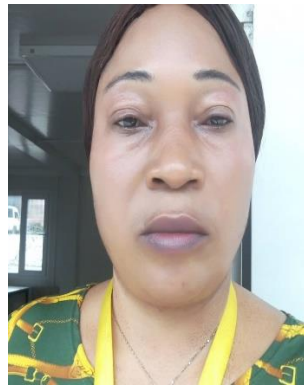


ACCOMMODATING DIFFERENCE: A STUDY OF BESSIE HEAD'S
MARU AND ZAKES MDA'S *THE MADONNA OF EXCELSIOR*



Beri Mary Shey,
Cameroonian,
Department of English,
Specialty : Commonwealth Literature,
Faculty of Arts Letters and Social Sciences,
Republic of Cameroon,
University of Yaounde I (Cameroon)
Cameroon

ABSTRACT

This article set out to examine *Maru* and *The Madonna of Excelsior* of Bessie Head and Zakes Mda respectively, in view of their approaches to the question of accommodation of difference in the context of the South African society. Although their respective texts are set in the South African context, their aspirations go beyond their immediate context to include the broader context of the African society. Accommodating difference means accepting and recognising other people irrespective of their backgrounds-whether social or cultural. This article handles the attempts to bring about harmony despite our racial, ethnic, historical, cultural, communal and social specificities as evident in the works of Head and Mda. It also examines the move towards forgiveness and acceptance as presented by the authors with special regard to their attempt at contributing to an authentic postcolonial society.

The article argues that insisting on our differences can only lead to a fractured society, but accommodating our differences would create an authentic society with opportunities for all. Coxed by the values of the Ubuntu philosophy, Head and Mda bring about a socio-cultural consciousness that underscores the significance of considering the aspirations and needs of others irrespective of our specific socio-cultural and political orientations. Love for one another and respect for other cultures and people are quintessential in the building of a better tomorrow. The theory applied in the analysis in this article is the postcolonial theory given that the question of difference is a crucial issue that preoccupies postcolonial critics and writers in the postcolonial society.

KEY WORDS

race, ethnicity, difference, harmony,
accommodation

