
Exploring Poetic Dwelling in African Prose: Heideggerian Echoes in Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968)

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Abstract

This article delves into the profound exploration of Martin Heidegger's concept of "poetic dwelling" by reinterpreting it through the prism of prosaic artistry, with a specific focus on Bessie Head's seminal work, When Rain Clouds Gather (1968), within the context of postcolonial African literature. Departing from conventional interpretations confined to poetry and Western literary forms, the study elevates prose as a potent medium for encapsulating Heidegger's philosophy of dwelling, extending the discourse beyond Euro-American-centric origins. The analysis meticulously examines Head's narrative strategies, thematic shifts, and symbolic complexity, unraveling the intricacies of "poetic dwelling" embedded in her novel. The protagonist, Makhaya, becomes a vessel for Head's narrative, mirroring her own displacement and facticity as a mixed-race South African woman, exiled writer, and feminist in Botswana. The study contends that postcolonial African prose, exemplified by Head's work, offers a novel lens for interpreting Heidegger's concept, emphasizing its universal nature while acknowledging diverse manifestations across cultures. This perspective aims to enrich the comprehension of Heidegger's 'poetic dwelling' philosophy, expanding its understanding beyond traditional boundaries and shedding light on the intricate representation in world literatures. The article underscores the unique contributions of African literature to the global philosophical and literary canon, urging a reevaluation of ontological dimensions within the vibrant tapestry of African prose.

Keywords: Martin Heidegger, 'Poetic Dwelling,' Prosaic Dwelling, African Literature, Bessie Head, When Rain Clouds Gather

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Introduction

In challenging the prevailing notion that poetic dwelling, as expounded by Martin Heidegger, is confined to the realm of poetic expression, this article posits a nuanced perspective. The contention here is that a profound examination of Heidegger's philosophy reveals poetic dwelling as an unfolding of Dasein's truth through the conduit of art, or at the very least, an authentic revelation of what it means to dwell poetically as a Dasein. This study redirects its focus from the poetic to the prosaic, employing Bessie Head's novel, *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968), as a central corpus. The aim is to explore the potential of scrutinizing the understanding of poetic dwelling within a philosophical framework and to establish a meticulous analytical structure that honors the unique sensitivity of the text as an African work. The significance of this study lies in its audacious proposition: postcolonial African prose, epitomized by Head's literary contribution, serves as an innovative lens for interpreting Heidegger's concept of 'dwelling'.

To embark on this exploration, the essay initiates with a comprehensive theoretical and conceptual discussion of Heidegger's ontological work in *Being and Time*, coupled with an examination of his later insights on language, art, and dwelling. Additionally, we will draw upon the insights of other philosophers and thinkers whose perspectives are pertinent to our literary analysis and vision of Head's novel. Once this foundational conceptual groundwork is laid, the subsequent sections will seamlessly transition into a literary demonstration, employing Head's work as an exemplar of the intricacies inherent in poetic dwelling.

1. Martin Heidegger: Ontological Perspectives on Being

Thrownness, Being-with-Others, and Historicity

Falling is not only existentially determinative for Being-in-the-world. At the same time turbulence makes manifest that the thrownness which can obtrude itself upon Dasein in its state-of-mind, has the character of throwing and of movement. Thrownness is neither a 'fact that is finished' nor a Fact that is settled. Dasein's facticity is such that as long as it is what it is, Dasein remains in the throw, and is sucked into the turbulence of the "they's" inauthenticity. Thrownness, in which facticity lets itself be seen phenomenally, belongs to Dasein, for which, in its Being, that very Being is an issue. Dasein exists factically (*Being and Time* 232)

The excerpt from Heidegger's seminal work, *Being and Time*, introduces a foundational assertion that has gained paramount recognition—the proposition that human existence is inherently characterized by *thrownness*. Thrownness stands as the cornerstone around which his ontological enterprise acquires an existential dimension. To be thrown into the world prompts an existential inquiry into the nature of human will and freedom, as well as its inherent limitations, a thematic exploration central to Heidegger's discourse.

The concept of facticity, as articulated by Heidegger, has undergone various interpretations in the diverse translations of *Being and Time*. In essence, facticity embodies Dasein's acknowledgment of the tangible, empirical dimensions of its existence. It encompasses diverse elements and conditions shaping the essence of Dasein, including its corporeal form, societal background, and the historical context within which it is situated.¹ Therefore, being thrown into the world signifies existence imbued with an awareness of 'facticity.' Such an understanding of humans and their experience in this world has led Heidegger to become a prime example of early existentialism. Despite Heidegger's association with the existentialist movement in philosophy, his perspective on the inherent "thrownness" experienced by Dasein diverges from the pervasive

¹ The term "Dasein," as employed consistently by Heidegger in both *Being and Time* and subsequent works, designates the distinctive nature of human existence. Humans, positioned as a singular entity among other entities and objects, undergo a unique mode of Being.

pessimism characterizing existentialist thought, particularly evident in the works of Jean-Paul Sartre.² Heidegger perceives thrownness as an intrinsic quality of Dasein, one that does not pose an inherent problem for Being. On the contrary, to be thrown into the world is to already exist. This ontological nuance remains a point of contention for post-Heideggerian existentialism, persistently grappling with the discourse on freedom and its limitations.

Another dimension of facticity arising from the act of thrownness involves Dasein's encounter with other Daseins. Departing from the existential tradition that ensued after Heidegger's era, particularly concerning the tension between individual will and societal norms, Heidegger introduces a departure. The contemporary societal dilemma, advocating individual autonomy and self-determination, receives scrutiny from Heidegger. He refutes the notion that individuals are self-proclaimed gods, wholly free to dictate their existence. German Hermeneutics, inspired by Heidegger, emphasizes historicity, a theme recurrent in Heidegger's own philosophical endeavors. Within this context, the communal aspect and the realization that Dasein's being manifests in conjunction with that of other Daseins emerges as a foundational affirmation in Heidegger's corpus.³

However, it is imperative to highlight that Heidegger dedicates considerable analysis and attention to scrutinizing Dasein's free will and its limitations within the framework of "authentic" and "inauthentic" Being, particularly in the context of interactions with other Daseins, denoted in Heideggerian parlance as "the-they." A significant challenge arises when Dasein, as an individual entity, encounters other Daseins in communal settings. In such instances, there exists a potential risk of compromising the authenticity of Being in its most elevated and genuine state, yielding to conformity within group structures and societal norms. According to Heidegger, it is within these communal encounters, where Daseins coexist in close proximity, that the phenomenon of "everydayness" comes to the fore. In this milieu, Being assumes a commonplace quality, and Dasein, regrettably, succumbs to an unfulfilled and inauthentic mode of existence. Everydayness, therefore, acts as a constraint on our reflective capacity as Daseins navigating a world replete with untapped "potentialities," thereby fostering an anti-authentic mode of Being.⁴

Simultaneously, it is crucial to recognize the inherent interconnection with the communal sphere. If Dasein isolates itself, exclusively focusing on its individual existence, it gives rise to the dilemma of how Dasein inhabits the world. According to Heidegger's perspective, authentic dwelling

² Jean Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* differs from Heidegger's philosophical concepts, most notably by rejecting Heidegger's conception of authenticity and emphasizing individual freedom, whereas Heidegger contends that authenticity is achieved by accepting one's thrownness and confronting one's facticity. Sartre contends that individuals have radical freedom and bear responsibility for forming their essence by the choices they make. Sartre's existentialism emphasizes people's complete autonomy in defining themselves, in contrast to Heidegger's concept of being in the world and the influence of external causes on human life.

³ Historicity is a central theme in Heidegger's works, from his early book *Being and Time* to his later essays and articles on language, art, and technology. He always acknowledged the historical situatedness of Dasein, his term for human existence. He was influenced by the hermeneutic philosophy of Wilhelm Dilthey, a German thinker who emphasized the role of interpretation in history.

⁴ In *Being and Time*, Heidegger explores the notion of "potentialities" as the ever-changing and limitless dimensions of Dasein's existence, emphasizing the ongoing interaction with numerous possibilities for being. These potentialities, devoid of permanent determination, express themselves as Dasein interacts with the environment, emphasizing the need of authentic engagement while cautioning against blind obedience to cultural customs.

emanates from a profound comprehension of the ongoing dynamics of Being, an understanding inherently intertwined with issues of historicity. Despite Dasein's inherent freedom and its thrownness into the world, its existence is framed within a historical and contextual framework shaped by the history and reality of other Daseins. To outrightly reject this perspective, as contemporary existentialism tends to do, is to deny the fundamental essence of Dasein: a being intrinsically embedded in its historical context.

Dasein Stretched Between “Anxiety” and “Care”

Heidegger argues that Dasein, or human existence, is always torn between its individuality and its community. This tension leads him to introduce two key concepts in his philosophy: “anxiety” and “care.” To understand this dynamic, we need to follow Heidegger's own analysis of the process. He writes,

Conscience manifests itself as the call of care: the caller is Dasein, which, in its thrownness (in its Being-already-in), is anxious about its potentiality-for-Being. The one to whom the appeal is made is this very same Dasein, summoned to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being (ahead of itself ...). Dasein is falling into the “they” (in Being-already-alongside the world of its concern), and it is summoned out of this falling by the appeal. The call of conscience—that is, conscience itself—has its ontological possibility in the fact that Dasein, in the very basis of its Being, is care. (322-23)

Once again, Heidegger confronts us with his idiosyncratic terminology, seeking to situate Dasein as a complex entity with multifaceted functions. The inception of the *Being and Time* project underscores Heidegger's acknowledgment of the formidable task of unveiling the intricate structures at play in the broader process of Being and, more specifically, the unique type of Being endured by Dasein—an existence distinctively human. In response to the enigmatic nature of its own existence, Dasein grapples with two concepts: “care” and “anxiety.” Following Heideggerian tradition, the term “anxiety” diverges from its commonplace usage in our modern lexicon. For Heidegger, anxiety does not stem from fear but from a profound existential realization. Dasein does not fear its existence; rather, it grapples existentially with anxiety about it. To simplify, consider the typical human experience, where existence, though occasionally problematic, seldom prompts a profound questioning of the underlying whys and hows; individuals merely exist in the world. This parallels Heidegger's conceptualization of Dasein—a state of being-there, engaged, and active, where the contemplation of the meaning of its existence takes a back seat to the practicalities of day-to-day life (“everydayness” in Heideggerian terminology).⁵

From the vantage point of Heidegger's philosophy, anxiety emerges as a mode of attunement or emotion unveiling the inherent uncertainty and indeterminacy of Dasein's existence. In contrast to ordinary fear, anxiety lacks a specific target, arising from Dasein's encounter with its potential for non-being, particularly the specter of death. The anxiety emphasized by Heidegger is not born of a fear of Being but of the unexplored “potentialities” intrinsic to such a being and the finitude nature of the horizon within which Dasein grapples with them. Humans often harbor apprehension about the paths not taken and regret missed opportunities, sentiments entwined with the relentless march of Time. In this realm, past, present, and future converge in a harmonious panorama, challenging the modern notion of their separation. While contemporary slogans urge seizing the present, influenced by the philosophy of “Carpe Diem/Seize the Day,” Heidegger observes that in such seizing, Dasein frequently distances itself from introspection into its own Being, consistently leaning towards a futuristic orientation. Dasein's perpetual dynamism renders it a non-static entity, complicating efforts to unveil its truth amid the perpetual shifts and continuous motion it undergoes. On this issue, Heidegger writes,

Thrownness into death reveals itself to Dasein in a more primordial and impressive manner in that state-of-mind which we have called “anxiety”. Anxiety in the face of death is anxiety ‘in the face of’ that potentiality-for-Being which is one's ownmost,

⁵ What I mean is that Dasein is an act that is already engaged with the world; whether or not the concerned Dasein is actively cognizant and authentic about it is irrelevant here.

non-relational, and not to be outstripped. That in the face of which one has anxiety is Being-in-the-world itself. That about which one has this anxiety is simply Dasein's potentiality-for-Being. Anxiety in the face of death must not be confused with fear in the face of one's demise. This anxiety is not an accidental or random mood of 'weakness' in some individual; but, as a basic state-of-mind of Dasein, it amounts to the disclosedness of the fact that Dasein exists as thrown Being towards its end. (295)

Within Heidegger's philosophical framework, the inquiry into death holds profound significance, prompting a brief investigation into the second term he employs besides anxiety, namely, "care" (Sorge). In addressing this, Heidegger articulates,

Being-towards-death is grounded in care. Dasein, as thrown Being-in-the-world, has in every case already been delivered over to its death. In being towards its death, Dasein is dying factually and indeed constantly, as long as it has not yet come to its demise. When we say that Dasein is factually dying, we are saying at the same time that in its Being-towards-death Dasein has always decided itself in one way or another (303)

Heidegger employs care as a term to delineate the second dimension of Dasein's being-in-the-world, specifically its relationship to mortality. As the entity comprehending being, Dasein possesses an awareness of its finite existence and the potentiality of non-being. Rather than inducing fear of death, this awareness prompts reflection on the meaning and significance of life and choices. However, this contemplation begets a fundamental anxiety (Angst) in Dasein, not grounded in any specific threat but in the uncertainty of its future. The unknowns of what transpires after death or the existence beyond the current world contribute to this anxiety, unveiling that Dasein's being and potentialities are perpetually in flux, open to change and transformation. Dasein, in its care for its own being, consistently propels itself towards death—the ultimate limit and horizon of its existence. The temporal structure of Dasein's being, encompassing past, present, and future, unfolds as a progression toward death, the conclusive point in Dasein's temporalization. Heidegger asserts that Dasein's essence is fundamentally care, signifying its continuous expression through possibilities, perpetual projection into the world, and constant attunement to its situation.⁶ Care, as Dasein's essence, serves as the propelling force behind its existential journey.

Dasein, Truth, and Understanding

Dasein, the profound existential presence of human beings, unfolds a dimension of meaning discerned through Heidegger's extensive body of work. Within its earthly existence and spatial context, a truth intrinsic to Dasein's nature and its interactions with other entities emerges. Heidegger encapsulates this profound concept using the term "Truth" (Aletheia). However, the intricacies of this truth are multi-layered, prompting Heidegger to consistently assert that the truth of Dasein and Being as a whole is perennially concealed within the fabric of things and beings. Despite its omnipresence, truth remains elusive in its purest form, obscured by the veil of our "everydayness" and camouflaged within mundane occurrences. The truth of our Being imposes upon us the dual extremes of "anxiety" and "care." In the contemporary world, a multitude succumbs to what Heidegger labels the "present-at-hand" truth about their world, rendering the authentic Truth persistently beyond reach. Simultaneously, Heidegger acknowledges the existence of such a Truth and the potentiality to grasp it. However, in his view, truth is dynamic rather than static, perpetually slipping through our grasp.

⁶ Heidegger employs a technical term to represent this type of projection. He refers to it as "ecstatical projection", which is to elucidate a particular mode of existence and temporal perception inherent in the concept of temporality. The Greek term "ecstasis" signifies transcending oneself or being outside oneself, precisely capturing Heidegger's depiction of Dasein's (human existence) continual forward-facing orientation.

Heidegger posits a primary resolution for approaching this elusive truth through his treatment of “Understanding” in its early hermeneutical stages.⁷

To understand, according to Heidegger, is to interpret and make tangible (disclose) that which is elusive—the Truth. In engaging in such understanding, Dasein partakes in authentic action, the action of “disclosure.” By disclosure, Heidegger refers to the act of unveiling aspects of Truth existing all around us. Art serves as a representative medium where such truth manifests, a topic we will explore shortly. Disclosure, or the unconcealment of truth, must transpire within a spatial context, which Heidegger terms the “clearing” (Lichtung). This space determines the type of truth available for experience by the Beings that “dwell” in that “clearing.” To “dwell” is not merely to exist but to exist authentically as a Dasein. Inauthentic Daseins, entrenched in the mundane “everydayness,” remain oblivious to the tangible, concrete, and transformative nature of the “clearing.” Truth holds transformative power for those authentically pursuing their own nature of Being as Daseins, while inauthentic Daseins persist in unawareness, oblivious to the concealed yet continuously unfolding Truth through disclosure.

Dasein, Truth, and Becoming

In our previous discussion, we have seen how Heidegger’s concept of Dasein, or the being that we are, is intimately related to the space that it inhabits and the way that it dwells in the world. However, this relation is not merely a matter of understanding, but also of transformation. Heidegger argues that understanding, if it is authentic and proper, must lead us to become what our Dasein is meant to be. In this sense, he follows a Nietzschean approach to Being, which emphasizes the creative and dynamic aspect of existence. To achieve this, we need to be aware of our own authenticity, and resist the temptation of falling into the inauthentic modes of being that are imposed by the “present-at-hand” and the “everydayness”. We also need to pursue the disclosure of truth, which is always elusive and hidden, and explore the various potentialities that our existence offers. In doing so, we can become multiple versions of ourselves, and avoid the stagnation and reduction of our facticity to a mere present.

This idea of becoming is echoed by Nietzsche’s famous expression, “No one can build you the bridge on which you, and only you, must cross the river of life”. Heidegger, in his later work, especially in the essay “Building, Dwelling, and Thinking,” develops a similar notion of dwelling as a form of building that enables Dasein to navigate its Being. He illustrates this with the example of a bridge, which, paradoxically, connects and separates at the same time. The bridge, as a product of building, is also an expression of dwelling, which reveals the truth of Dasein’s relation to the world. This truth, however, is not static or final, but dynamic and provisional. It unfolds through disclosure, and then conceals itself again. This makes the task of disclosing the truth a continuous and endless one, which requires perseverance and courage. But it is also a necessary one, for it is only through it that Dasein can become more aware and more authentic of its own Being in the world with other beings and things. Heidegger also emphasizes that this truth is not revealed in isolation, but in relation to the world and society. Dasein is not a solitary being, but a historical and social one, and its dwelling must take place in the open, where it can encounter and interact with others.

Another thinker who shares a similar view of the process of becoming is Carl Jung, the renowned philosopher and psychologist. For Jung, the human psyche is, from the moment of birth, in a constant process of “individuation”, which means learning, growing, developing, and becoming. This process, however, is not under our complete control, but depends on forces that are beyond our conscious will. Jung warns us that denying or ignoring these forces can hinder our progress in the individuation process, and cause us to lose touch with our true self (*Man and His Symbols* 82). In his *Collected Works*, volume ten, Jung asserts that “he who is rooted in the soil endures. Alienation from the unconscious and from its historical conditions spells rootlessness” (106). This shows that Jung, like Heidegger, considers humans to be historical beings who cannot be separated from their historical context. Jung is also famous for his theory of the collective unconscious, which is a layer of the

⁷ For further context, see sections 31-34 from *Being and Time* which are concerned with the issue of understanding and phenomenology.

psyche that contains the archetypes and symbols that are common to all humanity. This theory further supports our claim that Jung's views are relevant to our discussion of Dasein, truth, and becoming.

2. Martin Heidegger: Ontological Perspectives on Art

Dasein and Language

According to Adam Knowles, by “the 1930s *poiêsis* becomes a central concept which unites Heidegger's ontology with his philosophy of language, technology, and the environment” (589). Before discussing *poiêsis*, it is crucial to stop at the issue of language independently. Heidegger argues that Dasein, the being that we are, can only interact with other Daseins and the world through a medium, and that medium is language. However, he criticizes the modern conception of language as a mere instrument or tool for conveying information, or as a means of expression of personal thoughts. For Heidegger, language is much more than that: it is the very condition of possibility for the disclosure of Being, the meaning and essence of all that is. In his Letter on Humanism, Heidegger famously declares that “language is the house of Being”. What does he mean by this metaphor? He means that language is not something that we use or control, but something that we inhabit and dwell in. Dwelling, for Heidegger, is not just a physical activity, but a spiritual one, in which we relate to the world and ourselves in a meaningful way. Language, as the house of Being, provides us with a dwelling place where we can encounter and reveal the truth of Dasein, its nature and potentialities, as well as the truth of other beings and things. Language, in its spoken and written forms, is the way that Dasein manifests and articulates its own Being, and the way that Being shows itself to Dasein. Language is thus the site and the event of the unfolding and disclosing of truth.

In an infamous German television interview, Heidegger discusses the role and significance of language for his philosophy. He claims that language is not only a means of communication, but also a mode of revealing and concealing the truth of Being. He also criticizes the modern artistic expression of the technological world, which he sees as a threat to the authentic dwelling of man.⁸ He argues that language and art should reflect the historical and existential condition of Dasein, the being that we are, and its relation to the world and other beings. He laments that poetry, which he considers to be the highest form of language, has lost its power to disclose the truth of Being. He observes that the modern industry of literary and artistic production has succumbed to the logic of technology and capital, which reduces everything to a calculable and exploitable resource. He contrasts this with the language of the past, which expressed the sense of belonging and sharing that Dasein had with the earth and nature.

Heidegger warns that the modern technological language alienates Dasein from its own essence and from the essence of other beings, and creates a false sense of mastery and domination over the world. He says that the danger of technology and its terminology is that it “reduces being to non-beings” and that what is worthy of question now is that “that poetry itself no longer is able to be a decisive form of truth” (05:00-05:20).⁹ Heidegger, however, does not idealize the past poetic expression, but acknowledges the inherent ambiguity and mystery of language. He recognizes that truth is not fully or easily revealed by language, but rather hidden and disguised within its structure and usage. He argues that language itself is a form of art, and that only through great works of art can we approach the unconcealment of truth. He develops this idea in his later writings, especially in his essay “...Poetically Man Dwells”.

Locating Dasein in Art: Truth Unconcealed

Shifting his focus from the ontological and philosophical analysis of Being presented in *Being and Time*, Heidegger, in subsequent works, delves into a more concrete and practical exploration of the spaces where Being manifests itself. He considers language to be the primary medium of Being, as he famously states that “language is the house of Being”². Therefore, he examines the forms of language that are most expressive and revealing of Being, and he finds them in art. Heidegger does

⁸ See Heidegger's treatment of technology in Heidegger, Martin. *The Question Concerning Technology, and Other Essays*. Translated by William Lovitt, Garland, 1977.

⁹ Here is a direct link to the interview: [\(204\) Heidegger - What is Worthy of Question \(1957\) - YouTube](#).

not regard art as a mere representation or decoration, but as a mode of *poiêsis*, which means bringing forth or bringing into being. He argues that art, in its highest form, is concerned with the unconcealment of truth, which is the essence and meaning of Being. Art, then, is a creative and transformative activity, in which human beings participate in creation of a higher form of disclosure of Being.

Heidegger, in his essay “The Origin of the Work of Art”, illustrate his main argument on the function of good art: “the artwork opens up in its own way the Being of beings...this deconcealing, i.e., the truth of beings, happens in the work ... Art is thus setting itself to work. What is truth itself, that it sometimes comes to pass as art?” (38). Heidegger suggests that art is not a mere representation or imitation of reality, but a way of revealing and creating the reality of Being. Art, in its highest form, is a mode of *poiêsis*, which means bringing forth or bringing into being. Art, therefore, has the power to set up a “world” (43), which is the meaningful and coherent context in which beings and things appear and relate to each other. This world, however, is not separate or opposed to the “earth” (46), which is the mysterious and hidden source of all beings and things. Heidegger argues that art is concerned with the earth, and that to set forth the earth means to bring it into the open as the self-secluding. In other words, art shows the earth as both revealing and concealing itself, as both present and absent. This is the essence of truth, which is not a static or objective property, but a dynamic and subjective event. Heidegger says that in the work of art, we encounter “not only something true ...” but “truth ... at work” (54). He also implies that to appreciate and understand such works of art, we need a special approach, which he explains in the following analysis,

When we analyze {art} in rational terms by measuring its wavelengths, it is gone. It shows itself only when it remains undisclosed and unexplained. Earth thus shatters every attempt to penetrate into it. It causes every merely calculating importunity upon it to turn into a destruction. This destruction may herald itself under the appearance of mastery and of progress in the form of the technical-scientific objectivation of nature, but this mastery nevertheless remains an impotence of will. The earth appears openly cleared as itself only when it is perceived and preserved as that which is by nature undisclosable, that which shrinks from every disclosure and constantly keeps itself closed up ... The earth is essentially self-secluding. To set forth the earth means to bring it into the Open as the self-secluding” (45-46)

Art’s ability to open the earth through its transformative work towards openness constitutes a crucial aspect in Heidegger’s exploration of the nature and functioning of *Daseins* and Being. When engaging with a work of art, individuals, as Giorgio Agamben suggests, “man stands in the truth . . . {that is to say} in the origin that has revealed itself to him in the *poietic* act” (102). Derek H. Whitehead further scrutinizes the intricate relationship between art, the artist, and the unfolding truth in his exploration of *poiêsis* and art. He writes,

An artist is not marginal to a work’s expressive being. The artist makes a work and is in turn made by it. Something takes place in the exchange between artist and work, for artist and work are instruments one to one another. What takes its place originates in the work, and what is discovered of the work happens through others’ responses to it. Importantly, both artist and work concede one another to the world from within the world of their being. The direction of this being, whether from ‘world to work’ or from ‘work to world,’ has diacritical significance for the artist. It enables an interplay impelling him or her toward a space of ‘unitary multiplicity,’ a poetical space wherein the artist, the work, and the receiver of such a work are brought forward in all the lineaments of their self-presentation (8).

“...Poetically Man Dwells”

Regarding the character of poetic dwelling in our contemporary era, a matter briefly alluded to in our earlier discussion on language, Heidegger articulates,

Our dwelling is harassed by the housing shortage. Even if that were not so, our dwelling today is harassed by work, made insecure by the hunt for gain and success, bewitched by the entertainment and recreation industry. But when there is still room left in today’s dwelling for the poetic, and time is still set aside, what comes to pass is

at best a preoccupation with aestheticizing, whether in writing or on the air. Poetry is either rejected as a frivolous mooning and vaporizing into the unknown, and a flight into dreamland... (213).

Heidegger challenges the modern notion of poetry as a mere literary amusement produced by the industrialized culture. He conceives dwelling as a higher mode of being-in-the-world that transcends the material aspects of housing and relates to the fourfold of earth, sky, mortals, and divinities. He also criticizes the prevailing tendency to aestheticize poetry and detach it from its existential and ontological significance. Heidegger's poetic dwelling, therefore, is not concerned with the formal features of the text, but with its function as a manifestation of truth. Modern poetry, in contrast, often conforms to the aesthetic standards, but fails to achieve the quality of dwelling that ancient texts possessed. The crux of the matter is the role of language and its usage. This is where the article's argument becomes evident: projecting a human dwelling through a literary text does not require a specific poetic form, but rather a genuine artistic intention and a successful integration of the concept of *poiêsis*.

Inspired by the nature of Art as a transformative force that shapes Dasein's self-understanding and relation to Being-in-the-world, Heidegger devotes his later work to the exploration of poetry, especially the ancient Greek genres of epic and tragedy, as well as the modern poetry of Friedrich Hölderlin.¹⁰ His famous essay, "...Poetically Man Dwells", articulates his vision of dwelling as the fundamental mode of human existence, which entails a harmonious participation in the fourfold of earth, sky, mortals, and divinities. Dwelling goes beyond mere physical inhabitation, and becomes a spiritual and poetic way of being in the world, where one is responsive to the deep meanings that pervade existence. Heidegger states, "Poetry is the original language of dwelling. Poetry and dwelling are not separate; rather, they are intimately related, each requiring the other. Poetically man dwells" (227).

Given that poetic dwelling in our contemporary era is rarely encountered in literary works assimilated into the capitalist framework of commercialization and overproduction, it becomes imperative to explore and inquire: What attributes does a text necessitate to embody the essence of a poetic human dwelling? On this matter, Knowles articulates,

Dwelling poetically requires the restoration of this primacy of poetizing. The poetic role of art, therefore, is not to provide a set of pleasant aesthetic experiences but is instead an encouragement to reorient ourselves at a fundamental ontological level. Hence Heidegger writes: "art in the highest sense is *poiêsis* – poesy. It is knowledge, but as knowledge it is the gathering of the unconcealed and the self-gathering into unconcealment" (GA55:369). *Poiêsis* is the production of this self-gathering (590).

As Daseins, humans live in a "historical-social situation" that shapes their Being and the choices they make in the world (Heidegger 214). In this situation, Dasein's quest for authenticity involves the emergence of the *poiêsis* aspect, which signifies the actualization or accomplishment of its possibilities. A literary text, therefore, reflects the condition of Dasein's existence—a dynamic process of dwelling (becoming) that is both poetic (as it seeks the truth of its Being) and existential (as it applies this search to its concrete reality). These ideas will become clearer as we examine Head's novel *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968).

3. "...Prosaically Man Dwells": A Literary Analysis of Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather* (1968)

This third and final section engages in a literary analysis of Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather*, building upon established conceptual frameworks. In alignment with the article's assertion that poetic dwelling, integral to authentic Dasein, is discernible in Head's novel, the analysis systematically unfolds the narrative's revelation of a transformative Truth, distinguishing it distinctly from contemporary literary productions. This differentiation becomes particularly salient when rethought through the aforementioned systematic and technical integration of language within the current literary landscape. The analysis underscores how Head's novel projects a poetic quality of dwelling,

¹⁰ This phase spans approximately from 1930 onwards, persisting since the release of *Being and Time* in 1927.

aligning with Heidegger's notion of art that manifests a projective universal character, as expounded in "The Origin of the Work of Art" (38).

Before delving into our literary analysis, it is imperative to justify the choice of Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather* as the central focus. Situated among the first-generation African writers, the novel grapples with broader issues such as justice, inequality, political instability, decolonization, and the complex dynamic of Self-Other. While the plot ostensibly aligns with the thematic trends of its era, this article posits that a Heideggerian analysis of the work introduces a unique perspective that is transformative in understanding contemporary African literature and the nature of tracing poetic dwelling through prose. The ensuing analysis employs Heideggerian terminology to unveil concealed African truths within the narrative, positioning *When Rain Clouds Gather* as an embodiment of poetic dwelling for African-Daseins within their authentic space, thereby facilitating the revelation of inherent Truth.

African-Dasein and the "Historical-Social Situation"

Given that Being constitutes an existential concern, rooted in its positioning within the world into which it is thrown, the socio-political context enveloping a Dasein assumes paramount significance, particularly in the facticity shaping the African-Dasein. When referencing African-Dasein, the intent is to delineate a distinct historical circumstance, specifically that of late colonial and post-colonial Africa. In the forthcoming literary analysis, the focus will be on two specific countries: South Africa, the birthplace of both the author Bessie Head and her protagonist, and Botswana, the refuge sought by them in the narrative of *When Rain Clouds Gather*.

African-Dasein demands nuanced consideration, acknowledging the intricacies that define its essence and delineate the dimensions of Being presented to a Dasein situated within Africa. An essential facet to highlight is the pervasive alienation experienced by Dasein in post-colonial Africa from the very moment it becomes cognizant of its Being as a Being-in-the-world. This alienation is a product of historical realities that, if omitted, would hinder an authentic revelation of the truth embedded within African-Dasein. A case in point is Bessie Head, whose existence as a Dasein unfolds against the backdrop of specific temporal and racial dynamics in South Africa during apartheid. Born to racially mixed parents, Head faced complete dislocation, disownment, and abandonment within the context of apartheid. Her upbringing was marked by a pre-existing tension in her relationship with other African beings, notably the white community in South Africa, resulting in a psychological alienation that was ever-present. Head's migration to Botswana, as portrayed through the main protagonist in her novel, signifies an act of authentic African-Being—an endeavor not of escapism but of liberation from the historical shackles constraining Dasein.

The exploration of this theme will be further expounded within the framework of the novel. Crucially, the term African-Dasein demands a specialized examination, distinct from a globalized perspective. It necessitates an understanding of its unique circumstances, where the dynamics of dwelling manifest differently compared to regions like Europe or America. A detailed investigation into this aspect may be conducted in a subsequent study. Nevertheless, fragments of this African-Dasein will undoubtedly surface in the forthcoming analysis. Thus, it becomes imperative to ascertain the historical condition of Head as a writer and, subsequently, scrutinize its transformation into the realm of literary expression. The objective is to discern whether Head's Dasein has grappled with the poetic Truth of her dwelling and realized some of its potentialities.

Nature, Other-Beings, and Reflective Dasein in *When Rain Clouds Gather*

Head's literary output establishes a different viewpoint, one that categorically rejects the concept of human dominion over nature. This thematic assertion echoes not just in the tale under consideration, but also across her body of work. Head's representation of the natural environment in the novel captures this departure from the paradigm of human domination, and it is consistent with Heidegger's concern that Dasein must be conscious of other beings and things that live within the space that encapsulates them all. Head writes,

I wonder what the birds live on, {Makhaya} thought. The land on either side of the footpath was loose windblown sand and thorn bush. Often the thorn bush emerged as tall, straight-trunked trees, topped by an umbrella of black, exquisitely shaped branches, but more often it grew in short low tufts like rough wild grass. Long white

thorns grew on the branches, at the base of which were tightly packed clusters of pale olive-green leaves. And that was all. As far as the eye could see it was only a vast expanse of sand and scrub but somehow bewitchingly beautiful. Perhaps he confused it with his own loneliness. Perhaps it was those crazy little birds. Perhaps it was the way the earth had adorned herself for a transient moment in a brief splurge of gold ... whatever it was, he simply and silently decided that this dryness and bleakness amounted to home and that somehow he had come to the end of a journey (12).

Head's narrative unfolds with Makhaya as a discerning lens, skillfully applying Heidegger's concepts of presence-at-hand and ready-at-hand to delve into the profound connection between the self and the surroundings. Makhaya's contemplation of the barren landscape unveils a nuanced interplay between observation and utility. Instead of imposing desires upon the land, Makhaya engages in a profound observation of the present-at-hand. The vivid depiction of the landscape, as articulated by Head, captures Makhaya's gaze, presenting a "bewitchingly beautiful" yet seemingly inhospitable terrain. According to Makhaya, the beauty lies in his ability to appreciate both the physical space and its inhabitants—the Beings. This intricate dance between the observer and the observed establishes a relational context, intertwining nature, village life, and individuals within the tapestry of Head's narrative.

Beyond the atmospheric nature of the space, beings and entities devoid of a Dasein quality constitute a vital component in the narrative's progression and the revelation of its veiled Truth. The potentialities of Daseins inhabiting the novel's space are conditioned by non-Dasein entities, such as cattle, fields, drought, rain, etc. All endeavors undertaken by Dasein in the novel can only come to fruition through the interference and the being-of-other-beings—what their being entails. Rain must fall, fields must flourish, and cattle must thrive and multiply. Contrary to these expectations, the novel's title, *When Rain Clouds Gather*, implies that the clouds are ephemeral, and rain remains elusive, constantly in a state of not-being-itself. In other words, it fails to fulfill its inherent purpose: clouds must rain. When clouds merely gather in the sky, dispersing without precipitation, Daseins bear the consequences of clouds not being what they ought to be.

Within this conceptual framework, Dasein assumes a reflective quality, resonating within its environment. The novel's narrator informs us that Makhaya, a Dasein caught in the in-between and everydayness of post-colonial African reality in South Africa, becomes a Dasein in motion seeking a new dwelling ground. Upon encountering the vast and desolate space, he concludes that it all "amounted to home" and that he had somehow reached the culmination of a journey. An intriguing layer emerges when contemplating the nature of Golema Mmidi village, its inhabitants, and their facticity of dwelling within the narrative.

Golema Mmidi as a Dwelling Place

The setting for the unfolding events in *When Rain Clouds Gather* is the village named Golema Mmidi. Head, in describing the nature of this village, articulates,

Many factors had combined to make the village of Golema Mmidi a unique place. It was not a village in the usual meaning of being composed of large tribal or family groupings. Golema Mmidi consisted of individuals who had fled there to escape the tragedies of life. Its name too marked it out from the other villages, which were named after important chiefs or important events. Golema Mmidi acquired its name from the occupation the villagers followed, which was crop growing. It was one of the very few areas in the country where people were permanently settled on the land (17)

In this passage, the Heideggerian essence of dwelling and building in relation to each other becomes evident. Golema Mmidi's existence is not shaped by the geography of the country or traditional elements conferring historical significance; rather, it emerges from individuals who "had fled there to escape the tragedies of life," actively involved in the processes of building and dwelling within their distinct space. While the village itself is naturally given, the significance lies in the fact that its inhabitants, fleeing the tragedies of their existence in other African nations, have chosen this place intentionally.

A pivotal and complex element to consider in this analysis is the presence of Gilbert, a non-African Dasein inhabiting an African dwelling space. Head skillfully introduces a layer to her

narrative by bringing together Daseins that, by the facticity of historicity, seemingly cannot coexist. Gilbert, a white English man embedded in the village, possesses capital and an agricultural project geared towards enhancing farming production. Positioned as a disruptive Dasein with an ambiguous center, he resides in Golema Mmidi for an extended period, integrating into the encompassing environment and developing a new hybrid identity with both the place and the other Daseins dwelling there. In conventional African literature, a Dasein like Gilbert would typically be portrayed as inauthentic, seeking not to become through dwelling but to dismantle the constructions of other Daseins—examples being Christian missionaries, colonialism in Africa, Apartheid in South Africa, and Neo-Colonialism. Head, however, intricately weaves Gilbert's character into the village's surroundings, emblematic of Heidegger's understanding of Dasein's dwelling nature rooted in its adaptability to the occupied space.

Existential Angst and Dasein in Golema Mmidi

Remarkably, within the confines of the village depicted in the novel, an intriguing thread binds almost every character—a profound existential angst that permeates their very essence. Even those individuals seemingly ensnared in the mundane routines of the “everydayness,” categorized in Heideggerian terms as “the-they,” manifest in the narrative as dynamic Daseins, each driven by a purposeful inclination toward dwelling. The village's essence, entwined with agricultural endeavors, epitomizes a form of “building” that, as Heidegger would have us think, intricately connects with authentic dwelling. It is crucial to distinguish this form of building in Golema Mmidi from the contemporary concept, as it fundamentally embodies a construction not for excess, but for life, living, and genuine dwelling. The villagers find their abode in this space, surviving through their commitment to constructing dwellings in the truest sense.

A nuanced exploration of dwelling in Golema Mmidi reveals the dichotomy between authentic and inauthentic modes. Chief Matenge, embodying the latter—marked by greed, inhumanity, and corruption—faces a demise perceived by the community as cowardly. Matenge is not acknowledged as one who dwells-along-with, but as an oppressive force, imposing its Dasein upon a dwelling place unsuitable for its essence. Strikingly, all characters, irrespective of their roles or authentic/inauthentic being, share a common thread of anxiety propelling them to the space of Golema Mmidi. Crucially, the narrative underscores the inability of Dasein to control earthly spaces, emphasizing that even a dwelling space, if incomparable, fails to facilitate authentic dwelling. The protagonist's flight from his native country to the village stems not from a lack of love for his original dwelling place, but rather from the exigency of his being, compelling him anxiously toward an alternative abode. The encounter with the village serves as a revelation, a whisper urging him to recognize his home, his dwelling place, amidst the vastness—a space, akin to Jung and Nietzsche's concepts, where he can become who he must be.

The conceptual analysis of Heidegger's works sheds light on anxiety as a discomfort with one's Dasein, propelling characters from diverse corners of Africa and beyond to converge and settle in Golema Mmidi. This space refrains from judgment regarding their past or identity, offering a welcoming embrace within its pre-existing structures. Ironically, a village composed of refugees, each bearing a unique facticity that led them there, collectively embarks on an authentic Dasein pathway. This pursuit, stifled in their original dwelling places of escape, becomes possible in Golema Mmidi, where existential potentialities find activation and fulfillment.

The Transformative Power of Dwelling within Golema Mmidi

Authentic Dasein unfolds through the events and truths depicted in the novel as a being that resists succumbing to the order of corrupt and unjust systems governing its existence. Consider Makhaya, the protagonist, who departs from South Africa not out of a fear of death but rather out of a profound concern that the intense hatred cultivated through psychological repression among Daseins thriving on his demise might drive him to act on that hate. Thus, his decision to leave becomes a pivotal moment, a manifestation of his authenticity, activated by his departure and fulfilled by the novel's conclusion as he undergoes a transformative process in Golema Mmidi, reconciling with the truth of his existence. On this matter, Head writes,

Makhaya found his own kind of transformation in this enchanting world. It wasn't a new freedom that he silently worked toward but a putting together of the scattered

fragments of his life into a coherent and disciplined whole. Partly life in the bush was like this. In order to make life endurable you had to quiet down everything inside you, and what you had in the end was a prison and you called this your life. It was almost too easy for Makhaya to slip into this new life. For one thing he wanted it, and for another he had started on this road, two years previously in a South African prison, the end aim in mind being a disciplined life. But the Botswana prison was so beautiful that Makhaya was inclined to make a religion out of everything he found in Golema Mmidi. It did not amount to much. It even seemed as though the population of goats exceeded that of people (126-27).

In delineating the evolution of Makhaya as a protagonist emblematic of the transformative potential within the dwelling space of Daseins when pursued, Head expounds on his progression after years spent in the village. She does not focus on his material advancements but rather on a different facet of development.

He felt, too, that all the tensions, jealousies, frustrations, and endless petty bickering which make up the sum total of all human relationships were in reality unnecessary. This belief was necessary to his own survival, as the desire to retaliate in a violent way against all human selfishness and greed was a powerful urge in him. (140)

Prior to reaching the village, Makhaya grappled with intense feelings of hatred and rage directed at those responsible for making life unbearable for his people in South Africa. This overwhelming hatred had confined his perspective, blinding him to the world's complexities. Ironically, it was the act of fleeing from this very hatred that brought him to the village, marking the initiation of his transformative journey. As the novel unfolds, discernible shifts become evident in Makhaya's attitude towards life and others. He evolves towards an ethics of care, Heideggerian in essence, demonstrating concern for the seemingly mundane, rusty, and lifeless aspects of Golema Mmidi. Within this seemingly ordinary existence, Makhaya arrives at the profound realization that the accumulated hatred prevalent in the world, whether rooted in race or other factors, is ultimately "unnecessary" (140).

An illuminating example highlighting the transformation of hate, initially perceived as deeply ingrained and seemingly insurmountable during the novel's early stages when Makhaya wrestles with his existential facticity, is manifested in the evolving relationship between Makhaya and Gilbert. Head articulates,

It was only through Gilbert that he discovered in himself a compassion for the whole great drama of human history. Only Gilbert admitted the mutual interdependence of all men. The raw materials of all the underdogs had gone into the making of those airplanes and motorcars, and Gilbert had been surprised to find the underdogs living in such abysmal conditions while his own country had prospered to an almost unbelievable state of wealth. There was no way for him to grasp such poverty, except to live under the same conditions as the poor. Makhaya formed his own conclusions from this. He saw Gilbert's culture as one that had catalogued every single detail on earth with curiosity, and it revealed to him great gaping holes in his own culture and how impossible it would be for Africans to stand alone. His own culture lacked, almost entirely, this love and care for the earth (140).

It is crucial to recognize that the transformative impact of residing in the village extends beyond Makhaya and Gilbert. Nearly all characters, excluding the village Chief, show signs of reconciling with their own facticity. Consequently, they activate some, if not numerous, potentialities afforded by their existence in Golema Mmidi. While Gilbert's transformation will be examined shortly, one particular metamorphosis, due to spatial constraints, unfortunately remains unexplored within this discourse – the transformation of Paulina. As a widowed woman, Paulina's authentic-Dasein stands out distinctly in the novel, setting her apart from other female characters. Through the actualities of the tragedies she endured, Paulina has cultivated a character markedly distinct from others, attracting eventual interest from Makhaya. Their mutual attraction transcends mere sexual desires; instead, it is rooted in the transformative processes both have undergone, influenced by the facticity that has led them, burdened with hardships, to the village. Amidst their tribulations, Makhaya

and Paulina carve out a unique space within the village – an authentic space they alone are capable of engaging with and entering.¹¹

One noteworthy aspect emerging from this analysis is the concept of being-with-others in Heidegger's philosophy, specifically the communal existence of Dasein with other Daseins. The residents of Golema Mmidi, having endured a series of tragedies before their arrival, find a referential space in which burdened and weary Daseins relate to each other and their sorrows. In this communal coming together of those tragically thrown into Golema Mmidi, Head weaves a narrative of universal humanism. The point on universality will be revisited as we conclude our analysis, but its mention here naturally arises in the context of our exploration.

Unveiling Authentic-African-Dwelling of Daseins in *When Rain Clouds Gather*

A pivotal aspect demanding scrutiny is the dichotomy of authentic and inauthentic Daseins within Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather*. As we delve into this discourse, it is imperative to contextualize these terms within the narrative's sensitivities, specifically addressing authentic-African and inauthentic-African Daseins. Despite the characters' diverse facticities—past, identity, language, belief-system, and more—their Dasein in the novel remains open to the space they inhabit. This openness challenges conventional notions, highlighting that where one dwells is not necessarily tied to one's place of birth or ethnic origins. The novel portrays dwelling as an active pursuit of authentic-Dasein, prompting contemplation on the profound questions of belonging and being. The intricacies and interconnectedness inherent in each category necessitate further exploration to unravel the complexities threaded throughout the narrative.

Heidegger's concept of dwelling emphasizes a poetic existence, aligning with the sensitivities that accompany one's Dasein in a given space. Despite not being of African descent and living in a socio-historical environment filled with challenges, Gilbert persists in embodying an African way of life. This is noteworthy considering that he emanates from an oppressive history that has impeded the full and cohesive development of African communities. Nonetheless, Gilbert maintains his connection to the African culture in which he has consciously immersed himself. An ironic yet powerful intersection arises: Gilbert originates from a past and community that has oppressed Makhaya and his people in South Africa. Makhaya flees his country due to the rage and hatred stemming from the actions of Gilbert's people and the post-colonial system they left behind, which has fragmented life for colored South Africans. Despite this, both Makhaya and Gilbert collaborate in the village to enhance agricultural production, transforming it into a place of dwelling. In their joint "building," as Heidegger would argue, they engage in dwelling by redeeming themselves from the anger and hate rooted in the facticity of their beings.

Gilbert's character, like Makhaya's, proves enigmatic despite attempts to analyze it through a Heideggerian lens. Nevertheless, Head portrays that both have developed an authentic-African-dwelling-Dasein that builds and thinks in Golema Mmidi. In contrast, the chief of the village, although seemingly a natural African and Botswanian with a direct connection to the land, emerges as the most inauthentic-non-African-dwelling Dasein in the narrative. Head strives to project her notion of humanity as a universal experience, transcending racial prejudices or communal identities.

¹¹ I would like to draw attention to a contemporary philosopher, heavily influenced by Heidegger's ontological work, who delves into the contemporary issue of the distancing of Dasein from other Daseins within its space of dwelling. This philosopher is Byung Chul Han, and the specific book that addresses this concern, offering a nuanced perspective on resolving such dilemmas, is *The Agony of Eros*. In alignment with our analysis of Head's novel, it becomes evident that what is lacking in the modern age and its artistic expressions is an authentic representation of Eros as a transformative force capable of reconnecting and rebuilding bridges, thereby alleviating the existing distancing between Daseins. Byung argues that this distancing is a creation of contemporary bourgeois ideology. Eros, or Love, emerges as a means of connecting with other Daseins through care, representing a way of activating potentialities of authentic dwelling..

The community, in this context, becomes a convergence of scattered Daseins worldwide to Golema Mmidi, developing an authenticity inherently African due to the soil on which they dwell. However, mere presence on the soil does not suffice. The chief, despite longstanding tenure, embodies inauthenticity through malice and resistance to the progress demanded by the village as a site.

Authentic-African-Dasein, exemplified in Golema Mmidi's village in the novel, dwells within Africa with respect and awareness of the space it inhabits. To dwell authentically, especially in an African context, does not necessitate being inherently African. Authentic-African-Dwelling, as depicted in Head's novel, is ultimately poetic dwelling—human dwelling that embraces various perspectives, particularly those demanded by the space a Dasein occupies. Makhaya and Gilbert, cognizant of their historical origins, successfully overcome the limitations of their existence and authentically pursue the potentialities of reconciliation. This process, as discussed in the conceptual framework, comes alive through the activation of existential anxiety, propelling all characters to the village, and through *Care*, a crucial component of dwelling. Paradoxically, the universality projected in Head's narrative extends to Golema Mmidi, which opens its doors to refugees seeking transformation, while simultaneously alienating its own chief. The chief's tragic demise, rooted in inauthenticity and a blind pursuit of power, serves as a poignant commentary on the consequences of failing to fulfill one's potentialities.

In the tapestry of Head's literary oeuvre, the character of Makhaya emerges as a conduit, guiding us through the author's profound exploration of authentic-Dasein, personal evolution, and the intricate complexities of dwelling beyond one's birthplace and origin. This narrative unfolds against the canvas of facticity, where the social and historical dimensions intricately shape Head's identity as a mixed-race South African woman and Makhaya's identity as a political refugee in Botswana. The symbiosis between Makhaya and Head becomes palpable as both undergo displacement, reflecting Heidegger's concept of facticity and delving into the essence of belonging as Dasein within a specific socio-historical condition, that of post-colonial South Africa and Botswana.

Conclusion

This article, through its structured outline, endeavored to unveil spaces where the ontological underpinnings of Martin Heidegger can take root and be studied within and beyond Bessie Head's *When Rain Clouds Gather*. The analysis revealed that the nature of the Dasein in contemporary African prose is unique, a fact Heidegger would not dispute, acknowledging the facticity of socio-historical elements that condition African-Daseins. This unique experience of Being unfolds differently than in other literatures, influencing today's discourse on poetic dwelling. Postcolonial African prose, shaped by historical conditions, captures a Truth about Dasein's dwelling in Africa, even if not always positive, representative of the type of dwelling prevalent on the continent. Therefore, this form of representation can be perceived as a realm where potential truths unfold. An argument can be put forth that prosaic African literature, precisely owing to its historical condition and the language issue that Heidegger raised, effectively anticipates poetic dwelling more than contemporary poetry itself. This observation is pertinent in the present day, as contemporary poetry often appears distant from the dwelling spaces where Dasein unfolds.

In conclusion, our analysis paradoxically raises more questions than answers. While it shed light on critical aspects and developed a sensitive system for the analysis of its subject matter, this study underscores that there is much more to explore. African prose, beyond addressing social justice issues, delves into ontological questions intrinsic to Heidegger's philosophy. However, this exploration is far from exhaustive, and our understanding of African literature remains incomplete without a deeper engagement with ontological inquiries into the nature of poetic dwelling. The lack of such engagement within the existing literary canon represents a missed opportunity to broaden interpretations in African literary studies and unravel untapped ontological aspects in this rich literary tradition. Future research is imperative to extend the realm of ontological exploration in African literature, promising a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities inherent in the poetic dwelling of Dasein within the African context.

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