

## **Language, Power, and Ideology: A Critical Linguistic Study of Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather***

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**ABSTRACT:** *The paper examines language as a discourse mode of communicating the modulations and dimensions of power in Bessie Head's When Rain Clouds Gather. The paper explores the relationship between power and language in social relationships in the narrative. The focus of the essay is on the shifting dimensions of power in social encounters. The paper adopts a critical linguistic study (CLS) to underpin how power and consciousness permeate the narrative. The theoretical model draws from the works of Roger Fowler and Norman Fairclough. By adopting these models of analyses the essay demonstrates that particular modal structures are highlighted in the speeches and actions of the characters to reveal consciousness. There is lack of comprehensive study of modal structures and how they implicate power and ideology using critical linguistic study approach in the criticism of narrative fiction in Africa. The aim of the paper is to highlight how linguistic structures are used to transmit diverse ideological orientations, and the types of linguistic structures that predominate in the construction of different social realities. The major finding is that in the narrative, language is the mechanism of asymmetrical power relations which reveals the relationship between power, language and ideology. The paper concludes by revealing that subordinate groups acquire power through consciousness and agency, and through this resist and overcome the constraining actualities of the domination and oppression of the dominant power wielders.*

**KEY WORDS:** domination; power; agency; ideology; consciousness; language.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Bessie Head's narrative, interrogates the relationship among language, power and ideology in social discourse. These interconnections are highlighted in modal and linguistic structures. A critical linguistic analysis of the language of the novel reveals the technique through which Head ties the issues of power, language, agency and ideological consciousness that undercuts the narrative. The study adopts the gains of critical linguistic study of linguistic structures developed by Roger Fowler and his associates and the critical language study (CLS) developed by Norman Fairclough in *Language and Power*, in order to examine the relationships among power, language

and ideology. These two methods will show how the linguistic and discourse structures reveal how power and ideology interact in language.

Power operates at the base of social interactions and communication events. Some people choose to ignore how power emits in language, though it has received attention in the works of social theorists like Michel Foucault and Jürgen Habermas who dwelt on the social dimension of utterances. Foucault's contextualization of power is important in the theory of language, power and ideology. Foucault sees power as a "strategy" and a technique of manipulating discourse. Foucault opines that power is "not conceived as a property, but as a strategy" (qtd. in Bouguesri, 67). What is commonly observed in social discourse is the neglect some analysts give to communication.

Social theorists have stressed that language is the means through which power is exerted and resisted since it is not always the privilege of the powerful, because power fluctuates from one person to another as the circumstances change. Bouguesri argues that the strategies are "an effect that manifests and sometimes renews the position of those who are dominated" (67). Fowlers et al argue that the language we use embodies "specific views... of reality" because speakers use language differently in social contexts to capture social experiences (1).

Linguistic structures reflect and activate the nature of interpersonal relationships because language use emits the ascribed social level of the participants. Linguistic structures are the tools on the axis of power because Fowler et al argue that it "plays a part in the control of members of subordinated groups by members of dominant groups" (2). The control referred to is effected by social regulations by creating what they call a "natural world." The "natural world" is what generates inequality in the society and this is what encodes power in the structure of language (Fowler et al 2).

In Head's narrative, power is structured according to what Norman Fairclough calls a "hierarchical relations of domination and subordination" because language is a tool in the manipulation of the consent of the dominated (13). The interconnection among language, power and ideology is important in modern conceptualization of ideology. Louis Althusser argues that "What art makes us *see* and therefore gives us is a form of *seeing, perceiving* and *feeling*... the ideology from which it is born, in which it battles... to which it alludes" (222). For Paul Simpson ideology is "the way in which what we say and think interacts with society" (5). Ideology operates in both spoken and written discourses. The question arises: how does an ideology become powerful or dominant? Dominant ideologies are mediated and passed across through the habits of behaviour of powerful groups, their social practices, institutions and agencies whereas less dominant ideologies interact with the habits of the 'commoners' who are less socially important. Fairclough opines that "ideology is pervasively present in language..." and can be interpreted as a mechanism of power..." and language "contributes to existing power relations" (3, 12, 77).

It is important to contextualize the place of agency in this work. Agency is the conscious preparation of oneself or group for growth. Agency ensures the distribution of power because

access to resources is determined by rules and social practices. Bouguesri argues that the principle of distribution gives agency actors access to resources, power and authority over others (69).

The approach adopted in this study requires a precise explanation of modality. Paul Simpson calls modality the “‘attitudinal’ features of language,” as well as the grammatical means for conveying modal commitment...” (47). Modality describes how the identity and worldview of the speaker is embodied in his language use. Fowler opines that:“Modality is the grammar of explicit comment, the means by which people express their degree of commitment to the truth-value of the proposition they utter, and their views on the desirability or otherwise of the states of affairs referred to” ( *Linguistic Criticism*131).

Roger Fowler opines that modality examines an utterance and the relationship between the speakers and the social situation (*Linguistics and the Novel* 13). Fowler captures this social attitude that circulates in language when he states that “There is a dialectical interrelationship between language and social structure” (“How to See through Language...” 216).

The Critical linguistic study adopted in this paper is similar to critical language study (CLS) developed by Norman Fairclough. These approaches seek to show the connections which may be hidden from people in discourse situations. The focus of CLS is mainly upon the unexpected effects of linguistic and modal structures in communication encounters, as well as the need to understand the unexpected effects of linguistic structures in utterances.

The plot structure of Bessie Head’s *When Rain Clouds Gather* revolves on the actions of two emigrants: Gilbert Balfour who emigrated from England to Botswana to improve the technique of food and animal production, and Makhaya Maseko, a black South African refugee who fled the hostile segregation South African society in search of freedom in Botswana. Gilbert’s desire to economically empower the rural poor makes him to return back to England where he took up a Diploma in Agriculture and armed with his learning, he returned to Botswana to start improved farming methods in Golema Mmidi.

When Makhaya crossed the borders of South Africa into Botswana he meets old Dinorego near the police station. Dinorego invites him to his house and introduced him to Gilbert Balfour. Gilbert employs Makhaya to assist him improve crop and animal production among the rural farmers because he is educated and can easily communicate his ideas to the rural poor. This collaboration inspires Makhaya and gives him the peace and freedom he is looking for to improve the condition of the black poor. Together they organized the women and the cattlemen into cooperative cattle production. This threatens sub-chief Matenge who want them removed from the country on the pretense that Gilbert is using a refugee to destroy his territory and reports Makhaya to the police officer, George Appleby-Smith to have Makhaya deported. However, Paramount Chief Sekoto’s and Matenge’s plan fail because George Appleby-Smith has a lot of respect for the work Gilbert is doing among the rural poor and procures a resident permit for Makhaya, making it difficult to remove him. This development throws Matenge into panic as he plans ways of removing both Gilbert and Makhaya from the country because the poor of Golema Mmidi who he holds in

contempt have embraced Gilbert's ideas and Gilbert has destroyed his speculative cattle business which he uses to exploit the poor.

There is unease in Golema Mmidi because of drought and the cattlemen were losing their herds at the cattle posts in the bush. At this time, Gilbert and Makhaya through the help of the widow, Paulina Sobeso was organizing the women to cooperatively engage in tobacco farming and building of dams for cattle rearing. The farmers embraced this project and saw it as a means of saving the poor who have been oppressed by the ruling household of the chiefs. The grief stricken cattlemen return home in search of water to see what they could salvage of their cattle, and learned of the project. They were happy and all joined the cooperative farming. Paulina was not immune to this tragedy, as her son, Isaac was in the lonely cattle post with her cattle. When the boy did not return home, Gilbert, Makhaya and Paulina decided to go to the cattle post to see if the boy and the cattle were well. At the cattle post they found that the boy and the entire animal had died, and what remained of the boy was a heap of bones. Makhaya pleads with Gilbert to take Paulina home and bring the police man and the doctor so that they could confirm the cause of death. When Gilbert returned with the doctor and the police officer, the doctor examined the heap of bones of the dead boy and confirmed that he had died of malnutrition. Makhaya burned the bones and took the ashes to Paulina for burial.

On hearing that Paulina's son had died at the cattle post and buried without his permission, Matenge decided to persecute Paulina by summoning her to court for prosecution. On hearing Paulina's invitation to court, all the women working with Paulina in the farm; all the grieving cattlemen decided to accompany Paulina to court to confront Matenge.

Sighting the people of Golema Mmidi in the compound, Matenge ran into his inner room and hanged himself. The narrative ends with Gilbert's wedding to Maria and Makhaya's proposed marriage to Paulina signally the triumph of freedom and progress over ruthless power and domination.

A analysis of the language of the novel reveals the issues of power, language, ideology that dominates the narrative. Makhaya's quest for freedom and liberty opens the narrative:

His reasons for leaving were simple: he could not marry and have children in a country where black men were called 'boy,' and 'dog' and 'kaffir.' The continent of Africa was vast without end and he felt like moving out of a part of it that was mentally and spiritually dead... I might like it here, was his last thought before falling into a deep, exhausted sleep (Head;11,ch. 1)

The language of the passage depicts a society of unequal social status between black men and white men. Makhaya's consciousness does not accept this inequality that dehumanizes black people. The deictic adverb 'where' foregrounds the oppressive environment of the South African where black people are not recognized as human beings. Repelled by such environment, Makhaya immigrated to Botswana in search of peace and freedom from social restrictions. This is revealed

in the clause structure. The clause: “I might like it here,” contains Makhaya’s own voice, a device through which he questions the type of future South Africa holds for him or his immediate family, hence his quest for exile is based on the respect to his individual identity. The clauses are relayed by modal structures that highlight a pattern of restriction, inequality and domination based on race. Modal nouns like ‘boy,’ ‘dog’ and ‘kaffir’ show the toxic social relationships between black and white people in South Africa. The social context of the narrative captures the atmosphere of domination and restriction in South Africa.

Makhaya’s quest for freedom is constantly threatened by the South African police and their patrol van that deprives black people of liberty. This is why Fairclough describes power as an instrument of deprivation (4). Makhaya’s quest for freedom is a desire to escape from the oppressive society. It is within this context of his desire for freedom that his conversation with the old man in whose hut he stayed after crossing the South African border fence into Barolongs border village of Botswana becomes significant. The old man asked him: “Why was the young man here? What was he fleeing from? (Head; 3, ch. 1).

In response, Makhaya replied: ““Oh, Papa... ‘I just want to step on free ground... I want to feel what it is like to live in a free country and *then maybe some of the evils in my life will correct themselves*”” (Head;4, ch.1, emphasis mine).The italicized parts of the clause are words of ‘estrangement’ framed to emphasize Makhaya’s feelings and quest for freedom. The adverb of proximal location ‘here’ is used to express “physical proximity to the speaker’s quest (Simpson *Language, Ideology and Point of View* 13). In the clause structure: “What is he fleeing from,?” the locative verb “fleeing” identifies the relative position between the addresser, the old man and Makhaya. It points to the problematic social situation that distresses the addressee, hence “fleeing” can be described as a directional verb that signals a movement towards the object of physical quest. The word “fleeing,” refers to the South African society that inhibits healthy social relationships. This is reinforced in the conversation between Old Dinorego and Makhaya when the old man invites Makhaya to his house. Dinorego initiates the conversation when he asks Makhaya:

‘Where do you come from?’

‘South Africa,’ Makhaya said.

The old man shook his head. ‘That terrible place,’ he said.

‘The good God don’t like it. This is God’s country.’ ( Head; 16, ch. 1)

Dinorego uses the demonstrative pronoun ‘this’ to contrast the condition of life in South Africa with the social condition of peace and freedom in Botswana. The proximal deictic ‘this’ is contrasted with the distal deictic ‘that’ which refers to South Africa. The deictic sets identify the centres of reference. The deictic ‘that’ refers to South Africa, whereas ‘this’ is a proximal deictic that locates Dinorego’s Botswana.

Dinorego’s invitation of Makhaya to his house in Golema Mmidi marks another chapter in Makhaya’s quest for freedom and fulfillment. In Dinorego’s house, the old man introduced him to Gilbert Balfour, a British immigrant.

Dinorego tells Makhaya: “A Batswana man thinks like this: “If there is a way to improve my life, I shall do it.”(Head; 20-21, ch. 2). This agency role of the people of Botswana aligns with Gilbert’s consciousness that seeks for social improvement of the poor. This quest meets strong opposition in the Paramount chief Sekoto, the administrative head of the territory and his younger brother, sub-chief Matenge:

At first the young man’s ideas caused the chief acute discomfort, especially his habit of referring to the *poor as though they were his blood brothers*... But halfway through the interview, *a beaming smile lit up the chief’s face*. He would put this *disturbing* young man in Golema Mmidi, and if he could survive a year or more in the bedlam his brother Matenge would raise, that would be more than proof of his sincerity. One thing he was sure of- either the young man would be *completely* destroyed, or he could *completely* destroy his brother, he wanted his brother *destroyed* for all the family *feuds* and *intrigues* he had *instigated*.( Head19-20, ch. 2, emphasis mine)

The words in italics are modal structures that interpret chief Sekoto’s attitude towards the poor, Gilbert and Matenge. Chief Sekoto’s attitude is shaped by high-value modality words: ‘disturbing,’ ‘completely destroyed’ and ‘could completely destroy his brother.’ This brings out his ideology of hatred towards the poor, Gilbert and his brother. The demonstrative pronoun ‘that’ shows that Gilbert’s ideas are a threat to the paramount chief and his position of power, hence he wants the young man “completely destroyed.” The linguistic structures which relay his thoughts are modal words that bring out feelings. The combination of the proximal demonstrative pronoun “this” and the verb “disturbing” used as adjective are words which encode visual perspectives of chief Sekoto, especially his attitudes and feelings towards the poor, Gilbert and Matenge.

It is Gilbert who opens the conversation during his first meeting with Makhaya. Gilbert tells Makhaya: “I like it here,” he said. ‘I’m running away from England. You know what England’s like? It’s full of nice, orderly queues, and everybody lines up in these queues for a place and position in the world. ‘I let all that go hang and hopped out”’( Head;27-28, ch. 2). Gilbert’s utterance is a question that requested information from Makhaya, thereby soliciting for his participation in the discourse. The question functions as a strategy to initiate a conversation, however, the question can be construed as an attempt to control the conversation because he proceeds to provide answers to his questions and gives Makhaya no space to reply. The preceding answers: “It’s full of nice, orderly queues...,” is an answer that hints at Gilbert’s increasing sense of independence that leads to dissatisfaction with his society. The effect of this utterance reinforces the categorical assertion: “I like it here.” This assertive utterance provides the reason for Gilbert’s emigration to Botswana. The first-person pronoun ‘I’ combines with the proximal adverb of location “here” to signal his preference. The verb “running” suggests movement away from the centre of conflict, whereas the distal adverb “away” contrasts with the proximal deictic ‘here,’ an adverb of location that is synchronous with the time of the utterance. Having established tokens of good relationship, he asks Makhaya: “what exactly are you running away from?”(Head;28, ch. 2). In response, Makhaya declared: “It’s not so much what I’m running away from... . ‘It’s what

I'm trying to run into. I want a wife and children... 'I want some part of myself to go on when I die...'"( Head;28, ch. 2).

Makhaya's utterances are marked: "...what I'm running away from" and "'what I'm trying to run into;'" are clauses that express his attitude towards his society. His utterance reveals the harsh social reality that would make exile necessary. Thus "running away from" and "trying to run into" are epistemic forms that refer to his troubled relationship with his society and indicates the wishes of the speaker which convey the degree of his commitment towards his quest.

Gilbert's project of improving both crop and animal production includes asking the people of Golema Mmidi to end the land tenure system which the chiefs and the rulers have used to limit the expansion of opportunities for the common people by advocating individual ownership of land. This is at the centre of chief Matenge's opposition to Gilberts work among the poor:

Chief Matenge aware that he was about to lose his lucrative cattle-dealing business with the villagers, grabbed onto the fencing of the farm and cattle ranch to convince the villagers of Gilbert's evil intentions towards them. In alarm, the villagers called a meeting and sent a deputation of old men to Gilbert. ( Head;35, ch. 3)

The passage is a judgment in which Matenge is presented in his economically exploitative motives. The syntax of the first sentence captures his socio-economic greed: "his lucrative cattle-dealing business..." hence his relationship with the people is determined by personal economic benefits. The words show his desire to exploit which is in sharp contrast with Gilbert's ideology. The honesty of Gilbert's language puts the villagers at ease: "Was it true, they wanted to know that Gilbert had in reality *secretly purchased land from the paramount chief and was using the name of cooperatives to enslave the people? That was what chief Matenge had told them*" (Head;35, ch.3). The italicized section is Matenge voice in which he uses the language to manipulate the villagers.

In contrast, Gilbert answers using language devoid of tricks. His choice of words is important in refuting Matenge's lies and desire to economically exploit poor: "No, Gilbert had replied, he was not proposing an alternative to the tribal land tenure system. He believed that cooperative organization was similar to communal ownership of land, and he felt that progress could be achieved if enclosed grazing land, farm machinery... marketing societies were the responsibilities of the members (Head;35, ch. 3).

Gilbert uses persuasion and politeness in his response to the villagers. Therefore, he uses persuasive discourse to refute Matenge's accusations.

Chief Matenge's contempt for the 'commoner' is noticed when Makhaya in the company of Dinorego visits Matenge to report his presence as advised by George Applby-Smith. When they got to Matenge's home, Dinorego politely bowed his head and greeted him. The narrative voice informs: "His greeting was dismissed with a slight gesture of his head, which contained in it an

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inheritance of centuries of contempt for the ordinary man” (Head;65, ch. 5).The language highlights Matenge’s lack of politeness strategies in his social relationship. His gesture is a clear lack of phatic communion with people and his bent towards asymmetrical social relationship.

Because of his desire to continually manipulate the poor and control their lives, Matenge planned to influence the colonial authorities to remove Makhaya from Botswana on the pretext that he is a refugee. However, the police officer told him that Makhaya’s removal was at the discretion of the chief immigration officer, Major Ross. Then Matenge proceeded to the immigration office to influence Major Ross to order for Makhaya’s removal:

... Matenge took it upon himself to drive the three hundred miles down to the immigration headquarters, *perhaps* hoping to influence the decision concerning Makhaya’s removal...  
But the major hummed and hawed a bit and... then dropped a *bombshell*.  
‘Makhaya Maseko... ‘Ah... We *found* out that he *qualified* for residence and *granted* him a residence permit yesterday. (Head; 74,emphasis, mine)

Major Ross looked at the case on its merit and granted Makhaya the residence permit. The second-person pronoun when combined with the past tense verb *found* functions as an epistemic modality that conveys Major Ross’s assertion. Matenge’s trick to have Makhaya removed is conveyed by the epistemic modal adverb ‘perhaps.’ The modal lexical verbs (found, qualified and granted) incorporate some justification for Major Ross’s commitment to the truth of his utterance.

Because of the failed attempt to have Makhaya removed: ‘Matenge was struck down with a severe attack of high blood pressure... and during this one month a number of *rapid changes* took place in Golema Mmidi and at the farm’ (Head;75, ch. 5, emphasis mine). Makhaya’s consciousness articulates the liberation of the ‘common people,’ as he tries to understand: ‘...why so many people could be *persecuted by so few* and *why so many starved* while *a few had more than they could eat*’ (Head;82, ch. 6, emphasis mine). The action encoded in Makhaya’s consciousness displays a power of action realized through lexical verbs that give a visual image of economic domination, power and powerlessness. The modal lexical verbs (persecuted, starved) describe his thoughts, feelings and perceptions through a set of *verba sentiendi*. The utterance is attributed to Makhaya’s psychological denunciation of Matenge’s economic exploitation of the poor which is mainly conveyed through epistemic expression (‘why so many people could be persecuted by so few,’ and ‘why so many starved while so few had more than enough to eat’). This awakened a new perception about selfless love in the narrative. This ideology is rephrased by Maria, when she informs Mma Millipede that Gilbert wants to marry her.

This conversation ensued between Mma Millipede and Maria when the old woman asked her:  
‘Are you sure you want to marry, my child,?’ she asked, kindly.

The young girl shrugged, helplessly. ‘*I don’t know my own mind, Mama... I don’t know what I want. You must help me.*’



‘But you must help yourself with your understanding, my child.... As you know, we all live in a world that is full of danger’.

Maria stared meditatively... ‘I thought so too, Mama... *I don't care about myself*, but nothing must harm Gilbert.’ (Head; 91, ch. 6)

There is a feeling of feminine solidarity from the older woman. Mma Millipede’s question and Maria’s answers are in Direct Speech (DS). This form brings out the thoughts and feelings of the two women. Mma Millipede’s thought comes out in the Direct Speech form: “‘Are you sure you want to marry...’”

The conversation takes the pattern of question and answer sequence. This technique brings about an intrusion into the mind of Maria and her selfless love for Gilbert. Maria’s epistemic expressions (‘I don’t know my own mind,’ and ‘I don’t care about myself.’) are modal words that reveal her state of uncertainty and naivety which marks her ideology of selfless service in her relationship with Gilbert. Modal lexical verbs of perception (‘I don’t know,’ ‘I don’t care’) are used to relay a form of self-sacrifice which is a key proposition of her commitment to marry Gilbert. This is the ideology that threatens Matenge’s ‘cunning’ and ‘cruel mind.’

The issue of race as a tool of power is the subject of the conversation between Makhaya and a group of women led by Paulina Sobeso when they came to the farm to take lessons on how to cultivate Turkish tobacco. During the lesson the women asked him:

‘*Tell us about your country*’, they said.

‘But it’s just like yours... There are people there and the same kind of stars.’

‘*But our country isn’t the same as yours... You have electricity and water and we don’t.*’

‘*I don’t know anything about the water and electricity,*’ he said.

‘Why...’

‘*It belongs to the white man at present... He’ll tell you so if you go there....*’ (Head; 115, ch. 8, emphasis mine)

The women initiate the exchange by asking a question to him in the hope to build a good social relationship. Makhaya’s response indicates acceptance of friendship, but his response does not satisfy the request of the addressees, hence the next initiation which is problematic to the face of Makhaya (... You have electricity and water and we don’t.’). This utterance appears to ‘threaten’ the face of the addressee because it touches on the issue of social encroachment based on race in South Africa. It is the racial inequality and the social impingements on his right that made exile necessary. The utterance (‘I don’t know... about the *water and electricity*’), communicates the nature of social impingements that constitute face threatening acts of the white man to the growth of black people in South Africa.

For Makhaya, oppression of black people in South Africa is tantamount to a life of living death and he want to be no part of this kind of life, hence he prefers a life of freedom and loneliness

Golema Mmidi offers: “It was he, Makhaya, the individual who was seeking his own life because he was fearful of the living death a man was born into...” (Head;142,ch. 9).

His utterance stems from the clarity of his motives and his relationship with Gilbert for the liberation of the poor from poverty to economic empowerment. Makhaya’s consciousness is dominated by his quest for economic prosperity, wealth and socioeconomic growth of the African poor:

The ideology that projects the actions of Gilbert and Makhaya, are driven by the economic empowerment of the ‘commoners.’ The cattlemen appreciated their work. This appreciation is the subject of discourse of Dinorego when he addressed Gilbert and Makhaya in the presence of the grieving cattlemen concerning the work they are doing in their community: “‘we *can progress* too, even though *we are uneducated men*. The mind of *an uneducated man works like this: he is a listener and a believer... The uneducated man has been condemned for many years by the authorities*” (Head;161, ch. 10, emphasis mine). Dinorego’s utterance centres on the need for social emancipation of the ‘uneducated man’ by embracing the ideology of economic empowerment. The major presupposition that emerges from Dinorego’s utterance is the social emancipation of the ‘uneducated man’ and to use their social experiences for their social emancipation.

Through modal words he expresses the commitment that identifies with the social emancipation of the ‘commoner.’ The clause that captures Dinorego’s views of official oppression is: “... ‘The uneducated man has been condemned for many years by the authorities.’” This social emancipation consciousness dominates Makhaya’s worldview concerning Gilbert’s improvement of the social condition of ‘commoners’: ‘... He also needed the men near the food growing areas where beef production and food production could be combined’(Head,162, ch. 10). This desire to economically empower the ‘commoners’ pose a serious threat to Matenge ‘cunning and cruel mind,’ because it is geared towards the economic empowerment of the ‘commoners.’

The consequence of the drought in Golema Mmidi is that the whole village comes to embrace Gilbert’s plan of improved crop and animal production. The reaction of the villagers to his plan to help arrest the immediate problem of the drought is quite emphatic. Gilbert asked them: “Could a twenty-eight mile fence be erected for a cattle-holding ground... .Of course, they said. And the men *were prepared* to pool their labour for the *big job*, but *right now* they *were sorting* out how to keep alive *what cattle they had left*” (Head;82, ch. 12, emphasis mine).

Gilbert’s question to the cattlemen has features of free indirect discourse (FID), describing his thoughts on how to arrest the immediate problem of the drought. This view of the solution to the drought receives general acceptance. The deictic adverb ‘*Of course*’ indicates and transmits the ‘commoners’ respect and acceptance of the message. The modal auxiliary (*were*) in verbs like (*prepared, sorting*) captures Gilbert’s obligation towards the cattlemen. The deictic adverb *now* shows commitment to the actions presupposed by the cattlemen.

It is in the midst of these activities for self-survival organized by Paulina that Matenge's messenger arrives to tell her: "I am sent to bring you to court. The chief has a case"(Head,183,ch.12).

The messenger's utterance highlights the distant social relationship between Paulina and Matenge. Matenge's summons of Paulina to court at this moment of grief in Golema Mmidi awakened the consciousness of the villagers to all the social restrictions they had endured in the hands of Matenge and led the commoners to resolve to resist him:

Paulina's friend *stepped* into the yard that moment and straight away *decided* to accompany Paulina to the court case. Along the way they *picked* up Maria, then Dinorego, and Mma- Millipede. The news *travelled swiftly* from hut to hut, and men and women *immediately set* down their chores for the day and *made* their way to the village centre. They *were even excited* in a silent way as though they *had known* this day *would arrive* when they would *all face their oppressor of many years*. (Head; 184, ch. 12, emphasis mine)

The moment Golema Mmidi stood up and confronted Matenge is significant because it marked a moment of their resistance and acquisition of power. The modal lexical verb presents their social action to morally confront Matenge's oppression and greed. The use of the deictic adverb of time *when* seems to reflect an attitude of resistance and exercise of power. It is this exercise that shows that power is dyadic.

As Matenge loses grip on socioeconomic power to the 'commoners,' he wept and the people realized that the power they now wield over their adversary was the real power and their dual voice implicates the irony of Matenge's loss of socioeconomic power in their village:

*Why did he cry?* The greatest moments of his life *had been when he had inflicted suffering* on his fellow men. People *were* not people to him but things he *kicked* about... *to break, banish* and *destroy* for his entertainment.

*Was he crying now because, for the first time in his life, he was feeling what it must be like to face a tomorrow without any future?* They *weren't going to tolerate* a man like him any longer *because he would not give way* nor understand that they needed cooperation from the man at the top....(Head;185- 186, ch. 12, emphasis mine)

The centre of consciousness here is the 'dual voice.' The two sentences that bring out the dual consciousness are ('Why did he cry?' and 'Was he crying now because for the first time in his life, he was feeling what it must be to face a tomorrow without any future?'). These two sentences are examples of FID which reflect the 'commoners' voice and their consciousness that indicts Matenge's economic exploitation. This 'dual voice' provides a picture of Matenge's physical and psychological collapse due to the people's resistance.

The people's collective will to resist Matenge's persecution of Paulina drove him to commit suicide by hanging himself on a rafter inside his mansion. His elder brother, chief Sekoto is aggrieved not so much by his brother's death, but by his suicide because of the scandal it would

bring to the family. As chief Sekoto wanted to go and arrange a casket after he was informed by the police officer he met his secretary on his way home and told her:

“‘Pule,’ he said in a somber voice. ‘Please order a coffin. Put it in the truck. *I’ll have to go to Golema Mmidi as brother has just died of a heart attack*’” (Head,189, ch. 12).

Chief Sekoto’s utterance to his secretary emits power and implicates unequal social relationship between the addresser and the addressee. The utterance imposes a negative face to the addressee, by demanding a particular service to be provided by the addressee. However, the request adopts a positive politeness strategy (‘please’). It is an explicit order using this strategy, because Chief Sekoto considers himself to have made an order to impose some services on the addressee. Simpson argues that this type of utterance realizes what he calls ‘two negative politeness strategies’ (Simpson, “Politeness Phenomena...”181). This is because it implicates some form of “deference” on the part of chief Sekoto, he humbles himself by not explicitly making an order, yet Pule understands the utterance to be an order and complies. Besides, the sentence admits some impingement by his refusal to place an explicit order to the addressee. The positive politeness minimizes the impingement on the negative face of the addressee. He proceeds to repair the encroachment on his personality by making a kind of “reassurance” to the addressee ( *“I’ll have to go to Golema Mmidi as brother has just died of a heart attack”*).The reassurance of the impingement on the face of Chief Sekoto renders the use of the polite term “please” incongruous and restores the power relationship that marks the utterance.

Then he begins to reflect on what could propel Matenge’s death:

*But a suicide in a chief’s house? Oh, oh, oh. It would go down in history... it was a question mark before life. As though his brother had suffered because he had wanted more things than a man should desire for one life and then life itself had frustrated all these desires... What else made a man do all the things his brother had done?* (Head, 189-190, ch. 12, emphasis mine)

Chief Sekoto’s consciousness condemns Matenge’s avaricious greed and wickedness. His thoughts and feelings in the opening and closing sentences are his “dual voice” that are represented in FID and implicate his brother’s socioeconomic exploitation of others in his social relationships. There are two voices present in his consciousness; the grieving voice of his brother’s death, and the critical voice that condemns his brother’s social greed. Besides, modal auxiliary verbs modify modal lexical verbs (*had suffered, had wanted, had frustrated*). These lexical verbs characterize Sekoto’s opinion and judgments of Matenge’s greed.

That Matenge is an agent of indigenous oppression and economic exploitation of Africans disturbs Gilbert’s ideological consciousness. Gilbert’s ideological consciousness is guided by his quest for the freedom and prosperity of the poor. This is at the centre of Gilbert’s and Makhaya’s socioeconomic activities.

Makhaya's consciousness merged with Gilbert's philosophy of economic empowerment of the 'ordinary people' in Golema Mmidi: "*He wanted them to show everyone else...how ordinary people could get up and do things for themselves and produce enough for their needs and have some left over for sale*" (Head, 196, ch. 12, emphasis mine). The tone of the language that conveys Makhaya's consciousness is agency for economic empowerment of the poor. The inference that can be drawn from Makhaya's consciousness is the agency of the 'ordinary people' towards their socio-economic empowerment because they must play a significant role in their own economic empowerment. This is the presupposition that directs his actions and aligns with Gilbert's consciousness that merged with the narratorial voice. The second-person pronoun 'He' presents Makhaya's action towards socioeconomic empowerment, yet the narrator uses it to merge with Gilbert's consciousness. The italicized sections are modal linguistic structures that reveal their feelings and thoughts towards the agency which the people must embrace.

It is at this moment that Makhaya felt the need to marry Paulina. The language of their commitment to each other is significant. Paulina opens the dialogue by asking him:

*'Will you have some food?'* He *smiled*. *She was the best of all women he had known...* *'So Much has happened so quickly,'* he said. *'I forgot to ask you if you'd like to marry me. Will you Paulie...* (Head, 199, ch. 12, emphasis mine).

The conversation brings out the elemental love that knits Makhaya's relationship with Paulina. The participants in the conversation share mutual love relationship. First, Paulina in the opening turn in the conversation asks Makhaya an explicit question which bothers on his private social need—eating. The question constitutes a strategically ordered readiness to fulfill the marital needs of Makhaya. Makhaya's obligation to respond and fulfill that emotional need is underscored in his physical reaction (He *smiled*). The effect follows his question (*'I forgot to ask you if you'd like to marry me. Will you Paulie?'*). The question shows that there are no constraints in the social relationship between the speakers because their relationship is based on the mutual elemental feelings of love.

The speech forms of the interlocutors reflect their mutual interests and reciprocal love. The use of the modal auxiliary 'will' shows an endeavour to actualize their wishes of being husband and wife. The FID that marks Paulina's thought represents Makhaya's voice that desires to have a family because he wants a part of him that will exist in the world after he had died. The language of the conversation is the linguistic realization of Makhaya's subconscious wishes. The modal words that are associated with Makhaya and Paulina's consciousnesses reflect the probability of their obligation to be married.

## CONCLUSION

The major argument in this paper can now be restated. The premise that informs this paper is that Bessie Head's novel, *When Rain Clouds Gather* reveals the relationship among language power,

and ideology. The paper interrogates this interconnection, particularly as revealed in social relationships among the characters.

The key observation is that modality and linguistic structures encode diverse ideologies in the narrative. The paper observed that characters in the narrative used language in social situations to encode their dimensions of power and ideological consciousness. Finally, Head's novel interrogates the issues of power, control, ideologies, as well as the devices of social restriction and resistance which are all encoded in the language of the narrative.

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