emotional and sociological study models, using integrated threat theory to discern between symbolic threats and realistic threats in communities such as Tswana. Attempts at clarifying local, ethnic and caste-oriented bigotry within Black African societies are different from and portray European colonial racial intolerance, hence *Maru* reverberates both precise and universal condemnation of foreign and native systems of repressive hierarchies. Researchers should in addition investigate radical and performative rejections of class boundaries as in characters like Moleka, contrasting them with the domestic and calculated mental manipulations in characters like Maru, hence, revealing how both men are emblematic of the 'threats' within educated Masarwa woman in different ways.

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