

# Double Colonization Theme in the Selected Stories from the Novel “The Collector of Treasure” of Bessie Head

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## **Abstract:**

The most significant writer in Botswana and South Africa was “Bessie Amelia Emery Head.” The double colonization of women in Head’s works, which represents racial and gender subjugation, is mostly the result of her early experiences and her own battle to overcome social prejudice against a lady of colour like herself. She makes frequent references to her problematic non-black and non-white identity. Through her writing, she explores a variety of topics, including racism, sexism, feminism, and double colonization. Total thirteen stories contain in the novel “The Collector of Treasures and Other Botswana Village Tales.” It is an assortment of tales from a community in Botswana.

**KEYWORDS:** Bessie Head, South Africa, The Collector of Treasure, Double Colonization.

## **INTRODUCTION:**

Botswana's most significant writer often regarded as “Bessie Amelia Emery Head” a South African writer, despite her birth date being July 6<sup>th</sup> 1937. Her writing includes spiritual introspection and contemplation in her personal pieces, short stories and novels. Head’s research and writing cantered on common people’s lives and how they really fit into greater African political and religious movements. Eskia Mphahlele and Lewis Nkosi, among many of Head’s contemporaries who escape apartheid era South Africa, went as far as Botswana. Instead of focusing on the challenges she had left behind in South Africa her writing was more concerned with life there. Head released her debut book ‘when Rain Clouds Gather’ in 1968. Head centres her work on the political corruption and racial intolerance prevalent in her era. Some of Head’s other books are ‘Serowe: Village of the Rain Wind,’ which is situated in Head’s hometown, ‘Maru’ in 1971 and ‘A Question of Power’ in 1973. ‘A Woman Alone: Autobiographical writing, ‘A Collection of Treasures’ in 1977 and ‘Tales of Tenderness and Power’ are among the works that Head authored.

## **CENTRAL THEME:**

A collection of short stories about village life in Botswana, “The Collector of Treasure and Other Botswana Tales” primarily explores the double colonialism of women by the authorities. Whether a man’s actions and attitudes are white, colonial, or tribal. The gathering of short stories challenges Botswana’s traditional society and patriarchal systems, as well as how women function and how patriarchal norms impact their well-being. The collection investigates the effects of colonial rule and independence on women’s status in

society. Essentially, the entire book sheds light on issues such as gender inequity, socioeconomic stratification, and indigenous culture.

The Idea of double colonisation appears in several of the treasure collector's tales. A fundamental idea in postcolonial studies, "double colonisation" is a postcolonial feminist term that describes how women are operated by both patriarchy and colonisation. It is frequently used to characterise women's place in the postcolonial world. Double colonisation, according to some, is a continuous process. Even after gaining freedom, women are frequently marginalised and viewed as objects that men own and control in many nations.

"Holst Peterson" and "Rutherford" coined the phrase in 1988. It alludes to the notion that a woman's gender and race both oppress her. The phrase refers to the two types of domination that oppress women and how they are similar and overlap. Women are ostracised from social interactions and treated as objects by men.

### **THE DEP RIVER: A STORY OF ANCIENT TRIBAL MIGRATION**

A story of Ancient Tribal Migration depicts the predicament faced by 'Rakwana' in the society that does not value women. A tribal chief declares his love for one of his departed father's wives at the center of story. He disobeys the tribe law in the process which sparks tension within the group. The leader is forced to make a decision by the situation. He chooses to follow the rules of passionate love and unite with his sweetheart. At last, the village chief departs, followed by those who own his choice. This comparatively straightforward story of tribal strife serves as a powerful critique of the patriarchal ideologies that permits African culture. The peaceful village life is disturbed by chief 'Sebembele's' assertions that 'Makobi' is his own child and that 'Rakwana' (chief Monemapee's third junior wife) is his wife sebembele's brothers and council members anticipate that he will give up the woman had no value. They learn from their patriarchal upbringing that man who is influenced by women cannot be a king. He is comparable to someone who follows a child's advice. But the marginalization of women does not stop here. Rakwana's opposing party in the community decides to pick a different spouse for her. They do this with total disdain for her sentiments, based on the myth that women are incapable of understanding their own thoughts, dominates the masculine psyche.

### **LIFE:**

Similar attempts by the protagonist of "Life" to assert herself are met with resistance from society in this novel as well the narratives makes it evident that Head describes patriarchy and how it forced women to adhere to unequal moral standards. The narratives centers on a women named 'Life' who aspires to have the same authority and freedom to make a decisions as male, even if doing so means defying traditional norms. Life travels from Johannesburg to Botswana, a different cocountry. She turns to prostitution as a way to make ends meet until she can marry 'Lesego' a decent and honorable man. But none other than Lesego himself murders life for adultery. The fact that males can pay for and purchase a woman's service and no one questions them demonstrate the dichotomy in society responses. However a lady like Life must perish as a result of her promiscuity. When Head discuss the ambiguities in societal views at the outset, the issue is gently introduced. The ways in which people respond to Life's marriage to Lesego also reveals gender bias. They believe that Lesego transformed a wicked lady into a nice one, something they had never witnessed before. This is a critique of ingrained male prejudices that lead to the assessment of women based only on their sexual behaviour, but men are comfortably exempt from using this same

standard to access their own morality. Because it immerses us in life struggles to eventually dismiss this story is gripping it is ironic that Life loses her life for not wanting to “become a woman” while Lesego, the killer gets off lightly women who confronts to society’s expectations of what constitutes feminine behaviour are the only ones who are permitted to live. Their responsibilities as a wife mother and daughter defines who they are as a whole. The only authorities granted to woman is that which does not conflict with established social hierarchies or transgress social norms and taboos.

### **KGOTLA:**

In “Kgotla” meaning the ‘village court’. Head tells the tale of infidelity and dishonesty, along with their fallout. Kgotla is representation of a strong ancient world, when the chief’s word was considered to be divine law. Here, the exploitative tribal chiefs take the role of a white masters. The story begins with the men who make up the village elders getting together under a tree, excited about the chance to showcase their intelligence, experience and profundity of a thinking. Despite the necessity for the court to make a ruling, the elders prefer to lecture and make generalizations rather than offering solutions to actual human issues. It’s obvious that aims to ridicule the arrogance and conceit of the men in attendance who are listening to the marital quarrel between Gobosamang, his Ndebele wife Rose and young widow who has been living with him while his wife is away. The prejudice Rose encounters in the community as an outsider is also highlighted in the novel. Her spouse accuses her of being unfaithful, which makes her feel even more rejected and alienated. Rose realises she is no longer welcome in her hometown and flees to her own hamlet in an attempt to obtain asylum. Upon her return, she discovers her spouse has moved in with another lady, which only makes her suffering worse. It is a regrettable that a man such as Gobosamang is capable of having another woman, yet he will never extend a helping hand to his innocent wife. Rose requests that her proper position as a wife be reinstated, and widow Tsietsi would not depart until Gobosamang gives back all of her money and material possessions. Gobosamang warns the group that nothing can be done because everything has already been “eaten.” The court cannot make a decision. Only Rose offers to labour to pay off her husband’s debt does Kgotla – a representation of masculine authority -escape its predicament. Paradoxically it is a woman who gives the organization run by men, new vitality and make it possible for Kgotla to pass judgement the story powerfully highlights Rose's double colonization. She is always referred to as “that Sindebele Women.” She is not just a victim of regional customs but also of a patriarchal system that demands that Rose strictly follow its exceptional of what constitutes appropriate behaviour for women and takes joy in protecting chauvinists like Gobosamang. She suffers from both the operation of her tribe and her secondary role as a woman. Rose is a victim of the border socio historic framework that functions in a severely discriminatory settings.

### **THE COLLECTOR OF TREASURES AND OTHER BOTSWANA VILLAGE TALES:**

The story "The Collector of Treasures" by Bessie Head vividly depicts the patriarchal attitudes that males in her society have toward the women and children that they are expected to love and care for. Head introduces this issue by drawing a comparison between the considerably more loving marriage of their neighbors, Kenalepe and Paul Thebolo, and that of her protagonist, Dikeledi, and her husband, Garesego. Garesego, the protagonist's spouse, is the kind of man who, driven solely by sensual need, has intercourse with women like dogs. He abandoned Dikeledi after getting her pregnant three times in four years, staying in the same village and taking no care of his wife or sons. She never asks him for help for herself or her kids for many years afterward, seemingly taking pride in the fact that she can provide for

them, including food and clothing, as well as their elementary school tuition with the meagre money she makes from knitting and sewing for other villagers. Paul, the spouse of her neighbor Kenalepe, is entirely distinct from Garesego. Kenalepe gives her buddy a detailed account of her and Paul's excellent sex life and happy marriage. For Dikeledi, learning that persons such as Paul exist is enlightening. It demonstrates to her that there are men who appreciate their wives and do not behave like sex-crazed wolves. It makes her want to approach Garesego once more, but this time she's trying to persuade him to pay for their oldest son's secondary education, which is more expensive than the primary school their younger children attend. Since she has saved the most of the money, she just needs a small amount and is confident that he won't be financially burdened. Conversely, Garesego believes that any favor done for a woman ought to be exchanged for sex. He provides evidence for his claims about Paul by assuming that, having given Garesego's wife a bag of grain, Paul must also be benefiting sexually from the arrangement. Regarding that, Garesego is unconcerned; he doesn't desire Dikeledi anymore and doesn't mind if Paul has her; he just can't imagine a relationship or even a transaction between a man and a woman that doesn't entail sexual activity. As a result, he informs Dikeledi that their son is returning home and asks her to get ready for a hot bath when he calls her to discuss the prospect of providing her money for their son's education. Dikeledi is not a complete moron; he understands what this implies. He will want to have sex after taking a bath, and he may or may not think about giving her money after that. However, Dikeledi does not think this is a fair trade-off because she is aware that Paul Thebolo would not require this. Sexual activity has nothing to do with paying for education; it is solely related to love, and Garesego is not in love with Dikeledi. However, Garesego also believes that sex is a matter of power, and in this instance, having sex with Dikeledi while she is in need of anything would be an expression of his dominance over her. As a result, Garesego expects Dikeledi to follow him to bed after having dinner, taking a bath, and getting comfortably inebriated. After he's asleep, Dikeledi carefully slices off what she refers to as his "special parts" with a butcher knife that she takes out from under the bed. She understands she cannot continue to live this way, therefore even if she will be found guilty of manslaughter, it does not stop her. Dikeledi moves on to a new chapter in her life, this time in prison, and Paul swears to raise her children as he would his own. On the surface, Head's title, "The Collector of Treasures," is incredibly ironic because it appears that Dikeledi has gathered heartache rather than riches during her life. Head's early paragraphs, however, demonstrate Dikeledi's adjustment to prison life and the closeness of the women incarcerated for the same offense, suggesting that Dikeledi doesn't actually believe her life has been all that horrible. She has gained far more wisdom from her struggles than Kenalepe has from her fortunate fortune, and she has gained the respect of both men and women along the way, including Paul and Kebonye. Despite having a lot easier existence than Kenalepe, her disastrous marriage has actually strengthened her and given her a much stronger sense of self. As Dikeledi notes, she has searched beneath the surface and gathered little treasures throughout her difficult existence, and these provide her the willpower to carry on.

## CONCLUSION:

The autobiographical nature of Head's writings is a significant aspect. She expresses her deep emotional pain in South Africa as a result of an unfair social structure, her sense of creative inhibition, and her distaste for modern politics. Having lived on the periphery of society, she could identify with the oppressed masses of Africa. The double colonization of women in Head's work, which represents racial and gender oppression, is mostly the result of her personal struggles and formative experiences.

All of them come together to form a central theme in Head's writings her compassion for women who are subjected to discrimination based on their gender, ethnicity and class. This part of Head's study is significant because her main focus is on women's social status in connection to the power that males wield over them in patriarchal societies and among African racial and ethnic groupings. Because of this, the idea of double colonization is present throughout her writing. Head appears as a resolute defender of the doubly colonized women, the downtrodden of the planet. She is one of the most compelling women writers of the contemporary era because of her genuine faith in their ability to overcome their adversity and her profound care for them.

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