

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Research

Literary work is one's creativity towards ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Literary works are the result of human imagination that takes human life as a source of inspiration. The form of those literary works can be drama, poems, short stories, and novels. Literature can create its world as a product of the unlimited imagination (Wellek and Warren 22). It means that literature has its own story, whether it is about dreams, war, religion, or discussing symbols. All conflicts are packaged interestingly by the author so that the reader is carried away by the story in the literary work.

Half of a Yellow Sun is a novel written by Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and published in 2006. Previously, Adichie already wrote several works such as the novels *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Americanah* (2013), the short story collection *The Thing around Your Neck* (2009), and the book-length essay. *Purple Hibiscus* won the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book (Africa) in 2005, as well as the Commonwealth Writers' Prize for Best First Book that same year (overall). It was also nominated for the 2004 Orange Prize (later renamed the Orange Broadband Prize and now known as the Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction). *Half of a Yellow Sun* became an international best-seller and won the 2007 Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction. Eight years later, it won the "Best of the Best" Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction, a special award

for the previous decade's "best" prizewinner.

The novel tells the story of the lives of two twin women born to wealthy businessman parents in Lagos, Nigeria. The twins were Olanna and Kainene, graduates of a university in London, England. After completing her studies, Olanna chose to leave all the luxuries of Lagos to become an instructor in the sociology department in Nsukka. At the same time, Kainene preferred to take care of the family company, negotiate, and do many other things on behalf of her father's company. This story happened in the 1960s during the Nigerian-Biafran War. The whole character struggle to survive and the desire to live as safely and peacefully as before. Not only about dreams, but the author also describes the conflicts and the symbols that are seen in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

The first topic, the writer will discuss dreams shown by Adichie during the war that became the background of the novel. Through war, someone is forced to learn to live without splendor and suffering. Women who are usually weak are required to be mentally and physically strong. In this novel, all characters have to move around for their safety. Dreams to live comfortably and safely make the characters willing to fight. In this novel, all characters fight together. No visible status distinguishes between men, women, employers, or maids. This struggle is a testament to how the whole character craves a peaceful life like before. That is what happened in this novel that talks about the struggle and the conditions during the war in Nigeria.

The next topic is about conflicts. This topic describes that some

characters face conflicts. There are two kinds of conflicts; internal and external conflicts. External conflicts can also be between character and character, man and society, or between man and nature. Internal conflicts occur among the characters, such as their thoughts, ideas, and emotions. Various conflicts are seen through the flow created by the author. Adichie describes how the central character in the novel makes a quick decision in a war situation that requires her to leave all her wealth to survive. The characters' journey in saving themselves is filled with several other problems that follow them. The writer takes the topic of conflicts because the novel is set in war, and war itself is full of internal and external conflicts, so many conflicts are seen in this novel.

In the novel, there is also an implied meaning depicted by Adichie through symbols. Symbols can represent an opinion or idea in a work, including in a literary work. This last topic is interesting to examine because each symbol plays an important role in fiction. The title of this novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, symbolizes the flag of Biafra. Biafra is a country formed by the civil war in Nigeria. Not only the title, but the writer will also analyze an object of calabash and coffin. Starting from the title, the writer can analyze the symbol in the novel. The topic of symbols is important to discuss to know the implied meaning of the depiction given by the author and the relationship between the symbol and the storyline in the novel.

The writer chose the topics of dreams, conflicts, and symbols because these topics are new and interesting to analyze. Dreams, conflicts, and symbols are demonstrated by the author. These topics are seen in almost the entire story

of the struggle of the people of Biafra about the cruelty of war and the impact of war felt. The author considers that this novel is intended to inform the reader how the condition of the Biafra society is suffering that it wants to separate itself from Nigeria to live free without war. Readers will be surprised and some unpredictable plots that require the reader to read the novel to the end. Therefore, the writer decided to analyze the novel through three topics about dreams, conflicts, and symbols with war as the background and new criticism as the theory to support this research. Thus the writer entitles this research *Dreams, Conflicts and the Symbols in Contemporary Literature: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of Yellow Sun*.

1.2. Identification of the Problem

Adichie through the characters in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* describes the civil war that took place in Nigeria because of dissatisfaction with the government that caused some people to desire to form a new country, Biafra. In this novel, the government does not approve of the formation of the state of Biafra, while some people have agreed to secede.

Regarding dreams, the war that occurs has an impact on the lives of the characters causing all characters to have the desire to live peacefully and try to find a way to live free from oppression. The carnage of war requires the characters to abandon the luxuries they have to survive. War also causes hunger, so the characters try to get food to stay alive. The oppression experienced during the war is the cause of other problems arising. All the characters in the novel live in a move for the realization of dreams about a peaceful life. War is the

cause of the problem of hunger and the desire to live safely and peacefully without oppression. This raises the dreams of the characters to fight to save their lives.

Furthermore, in the topic of conflicts, war causes other problems to the characters both internally and externally, such as sadness, fear, trauma due to war, and problems with other characters, such as anger. A person who used to live comfortably and well-off must be willing to feel a life of deprivation during the war. Conditions during the war can cause difficulty for the character to think clearly, so it is easy to misunderstand. This creates conflict between the characters. War makes the characters move around to find a safer place. The massacre caused the characters to have to save themselves, and the war became the reason for the food supply being depleted.

Next is the topic of symbols, each region has different conditions and situations than the other regions, and all situations and conditions of a region can be described through the objects, animals, plants, the environment, or they can be seen from color in the novel. The writer will discuss the title of the novel that became a symbol and related to the storyline. Not only that but how the objects mentioned by the writer in her novel have meant a place. The writer will focus on three symbols, Half of Yellow Sun, Head in Calabash, and the Coffin.

The topics of dreams, conflicts, and symbols that arise in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* are caused by war, and all issues are interconnected. The writer will focus on how the author explores the dreams arising from the oppression that occurred during the war. The writer also reveals the external and internal conflicts

depicted by war in Nigeria and the conflicts before the war occurred. Through the symbols, the writer will investigate how far a symbol conveys a place, and influential the implied meaning of the symbols seen by Adichie in the novel relates to dreams and conflicts that occur.

1.3. Review of Related Literature

There have been some studies related to Adichie's works from different perspectives. The purposes are to support this research and to take a more profound understanding to explain the issues.

The first is an article written by Ogechukwu A. Ikediugwu titled *Feminist Inclinations In Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of A Yellow Sun And Purple Hibiscus*, published in 2013, Vol. II Issue IV. This article discusses two works by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of A Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus*. This article uses feminist theory, focusing on the women's issues contained in both novels. The findings of this article show that Adichie is a feminist writer because there is a feminist inclination in these two novels as quoted from this article "Through a contrastive analysis of the characters in the texts, the essay establishes that Chimamanda Adichie is a feminist writer" (14). The researcher also identifies the portrayal of male characters in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus* in the middle of women's issues insight. This article is extremely clear because all the characters in the novel, both women and men, are analyzed with every problem related to women issues in areas with a powerful patriarchal culture. However, the use of researcher sentences is a little monotonous. In the writer's opinion, researchers can use

passive voice in her writing to make it more varied. This article has chosen by the writer because it has similar novels discussed, namely *Half of Yellow Sun*.

The second article was written by Suleman Bouti titled "American Dream in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*," published in 2018. This article focuses on revealing the aspects of the American dream in Scott Fitzgerald's novel *The Great Gatsby*. The stressed aspects are the pursuit of happiness, persistence, self-reliance, individualism, and the way to wealth. This article is qualitative research using a sociological approach. The result of this article indicates that *The Great Gatsby* reflects the aspects of the American Dream, such as the pursuit of happiness, persistence, self-reliance, the way to wealth, and individualism.

Bouti obviously describes all aspects of the dream, especially the American Dream in this novel. It is illustrated by the explanation of the researcher, who chose not only one aspect of the American dream but five aspects of dreams. However, the writing structure in this article is a little chaotic as the title of the discussion from the beginning has not been numbered but in the discussion 'Self -Reliance' researcher instead gave the number '4.1. Self -Reliance'. In writer's opinion, it would be better if the researcher did not number each subtitle to look harmonious and the reader did not become confused. This article particularly helps the writer when analyzing the topic of dreams.

The third study is conducted by I Wayan Partana from Udayana University titled *Henchard's Internal and External Conflicts in Thomas Hardy's The Major of Casterbridge*. This article was published in 2013. Henchard's

internal and external conflicts as central figures are focused on the discussion in this article. This study aimed to apply theories related to novels to understand Thomas Hardy's book entitled *The Mayor of Casterbridge* and then to find out what message the researcher wants to convey from the novel. This article uses descriptive research methods. The finding of this article states a close relationship between the novel and the social conditions in England.

This study is clear because the discussion of conflict is more focused, on external conflicts only on interpersonal conflicts while internal conflicts focus on the main character Michael Henchard as a result. The researcher explains each conflict in detail. However, the theories used by researchers are too developed. Not only that, some of the theories used are unclear because there is no explanation of the theory. In the writer's opinion, the study would have been more useful if the researcher could use one main theory and explained it in detail so that the reader would more easily understand. According to the article, the relationship between this article and this research is the similarity of the topic of the conflict, which is also divided into two, internal and external.

The fourth is an article titled *Individual and Collective Trauma: Negotiations of Violence in Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*, written by Samuel Rukuni from the University of South Africa, published in 2021. This article uses qualitative and quantitative analysis, and this article also features a postcolonial theoretical rubric and the concepts of resistance and narration of trauma as the main theory to consider how *Half of a Yellow Sun* represents negotiations of violence. This article focuses on the limits

of narrating individual and collective trauma in current African literature studies is limited. The finding of this article reveals that the story in the novel is based on real-life happening in Nigeria. On the other hand, the violence that occurs in the novel is a form of representation of the actual events occurring in Nigeria. Nigerian political and cultural identity is also embedded in the political, economic, and cultural conflicts shown by the author.

This article is complex because in qualitative analysis, researchers explain in detail, supported by conversations and list pages from novels when analyzing violence. Although in this article, researchers are less structured in the analysis section. The writer suggests it would be better if the researcher began the discussion through the internal conflict after that associated with the trauma. Even so, the relationship between this article and this study is the similarity to the novel *Half of Yellow Sun*, as well as the content of the article that occurs, is useful as a reference for the writer in analyzing this research.

The fifth is an article titled *Representation of History in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun (2006)* written by Morve Roshan K, published in 2014, Vol. 1, No. 3. This study deals with the conflict of the Nigerian Biafran War. In order to understand this conflict, the study addresses the detailed analysis of war conflict, ethnic conflict, class conflict, military conflict, and eco-political conflict. To sum up, the novel is located with the issues of marginality, history, and conflict, which interrogates through post-colonial theoretical formations and the six-phase structure of war novels. The result of this article is that the reader knows that the story of the novel *Half of*

Yellow Sun comes from the original history of Nigeria; the historical background brings a new lesson to awareness of real history.

On the other hand, Roshan also explains the similarities between the events in the novel and the actual events. This article is attractive because of the giving of images in this article and the words are easy to understand. However, in the conclusion section “The representation of the history of Biafran war gives the sense of existence of war not only in the past but also present” (153), the word 'present' is not explained by the researcher in the analysis chapter even the researcher does not give an overview or comparison of what is happening now in Nigeria so that it is equated. The writer's suggestion would be better if the researcher gave a little idea of the conditions that are happening in Nigeria today and what is happening now that has to do with the discussion of this article about the war. The correlation between this article and the research is the same novel and the same theory that the writer used.

Furthermore, the article written by Anneli Mihkelev titled *Literary Symbols as the Creative and Original Impulses of Literary Creation*, published in 2018. This article analyzes Hamlet's novels using symbolism. Mihkelev focuses on Hamlet has become a literary symbol and how it works as a literary symbol in unexpected cultural relationships with Estonian culture. These symbols are dynamic, and it depends on the context and readers how these literary figures and texts are interpreted. The result of this article is the researcher reveals the meaning of hamlet's characters as symbols in the novel, especially in Estonian culture; as a cultural symbol Hamlet can also convey a

political message to the totalitarian regime.

In this writer's opinion, this article is analyzed clearly but the article is more challenging to read because the way the researcher presents this article will create a new perspective on symbols, and there are many types of symbols, such as myths. Not only that every subtitle is not thickened. If the reader does not read carefully, this will confuse the reader. The article would have been more interesting if the researcher can distinguish between subtitles and the discussion by thickening the title or giving a number. Basically, this article is very helpful to the writer because of the similarity of the theory used.

The next article is titled "An Analysis of Pride and Prejudice from Structuralist Perspective" by Jinhua Zhang, published in 2020. Pride and Prejudice is one of the best-selling novels by one British author. This novel is very often used as a subject of research in the literary world, which usually discusses the language, content, feminism, and marriage contained in the story. Jinhua Zhang tries to skin this novel using a different perspective which is using structuralist perspective, which is a new thing in researching the novel Pride and Prejudice. In this article, Jinhua says that this research focuses on the plot featured in this novel to see the structure and meaning contained in it.

Jinhua also used the structuralist narratology method in analyzing the novel. Structuralist narratology is also useful in exploring the entire content of the novel Pride and Prejudice, making it easier for Jinhua to analyze the novel. The content of the discussion is none other than the analysis of the surface and deep structure. The researcher should give the connection between the theory

and the topic to be discussed so that the reader knows the reason why the researcher chose this theory. The end of this article concludes that the achievement of a novel is closely related to the structure of the novel itself. Hierarchies can divide or decipher stories and themes as effectively as possible.

The last article is written by Jeremy Francis, titled "Aesthetic Confusion: The Legacy of New Criticism" published in 2008. This article discusses the theory of new criticism that helps researchers analyze literary works in the present. The findings of this article know that there are still few teachers or researchers today who know that new criticism is a literary theory. The result of this article tells about literary criticism as one of the theories that can be used in analyzing literary works such as novels, poetry, and others all students. In the opinion of the writer, this article is complete because the researcher provides an explanation of the theory in the detail, and the writing structure is also regular so that readers can easily understand the content of the article. This article has similar theories that will be used so that the writer can make this article a reference for this research. In addition, because the targets of this article are teachers, researchers, and students, the language used is easy and explained simply.

The writer chooses these articles because they have a similar theory, novel, and topics that help the writer in completing this research. This whole article will be a reference for the writer when analyzing the novel, the use of appropriate sentences, the structure of each paragraph in analysis, and ideas obtained from the article that is accessible to the writer in developing this

research. Although this research has similarities with all of the articles, it still has its differences in the topic of conflicts, and the writer will discuss external and internal conflicts using new criticism as well as on the topic of symbols. Therefore, this research is interesting to discuss and read because the topic raised is new and unique about “The Representation Dreams, Conflicts and the Symbols in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*”.

1.4. Research Questions

There are several issues related to dreams, conflict, and the symbols of geography in *Half of a Yellow Sun*:

1. What kinds of dreams does Adichie show in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*?
2. What are the conflicts presented by Adichie that occurred in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*?
3. What are the symbols of the war depicted in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*?

1.5. Scope of the Research

This research will be divided into three discussions about dreams, conflict, and symbols. First, the writer will discover what kind of dreams Adichie describes in the novel. On the topic of dreams, the writer only discusses the dreams shown by the characters when the war occurs. Next, the writer will analyze the external and internal conflicts shown by the author in the novel. For external conflict, the writer focuses on Olanna's character and the problems faced by her during the war. As for internal conflict, the writer only analyzes the

trauma, sadness, and fear experienced by the characters due to war. Finally, the writer focuses on the symbols that the author shows. Through these three discussions, the writer will show how the topic of dreams, conflicts, and symbols are represented in the novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

1.6. The Objective of the Research

This research aimed to explore the events that took place in Nigeria through three topics on dreams, conflicts, and symbols. Because of the topics discussed by the writer about formal elements, the writer uses new criticism as a theory and focuses on discussing the plot and symbols seen in the novel. The first is to describe what Olanna's character does to achieve the dream of living comfortably and free from hunger when war occurs in the novel. The second is to identify internal and external conflicts such as trauma, sadness, anger between characters, and fears caused by war. The third is to explain the relationship of objects, images, colors, animals, or plants as symbols with war as the background of the novel.

