

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background of the study

In the Athenaeum Review, the term feminism was first introduced on April 27, 1895, but actually, this term has been used since the mid-century in American and French journals (Mitchell, 2015, p. 1). Feminism is the key to the movement that advocates for gender equity and equality. This movement began at the end of the nineteenth century and continues to this day (Robertson, 2019). Feminism is present as a form of protest from the gap that exists between the roles of men and women in society, socially constructing biological differences between men and women has an impact on their value as humans, in traditional gender roles, it is believed that men are strong, rational figures, decisive, and protective, on the other hand, women are seen as the opposite of these attitudes, namely women have a weak, emotional (irrational), submissive, and nurturing attitude (Tyson, 2006, p. 85), but in the book *Sexual Politics* who took a quote from the Money's Paper as scientific evidence that the differences between men and women are not due to biological factors but social expectations and prejudices (Milett Kate, 2000). Because of this social construction, women become individuals who are considered less competent to make crucial decisions in life or become a leader, and people tend to choose men to fill these positions because of the attitudes discussed earlier.

The understanding that men are superior while women are inferior is seen by feminists as a form of justification on the part of men to maintain their position economically, politically, and socially in society, in other words, this is an attempt to silence women by letting them left behind in the field of education so as not to interfere in economic, political, and social power affairs (Tyson, 2006, p. 103).

Cultural critics distinguish the history of the feminist movement into four parts, otherwise known as the four waves of feminism, each wave of this movement signifies a specific period of the movement and women's involvement with the media (Malinowska, 2020, p. 2). The first wave of the feminist movement occurred around the 19th century, one of which was marked by the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* in 1792. In 1848, about 200 women gathered in a church and declared 12 resolutions to demand several rights, including the right to vote and the right to be treated as a human being, not a property.

The second wave of the feminist movement that took place in the 1960s and 1970s was the most significant social movement in the history of the United States (Hewitt, 2005, p. 415). This movement affects every home, school, and business, every form of entertainment and sport, and every aspect of life, both private and public. There are types of feminist thought, including liberal feminism, radical feminism, and cultural feminism. Liberal feminism focuses on institutional reform, which means reducing gender discrimination, giving women access to areas dominated by men, and promoting equality. Radical feminism contains the desire to completely dismantle the

penitentiary system so that there is no longer a patriarchal system that is believed to have been passed down from generation to generation. Cultural feminism is not much different from radical feminism, namely the understanding that women have been distinguished from men. wave one and wave two of the feminist movement failed to provide justice for women who are in the third world, this third world is countries that are not colonial countries, namely the West and Europe.

The third wave of feminism developed around the mid-1990s in the United States. On this wave has developed ideas about gender equality and also the freedom to choose sexual tendencies (Hall, Claire, 2010, p. 1). The second wave of feminism has a big impact on the third wave of feminism, at this point, women's identities are considered equal to men, and each of them can explore many things. Women who have started to open up about their sexuality begin to show themselves through the way they talk, dress and behave. This third wave of feminism is also more aware of the issue of race. Kimberle Crenshaw, a gender and critical-race scholar coined the term “intersectionality” in 1989 to refer to several types of oppression (within gender and race), in the second wave of feminism, this issue is not something that becomes a concern, but in the third wave of feminism it is in the spotlight as the feminist movement is becoming more and more widespread.

Now we are in the fourth wave of feminism, where everything is easily accessible, and everyone is starting to demand equal rights. This era began in 2012 with a focus on sexual harassment, body shaming, rape culture, and several other issues. The

Me Too Movement, which started in 2006 to voice cases of sexual violence, especially for females of colour, was followed up in early 2017 by victims of sexual harassment from all over the world using the hashtag #MeToo, in a few months this movement exposed dozens of men who commit sexual violence against women, many of whom come from critical circles in politics, entertainment, and the media (Burkett, 2020).

The existence of this waves of feminism indicates the development of human life in various aspects of life, from what was previously seen as a woman's property until finally women can have absolute power over themselves. Although now the position of men and women is more equal, in fact traditional gender roles are still so inherent in society, this is difficult to eliminate because traditional gender roles are cultural products that exist to maintain the power of men compared to women (Henley, 1977).

Since the industrial revolution, class struggles began to emerge, which became conflicts. Along with this, women's social groups also began to fight for their rights, and the feminist movement in the west began to rise (Hanifah et al., 2017). From this incident, feminist ideologies began to emerge.

Postcolonial feminism began to emerge in the 1980s as a critique of existing feminist theory, which was when women's freedom was universalized. Feminism theory that was born in the western world is considered irrelevant when applied to other parts of the country where the prevailing culture and norms are not the same.

Postcolonial theory sees that women, especially those in the Third World Country experience gender inequality, therefore women in colonized countries experience what is called double oppression: oppression from the colonial and also from indigenous men. Postcolonialism concludes that "women in the Third World" are victims of par excellence or victims of imperial ideology and victims of indigenous patriarchy (Gandhi, 2007, p. 108)

Women's empowerment is a term used in the process of developing women to become better, and women provide mutual support to each other so that they are released from the patriarchal system that has been shackled to them. The process of women's empowerment allows women to gain the right to control, have ownership of property and other things, and make decisions for themselves, and this is something that is very important to access for women today (Kabeer, 2001). The social and political situation must be reformed again in order to create security where women are not afraid of oppression, discrimination, being subordinated, acts of exploitation, and persecution as women experience in a system where men still dominate. Women's empowerment also defines that women have full control over their own lives and have the right to participate actively in social, political, and economic life because this is a true form of equality between women and men and as a form of their protection from all forms of violence (Malhotra et al., 2002). Women can be supported in all aspects, they can have power equal to men in any field, including art, politics, social, education, economics, and others.



Unlike in today's era, where women already have the same voice as men and have begun to show themselves in a society that is on an equal footing with men, women's voices were rarely heard in the past. Women are just like goods that are passed from one man to another, from being under the protection of their father, when they become adults, they move under the protection of their husbands. Women are only those figures who take care of their family, give birth, and raise children, they do not know life outside their home and have no interests or so-called business outside their family.

This problem can be seen in the novel by Maaza Mengiste entitled *The Shadow King*. This novel is set in the Italo-Ethiopian war that took place from late 1935 to mid-1936. When we hear the word war, we hardly think of women, war is identical with men. In war, it takes rationality, strategy, leadership, and strength, and women are not related to those mentioned words, women are discussed in war only in terms of casualties, victims, or defence-less parties. In the novel *The Shadow King*, the other side of war will be seen and revealed, which is, the actual role and job of women during the war that are not written in history. This novel tells about the journey of the Ethiopian people against the Italian army, who at that time wanted to invade several areas in Africa but before the war occurred, the Ethiopian leader, Haile Selassie suddenly disappeared and reportedly fled to London, England. From the departure of Haile Selassie to leave Ethiopia when the situation was most critical, the leader of Selassie's trusted army, namely Kidane, was confused, he was confused about what to

tell the rest of the soldiers and public so that they were not discouraged and tough to fight against Italy and not panic. Seeing Kidane who was so confused and almost desperate, Aster, Kidane's wife offered to help him go down to the battlefield, but of course, this was ignored by her husband, this decision not even taken seriously by Kidane. Aster's character is a woman who has big ambitions, since marrying Kidane her life has only been sitting at home while lamenting the death of her son. Aster's emotions that have been soaring because of her son death, culminated with a war that will occur, she feels that she must participate in the war. Insisting on going into the war even though her husband ignored this wish, Aster without his husband's permission, began to gather other women to volunteer to help in the war.

In this novel, female characters such as Aster, Hirut, and The Cook experience what is called double oppression. They received colonization both mentally and physically, as women they were made to feel small by the men who were even around them and as citizens, they were pressured by the Italians who were trying to colonize them at the time.

In this novel, the concept of patriarchy is clearly seen in Kidane's character when Aster, who is his wife, volunteered to go to war, Kidane did not take this decision into account at all because Kidane had seen Aster as a woman who usually stayed at home. The ideology that was widely adopted in the 1930s in families was usually patriarchal (Jameson & Armitage, 1997, p. 437), this resulted in not being heard of women's voices and they were considered unable to do things that involved power. In

fact, this war was won because of the intervention of women, how women prepare supplies of food, clothing, medicine, ammunition, and even descend directly into the war itself. Women's Empowerment can be seen in Maaza Mengiste's novel *The Shadow King*, where women make their own strongholds apart from their unsupportive husbands, they support each other in order to fulfil the needs of war and as a result, can win Ethiopia victory over Italy.

Maaza Mengiste, the author of *The Shadow King* novel, wrote this novel because she saw that so far the role of women in war has never been written in history, the heroic story of women, especially during the Italo-Ethiopian war, was only told by word of mouth like a fairy tale from a grandmother. To his grandson. This makes Mengiste feel the need to improve the history of female heroism in her work, how women made a big contribution to the victory of Ethiopia, and how women were so brave against foreign invaders even though they were only underestimated by men.

Based on the description above, the researcher will conduct research that focuses on the act of double oppression found in the novel and involves the postcolonial feminism, which is seen in every female character in this novel, such as Aster, Hirut, the cook and others, which they experienced double oppression. For this research, as already mentioned, the corpus that will be used is a novel entitled *The Shadow King* that is written by Maaza Mengiste. This study will reveal the types of oppression, this study will look at the theory of Five Faces of Oppression (in Marginalization,



Exploitation, Marginalization, Cultural Imperialism, and Violence) proposed by Iris Young (1990).

## **1.2 Research of questions**

1. How does the concept of postcolonial feminism reflected of the characters in Maaza Mengiste's *The Shadow King* novel?
2. How does the double oppression portrayed in the characters of Maaza Mengiste's *The Shadow King* novel?

## **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

Based on the aforementioned research questions above, this study aims to analyze the concept of postcolonial feminism and categorize the form of oppression, that appears in Maaza Mengiste's novel *The Shadow King* and the female empowerment found in each female character in this novel.

## **1.4 Scope of the Study**

This study focuses on narrations, sentences, paragraph, and dialogues that indicate act of liberal feminism and women's empowerment in *The Shadow King* novel by Maaza Mengiste. Implementing the theory of postcolonial feminism and reveals the forms of oppression based on Five Faces of Oppression.

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

The outcomes of the study are expected to contribute benefits in several aspects, as follows:

### 1. Theorically:

- a. To provide a further understanding of the history of the feminist movement, mainly postcolonial feminism which contradictive with the mainstream feminism.
- b. To broaden and enrich the scope of readers' knowledge about the issue of women's empowerment (which includes increasing awareness of the importance of supporting each other in order to raise the status of women in society so that they can obtain full rights for themselves, gain freedom which includes making decisions), specifically in the novel *The Shadow King*.
- c. To provide a further understanding of the postcolonial feminism theory as seen in the characters in the novel and apply the concept of Female Empowerment Dimensions proposed Malhotra et al.

### 2. Practically :

- a. To contribute to increasing the number of studies on feminism, especially postcolonial feminism, and women's empowerment.
- b. To provide a reference for future researchers related to the literature.