

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Background of The Research

The image of women in literary works cannot be separated from the social and cultural environment of the community where the female character lives and interacts. Many literary works in the world present women as story characters. Many literary works with a background present the story of a woman. The literary works have the potential to show images or descriptions of women's lives in society and culture.

A lot of literary works, women have been portrayed as weak and sensitive. Women are often placed in lower positions than men in human relations. Women become a character who is unable to resist men's authority. Hooks (1948:1) identifies that "women who are most victimized by sexist oppression; women who are daily beaten down mentally, physically, and spiritually, women who are powerless to change their condition in life, they are a silent majority." The stereotype that women are weak creatures creates a variety of injustices and oppression. Women are often judged only to take care of their husbands, give birth to children, take care of their children, carry out their duties as housewives, or treated as a sexual object as a daughter.

One of the literary works that present the life of the woman in the society is the novel *Half of Yellow Sun*, written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Adichie was born on September 15, 1977, in Enugu, Nigeria. She is a Nigerian novelist that already wrote several works such as the novels *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a*

Yellow Sun (2006), and Americanah (2013), the short story collection The Thing Around Your Neck (2009), and the book-length essay We Should All Be Feminists(2014). Adichie has described as "the most prominent" of a "procession of critically acclaimed young anglophone authors (who) is succeeding in attracting a new generation of readers to African literature" by The Times Library Supplement. She also gets an award, MacArthur Genius Grant. Moreover, Dear Ijeawele or a Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions, published in March 2017, was her recent book.

Half of Yellow Sun is one of Adichie's works published in 2006. The novel takes place in Nigeria, where the author was born. This story happens in the 1960s during the Nigerian-Biafran War. According to theguardian.com, the story tells through three different points of view. First is Ugwu, a young teenage boy who works in Odenigbo's house as a houseboy. Second is Olanna, the daughter of Chief Ozobia and twins of Kainene. Third, is Richard, a white ex-patriot originally from England, who falls in love with Olanna's twin sister. The story is a combination of politics and personal relationships, charged by the brutal conflicts that occur around the main characters.

In this novel, Adichie portrays the central character as an object of a patriarchal society. She experiences oppression committed by her parents and her future mother-in-law. The central character suffers from oppression not only from male characters but also from the female character that believes in culture. On the other hand, Adichie represents some characters to empower the central female character to be strong and independent.

It is interesting to examine Adichie's female character that shows how a woman who was born wealthy and educated who try to become independent and not depend on anyone. With a status that she has as a child from an upper-class family, she quickly has access to everything she wants to do. Nevertheless, she still wants to live independently and free from the social status that her family has. It became hard for her because she had to adapt again to the new society.

The author pictures that the central character, an educated woman, in the novel did not wants to completely follow the rules of Igbo culture as a woman of her age did. The central character here is showing her independently after experiences oppression committed by her parents and her mother-future-in law. Adichie shows how the character fights against the oppressions. Adichie also describes how an educated and modern woman, struggles in facing conflicts related to the Igbo culture.

The writer chooses this novel to analyze women's empowerment, independence, and identity. These three topics never analyzed with the novel Half of Yellow Sun. By doing this research, society will realize that women can be an independent woman and not depend on a man.

1.2 Identification of the Problem

Half of Yellow Sun describes the oppressions that the central character experienced. Then, Adichie portrays women's empowerment and independence of the female character. The work mainly represents how the central character, Olanna, a girl from upper-class family try to be a strong and independent woman after receives oppressions from a male and female character in the story, as well as how the

appearance of other major and minor character affect her. In the end, the novel represents how education affects her identity as an Igbo woman.

The writer wants to examine the oppressions and the conflict that the character faced being among the traditional and patriarchal culture. This novel also shows how a woman becomes stronger. The central character has to fight with her parents and her environment to get approval to do what she wants to do. Then, Adichie describes how an educated woman struggles in facing conflict related to the traditional Igbo culture.

1.3 Scope of the Research

In this research, the writer discusses some characters that are the central character and the other major and minor characters. The central character here is Olanna. The major character is Odenigbo and Richard. The minor character that the writer also discusses is Chief Ozobia, Auntie Ifeka, Mama, Amala, and Edna Whaler. The writer focuses on the oppressions that the central female character experienced. Then, the writer examines the way women's empowerment reflects in the novel. Furthermore, the writer analyzes how the author describes modern woman identity and feminist messages in *Half of Yellow Sun*.

1.4 Research Questions

There are several issues related to women's empowerment that occurs in *Half of Yellow Sun*. To limit the scope of analysis, the writer limits research by two topics, they are:

1. What kinds of oppressions do the female character experience that make her want to become an independent woman?
2. How are empowered women portrayed in the novel?

3. How does the author depict the modern woman identity and feminist messages in the novel?

1.5 The Objective of the Research

This research aims to examine and explain women's oppression, empowerment, and identity in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of Yellow Sun*. Besides, it reveals how the character challenges itself to be an independent woman and contribute to the war. On the other hand, the writer also examines the way Adichie represents the effect of education on the identity of a modern woman and the feminist messages. The writer hopes this research will be useful for the other researcher and will enrich the literary study, particularly about women empowerment.

1.6 Review of Related Literature

To support this research, the writer reads several related studies that discuss the same object of research with a different topic and different object but has a similar problem. The purpose is to take a more profound understanding to explain the issues. The writer reads four articles and thesis of related studies from a different point of view.

The first article, written by Syed Hajira Begum titled *Women Empowerment in Purple Hibiscus* (2017). *Purple Hibiscus* is one of the novels written by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The topic of this article is to show how the challenges of life in the postcolonial African country towards woman's life and the way Adichie represent women assert themselves in a world dominated by men through education and women's solidarity. Begum found out that Adichie uses various strategies to give

voice to women in the presence of structures that silence. This article only has two-point to discuss and sometimes not focus on the topic. It seems that the way the author explains about the strategies adopted by women to subvert oppression is clearly showing the proof or the text that illustrates the point.

The second article, written by Ogechukwu A. Ikediugwu titled Feminist Inclination in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of Yellow Sun* and *Purple Hibiscus* (2013). This article shows that the two novels written by Adichie are about feminist issues and to proof that Adichie is a feminist writer. Ikediugwu found out that Adichie is a feminist writer based on the novel that she writes. From my point of view, this article is quite good because the author put some quote and explanation of female and male character that shows the feminist issues and how it seen as feminist issues.

The third article was written by Gloria Ajami Makokha, titled *Portrayal of African Woman in Half of Yellow Sun* (2014). The topic of this article is to analyze how Adichie articulates the place of the female character in Nigeria society in the novel *Half of Yellow Sun*. The findings of this article are, at first, Adichie place the female character as an object of the man's commodity. Makhoka finds that Adichie wants to tell society to rescue the African woman from subordination. The problem of patriarchy and domination of African women by the African men can be solved by treat women as men partners and not as second-class citizens, both domestically and formally prepare. The explanation of this article is good because the writer explains clearly the position of a female character from before the war, during the war, and after the war.

The fourth is a book written by Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams titled *Women at War, Women Building Peace: Challenging Gender Norms*. This book

discusses women influenced by war and conflict all around the world. This book is useful for writers to understand more about the activities and the movement of the woman during the war and understand more about the resistance of women in general.

After reading those related studies, the writer concludes that the writer has different research from those associated studies. The writer wants to show how the women empowerment described in *Half of Yellow Sun* and the way the author presents Nigerian Identity through female character.

1.7 Theoretical Framework

The writer uses Feminist theory to analyze the novel *Half of Yellow Sun*, the theory that the writer use is Feminist theory. Simone De Beauvoir defines that feminism is a branch theory of literature that outlined the differences between the interest of men and women and attacked various forms of male domination over the woman. (David:2006, 93). Feminist theory aims to understand gender inequality and focuses on the promotion of women's rights. Donovan (1997:211) also states that the 'image of woman' approach the critic determines how women characters are presented in the literature. On the other hand, Jane Freedman (2001) said that feminism is thus a term that emerged long after women started questioning their inferior status and demanding an amelioration in their social position. The writer of this research sees that feminism is a women's movement that fights against the oppression they receive to get equal rights between women and men.

The writer refers to the second wave of feminism to analyze this novel. The second wave of feminism starts in the early 1960s and continues until the late 1970s. The second wave feminism focuses on issues of equality and discrimination. This movement identifies the equal right and equal working for woman and man. The

second wave of feminism also focuses on sexuality, family, the workplace, and reproductive rights.

In the ninetieth century, women are still a minority and must be passive than men. Women did not accept this condition and decided to fight against it by the movement named women's empowerment. From the feminist perspective, defining women's empowerment delivers an understanding of the dynamic of oppression and internal oppression. Empowerment is the process of not being empowered to being empowered. Women's empowerment is a process of women to establish and recreate what they can do and resolve problems that were previously rejected by women (Batliwala 1994:130).

Empowerment is an approach that appears in the middle of the 1980s. According to Moser (1993), "The origins of empowerment approach are derived less from the research of the First World women, and more from the emergent feminist writings and grassroots organizational experience of Third World women.". Empowerment is a power that gives to someone to do something that it is wanted. The word "empowerment" is related to the word "power." In this case, the power that exists in the word "empowerment" is the power to control something, such as material or ideology. This, in turn, controls relative to the decision-making power (Batliwala, 1994). Empowerment is a process of gaining or accessing control over self and the resources as well as the ideology which determines power relationships. The process of empowerment tries to change the existing balance of power in a given context (Verma, 2009)

Naila Kabeer (1999) defines that women's empowerment is about the process by which those who denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an

ability. Empowerment allowed women to take control of their lives, the decision to help others, and sue the state for support and society itself for change. Kabeer also states that women's empowerment is defined as the process to make the women have the ability to make life choices in the context that this ability was previously denied them (1999). The female character in the novel is also deciding to fulfill its needs and become an independent woman.

The writer also uses the identity theory to analyze the effects of women's empowerment and independence to the identity of the female character. The writer chooses the theory by Peter J. Burke and Jan E. Stets. Burke and Stets state that "An Identity is the set of meanings that define who one is an occupant of a particular role in society, a member of a particular group, or claims particular characteristics that identify him or her as a unique person" (2009). Identity theory seems to explain how the identities affect the behavior, feeling, or thought and tie the person into society.

Jola Skulj explains that cultural identity as an element of the historical process cannot remain of the same nature and is never a continuation of itself. Cultural identity, as expressed in literature, is rebuilt through constant dialogue with other cultures and literature (2000). McCabe also explains that there is no outside to the text where meaning originates before language, rather the text's meanings are constantly being produced in the act of reading: in, that is, the juxtaposition of the discourses of the reader and the text (1978).

1.8 Method of the Research

In this research, there are three steps to complete this analysis. The first step is collecting data. For this, the writer use library research. The primary data are taken from the novel itself, *Half of Yellow Sun* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. The

secondary data are any information taken from the books and article concerning the story and all information that are available in the library and the internet.

In analyzing data, the writer read the novel extensively to understand not only the story but also can relate the story to Feminist and Identity issues. After that, the writer applies the Feminist theory, empowerment theory, and identity theory that are suitable for the analysis.

In presenting data, the writer uses the qualitative method to prove the analysis by emerging an argument and opinion since the data are words, statement, or paragraphs, and not in the form of a number. The writer uses the data in the form of words, and then the data are collected and quoted to support the research.

