

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### Background of the Study

Bessie Emery Head is one of African prominent writers in the twentieth century. She wrote novels, poetry, short stories and newspaper articles. Her writings cover many aspects of her personal experiences as a racially mixed person who grows up without a family in the South Africa. They deal with issues of refugees, racialism, African history, poverty, and interpersonal relationships. Her focus is always on the struggles and hardships of life in the postcolonial Africa, such as her novels When Rain Clouds Gather (1968), Maru (1971) and A Question of Power (1974). These three novels are about racism that happens to people in South Africa during the postcolonial era, who are being discriminated by their environment so that it is difficult for them to get a refuge.

I choose When Rain Clouds Gather, Bessie Head's first novel and one of her three major novels, for my thesis. I find this novel interesting to analyze because this novel is based on Bessie Head's experience when she moved to Botswana. I would like to analyze the protagonist of this novel, as "Without characterization, no thesis, no plot, and no setting can develop genuine interest for

a reader or cause him to care what happens, or does not happen, to whom and why” (Shaw 71).

The protagonist of the novel, Makhaya, struggles for equality in his tribe. As an educated person he feels ashamed of the people of his tribe because they like to do terrors of rape, murder, and bloodshed in the city slum. Besides, his tribe gives him bad experiences such as alienation, and disparagement. Makhaya’s struggle to change his way of life make this novel interesting to analyze. Based on that reason, I also intend to find the influence of the family and pressure of the society on the protagonist. I believe that an in-depth analysis of the protagonist in When Rain Clouds Gather would help me to analyze the protagonist’s characteristics.

### **Statement of the Problem**

In order to analyze the topic chosen, I state the problems as follows:

1. How does the author portray the protagonist?
2. What is the purpose of the author in creating such character?

### **Purpose of the Study**

Based on the statement of the problem above, the purpose of the study is:

1. To show how the author portray the protagonist in the novel.
2. To show the purpose of the author in creating such character.

## **Method of Research**

In doing my analysis the method I use is library research. I start the research for this thesis by reading When Rain Clouds Gather as the primary text. I also read and compile some references that are taken from text books and the Internet which can support the analysis. After that, I analyze the novel. Finally, I draw some conclusions based on the analysis.

## **Organization of the Thesis**

My thesis consists of three chapters, which starts with the Abstract, Acknowledgements and Table of Contents. The first chapter is the Introduction which consists of the Background of the Study, the Statement of the Problem, the Purpose of the Study, the Method of Research, and the Organization of the Thesis. The second chapter is the discussion of the protagonist's characteristics in When Rain Clouds Gather. The last chapter is the Conclusion of the discussion. My thesis will end with the Bibliography and the Appendices which presents the Synopsis of the novel and the Biography of the author.