5. Alienation in the Post-colonial African Society – Novels of Bessie Head and Buchi Emecheta

Alienation is the most comprehensive term to describe the mental state of some of Head’s and Emechata’s characters. This term describes both the external and the internal aspects of their problems. From alias, “another,” Latin, developed the forms olienus, “belonging to another country,” and dienatus, “estranged.” The word alienation thus bears the constant notion of being and feeling a stranger, an outsider. Many of Head's and Emecheta’s characters have the status of a stranger inside the society they live in, and this situation creates friction, isolation and uneasiness in the life and mind of the newcomer. Also, according to Hegel, alienation is a characteristic feature of the modern man, his sense of inward estrangements, of more or less conscious awareness that the inner being, the real "I," is alienated from the "me," the person as an object in society.

Head's and Emecheta’s protagonists have their inner being disturbed and shattered by different causes: difficulty of adaptation, racial and class prejudices, traumatic memories, repressed feelings and unconventional philosophical or religious beliefs. The aim of Head’s and Emecheta’s protagonists is to lessen their inner alienation and find a satisfactory peace of mind. A good mental balance brings the characters to a healthier and happier existence. Psychic wholeness is the term employed throughout this chapter because it suggests a putting together of all the shattered pieces of the soul into a harmonious whole.

5.1 A Question of Power – An Approach

In A Question of Power Elizabeth’s quest for psychic wholeness requires two essential steps: one, a complete disintegration, through which Elizabeth must
get rid of truths she considered as absolute; and two, a reconstruction, which will reintegrate her fragmented self and give her a new vision of herself and the world. Elizabeth is shattered by the concepts of good and evil. Her psyche wrongly divides these two notions by projecting two hallucinatory characters, Sello and Dan. Elizabeth is also shattered by a bitter past which still haunts her, an uncertain birth origin, a traumatic experience of apartheid in a colored community in South Africa and an unsuccessful marriage. She is also torn by her wish to believe in an individual philosophy, which is in opposition to the principles of the Christian religion in which she has been brought up. Elizabeth’s present and future are also maddening because they do not provide a satisfactory answer to her problem of identity and to her family situation she is the sole provider for her son. Elizabeth feels lonely, but she is caught between her wish to eventually accept another man in her life and her unconscious fear of men and sexual relationships.

Elizabeth's quest is similar to the novel's central metaphor: the story of Osiris and Isis. Sello tells Elizabeth that he is Osiris and that she is Isis. However, Sello is Elizabeth's hallucination; thus she becomes both Osiris and Isis. According to the Egyptian myth, Osiris was locked inside a sarcophagus and thrown into the Nile. Isis then brought together all the body parts, which were swallowed by a fish. Therefore, symbolically, death represents life's final castration, but it is also the essential element which makes another life possible.

In the myth of Osiris we can then distinguish three phases of psychic individuation: Osiris inside the sarcophagus is the image of the integration of the self; the coffin shapes the outline of the individuality; Osiris’s mutilation is the image of disintegration. And finally Osiris was reassembled with an eternal soul and this is the reintegration under a more elevated form, with a spiritual significance. It is the ultimate synthesis which characterizes a person who has finally reached the peak of her evolution.
Elizabeth, like Osiris, must also go through these three phases in order to find psychic wholeness. She is at first trapped inside a chest of individuation created by the society in which she lives. She has been defined and classified while she yearns for something more universal. Elizabeth is also haunted by the concepts of good and evil and by her unconscious fears; this will bring her to the second phase, the complete disintegration and the symbolic death of her soul. She will be shattered to pieces, and in order to restore her mental balance, she will have to assume the role of Isis.

The Osiris-Isis myth is not the only metaphor used in the novel. Along with the allegory of heaven and hell, Christ's crucifixion, death and resurrection, the same three symbolic phases found in the Osiris myth are also present in *A Question of Power*. Elizabeth engenders her own crucifixion. During the journey into her soul, she is confronted by her unconscious wishes and fears, which could be seen as her own sins or what she thinks, are her sins. Moreover, Elizabeth, like Jesus-Christ, identifies herself with mankind in general; therefore she takes upon herself the original sin and all the miseries of the world in order to redeem all humanity: "People cried out so often in agony against racial hatred and oppressions of all kinds. All their tears seemed to be piling up on Elizabeth and the source or roots from which they had sprung were being exposed with a vehement violence" (Head 1974:53). This self-crucifixion brings Elizabeth into the hellish part of her soul where she undergoes a spiritual death and a complete breakdown. Finally, Elizabeth "resurrects" and regains her psychic wholeness in order to prepare and create a new world based on love.

This chapter examines Elizabeth's journey through these three phases by closely analyzing the hallucinatory and the real characters that threaten, or conversely contribute to Elizabeth's psychic wholeness. *A Question of Power* is a circular novel and the first three parts of this chapter will respect the order in
which Elizabeth undergoes the different phases of her journey. The first part is a study of the beginning of Elizabeth's journey into madness, her first hallucination of a man called Sello, whom she associates with good and who is the teacher of a new kind of philosophy and religion. The second part is Elizabeth's sojourn into purgatory, where a hallucination of the mythical Medusa forces Elizabeth's psyche to bring her sins into consciousness. The third part will focus on Elizabeth's symbolic death of the soul inflicted by her hallucination of Dan. Finally, the non-hallucinatory characters Tom, Shorty, Kenosi, Eugene, Mrs. Jones and Camilla, as well as the physical environment of Motabeng village, are examined in the last part of the chapter.

Elizabeth's three main hallucinations will be studied in more than a literary psychoanalytical manner. Her hallucinations are not only the result of a psychological trauma; they are also a reflection of reality. Dan, for example, is both an African politician and Elizabeth's repressed sexual fears and desires. Elizabeth's journey is characterized by a constant movement in and out of madness, or sanity within insanity; her madness is therefore a permanent struggle between her conscious and her unconscious selves. Very often, Elizabeth's consciousness is able for a short time to employ ideas to counteract the horror of her unconsciousness. For example, consciously, Elizabeth refuses to believe in the Christian God, while unconsciously she is afraid of being damned for her impiety.

During one of her nightmares, she imagines Dan sprinkling holy water and immediately her consciousness employs this image to retrieve her sanity: "A part of her mind which was still a free observer of all this laughed with silent contempt. God, and any gesture towards the idea of God, stood clearly apart in her mind from all the gimmicks and foolery of the priests"(Head 1974:146).Sello's apparition marks the beginning of Elizabeth insanity. Elizabeth was not given to seeing things, but the narrator informs us that, three months after her arrival in
Motabeng, she does see Sello as though he were really a live being. Elizabeth's hallucinatory figures, Sello and Dan, are inspired by two living men in the village. Elizabeth hardly knows these men and she has never talked to them. She only knows that Sello is a married crop farmer and a cattle breeder who drives a green truck. As for Dan, he is an entrepreneur and a politician who is greatly admired for being an African nationalist in a country where people were concerned about tribal affairs. He is one of the very few cattle millionaires of the country: "he ordered a fantastic array of suits from somewhere, and he was short, black and handsome" (Head 1974:104).

The fact that Elizabeth's psyche chooses these two men in particular can be explained by what Freud calls the effect of the process of displacement. According to Freud, what makes their way into the content of dreams are impressions and material which are indifferent and trivial rather than justifiably stirring and interesting. Elizabeth has always been indifferent to these two men until her psyche uses them to embody specific concepts. Sello becomes the personification of good and Dan the personification of evil. In Elizabeth's tormented mind, they are however more than just concepts of good and evil. They are both projections of her unconscious.

What is kept and hidden in the unconscious is usually what one has been unable to cope with in one's past. Insanity appears when these repressed memories encroach on the present and prevent the person from living a normal life. As I shall show later, Sello is largely Elizabeth's uncertainty about religion and philosophy, and Dan is primarily Elizabeth's repressed sexual wishes and phobias. Elizabeth suffers from what Freud calls psychoneurosis and must be subjected to psycho-analytic investigation, which is employed in the therapeutic procedure known as “catharsis”. In Elizabeth's case, she will employ her own therapeutic
means, and by making the journey into her soul she will regain her psychic wholeness.

5.2 Sello and Dan in A Question of Power

*A Question of Power* is divided into two equal parts, one devoted to Sello and the other to Dan. This structure mirrors Elizabeth's false belief in an absolute division between good and evil. This belief constitutes the starting point of her disintegration. Both Sello and Dan are Elizabeth's guides for the journey into her soul. Sello, who is supposed to represent the good side, should take Elizabeth into the heavenly part of her soul, while Dan should ostensibly take her into the hellish one. However, Elizabeth discovers no such good-evil dichotomy, and the discovery upsets her mental state.

At first everything seems to be working according to the good-evil construct that Elizabeth imposes on nominal reality. Sello appears for the first time to Elizabeth under the form of the "good guy": "he had introduced his own soul, so softly like a heaven of completeness and perfection" (Head 1974:14). Sello's stereotyped physical look also reinforces this idea of perfection and goodness. Sello is distinguishable by the color of his white robe. According to the Christian tradition and to Elizabeth, who has been brought up religiously, white is associated with goodness and purity. But Sello's dress is illusory and a few months later, Elizabeth's psyche will create the apparition of another Sello dressed in a brown suit. The change of color reflects Elizabeth's altering consciousness of good and evil. But at the beginning of the novel, Elizabeth associates Sello with "an almost universally adored God" (Head 1974: 23).
When the name of Sello finally forms itself in Elizabeth's mind, she cannot help thinking about the real Sello, "a man she had seen about the village of Motabeng who drove a green truck" (Head 1974: 23). Driven by curiosity, she will not learn much about the living man, but what she learns is enough for her to see him as a good person: "He is a wonderful family man. He keeps order in his house" (Head 1974: 29). Therefore, Sello quickly becomes the personification of good in Elizabeth's mind.

For Elizabeth, Sello's apparition is auspicious. She accepted "an entirely unnatural situation and adapted it to the flow of her life" (Head 1974: 23). Elizabeth's hallucination of Sello serves at first as a means to counter her loneliness. What attracts her in this apparition are the full-time absorbing conversations with Sello; for Elizabeth, loneliness, due to her partly voluntary withdrawal from village life, has become quite unbearable. But at the beginning of *A Question of Power*, there is no one with whom Elizabeth can share such views. Her deranged mind then creates an apparition, Sello, who seems so real that sometimes she prepares two cups of tea, one for her and one for him, or she asks her visitors not to sit on the chair, because it is where Sello sits. Elizabeth's psyche creates Sello male because Elizabeth needs manly conversations, with "deep metaphysical profundities" (Head 1974: 24).

Therefore, it imagines the basis of the relationship between Sello and Elizabeth to be masculine. Sello is a fragment of her imagination; therefore he teaches Elizabeth all the beautiful theories which she wants to believe. In her dreams, Elizabeth clearly identifies Sello with Buddha. Elizabeth turned and looked at Sello. He averted his face. It was Buddha and the only face she had acquired apart from Sello. In fact, in his white robe, Sello is the incarnation of a great teacher, and his physical appearance is a venture or visible body assumed by the spirit or creative force. It is the Buddhist idea of the great teacher who, having
earned the right to enter Nirvana, voluntarily gives up and takes on a visible body in order to continue his work among mankind. Sello's teachings concern the world of the future. Sello is therefore a prophet. His devotees include Elizabeth and he prophesies a role for her in the creation of a new, beautiful and humanistic world. This notion of prophecy reveals Elizabeth's dream to be recognized in a world which keeps refusing her a place. It gives her the feeling of belonging to the whole world and universe instead of being restricted to a race or nation. It also provides her with hope for the future and gives purpose to her life. It allows her to envisage herself as one of the saviors of Africa; it heightens her ego and attests to her usefulness in this ungrateful world. According to Elizabeth's Hindu-and-Buddhist-inspired philosophy, her role is stretched out over a long time period because she believes in reincarnation. Elizabeth's psyche has no difficulty accepting the hallucination of Sello and his theories because she imagines that she has already worked with him in previous lives. However, this philosophy can both help and harm Elizabeth. Indeed, according to Buddhist philosophy, suffering is a necessary experience to elevate the soul; therefore we can see in Elizabeth a tendency to masochism in order to become a real soul entity. Elizabeth develops feelings of destruction and guilt which lead to an unconscious wish for punishment.

Elizabeth's relationship to Sello is one of a pupil and "favorite disciple" (Head 1974: 25). This suggests that Elizabeth prefers to be taught than to teach. In creating the hallucination of Sello, she creates for herself a master that she has never found in real life, one who preaches her beliefs. She does not want to be the originator of a new kind of philosophy; it is a lot easier to follow a path that has already been prepared by others. Sello's teachings are, therefore, a lot easier to accept because she imagines that they are not hers. Elizabeth is very confused about religion and philosophy. Since her childhood, Elizabeth has striven to turn away from Roman Catholicism toward Hinduism. Therefore, all her life Elizabeth
has been caught between remnants of Catholicism and Oriental beliefs and she yearns for a synthesis.

Elizabeth is not, however, completely at ease with her own theories; she is afraid to blaspheme against the God of her childhood by adopting a foreign philosophy which does not satisfy her either. The hallucination of Sello is thus a means to weigh her ideas from an outsider's perspective. Elizabeth's philosophy is the one followed by the people she considers practical and ordinary. Elizabeth's psyche confers upon Sello the role of a teacher who is going to preach that humans contain their own divinity. For Elizabeth, God is not somewhere up in the sky watching people, he is in every living human being; therefore every man is sacred and should be so treated. Sello teaches this belief to Elizabeth in three lessons. Sello's first teaching is that there are gods even among white people. Even though Elizabeth was born in South Africa and grew to hate her country and whites, in Botswana, she has met some white people who are so good and so concerned about their fellow humans that she can no longer generalize her hate for whites. Consequently, she expresses, through Sello's words, that her 'South African hate' for whites should be suppressed. Elizabeth's conscious self has no difficulty accepting this statement but she nevertheless needs an example. The next logical step is to point out one white man who could be God.

As a second lesson, Sello introduces "The Father" to Elizabeth with whom he can easily interchange his soul. Elizabeth, instead of using the word God, employs the Christian term of "The Father". In the Christian religion, the word "Father" is used to make God more human, more accessible and more comprehensible to children. Symbolically, the Father represents all the figures of authority: chief, teacher, protector, God. This is probably Elizabeth's favorite Christian perception of God, especially because she never really had a father and is raising a child without one. Elizabeth is an "illegitimate" child and in her
imagination the father is a noble hero who watches over her, warns her of great
dangers but also deserts her. But the role played by the Father in the novel is more
linked to the author Bessie Head than to her character Elizabeth. The Father is
none other than Gilbert from When Rain Clouds Gather. Bessie Head uses the
same description of Gilbert in her two novels. In When Rain Clouds Gather we
read:

Gilbert was not big, he was a giant, and his massive frame
made him topple forward slightly and sway as he walked. He
never wore much except short khaki pants and great
hobnailed boots, and because of this, the sun had burned him
a dark brown hue, and this in turn accentuated the light-blue
coloring of his eyes so that they glittered. (Head 1969: 29)

In A Question of Power, the description goes as follows:

A tall big-built man wearing only short khaki pants and boots
came walking along the pathway to Elizabeth's house”...
“The Sun had directly transferred itself to his face and its
light was flying in all directions. He sat down on Elizabeth's
bed, picked up his right leg and flung it over his left knee and
looked at Sello. He said nothing, and the expression in his
eyes was difficult to define”.... “He stared with wide, blue
eyes at the distant horizon. (Head 1974:118)
Like "The Father" in *A Question of Power* who puts on the dirty rags worn by the poor man in Africa and teaches Elizabeth the word poverty, Gilbert is the one who shares the life of the poor in order to help them: "He came along and spent an hour outlining plans to uplift the poor"; he also has the "habit of referring to the poor as though they were his blood brother"(Head 1974: 24). Bessie Head really saw a God in Gilbert and she uses him in her third novel and in her psyche too as living proof of her theory that man is God. The Father says to Elizabeth: "We have worked together for a long time, we'll work together again, but you prepare the way"(Head 1974: 30). This sentence could be read as Bessie Head's own private wish to see and work again with Gilbert for the good of humanity.

In *A Question of Power*, The Father taught Elizabeth the meaning of Poverty and this lesson has been well accepted by Elizabeth's consciousness. She is then ready for Sello's next lesson. Elizabeth’s psyche projects the image of the poor of Africa with sad, fire-washed faces, the expression of people who had been killed, and killed again and again in one cause after another for the liberation of mankind. For Elizabeth, these are hallucinations which she employs to convince herself that people are Gods. Once again Elizabeth's consciousness is ready to accept this as a proof. In Elizabeth's case we see that insanity is not a brutal loss of reality and consciousness; rather it is a progressive passage into awareness of what has been kept hidden in the unconscious.

During Sello's first three lessons, which correspond to the beginning of Elizabeth's journey into madness, Elizabeth is capable of keeping a more or less critical view of what her hallucinations represent. She is fully aware that some people, black or white, are so good and generous that they must be gods in their own ways. Gilbert and all ordinary people fighting for the good of mankind are living examples of this. But Elizabeth's consciousness rapidly loses its power to censure what has been repressed in her unconscious.
Unchecked words and insinuations begin to appear in Sello's teachings as Elizabeth's psyche starts to pull down the protective barriers between her conscious self and the unconscious one, and all her repressed fears and wishes take hallucinatory form and substance and drive her into madness. In Elizabeth's mind, people can only be Gods if they are entirely good. But the aim of Elizabeth's journey is to examine this absolute belief. At the end of the novel, Elizabeth discovers that good need not necessarily triumph over evil, and that God need not be completely good. She then accepts her own good and evil nature and nothing prevents her from beginning the process of becoming a god for the good of mankind.

To fully understand Elizabeth's difficult task to reconcile these two notions, one must search for the origins of this absolute division in Elizabeth's mind. It is useful to ask the question - what does Elizabeth consider as good and what does she consider as evil? The answer resides in the religious as well as the philosophical belief that everything coming from the soul is good while everything concerning the flesh is evil. Sello is the personification of good because he is a soul entity; he introduced his soul like a heaven of completeness and perfection. Dan is the personification of evil because he represents the physical body, thereby representing all human desires. Elizabeth feels only the "extreme gentleness and tenderness" of Dan's personality.

Bessie Head's choice of the two terms, soul and personality, marks this difference well. At the beginning of the novel, Elizabeth is not yet ready to accept that people embody both good and evil, and she prefers to separate these two notions by projecting another Sello who is the exact replica of the first one. The new Sello is distinguishable by the color of his brown robe. This differentiation reveals two aspects of Elizabeth, the depth of her confusion and her hopes. In terms of skin color, she can no longer always associate white with apartheid and
evil deeds as she used to in South Africa. She has met many good and generous white people and consequently changes her extreme position against whites to a more moderate one. Still in South Africa, blacks are always the oppressed and the humble ordinary people with whom she wishes to be associated. However, in Botswana, she has discovered egotistical power-seeking black people, and as a mixed-breed, she also feels rejected and unwanted as a real African. Elizabeth's insanity takes shape, while she is living in Botswana and, resentfully, she associates brown with evil.

Elizabeth's psyche then projects the hallucination of Medusa, who will become her guide into her own purgatory. Medusa is more than just a femme fatale, she is a goddess with an all-seeing eye and she points an accusatory finger at Elizabeth. Taken in this sense, Medusa bears well her mythological name. According to the Greek myth, people who saw her face were turned into Stone. This suggests that Medusa mirrors the image of personal guilt. Elizabeth is guilty of many crimes: a rejection of sexuality, a wish to become African while making no efforts to do so, a harboring of inferiority feelings about her origins and her physical appearance, and a harboring of prejudices. Elizabeth also wishes to be recognized as an African instead of a "Colored". Consciously, Elizabeth accuses the Botswanans of rejecting and persecuting her because she is a "Colored". Now, unconsciously she is pointing out her part of the responsibility for this rejection.

Medusa accuses Elizabeth of having absolutely no link with African people because she does not know any African languages. Finally Elizabeth is ashamed of her mixed-breed origin "Colored" is a term abhorred by Elizabeth because it reduces her to racial classification instead of a human being with a personality. It also reminds her of all the shame she felt when living in a "Colored" community in South Africa. In Elizabeth's mind, colored is associated with open homosexuality, homosexual men parading in women's clothes in the
streets with people around laughing at them. Elizabeth refuses to be associated with this image and prefers to repudiate her origins, to the point of becoming stark raving mad. Elizabeth’s psyche also uses Medusa for a physical comparison with Elizabeth's own self. Because Medusa is a beauty queen, Elizabeth ends up depreciating herself: "I'm not saying I'm not ugly myself. I shouldn't mind if anyone told me I'm ugly because I know it is true" (Head 1974: 48).

Medusa, being one voice of her unconscious, we can add that Elizabeth is also concerned about her body. Medusa once gave her a plate of food which she snatched away the next minute from Elizabeth, accusing her of being too fat. Here it is evident that Elizabeth's criteria for beauty belong to white standards, and that Elizabeth dislikes the African elements in herself. Medusa accuses her of hating Africans because of their physical appearance: "You don't like the African hair. You don't like the African nose" (Head 1974: 48). Elizabeth's physical perception of herself reveals two things; she thinks of herself as a failure because she does not like her physical appearance, but on the other hand, she uses her ugliness as an excuse to reject her sexual needs. Medusa symbolizes all women and their ability to tempt and corrupt men. Elizabeth, by convincing herself that she is totally unattractive, unconsciously rejects the feminine element in her. But once again Elizabeth is confused, and consciously, she knows that she is attractive; didn't Tom call her Lucrecia Borgia, a woman famous for her beauty? At the end of the novel, when Elizabeth has regained her psychic wholeness, she ceases to see woman's beauty as a flaw and as a means of corrupting innocence and propagating evil.

The hallucination of Medusa does not only operate at an unconscious level. Medusa is, according to Elizabeth's diseased psyche, the "expressing surface reality of African society" (Head 1974:38). On another level of consciousness, Elizabeth finds this attitude quite maddening. According to her then, people
should look beyond such surface reality and see instead the equality of souls. This reference to an African surface reality is aimed more at South-African society than at the Botswanan. At the beginning of the novel, Elizabeth makes a brief comparison between the Botswanan and the South African greeting. In Botswana, she is very surprised at people's concern for each other, unlike in South Africa where she has been used to insults.

That Elizabeth allows Medusa this quality reveals that in her madness, she has moments of complete lucidity and sanity, the same kind of clarity of consciousness she attains when Kenosi or Tom come and ask her to work. However, it is ironic to notice that Elizabeth, being from South Africa, also incorporates this aspect of Medusa about superficiality, especially when she pays so much attention to physical appearance. Elizabeth's Medusa hallucination is only the transition between heaven and hell. Medusa represents what the Christian religion would call the recognition of one's sin. Medusa is the one who harms deliberately: "her eyes were full of comprehension, bold, conscienceless, and deliberate" (Head 1974: 92). Therefore, she is the one who brings other people's sins to consciousness. Elizabeth confessed herself and her hallucination of Medusa disappears.

Then comes an extension of Medusa's hallucination, Dan. Elizabeth is now able to resume her journey into hell and receive her unconscious punishment. Elizabeth's psyche keeps intact the Christian belief that Satan is a male figure; therefore Elizabeth's hallucination takes the form of a man (Dan) to embody the concept of evil. Satan is the imitator of God and Dan is dressed in a white cloth like Sello. However, the impression Dan makes on Elizabeth is totally different from the one given by Sello. Sello wears his robe "in a particular fashion, with his shoulders slightly hunched forward, as though it were a prison garment" while Dan keeps "his hands clasped in front of him as though his life were a constant
prayer" (Head 1974:22). These two descriptions suggest again that Elizabeth's psyche associates Sello with the abstract world of the soul, which is the reason why his earthly garment is painful to him, while she links Dan to the materialistic world, with all the false outer pretense one has to adopt.

Elizabeth's hallucination in the form of Dan embodies her three great unconscious fears. Dan is the symbolic representation of the horror of apartheid, and what the two African defects are for Elizabeth, the African man's loose, carefree sexuality and witchcraft practices. Elizabeth drives herself crazy by creating in her mind a monster, which she calls Dan or Satan, who embodies all the evil she abhors. Elizabeth's mental illness is rooted in a past she has not yet coped with. Her life experience in South Africa has left her with a scarred psyche. She hates the country for the 'natural hatred' which exists between people: "whites were born that way, hating people, and a black man or woman was just born to be hated" (Head 1974:19). The power-maniacs are responsible for this because they never saw people, humanity, and tenderness. Apartheid in South Africa is therefore endless, "just this vicious vehement struggle between two sets of people with different looks; and, like Dan's brand of torture, it was something that could go on and on" (Head 1974: 19). Elizabeth had no regrets accepting a 'no return' exit permit from South Africa, but when she left for Botswana she did not know that African life too had its maddening defects. At first, Elizabeth finds Botswanans to be very polite and sociable in their greetings. However, she also learns about a "permanent adult game" called "I bewitch you and you'll bewitch me" (Head 1974: 21).

In South Africa, Elizabeth had been used to open animosity. In Botswana she discovers the subtleties and the psychological effects of evil. It is therefore not surprising to see in her nightmares, Dan parading again the same ordinary people that Sello showed her earlier, "but this time as chain-gang slaves. They had the
sleepest expressions of people with hidden evils"(Head 1974:119). Here, a link
could be made with Sello 'killing' women psychologically. His wonderful
goodness shown at the beginning also hides an invisible mental evil. Elizabeth
discovers through her nightmares that the power of the soul represented by Sello
has its own evil side. Elizabeth, who is aspiring to this kind of power, cannot
accept that she also has two sides. Dan, who embodies physical power, is even
more dangerous because he uses both open and hidden evil.

During her first months in Botswana, Elizabeth could not understand
Botswanan gullibility, their superstitions, but it finally affected her more than she
thought: "Such a terror was to fill her mind at a later stage that she would look
back on the early part of her life in Botswana, and think that the personality who
held her life in a death-grip must really be the master of the psychology behind
witchcraft" (Head 1974:21). For Elizabeth, this "sustained pressure of mental
torture that reduces its victim to a state of permanent terror" is as bad as if not
worse than open cruel deeds and, like apartheid, it is endless: once they start on
you they don't know where to stop, until you become stark, raving mad"(Head
1974:137). According to Elizabeth there are two kinds of power: physical, external
power, which is the one used by power-maniacs and politicians; and the power of
the soul, which is employed by non-violent, humble people like Gandhi. Through
her hallucination of Sello, Elizabeth studies the power of the soul, which she
found "passive, inactive, and impersonal". Elizabeth has a strong personality and
she finds what inaction against the oppressor, difficult to accept seems. It is one of
the reasons that Elizabeth tries to counteract in real life the powerlessness she feels
in her nightmares, and whenever she can react she does.

This explains why she hits the “too good to be me” religious Mrs. Jones
and puts posters about Sello's imaginary incestuous relationship with his daughter
on the wall of the post-office. Then Elizabeth, through her hallucinations of Dan,
turns to the study of physical power. Dan is a South-African politician and his card, which reads, "Directorship since 1910," suggests long managerial experience. In Elizabeth's nightmares, evil is stronger than good; Medusa and Dan are by themselves whole universes of energy, biblical giants (like Goliath) compared to the frail army of the good, like Sello or Elizabeth. Sello is described as a "spineless, backboneless man" while Dan is always associated with the blazing Sun. The seeming invincibility Elizabeth grants to evil approximates the image of what she had lived in South Africa. Dan's power also implies physical attractiveness, like handsomeness or charisma, which Elizabeth thinks she lacks.

By the end of the novel, Elizabeth's psyche completes the exploration of two different kinds of love and Elizabeth is finally able to make a choice. She chooses Sello's universal, sharing love: "Love is two people feeding each other, not one living on the soul of the other, like a ghoul"(Head 1974: 197). According to Elizabeth, love is also "freedom of heart"(Head 1974: 11). And "many variations on one theme: humility and equality"(Head 1974: 54). This definition is opposed to Dan's "powerful, blind, all-consuming love", where "there is nothing else, no people, no sharing. It is shut-in and exclusive"(Head 1974: 108). Elizabeth's choice brings back her hallucination of Sello and his words end Elizabeth's sojourn in hell, and marks the beginning of her ascent back to reality and sanity: "Something was giving way. The pain in her chest subsided. The storm in her head subsided. She actually felt a sensation of being lifted and flung clear out of purgatory. In one jubilant shout of joy she swung around to Sello with outstretched hands: Elizabeth's choice at the end of the novel shows once again that she did not completely get rid of her absolutes, at least about love.

Her return to her concept of soul mates implies that she has not coped with the problems of conjugal relationships and that she idealizes too much. The moral character who really helps Elizabeth and who actually saved her life is her son,
Shorty. He is the passive observer of his mother's fight against her demons but his presence in the house helps Elizabeth to reel back to reality for short periods and provides her momentary distraction. Their relationship is odd because of Elizabeth's mental disorder. Elizabeth can be by turns aggressive or kind towards her son, but at the same time she is aware that her bad moods "could throw him off balance completely" (Head 1974: 49). It is obvious that she loves her child, and her ideas about killing him denote that she completely believes in her nightmares, to the point of 'saving' her child from such a miserable world.

At the end of the novel, when she is finally ready to commit suicide, her son and his friends come playing football in front of her house. It is only this that prevents her from killing herself. When she manages to bring her nightmares to an end, she sees in her child's poem, a summary of all her observations, about "what she felt about people's souls and their powers and that there'd be a kind of liberation of these powers, and a new dawn and a new world" (Head 1974: 205). The realization that her son has made the hallucinatory journey alongside her astonishes Elizabeth. She is unaware that her insanity could affect Shorty so deeply. Because he is a child, Elizabeth thinks that nothing or no one can harm him, especially in Motabeng where, unlike Elizabeth, he is well-integrated and speaks Setswana.

According to Elizabeth, "people here made sharp distinctions between adults and children, and hostilities were restricted to adults" (Head 1974: 94). Also, each time she was sent to hospital, there was always someone to take good care of Shorty. But Elizabeth missed the fact that the worst torturers could be children and apart from the boys who come playing football at the end of the novel, Shorty does not seem to have any friends. The first time Shorty goes playing with Jimmy: "He burst out, impulsively: “Jimmy is my best friend. The truth was he usually said that about anyone who pulled up with him, once even about an old Motswana man
of sixty who had sat down on the floor with him and chatted with him about the mystery of the animal life in the bush".(Head 1974: 59)

Shorty is always very eager to see Kenosi or Tom because he can talk to them. Elizabeth is so pre-occupied with her inner life and problems that she does not take the time to converse with her son apart from the bedtime stories. Or, when she does discuss anything with him, her sense of reality is so confused that she gives her son her own distorted visions: "The edge is where the Sun comes up. And the other edge is where the sun goes down. I asked my mother if that was the edge and she said yes. The goats keep on going to the edge and falling off. My mother says once they fall off they just keep falling and falling because there is no bottom. I can never go far away from home in case I fall off too"(Head 1974: 95).

This explanation is not only a means to keep Shorty near home; it is also Elizabeth's private wish that her son should not follow her in her journey. The same day that Shorty talks to Kenosi about the edge, Elizabeth dreams that Sello shows her a bottomless cesspit and as she slipped over the edge, she clung to its periphery with both hands, her legs dangling down into the pit. Alarmed, she cried out: “Oh God, if anyone plans evil like this again, may they suffer alone and not involve others. If anyone has to fall, let them fall alone"(Head 1974:97). At the end of the novel, Elizabeth is probably not completely aware of the trauma Shorty must have endured, especially when she kept noticing that he was such an imitator of adults, and therefore could have easily adopted his mother's attitude.

For Bessie Head, writing always had a cathartic effect and after each one of her breakdowns, she would produce a significant piece of writing. A Question of Power was her last fictional novel and we can add that the healing process has been more efficient this time but not completely successful. The journey into her soul forced Head to confront each of the alienating elements of her life, from her
apartheid past to her Botswana loneliness. But although Head's protagonists regain their psychic wholeness, Head's own mental equilibrium remained precarious and the novel-writing process gave her only a certain breathing space. Eilersen explains that the writing process can be regarded as a form of therapy; it would appear to have been successful. Elizabeth, a reflection of Bessie Head herself, does achieve healing, can banish her sense of isolation and feel that she belongs. Unfortunately, as time was to show, the autobiographical element does not apply in this vital area. Bessie could not eradicate her paranoid concern with evil by writing about it. Similarly Elizabeth, in the novel, achieves considerable insight into the fact of its being her mixed blood which can provide her with a unique purpose in life, whereas Bessie could not at that stage retain the vision.

5.3 Second Class Citizen – A Quest

In *Second Class Citizen*, Buchi Emecheta talks about the identity problem of her characters after their migration to England. Like other post-colonial novels, Emecheta’s works are rooted in the contrasting senses of place and displacement. Her characters in her novel are concerned with their own personal development, or they deal with the recovery of an effective relationship. Emecheta’s characters are caught up between two worlds, to neither of which they fully belong and in the novels their sense of self has been challenged by dislocation which is the result of their migration. Buchi Emecheta in the *Second Class Citizen* talks about her main character’s desire to go to England from Nigeria to live a better life and to secure her children’s future. In her novel, she focuses on people’s point of view about England before and after going to England. She aims at showing her readers the problems of immigrants after leaving their home-countries, and the racial prejudice they face. People, who leave their home-country and migrate to England, go through the stages of rejection, acceptance, mimicking, adaptation, integration and finally assimilation. But for the first-generation of immigrant’s assimilation
does not come easily since it is quite difficult to grow out of their cultural baggage. In her novel, Emcheta reveals her characters’ adaptation problems.

*Second Class Citizen* is about the main character Adah, who was an ambitious and intelligent girl. During her childhood and adolescent years, she fought to have a good education. She had never been like other girls in Nigeria. She gave great importance to her education because she had aims in life. The things in Nigeria did not suit her. The traditions, people’s nonsensical attitudes did not appeal to her. Her education had a positive effect, enabling her to get a good job with a good salary. So, her education made her move up from lower class to middle class. Since Adah grew up in a colonized country, she had always dreamt of going to England to have a better life. Because as Abioseh Michael Porter says, “Grows up believing that the United Kingdom is synonymous with heaven” (Emcheta 1974: 269).

But Adah cannot know the realities of England that is the racial prejudice of the English people. Finally she gets married and goes to England. But there are a number of problems awaiting her. She becomes a person living in between. She begins to compare her homeland with England and could not become a true individual for a long time. An avalanche of problems stemming from the difficulty of finding accommodation, her children’s’ illnesses, her husband’s nonsensical pressures and restrictions, her pregnancy, society’s discrimination against blacks, her inner conflicts, the differences between the two countries and her comparison of both countries, lack of love, her need for independence, and her country’s illogical traditions like forcing women to treat their husbands with the utmost respect, lead her to experience an acute sense of displacement, homelessness, loneliness and an identity problem. While at home in Nigeria, it had never occurred to her that she would have an identity problem because she had known Britain as a heaven-like place. She was brought up in the knowledge that Britain
offered everyone the same opportunities. She did not know that there was discrimination in Britain.

Adah thought that everything would be well but she is disappointed right from her first days in Britain, since Adah could not find the things she has dreamt all her life. Adah faces a cold welcome in England when she first sees the place she will live and meets the neighbors. So her identity problem emerges right from her first day in England. Yet she is determined to live there and she thinks, “If people like Lawyer Nweze and others could survive it, so could she” (Emecheta 1974:36). When Francis, her husband, mentions how the English people make jokes about this, Adah responds saying that she thinks they do not know how to joke because of the look in their faces. Behind this response are her ideas about the way Nigerians make jokes.

Later on they go to the house they are renting, and Adah is shocked when she sees the house and this time she compares the house with the ones in Nigeria. This shows her rejection of England. She says that the “houses are like monasteries” (Emecheta 1974:37) and in Lagos houses were usually completely detached with the yards on both sides, the compound at the back and verandas in front. These ones had none of those things. To this Francis remarks that in England the colored people live together and the houses they can get are “horrors like these” (Emecheta 1974: 38). Francis and Adah share similar negative feelings towards Britain because Britain has proved to be not the country they have dreamt of. From the first days onward Adah complains about everything in England and this gives the first clues about Adah’s future problems. She is in a state of shock and constantly compares Britain with her own country of When Adah learns that she has to share the house with other Nigerians, who call her madam in Nigeria, she is again disappointed. Back in Nigeria she was used to being a first-class citizen among Nigerians but now in Britain she is obliged to live with second-class
people and she accuses Francis for not trying to have a better accommodation. She has dreamt of living comfortably like their friends.

But Francis, in order to show her the reality in Britain, says; “Why don’t you stop wishing and face reality” (Emecheta 1974:39). He continues: “You must know, my dear young lady, that in Lagos you may be a million publicity officers for the Americans; you may be earning a million pounds a day; you may have hundreds of servants; you may be living like an elite, but the day you land in England, you are a second-class citizen” (Emecheta 1974:39). So you can’t discriminate against your own people, because we are all second-class.

Despite her disappointment with the accommodation, Adah is determined to live like the British person. She sets for herself a first-class life and refuses to work at a shirt factory, because she has “A” levels at school, and she has received the British Library Association Professional Certificate. She does not want to be considered as equal with the Yoruba people in England, and she starts rejecting the norms in England that classify her as second-class; and this destabilizes her sense of a secure life. Adah’s feelings keep changing; sometimes she feels relaxed and sometimes she rejects the situation in England. Her first impressions of England have been negative, but it appears that as time passes she is getting used to the life in England.

5.4 Change in Attitudes – Slow but Steady Progress

“Now everything was young, clean, moist and full of juice” (Emecheta 1974:43). These words show Adah’s point of view about England and it reminds the readers that Adah’s feelings are changing. She starts accepting the things in England. But still she is not comfortable. Even though she starts accepting the
conditions, at times she feels inferior among her friends in the library. Nevertheless she still feels herself a first class citizen because of her work in the library. “It was all right for her, being a first class citizen for the part of the day when she worked in a clean, centrally heated library, but what about her children” (Emecheta 1974: 45).

Because of her education she could get a good job like first-class people in her home country, but when she first arrived in England, she came face to face with the problems of second-class citizens since she has a dark skin, and her English is not as good as that of the native English Nigerian families in the novel do not bring their children to England and the children are brought up by their grandparents, and if a woman happens to be pregnant, she should look for a foster mother who is white. People do not want to know whether the house they bring their children to is clean or not. They think “the concept of whiteness could cover a multitude of sins” (Emecheta 1974: 46).

But Adah disagrees with this and she is determined to take her children with her to England and she does not care about what the others think. She is in a way rejecting the norms of her own society once again. Her rejection is double-sided because she rejects the norms of both her native land and of the English society. Adah’s questioning herself never stops. She constantly questions herself whether she has done the right thing or not by going to England, and these questions show that Adah has begun to lose faith in her. She feels displaced and homeless. In her imagination she goes back to Nigeria where she thinks everything was better. She misses her hometown and constantly compares it with London. Also her comparison furthers her identity problem. As McLeod puts it, too often Diasporas like Adah, “are ghettoized and excluded from feeling they belong to the ‘new country’, and suffered their cultural practices to be mocked and
discriminated against” (Emecheta 1974:208). This leads to a feeling of homelessness and displacement. So for Adah the period of resistance continues.

With their immigration, Adah’s life has been affected much. Earlier in Nigeria, they had never thought about how to survive, because Adah had been earning sufficiently, but now because of the living conditions in England they start counting every single penny. Adah’s pay at work was just enough to pay the rent, pay for Francis’s course, his examination fees, buy his books and pay Trudy. They had little left after this, and so it was impossible for Adah to have lunch at work. On her way to work Adah always looks at the windows of restaurants and dreams of going there one day. On second thought, she realizes that Francis, who believes that such places were not for blacks, would never take her there: Adah knew that his blackness, his feeling of blackness, was firmly established in his mind. She knew that there was discrimination all over the place, but fertile ground in which such attitudes could grow and thrive. “Personally if she had had the money, she would have walked straight into such places and was sure she would have been served” (Emecheta 1974: 58).

Because of feeling inferior among English people, Francis restricts himself and Adah all the time and he makes both himself and Adah unhappy. Adah wants to break the chains and wants to get started in a new life but Francis does not let her be free. The difference between their homeland and England becomes clear in Adah’s mind once again with their child Vicky’s illness. Vicky becomes ill and the doctors insist on sending him to a hospital, but Adah thinks that there is no need to panic. She is trying to understand the society in which she lives, but sometimes she cannot make sense of the behaviors of English people because she still continues to act in her Nigerian identity. Adah thinks that Vicky has malaria and she says that if she gives Nivaquine to her child everything would be fine: “Why all the panic then? She wondered. Any mother could cure a child of malaria
without phoning the ambulance men or calling the doctor, who simply stood there, ready as if for nothing but to sign a death certificate” (Emecheta 1974: 59).

Her feeling of inferiority overtakes her once again after she learns the name of the hospital. The name of the hospital is Royal Free and she begins to question the word free and thinks that the hospital is for second-class citizens and she feels discriminated against even in the hospital: Was it a hospital for poor people, for second class people? Why did they put the word ‘free’ in it? Fear started to shroud her then. Were they sending her Vicky to a second class hospital, a free one, just because they were blacks? (Emecheta 1974:60).She grows suspicious and thinks that since they are second class, the doctors may even use her child’s organs to save the life of some white people. Adah begins to compare the two countries and this shows that she is still in the rejection period. In Nigeria, people pay for their treatments unlike in England, and people go to hospitals either to give birth to a baby or to die.

Adah’s comparison of hospitals in both countries continues and what attracts her attention is that, in Britain authorities do not allow mothers of young babies to stay with their child, but in Nigeria they can stay with their children. This shows that Adah is still not comfortable in England. Not knowing what to do, she questions herself and the things around her all the time because she cannot free herself of her cultural baggage. After the incident of their son’s illness the relationship between Francis and Adah gets worse day by day, because Adah is suspicious that Francis is having an affair with another woman. Her suspicions are based on the difference between Nigeria and Britain. In their society, men were allowed to sleep around if they wanted. They gave the nursing mother a break to nurse her baby before the next pregnancy. But in London, with birth control and all that, one could sleep with one’s wife all the time. But he was not brought up like that. He was brought up to like variety. So, she has problems with her husband
who acts as if he is her opponent. Thus her husband becomes an additional burden to the difficulties Adah faces in England. The child’s illness and her husband’s indifference towards her increase. There is nobody to share her feelings and her anger towards her husband increases. She is trying to stand on her feet all alone and her husband, instead of supporting her, makes her feel alone: In England, she couldn’t go to her neighbor and babble out troubles as she would have done in Lagos. She had learnt not to talk about her unhappiness to those with whom she worked, for this was a society where nobody was interested in the problems of others. If you could not bear your problems any more, you could always do away with yourself. This proves that Adah still does not feel at home in England. She still yearns for home so she is still in the rejection period. On top of her feelings of loneliness, Adah worries over another problem and that is to find a place for her children where they could be cared for while she is out at work. She speaks to Miss Sterling, her boss who suggests that Adah should put her children in a nursery. But after trying some possible places, Adah is appalled by the price she is asked to pay.

Second-class-citizens could keep their children with them, but just look at the price they had to pay. Vicky was still in danger, her marriage hung in the balance, and now this entire row. She did not know whether to feel ashamed or grateful. She felt both, in a way, especially as it now seemed that her threats had been empty ones. There was no need for them. The housing continues to be a big problem too in Adah and Francis’s life. Adah has never wanted to live with her Yoruba neighbors but when their landlord wants them to leave the house; they get into big trouble because of the accommodation problems for immigrants. But, Adah does not seem to mind it because she thinks they can have better life conditions and would not be discriminated against by her Nigerian neighbors after leaving that place. Ironically, the outside world is much more merciless towards immigrants.
5.5 Shades of Alienation – Double Discrimination

In fact, to most of her Nigerian neighbors, she was having her cake and eating it. She was in a white man’s job, despite the fact that everybody had warned her against it, and it looked as if she meant to keep it. She would not send her children away to be fostered like everybody else; instead they were living with them, just as if she and Francis were first-class citizens, in their own country. To cap it all, they were Ibos, the hated people who always believe blindly in their ideologies. Well, if they were going to be different from everybody else, they would have to go away from them. Obviously they are not discriminated against only by white people but also by other Nigerian immigrants. According to Joya Uraizee, Adah is experiencing an alienation resulting from mental and physical abuse, acute loneliness, and misery. It is an exile imposed on her both by her family or community and by Western society.

This indicates that black immigrants experience double discrimination in their adopted home. Discrimination by white natives leads immigrants to feel inferior and they feel forced to live in areas where other immigrants reside which gives them a feeling of security and a feeling of community. But if the immigrants boast of their superiority and mimic white people, that is, if they try to live like white people and take white people’s jobs rather than the unqualified jobs set aside for immigrants, they attract hatred and are discriminated against by other second-class citizens of the adopted society. They express their feelings in accordance with their traditions: Maybe if the blacks could learn to live harmoniously with one another, maybe if a West Indian landlord could learn not to look down on the African, and the African learn to boast less of his country’s natural wealth, there would be fewer inferiority feelings among the blacks. Adah, in order to find a place to live, wanders around and looks for a house. But soon she gets disappointed because there is no accommodation for blacks to live in a clean and
beautiful place. They are alienated from the society and there are barriers in the society for immigrants. Thus, Adah is being stopped by those barriers. She is not allowed to get into the white society. Nearly all the notices had ‘Sorry, no coloreds’ on them. Her house-hunting was made more difficult because she was black; black, with two very young children and pregnant with another one. She was beginning to learn that her color was something she was supposed to be ashamed of. She was never aware of this at home in Nigeria, even when in the midst of whites. Those whites must have had a few lessons about color before coming to the tropics, because they never let drop from their cautious mouths the fact that in their countries, black was inferior. But now Adah was beginning to find out, so did not waste her time looking for accommodation in a clean, desirable neighborhood.

Even if she had enough money for the best, she would start looking at the sub-standard ones and then work her way up. This was where she differed from Francis and others. They believe that one had to start with the inferior and stay there, because being black meant being inferior. Well Adah did not yet believe that wholly, but what she did know was that being regarded as inferior had a psychological effect on her. The result was that she started to act in the way expected of her because she was still new in England, but after a while, she was not going to accept it from anyone.

She was going to regard herself as the equal of any white. But meanwhile, she must look for a place to live. Even her Nigerian neighbors who have come to terms with their second-class citizenship do not sympathize with Adah. They make fun of Adah and her education by:
Singing as soon as they saw Adah coming. Most of the songs were about the fact that she and her husband would soon have to make their home in the street. What use would her education be then? The songs would ask. To whom would she show her children off then? It was all so Nigerian. It was all so typical (Emecheta 1974: 72).

They make fun of her because Adah has had a good education, and she looks down on her neighbors and sees the songs as so Nigerian and so typical. She is different from her neighbors and she has an aim in England and that is to be accepted by the white society. But others might not have any such concerns and they feel comfortable in continuing their lives as exiles. Accommodation continues to be a real problem for Adah. She blames Francis for not looking for a better place to live in. Adah is constantly reminded that because of her skin color she is not allowed to rent a house even in areas where other immigrants live. Therefore, she develops a strategy and makes telephone calls to possible houses where there is a vacancy and on the phone Adah mimics white people’s way of speaking to be accepted, but this is at the cost of erasing her real self. Adah did not tell him that she had held her nose when talking to the woman; neither did she tell him that she chose nine o’clock because it would be dark and the woman might not realize in time that they were blacks. If only they could paint their faces just until the first rent had been paid. This is her first attempt to reject her identity to be like the English or to wish to be treated like the English people.
5.6 Stage of Mimicry

This is the beginning of Adah’s entering the stage of mimicry. Adah’s joy of mimicking successfully is short lived and she gets rejected. Adah had never faced rejection in this manner. Not like this, directly. Rejection by this shrunken piece of humanity, with a shaky body and moppy hair, loose, dirty and unkempt, who tried to tell them that they were unsuitable for a half derelict and probably condemned house with creaky stairs. In the face of rejection Adah reverts to the first stage of her immigrant experience, that is the period of rejection. She starts questioning English people and the reasons why the English are in conflict with themselves. She thinks about religion and Jesus and Jesus’s pale skin color and says “these people worship a colored man and yet refuse to take a colored family into their home?” (Emecheta 1974: 78).

It can be said that Adah still cannot understand the way English people think and behave, and therefore, she rejects them. This is her response to being rejected by them. Adah not only questions the English people, but also the Bible:

_Sometimes Adah used to wonder whether God really said all that…. If you were lazy and did not wish to work, or if you had failed to make your way in society, you could always say. ‘My kingdom is not of this world.’ If you were a jet-set woman who believed in sleeping round…. you could always say Mary Magdalene had no husband, but, didn’t she wash the feet of Our Lord…. If, in the other hand, you believed in the inferiority of the blacks, you could always say. ‘Slaves,
obey your master’.... But the one thing Adah could not stand was when a group of people took a portion of the Bible, interpreted it the way that suited them and then asked her to swallow it like that, whole. She became suspicious. (Emechta 1974:100).

Actually it is not only Adah who has had these feelings and thoughts. Many Nigerian men came to Britain, failed to make a foothold, in England, sought consolation in the pubs, got themselves involved with the type of women who frequented pubs. Nearly all the failures married white women. Maybe it was the only way of boosting their egos, or was it a way of getting even with their colonial masters? Any woman would do, as long as she was white.

Their original dream of becoming one of the elite in their new country becomes buried in their hearts and their dream becomes “a reality of being black, a nobody, a second-class citizen” (Emechta 1974:81). She was different. Her children were going to be different. They were all going to be black; they were going to be proud of being black, a black of a different breed. Adah wants neither to fail nor to feel ashamed of her skin color and hopes to be able to feel proud of being black. She has faced a lot of problems because of being black, but she does not want her children to face the same problems. Among the Nigerians there is a certain Mr. Noble and he has been a lucky person, but he has also made a lot of sacrifices to come to that point in life. People have turned him into a jester and a clown in order to laugh at him and humiliate him. They wanted him to remove his pants to see whether Africans had tails or not. One day his work mates wanted him to operate a lift without using electricity.
Mr. Noble to prove that he was strong, tried to shoulder the lift, but the lift crashed onto him and the railway authorities paid him a large sum of money for compensation, and thus he became a rich person and bought himself a house. Mr. Noble was taken for a fool and was never accepted by white people at work. At the end he acquired money but it was at the expense of becoming an invalid and he still remained a second-class citizen. Adah and Francis finally get a better house and that is Mr. Noble's house and Adah is now more confident and things begin to change for them with the house.

Adah begins to show the first signs of hope at the hospital when she is hospitalized for miscarriage:

They were kind, those women in the ward. For the first few days, when Adah was deciding whether it was worth struggling to hold onto this life, those women kept showing her many things. They seemed to be telling her to look around her, that there were still may beautiful things to be seen, which she had not seen, that there were still several joys to be experienced which she had not yet experienced, that she was still young, that her whole life was still ahead of her.

(Emecheta 1974: 111)

It is at the hospital that Adah begins to question herself and her relationship with Francis. She looks round her and examines the other women and the attitudes of their husbands. She begins to adore the other couples. She wants to be like them. But when she examines her relationship with Francis she understands that
with Francis she cannot go any further in England: Why was it she could never be
loved as an individual, the way the sleek woman was being loved, or what she was
and not just because she could work and hand over money like a docile child?

Why is that she was not was blessed with a husband like that woman who
had had to wait for seventeen years for the arrival of her baby son? (Emecheta
1974:115). She feels lonely in the hospital and after seeing women receiving
flowers from their husbands, hopes that her husband would bring flowers to her.
But soon she realizes that this hope is never to be realized. This shows her
eagerness to adapt herself to the society but she knows that her husband cannot
adapt himself. She wonders, “Why was it that men took such a long time to
change, to adapt, to reconcile themselves to new situations?” (Emecheta 1974:
116). Men do not want to change because they think that if they change they may
lose their superiority. While she is in the hospital Adah begins to feel inferior to
the other women and experiences an acute sense of self-pity: “She was now sure
people were talking about her. Look at that nigger woman with no flowers, no
cards, no visitors, except her husband who usually comes five minutes before the
closing time, looking as if he hates it all. Look at her she doesn’t have a nightdress
of her own” (Emecheta 1974: 119). In the middle of her misery a flicker of hope, a
piece of good news arrives in the form of a letter from her boss telling her to make
the best of her stay in the hospital and that they will give her money to take a
holiday and get herself some clothes.

This letter is very important for Adah because it shows that she is accepted
by her work mates, in other words by the society, and things will change for Adah
but her hopes are crushed by Francis when he wants the money. Husband and wife
begin to argue. Here Adah shows her hopes for her children and for the first time
expresses her thoughts about Nigeria. Obviously at this stage in her experience
Adah still rejects England and wishes to keep her Nigerian identity. Poverty is
Adah’s big problem. It is Christmas time but she cannot afford to buy presents for her children. But her boss sends her children some presents and this solves her problem. What is important is that once again her boss’ presents convince Adah that now she has a place in this white society.

Despite this assurance Adah still cannot understand her host country. Adah learns from Mr. Noble that she can buy many things without paying a penny to the salesman who comes to their door in England. This shocks her because she has never heard of such a bargain before. Things were different in Nigeria. If a salesman could be stupid enough to allow people to buy on their doorsteps goods worth almost a hundred pounds, just like that, the salesman would soon have to close up his business. In Lagos people would not pay, and if the salesman’s demands became too irritating, people would just disappear. The questioning and comparison continues in Adah’s mind. She still finds herself attached to Nigeria because it is her country and it is her life experience. They are her only references to her identity. Therefore she cannot fit herself into the English life. On Christmas day Adah realizes Vicky has a problem with his right ear. They think that they should bring the child to see a doctor and Francis goes to look for one. But Adah’s feeling of inferiority overtakes her once again, “If anything should happen to Vicky now, society would forgive the doctor, because he was a black child and had been taken ill on Christmas day” (Emecheta 1974:136). After Francis finds the doctor Adah feels relieved because of the doctor’s race. The doctor is Chinese, and she thinks that he cannot treat them as inferior because he is also a second-class.

The man, doctor or no doctor was a second-class citizen too and could not come to show them any superior airs. This did not help Adah much, but it was nice to hear it. First signs of adaptation for Adah start with her decision to use birth control and to do it behind her husband’s back. This is very important because for the first time she decides to make her own decisions. She goes to Family Planning
Clinic and learns about the ways of birth control but formalities require her husband to sign a form to allow birth control and at this point she immediately thinks of home and imagines how her mother-in-law would react. It was the picture of her mother-in-law when she heard that Adah went behind her husband’s back to equip herself with something that would allow her to sleep around and not have any more children. She was sure they would interpret it that way, knowing the psychology of her people.

Christine W.Sizemore thinks that Adah must cope not only with the difficulties in English life, but also with the sexism of her husband. Francis does not believe in birth control, but he also expects his well-educated wife to work to support him. In the middle of her difficulties Adah’s ideas of religion have gone through a change. She compares the churches in England and in Nigeria. She says that in Nigeria, churches are like festival places whereas in England churches are cheerless. She also adds that her concept of God has changed: London, having thus killed Adah’s congregational God, has created instead a personal God who loomed large and really alive. She did not have to go to church to this One. He was always there, when she was shelving books in the library when she was tucking her babies up to sleep, when she was doing anything. She grew nearer to Him, to the people with whom she worked, but away from Francis. Adah starts working in the Chalk Farm Library where she meets new people and “grows nearer to the people with whom she works” (Emechta 1974: 51).

They talk about books and being black. Adah especially likes Bill, who is a Canadian. They talk about black writers and the beauty of blacks. She came to believe, through reading Baldwin, that black was beautiful. She asked Bill about it and he asked, did she not know that black was beautiful.
Slowly, Adah begins to come to terms with her feelings of inferiority to adjust to the society. She reads women’s magazines to learn about the lives of other women. She also decides to write a book The Bride Price and wants to tell Francis about it, but his response causes much disappointment. Francis said: “you keep forgetting that you are a woman and that you are black. The white man can barely tolerate us men, to say nothing of brainless females like you who could think of nothing except how to breast-feed her baby” (Emecheta 1974: 167). One day Adah comes home and smells the odor of burning paper. She runs inside and asks what Francis has been burning. Francis laughs at her. He feels satisfied at that moment because he has burnt the book Adah has written. In desperation Adah says,

*Bill called that story my brainchild. Do you hate me so much, that you could kill my child? Because that is what you have done. ‘I don’t care if it is your child or not. I have read it, and my family would never be happy if a wife of mine was permitted to write a book like that.’ ‘And so you burnt it?’ ‘Can’t you see that I have?’ (Emecheta 1974: 170).*

Francis becomes happy for not letting her stand on her own feet. He is self-centered, cruel, narrow-minded, and in fact downright venal. Instead of helping Adah to develop the creative potential she obviously has, Francis only proves himself to be an obstacle on her route toward self-improvement. After this event “life with Francis became purgatorial” and she decides to live apart from Francis. So Adah: walked to freedom, with nothing but four babies, her new job and a box of rags. Adah was happy about this; she did not want to see him again, never on this earth. This is the climactic point in Adah’s life.
By writing, Adah discovers her “self”. She understands her strength and with Francis’s burning her manuscript, she finds the power to go on with her life alone and this leads her to her adaptation period. At this particular stage she finds her real identity. Earlier she could not reject her husband and the norms in Nigeria but now she can make her own decisions and she starts a new life in England. Adah obviously understands now that she was totally wrong in looking up to Francis as a source of support; she also realizes that if she wants to succeed both in her creative endeavors and in the rearing of her children she has to take full control of her life.

Emecheta not only focuses on Adah’s but also Francis’ identity problem. When compared with Adah, Francis does not show any change. He continues his life as he used to in Nigeria. He never leaves his own traditions. Instead, he always rejects the norms in England. The only change in him is that he mimics the English by using their language. When he was in Nigeria, he had always consulted his parents and never made a decision by himself. But in England it is different. He has nobody but his neighbors to consult. Francis consults his neighbors, but the little minded neighbors, instead of supporting him for bringing the children to England; for example, they laugh at him. On the other hand, this is not a big problem for Adah because she has plans for her children. She hopes for a better life for her children and she hopes that they would have better life standards in England. But their neighbors insist that they are second-class citizens and they should send their children back to Nigeria. Neighbors say that “Only first-class citizens lived with their children, not the blacks” (Emecheta 1974:47). Francis’s feelings of inferiority continue even after he finds a job. At Christmas he starts working as a postman, but still cannot cope with the racist attitudes of the English:
Those people, the English they did worship their dogs! They love dogs, the English do. Yes they love their dogs, Francis continued, so much so that they would rather the dogs’ butcher black men, than let the black man kill the dog. After all a black man was only a postman, delivering Christmas cards and parcels. (Emecheta 1974: 128)

He accepts these attitudes without protest and attempts nothing to challenge them. He continues behaving as he did in Nigeria and treats Adah as his property: he could hardly ask her how she was feeling, because to him Adah was always his and no illness, no God could take Adah from him, so why bother to ask how she was feeling, when he was sure she would get better anyway? They grow more and more estranged from each other. Because of Francis’s negative attitudes Adah loses her feelings of respect for her husband. She begins to hit him and even bite him. She thinks if that was the language he wanted, well, she would use it. Before she had never treated him badly because she knows that according to the Nigerian traditions she has to treat her husband with respect. But now she has changed and she has learnt to stand on her own feet. It is the Nigerian way of thinking in general. Nigerians think that it is the women who are always at fault and Adah, as a part of that society, has been raised in the same belief. But now she has realized the truth, and she does not want to obey the illogical norms of that society. Adah also knows that she has to be strong in England since she knows that England is a dangerous place to be unhappy in because she has nobody to share her troubles with. She is all alone and this is the fate of all immigrants, because, as Adah suggests that most lonely African students usually had emotional breakdowns because they had no one to share their troubles with.
Adah’s child, Titi also has an identity problem. Titi is described as a “noisy toddler” in Nigeria, but after their arrival in England, Titi stops talking. This event attracts the attention of Adah and one day Titi expresses the reason for not talking. She says, “Don’t talk to me. My Dad will cane me with belt if I speak in Yoruba. And I don’t know much English. Don’t talk to me” (Emecheta 1974:53). This event shows that Titi is really affected by living in England. But Titi is not the only person who is affected. It can be said that Francis is also affected by the conditions in England. He does not even want his daughter to speak in Yoruba. This may be taken as an indication of his feeling ashamed of his roots and he does not want to be considered as a second class citizen because he has a strong connection with his traditions.

By speaking English he wants to be treated as a first class citizen; yet he does not know that he cannot gain it by rejecting his roots. His mimicking and his expecting his children to do the same is an expression of his inferiority and his desire to be like the English. He thinks that by mimicry he and his children can be accepted as a part of the society. But Francis does not show any change at all. Yet it is as if Francis was like the Vicar of Bray. He changed his religion to suit his whims. When he realized that equipping Adah with birth control gear would release her from the bondage of child-bearing, Francis went Catholic.

When he started failing his examinations, and was feeling very inferior to his fellow Nigerians, he became Jehovah’s Witness. Francis is an irresponsible spouse who, deliberately tries to inject a feeling of inferiority into her and, when all that fails, he tries to deprive her of what she values most—her children and her potential to become a writer. Although Adah has contributed to her self-education a lot in England, Francis has done nothing for himself. Adah’s self-education makes her understand the difference between her and Francis easily. In her happiness she forgot that Francis came from another culture, that he was not one
of those men who would adapt to new demands with ease, that his ideas about women were still the same. To him, a woman was a second-class human, to be slept with at any time, even during the day, and, if she refused, to have sense beaten into her until she gave in; to be ordered out of bed after he had done with her; to make sure she washed his clothes and got his meals ready at the right time. By the end of the novel Adah demonstrates that in order to become both the good writer and independent human being that she hopes to become, she has to free herself from the exploitative relationship between herself and Francis, create her own identity and, in general, try to understand human relationships better. Thus in the end, Adah asserts her independence in a way which shows that she is now ready to be in complete control of her own and her children’s lives.

Adah is always respectful towards her husband. But Francis does not understand this respect and all the time tries to humiliate her. He does not want his wife to be a true individual. He thinks that she does not have any right to be free; he wants to oppress her with his words or with his attitudes. But when Francis burns the manuscript, Adah cannot bear this and she decides to start a new life. She reaches self-realization and understands that Francis has always prevented her from reaching her potential. Second Class Citizen is a novel of personal development and it is: quite successful in the depiction of Adah’s growth from the initial stage of naiveté and ignorance to her final stage of self-realization and independence.

This Chapter has explored the alienation of Bessie Head's protagonists and their quest to attain psychic wholeness. A Question of Power is Elizabeth's journey into her soul. She experiences a progressive madness and loses her psychic balance, which she must at all costs regain in order to survive. She discovers her unconscious fears and hopes through dreams, nightmares and hallucinations. Elizabeth's quest enables her to cope with several psychological problems and
alienating aspects of herself, but not all of them, and at the end she regains only a
temporary mental equilibrium. Head explores the question of alienation and
mental balance from several angles because it is her own quest she is recording
and analyzing; her writings are somewhat of a fictionalized versions of her
problems. The realistic aspect of Head's novels is therefore questioned and her
three novels are more a reflection of Head's needs and fears rather than reality. Her
three novels are all inspired by her life and the basis of the stories are taken from
her own experiences. Thus the solutions she suggests for attaining psychic
wholeness differ from one novel to another and there is an obvious evolution in
her philosophy and way of thinking.

In *A Question of Power*, the external environment is secondary and
madness comes from psychological problems. It is important to keep in mind that
Head probably suffered from neurosis and that she realized that people around her
were not the only ones responsible for her problems. Head then focused only on
herself and explored her own psyche. She examined her consciousness and the
repressed memories and wishes hidden in her unconscious. However, the reader
soon realizes, through the character of Elizabeth that Head's disintegration derives
from sociological trauma. Head not only suffered from apartheid in South Africa,
but she also accepted as true the racial and sexual prejudices of both races and,
considering her already existent mental illness, it only aggravated her trauma.
There are many subjects that still need to be explored; they were beyond the scope
of this study. They include a more detailed examination of the parallels between
the author's life and her work, a study of how realistic her characters are and the
function of the fairy-tale structure in her novels.

In Buchi’s *Second class citizen*, the long-going-war Adah comes out as the
winner. She has fought with Francis during her stay in England, and with the
inferiority that has been injected into her. She has tried to be a good mother for her
children and a good wife for her husband. At first she has rejected the norms in England. All the time she has made a comparison between England and Nigeria. Things in England sometimes shock her and sometimes she gets used to the things in England. She has sometimes rejected and sometimes accepted the things going on in England. But she has never given up her fight. There has never been a person to support her. She has been all alone and alienated ever since her arrival in England, she has failed to learn how to behave and what to do in a foreign land. She, at first, could not decide whether things in her mind are true or not. Back in Nigeria she grew up knowing that the English people welcomed immigrants. But starting from her first day in England, she learnt the reality, that English people have racist attitudes. Thus she has had problems in accepting and adapting herself to the society. So this has led her to have an identity problem.

But at last she has learnt to cope with every single problem. She gets used to the norms in England. Finally she adjusts to the society and is accepted by some white people at work. She has gone through different stages. At first she cannot adapt herself and she rejects almost everything in the society. Then she begins to accept the things in England. Finally, she can create a new identity and overcome her adaptation problems all by herself. She becomes a true individual at last. She is now a victor and she can stand on her own feet. She learns to accept the society as it is and also learns to live like the English people and soon she gets used to the things in England and adapts herself to the English way of life.

On the other hand, when Francis is examined, it can be said that Francis does not change. In the novel he works as an opponent to Adah. All the time he rejects the things in England and makes no attempt to adapt himself to the society. He has chosen to accept that he is inferior or is an exile in England. He has not gone beyond the stage of mimicry. As a result, it can be said that he cannot get over his problem of identity. He chooses to live as a mimic man but Adah
becomes successful in her fight with the outside world and makes England her home and thus gains her identity. So in the immigrant experience it is the woman who succeeds finding a place of belonging, a real home and building a secure sense of self-identity.