

Maru Bessie Head

This work provides an insight into the Serowe village community and its history.

"Bessie Head's short stories have an extraordinary simplicity and breadth of vision," heralded a review in *The Tribune* after publication of Head's first collection of short stories, *The Collector of Treasures*. Regarded today as one of Africa's best-known woman writers in English, Head draws on the rich oral tradition of southern Africa and masterfully applies storytelling's language and imagery. Carefully sequenced, the anthology gives special focus to village people from independence-era Botswana and the status, position, and plight of African women.

The first collection of nonfiction critical writings by one of the leading literary figures of post-apartheid South Africa. The most significant nonfiction writings of Zoë Wicomb, one of South Africa's leading authors and intellectuals, are collected here for the first time in a single volume. This compilation features essays on the works of such prominent South African writers as Bessie Head, Nadine Gordimer, Njabulo Ndebele, and J. M. Coetzee, as well as on a wide range of cultural and political topics, including gender politics, sexuality, race, identity, nationalism, and visual art. Also presented here are a reflection on Nelson Mandela and a revealing interview with Wicomb. In these essays, written between 1990 and 2013, Wicomb offers insights into her nation's history, politics, and people. In a world in which nationalist rhetoric is on the rise and right-wing populist movements are the declared enemies of diversity and pluralism, her essays speak powerfully to a host of current international issues.

"Monumental a wonderful read."--Stephen Gray, *Mail & Guardian*, South Africa "Eilersen's account of Head's childhood is a gift to admirers of Bessie Head for it offers a fascinating insight into the events and circumstances that shaped Bessie Head's sense of self and her strong political identity. Eilersen's book is invaluable and represents a long-awaited study of Bessie Head that manages to undo much of the enigma that has surrounded her and her ideas." --Kwame Dawes, *African Affairs* In July 2007, the acclaimed writer Bessie Head would have turned seventy years old. Her friends, colleagues and literary critics will honor her with a series of conferences, new books and theses, re-namings, tree-plantings, writing prizes, composing music inspired by one of her novels, *Maru*, and the founding of a permanent Bessie Head Heritage Trust to guarantee the future of her house and literary papers. Wits University Press takes this opportunity to repackage and republish this excellent biography. It will appear with new--never before published--photographs of Bessie Head's life. Gillian Stead Eilersen studied at the former University of Natal (South Africa) and Odense University (Denmark), where she now lectures in the Department of English.

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"Margaret Cadmore, an orphaned Masarwa girl, goes to teach in the remote village of Dilepe in Botswana, where her own people are kept as slaves. Her presence polarizes a community which does not see Masarwa people as human, and condemns her to the lonely life of an outcast"--Publisher's description.

Set in a block of dilapidated apartments in Hillbrow, an inner-city neighborhood in Johannesburg, this novel tells the story of six young men who will do anything—including hustling and conning anyone they can—to survive. Painting an engrossing portrait of the friends, it shows the hopelessness and despair of a group stuck in their position in life, having to compromise themselves to make a living and reach for their dreams.

In this fast-paced, semi-autobiographical novel, Head exposes the complicated life of Elizabeth, whose reality is intermingled with nightmarish dreams and hallucinations. Like the author, Elizabeth was conceived out-of-wedlock; her mother was white and her father black—a union outlawed in apartheid South Africa. Elizabeth eventually leaves with her young son to live in Botswana, a country less oppressed by colonial domination, where she finds stability for herself and her son by working on an experimental farm. As readers grow to know Elizabeth, they experience the inner chaos that threatens her stability, and her constant struggle to emerge from the torment of her dreams. There she is plagued by two men, Sello and Dan, who represent complex notions of politics, sex, religion, individuality, and the blurred line between good and evil. Elizabeth's troubling but amazing roller-coaster ride ends in an unfettered discovery.

First published in 1976, this great literary classic follows a young Nigerian woman who rejects the patriarchal traditions of her culture to find love and happiness in the western world. With pure honesty and subtle protest, Buchi Emecheta chronicles the unfair pressure and ultimate demise that women often suffer in Nigerian lore.

This book investigates the entire spectrum of techniques for portraying the mental lives of fictional characters in both the stream-of-consciousness novel and other fiction. Each chapter deals with one main technique, illustrated from a wide range of nineteenth- and twentieth-century fiction by writers including Stendhal, Dostoevsky, James, Mann, Kafka, Joyce, Proust, Woolf, and Sarraute.

This powerful and widely acclaimed autobiography of Sindiwe Magona's early years in South Africa gives an account of her eventful first 23 years--a candid story of triumph and endurance in the face of hardships relentlessly reinforced by the apartheid system.

A collection of autobiographical writings, sketches, and essays that covers the entire span of Bessie Head's creative life. 'When Rain Clouds Gather and *Maru* are fairy tales about the transformations that love can wreak. And they transform love into a force to be thankful for' HELEN OYEYEMI In two powerful novels of belonging, one of Africa's most important writers explores village life and the traditions of Botswana. When *Rainclouds Gather: Escaping South Africa* and his troubled past, Makehaya crosses the border to Botswana, in the hope of leading a peaceful, purposeful life. In the village of Golema Mmidi he meets Gilbert, a charismatic Englishman who is trying to modernise farming methods to benefit the community. The two outsiders join forces, but their task is fraught with hazards: opposition from the corrupt chief, the pressures of tradition, and the unrelenting climate ever threaten to bring tragedy. *Maru*: Margaret, an orphan from a despised tribe, has lived her life under the loving protection of a missionary's wife. She has only to open her mouth to cause confusion, for her education and English accent do not fit her looks. When she accepts her first teaching post, in a remote village, Margaret is befriended by Dikeledi, sister of *Maru* the chief-in-waiting. Despite making influential friends, Margaret faces prejudice even from the children she teaches,

and her presence causes Maru and his best friend - also Dikeledi's lover - to become sworn enemies.

The Cardinals--thought to be the first long piece of fiction Head produced and the only one she ever set in South Africa--is an exciting literary event.

Introduces key concepts needed for map reading and map making. This series explores different types of maps, photographs and illustrations, and includes activities and quizzes, making it ideal for learning essential map skills.

This book is an exploration of the way in which Head's writing is her idiosyncratic response to her personal life. Her desire to portray and yet subvert oppression- political, racist, and sexist- that she encountered in South Africa and Botswana, led to a Romanticism born of her need to create an antithesis to what she perceived to be the reality around her. Her eagerness to discover a haven in her adopted rural Botswana led to a Utopia of her own making, a literary resolution imagined, not actual. A mental breakdown led to the creation of her greatest novel, *A Question of Power*, one which examines the depths of evil, but allows also for the dawning of the heights of goodness. The appendix contains many heretofore unpublished letters that help to explain the personal compulsion that provided for Head's creativity.

Explores the narrative strategies Head employs to inscribe an idealistic vision in response to the psychic fragmentation and rootlessness she experienced as an exiled black South African woman writer.

South African political refugee, Makhaya, and Englishman Gilbert Balfour join forces to revolutionize the villagers' traditional farming methods. *The Lovers* collects Head's short fiction of the 1960s and 70s, written mainly in Serowe, Botswana, and depicting the lives and loves of African village people pre- and post-independence. An earlier selection called *Tales of Tenderness and Power* was published in the Heinemann African Writers Series in 1990, but this expanded and updated volume adds many previously unavailable stories collected here for the first time. Anthology favourites like her breakthrough 'The Woman from America' and 'The Prisoner who Wore Glasses' are included, leading up to the first complete text of her much translated title story. Stephen Gray is a noted South African scholar and novelist.

Arguing that the fundamental, familiar, sexual violence of slavery and racialized subjugation have continued to shape black and white subjectivities into the present, Christina Sharpe interprets African diasporic and Black Atlantic visual and literary texts that address those "monstrous intimacies" and their repetition as constitutive of post-slavery subjectivity. Her illuminating readings juxtapose Frederick Douglass's narrative of witnessing the brutal beating of his Aunt Hester with Essie Mae Washington-Williams's declaration of freedom in *Dear Senator: A Memoir by the Daughter of Strom Thurmond*, as well as the "generational genital fantasies" depicted in Gayl Jones's novel *Corregidora* with a firsthand account of such "monstrous intimacies" in the journals of an antebellum South Carolina senator, slaveholder, and vocal critic of miscegenation. Sharpe explores the South African-born writer Bessie Head's novel *Maru*—about race, power, and liberation in Botswana—in light of the history of the KhoiSan woman Saartje Baartman, who was displayed in Europe as the "Hottentot Venus" in the nineteenth century. Reading Isaac Julien's film *The Attendant*, Sharpe takes up issues of representation, slavery, and the sadomasochism of everyday black life. Her powerful meditation on intimacy, subjection, and subjectivity culminates in an analysis of Kara Walker's black silhouettes, and the critiques leveled against both the silhouettes and the artist.

This is an anthology of stories, personal observations and historic legends. It reflects the author's fascination with Africa's people and their history as well as her identification with individuals and their conflicting emotions.

One of the foremost African writers of our time, who dispelled the silence between colonial and feminist discourses by "talking back", Bessie Head at last gets her due in this first book-length, comprehensive study of her work. This book locates Head's unquestionable importance in the canon of African literature. Author Huma Ibrahim argues that unless we are able to look at the merging of women's sexual and linguistic identity with their political and gendered identity, the careful configurations created in Head's work will elude us. Ibrahim offers a series of thoughtful readings informed by feminist, diasporan, postcolonial, and poststructuralist insights and concerns. She identifies a theme she calls "exilic consciousness" - the desire to belong - and traces its manifestations through each phase of Head's work, showing how "women's talk" - a marginalized commodity in the construction of southern Africa - is differently embodied and evaluated. Bessie Head's works are frequently featured in courses in African literature, third-world literature, and fiction writing, but there is little critical material on them. Ibrahim offers readings of Head's novels *When Rain Clouds Gather*, *Maru*, and *A Question of Power*, as well as the collections *Tales of Tenderness and Power*, *A Collector of Treasures*, *A Woman Alone: Autobiographical Writings*, and *The Cardinals*, the histories *Serowe: Village of the Rain Wind* and *A Bewitched Crossroad*, and her letters to Robert Vigne collected in *A Gesture of Belonging*. In Head's exploration of oppressed people, especially women and those in exile, Ibrahim finds startling insights into institutional power relations. Head not only subverts Western hegemonic notions of the third-world woman but offers a critique of postcoloniality.

Read worldwide for her wisdom, authenticity, and skillful prose, South African-born Bessie Head (1937–1986) offers a moving and magical tale of an orphaned girl, Margaret Cadmore, who goes to teach in a remote village in Botswana where her own people are kept as slaves. Her presence polarizes a community that does not see her people as human, and condemns her to the lonely life of an outcast. In the love story and intrigue that follows, Head brilliantly combines a portrait of loneliness with a rich affirmation of the mystery and spirituality of life. The core of this otherworldly, rhapsodic work is a plot about racial injustice and prejudice with a lesson in how traditional intolerance may render whole sections of a society untouchable.

A tale set against a backdrop of 1937's massacre of thousands of Haitians under the orders of power-mad generalissimo Trujillo finds the loving interracial marriage of Dominican Pedro and Haitian Adèle shattered when a group of soldiers arrive in their Dominican border town intent on murdering Haitian citizens.

"When Elizabeth learns the devastating truth about her mother, locked away for defying Apartheid, she flees South Africa and begins a new life in Botswana, at Motabeng, the village of the rain-wind. But Elizabeth is tormented by two men, Dan and Sello, who represent for her a private vision of hell into which she sinks deeper and deeper. This novel interweaves one woman's terrifying experience of insanity with the madness and cruelty of life in a divided society. *A Question of Power* is the unforgettable study of an individual - and a race - whose identity has been annihilated, and their resulting

struggle to endure"--Publisher's description.

Rural Botswana is the backdrop for *When Rain Clouds Gather*, the first novel published by one of Africa's leading woman writers in English, Bessie Head (1937–1986). Inspired by her own traumatic life experiences as an outcast in Apartheid South African society and as a refugee living at the Bamangwato Development Association Farm in Botswana, Head's tough and telling classic work is set in the poverty-stricken village of Golema Mmidi, a haven to exiles. A South African political refugee and an Englishman join forces to revolutionize the villagers' traditional farming methods, but their task is fraught with hazards as the pressures of tradition, opposition from the local chief, and the unrelenting climate threaten to divide and devastate the fragile community. Head's layered, compelling story confronts the complexities of such topics as social and political change, conflict between science and traditional ways, tribalism, the role of traditional African chiefs, religion, race relations, and male–female relations.

This book investigates themes of exile and oppression in Southern Africa across Bessie Head's novels and short fiction. An exile herself, arriving in Botswana as a South African refugee, Bessie Head's fiction serves as an important example of African exile literature. This book argues that Head's characters are driven to exile as a result of their socio-political ambivalence while still in South Africa, and that this sense of discomfort follows them to their new lives. Investigating themes of trauma and identity politics across colonial and post-colonial contexts, this book also addresses the important theme of black-on-black prejudice and hostility which is often overlooked in studies of Head's work. Covering Head's shorter fiction as well as her major novels *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1969), *Maru* (1971), *A Question of Power* (1973), *Serowe: Village of the Rain Wind* (1981), and *A Bewitched Crossroads: An African Saga* (1984), this book will be of interest to researchers of African literature and postcolonial history.

When Rainclouds Gather: Escaping South Africa and his troubled past, Makehaya crosses the border to Botswana, in the hope of leading a peaceful, purposeful life. In the village of Golema Mmidi he meets Gilbert, a charismatic Englishman who is trying to modernise farming methods to benefit the community. The two outsiders join forces, but their task is fraught with hazards: opposition from the corrupt chief, the pressures of tradition, and the unrelenting climate ever threaten to bring tragedy. *Maru*: Margaret, an orphan from a despised tribe, has lived her life under the loving protection of a missionary's wife. She has only to open her mouth to cause confusion, for her education and English accent do not fit her looks. When she accepts her first teaching post, in a remote village, Margaret is befriended by Dikeledi, sister of Maru the chief-in-waiting. Despite making influential friends, Margaret faces prejudice even from the children she teaches, and her presence causes Maru and his best friend - also Dikeledi's lover - to become sworn enemies.

At thirty-nine, Deola Bello, a Nigerian expatriate in London, is dissatisfied with being single and working overseas. Deola works as a financial reviewer for an international charity, and when her job takes her back to Nigeria in time for her father's five-year memorial service, she finds herself turning her scrutiny inward. In Nigeria, Deola encounters changes in her family and in the urban landscape of her home, and new acquaintances who offer unexpected possibilities.

Deola's journey is as much about evading others' expectations to get to the heart of her frustration as it is about exposing the differences between foreign images of Africa and the realities of contemporary Nigerian life. Deola's urgent, incisive voice captivates and guides us through the intricate layers and vivid scenes of a life lived across continents. With Sefi Atta's characteristic boldness and vision, *A Bit of Difference* limns the complexities of our contemporary world. This is a novel not to be missed.

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