

Cultural Conflict As Represented Through Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half Of A Yellow Sun

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Abstract

Half of a Yellow Sun, the second book by Adichie, explores themes which are linked to Purple Hibiscus. In spite of the civil conflict, the author depicts mothers fighting to keep their families hopeful. Half of a Yellow Sun is an account of women who were forthright and proactive. They guide the men and the general public in hard times. While progressive women are portrayed in a positive light, regressive women are cast in a bad one, and as readers, we are encouraged to reject them. Characters like Alice allow Adichie to express her thoughts on mistresses, concubines, and second spouses. Alice is pictured as reclusive and strange. Her connections with men are usually underwhelming. Though she laments about the military official who cheats her, we are angry when she charms Odenigbo while Olanna is at Orlu. Adichie has her character Alice chastise those who cheat on their spouse or have several partners.

Keywords: victim, women, conflict, reclusive.

Introduction

In Half of a Yellow Sun, men who cheat on their wives provide a major obstacle for women to face. Mrs. Ozobia has been a victim of the anti-masculine effects of her husband's affair with a Yoruba lady, for whom he has acquired a property in a Lagos

area that is inhabited by the city's upper-class socialites. These depictions cause readers to hate women who steal their partners from other women. Mariama Ba, in *So Long a Letter* (1980), explores infidelity in marriage with the observation that men stray from their spouses in order to vary their sexual experiences. This is a disgrace to the wives. Mrs. Ozobia sheds tears of embarrassment when recounting to her daughter, Olanna, about the father's mistress:

Her mother held a glass of tonic water in one hand and a handkerchief in the other. She was crying. She was telling Olanna about her father's mistress. „He has bought her a house in Ikeja,” her Mother said, My friend lives on the same street.“ ...„Have you talked to him?” Olanna asked...What am I to say to him?” Gwa ya gini? ... There is nothing I can say to him. I just wanted to let you know what is happening so that they will not say I did not tell somebody” (217).

If Mrs. Ozobia were to tell a woman something, that might mean that female collaboration will help women free themselves from patriarchal constraints. When Mrs Ozobia says “...so that they will not say I did not tell somebody” (217) the statement tells us that the society does not approve Chief Ozobia's behaviour. The scenario described above highlights the struggles women have while trying to fill the role of a wife. In response to the daughter's desire to confront her husband about his adultery, Mrs. Ozobia curtly asserts that there is nothing to talk about. In this way, she further highlights the daughter's subordinate position in the relationship. It appears that she is nearly admitting to her fear of her husband, which means he may do anything he chooses. The uneven gender dynamics inside marriage and in patriarchal society are exemplified by the panic that grips women in many parts of Africa. Aunt Ifeka's worries about Uncle Mbaezi's flirtations with other women shows how common it is for men to cheat on their wives, and the devastation that causes. Despite the men's adultery, women like Aunt Ifeka, Mama Dozie, Edna Whaler, Kainene, and Olanna are hopeful about life.

Through the characters of Olanna, Arize, Odenigbo's mother, and Anulika, the longing for children is explored in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Odenigbo's mother wants a kid and a grandchild, so she encourages Amala to sleep with Odenigbo, which nearly ruins his relationship with Olanna. For Mama Odenigbo, a woman who can't have children is a spoilt one. It is unknown if she can bear children, she explains: “Are you

aware? Anyone has an answer?" (HYS198). The reason for Mama's anxiety comes from the importance children have in Igbo community and Africa as a whole. She desires to have a grandchild quite desperately. She is furious that many females go to college and spend the rest of their lives following guys around. She declares, "my son is single while his friends are boasting about their children's ages" (HYS 97). This depiction of Amaka's tense relationship with her husband, Obiora, is comparable to what happened in Nwapa's *One is Enough* (1990), when the mother-in-law blames Amaka of being barren. The examples previously provided seem to show that childlessness is a constant cause of frustration for African women.

Children carry on the family name and care for their parents. The reason women and society are so subjugated to the husband's lineage is to ensure that the family name is carried forward by numerous offspring and that umunna (or tribe) is made larger. Adichie's society is patriarchal, making mothers responsible for the fate of their sons, by virtue of the fact that they have sons. The endeavour to redefine motherhood involves proposing adoption as a more progressive method of addressing childlessness. Olanna welcomes Amala's kid into her home when Amala refuses to accept her. In addition, Mrs. Ozobia had problems with her milk supply since her breasts dried after her children were born, and Aunt Ifeka had to take care of her children due of this. Olanna believes that Aunt Ifeka was as good as her mother because of this. Olanna goes to Ifeka when she has issues with Odenigbo. Furthermore, Olanna is delighted when the nurse inquires about the number of her children. Motherhood is the key theme of her own experiences. Arize's mother-in-law shames her by wanting to know how many abortions she had before her marriage, which is comparable to the society fixation with the goal of having children. Arize's infertility leaves Nnakwanze on edge since she fails to conceive in the first, second, and third year of their marriage. Arize's suffering comes from her mother-in-oppressive law's behaviour. Odenigbo's mother has Amala in her grasp, and she wishes to exploit her to bear a grandchild. This kind of scenario places women under a lot of strain, curtails their independence, and deprives them of any control over their own destiny. The female characters in the novel (the mother-in-law) demonstrate the effect of patriarchy on women, who are conditioned to accept the demands of the male hierarchy.

Women who have capitulated to patriarchy and forced their sisters to do the same have become culprits of their own oppression. Adichie highlights the ways in which parenting may be updated to halt women oppression and suffering via the characters of Ifeoma, Olanna, and Kainene. Adichie redefines women's view of parenting in the novel by portraying the struggles and triumphs of both Kainene and Olanna. In comparison to *Purple Hibiscus*, the female characters and parenthood in *Half of a Yellow Sun* provide a new paradigm. Kainene and Olanna, despite the absence of children, are very childless; the book ends with Kainene in a long-term relationship. Olanna becomes the mother of Amala's kid. Despite the fact that Kainene and Richard do not have children, they are happy and successful. Adichie suggests a new society in which women are free from their biological responsibilities of motherhood.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie illustrates how Ozobia uses his daughter Olanna to gain favour with the Minister of Finance, Okonji, through the scene in which she asks him for a deal on behalf of her father. Olanna was unsure: she even pondered how her parents had made a deal with Okonji to get the contract, promising him an affair with her. Had they stated it verbally, plainly, or had it been implied? ... Her father stabbed at his avocado. „I see” (HYS 32-3).

The parents have Olanna make a sexual connection with the finance minister, painting a distasteful picture of daughters who are at the mercy of their boyfriends' whims. Olanna's father disapproved of her choice of Odenigbo. The narrator observes that Odenigbo's relationship with Olanna has gone sour, and he understands that Odenigbo's father only wants to hurt his pride by insulting him in front of his daughter (32). The influence her parents desire over Olanna's choice of mate is discussed in the novel when Olanna talks about her mother and their divergent views. Olanna's dissent over her choices inspires Adichie to encourage women to have strong convictions. When it comes to the freedom of women, women have personal choice and some degree of liberty. In the conflict, Eberechi is forced to prostitute herself and denied the chance to pick a mate. Her humanity is entirely ignored in this action, and the young child is stripped of her basic rights. Adichie emphasises these events to celebrate how women have been aided by beneficial changes. Adichie's argument, which favours the exchange of property ownership between sons and fathers and daughters and mothers, points to the

need for an overhaul of gender norms. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the protagonist Ozobia is a middle-aged Nigerian man who lives with his young mistress, whom he took from a Yoruba family in Lagos. A variety of people's characteristics are explored, including Kainene, Richard, Susan, Olanna, Mohamed, Ugwu, Eberechi, Alice, and the army colonel, and concubinage as a possible means of exploitation is discussed.

The fact that women are so excluded that appearing in a respectable social place without a male is odd illustrates their low status. Kainene's visiting these sites is a sign that she has control and is making a free decision. She is willing to defend her conduct without any fear or favour. This argument is demonstrated by Major Udodi in the moment where he expresses doubt about the romance between Richard, a Brit, and Kainene. Kainene was forthright with Udodi, bluntly telling him "My choice of lovers is none of your business" (HYS 80). The Major talks about poor black women being sexually exploited by the whites and deserting them at the long last with little or no gain at all. He does not see what Kainene, "a Big Man's daughter," (HYS 81) is doing with Richard. The Major's rescues the day by distracting Major Udodi, leaving Kainene alone to think about her conversation with the commissioner. This passage shows Udodi as someone who is indiscreet. Kainene's response makes him appear like an idiot and a coward. Society is run by males, who are quick to ridicule women publicly and force them to be ashamed. The Major's plan to publicly shame Kainene only ends up hurting himself and revealing his poor judgement. In the segment above, Adichie shows that contemporary progressive women may attend social events without having a partner. Adichie refutes the notion that women are keeping other women down by spreading ideas that demean and abuse them, such as Alice, Amala, Nnankwanze's mother, and Odenigbo's mother. Emecheta, Aidoo, Nwapa, Frank, and Mariama Ba are all critical of wifehood and motherhood, yet their views are incomplete, as this study clearly demonstrates. In these kinds of partnerships, women unknowingly use other women while they live with their husbands or boyfriends, thereby helping the patriarchal structure to remain in place. In her arguments, Adichie hopes to prick the conscience of women in such situations, so that they might help to prevent other women from going through similar pain.

Chimamanda Adichie is supportive of Olanna's decisions in both cases. In the storey, Olanna is not aggressive,

reflecting her subtler feminist leanings. Adichie is an excellent African feminist. Carole Boyce highlights the feminism in African literature that not only promotes the self-esteem of African women, but also shows the struggles of African women as well. as “...not antagonistic to ... men, but challenges them to be aware of certain salient aspects of woman subjugation” (HYS 8-9). Adichie depicts men as unreliable in their connections with women. The infidelity of Chief Ozobia is clear in the book. He often has extramarital sex with a Yoruba mistress who lives near his house and whom he always meets on his way back from work. Moreover, he purchased this mistress of his a property in the neighbourhood where Lagos socialites lived (HYS 218). Chief Ozobia’s wife’s neighbours reside nearby, and they frequently watch him park his car there every day. They report it to his wife. Mrs. Ozobia’s acquaintances are troubled by her lack of similarity to their buddy, since she is “old and unattractive” (HYS 218). Why is the Chief so special? As Mrs. Ozobia sees it, the reason for her anxiety is not that her husband has a mistress, but because his mistress lives in the same neighbourhood as her acquaintances. Therefore, Ozobia’s wife is accustomed to him maintaining mistresses, and so she is acclimated to this, although she is not thrilled by it. Her friends must not learn of her husband’s affair, since it would damage her reputation in their eyes. However, Chief Ozobia, who is both patriarchal and lazy, doesn’t care at all because we are living in a society where wives are property to their husbands, meaning they are possessions and can’t question or examine their husband’s conduct on anything.

Adichi depicts Olanna as a practical young woman. Besides her wisdom, she is also better than Chief Ozobia in speaking, thereby showing herself to be her father’s superior in morals and in all other areas. She is rather direct with her father, telling him what he does and the ramifications. While not speaking to her father in a way that is disrespectful, she makes it clear to him that he has to take action to resolve the matter since her mother is upset. Her first aim here is to make her mother happy, and she wants to confirm the things that keep her mother upset. Her calm delivery is imbued with gravitas that indirectly compels her listeners to obey her order. In this episode, the author demonstrates that until men and wives respect each other, there will be no harmony in the family. This novel also lets us know that Ozobia’s mistress is a lady of little value; she is, in fact, a Yoruba woman who is

promiscuous. So, the mistress is elderly and unattractive, and, most importantly, immoral. Why does Chief Ozobia choose his mistresses in the first place? According to all the evidence, Chief Ozobia, who is affluent, is not a member of any class when it comes to sex. His lack of moral fibre means he has no compunction in using his daughter as a sexual weapon to secure business contracts. Another male figure with questionable morals is Odenigbo. He may be a giant in the intellectual world, but he has no class when it comes to immorality. It's clear that he is really in love with Olanna, who graduated from a London university. They live as a couple and pledge to get married. However, Odenigbo's affair with the shy girl, Amala, occurs when Olanna is gone in London for three weeks. Amala, a shy rural girl, is shown as a character who's vulgar, having a disinterest in bedmates, by the author's going in. In contrast to Olanna, Amala is clumsy, innately unintelligent, poor, and, more importantly, intellectually inferior. In contrast to the portrayals of males in literature before Adichie, she presents them as a class of individuals who lack self-control and so have no choice but to crawl into whatever hole they find, no matter how accomplished they are in other areas. In addition to her strong position on feminism, Auntie Ifeka's genuineness is shown later in the narrative when Odenigbo has a sexual affair with Alice when Olanna is away in Orlu with her twin sister, Kainene. Having a sexual affair on his marital bed with Olanna's friend is deeply disrespectful to Olanna, and Odenigbo is disgracing himself with his acts. Because of Odenigbo's behaviour, it appears that he is unable to maintain his wedding vows because to his beastly sexual cravings. This is just absurd! Despite this, though, it shouldn't be so shocking when we consider that we're living in a patriarchal culture, where males have the power and may act with impunity. They have no regrets about their spouses since their wives are their possessions, to be used and cast aside as they see fit, even if it means breaking their marriage vows. In addition to having to be passive and complacent, women are supposed to be compliant and subservient to their husbands. But feminism is all about the exact opposite of this. Omolara's comment provides a summary of Adichie's treatment of female characters: They are able to stand on their own two feet; they are distinct persons; they confront males directly and state their own rights as human beings. On the other hand, the author acknowledges that no one is self-contained. She is subtle in her feminist impulses since both men and women need one another. According to Daniel Udo, she understands

that women cannot achieve their lofty ambitions without working in partnership with men, and that they can never be above men.

Richard, one of the novel's male characters, is British. Kainene is the love of his life, and he spends almost all of his time at her home. She looks after him and supports him. But Richard betrays Kainene's confidence in him when he begins an affair with her twin sister, Olanna. Richard would have had difficulty resisting Olanna's advances, knowing that she is Kainene's sister. African intellectuals of any prominence would likely dismiss Adichie's handling of sex in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Contrary to the tradition of earlier Nigerian writers, the explicit descriptions of sexual acts in the novel were a shock to many readers. The curtains should be drawn when engaging in sex. Traditional Nigerian literature's sexual scenes cannot be adequately described without it seeming like a preposterous endeavour. Prior to the wedding, sex was rarely discussed, since it was seen as something that should be avoided unless the family had previously reached an agreement. Ironically, none are married to Odenigbo, Olanna, Amala, Kainene, Richard, Ugwu and Chinyere. Even despite her parents' wishes, Olanna wants to stay in Odenigbo's house. The fact that she is sleeping with Richard does not concern her since, in her opinion, sex is a way to release emotional baggage. Whenever Odenigbo offers her marriage, she rejects it, choosing instead to live with him. She's indifferent to the social stigma of having a kid out of wedlock, therefore she wants to have a baby. Even Kainene, who is not very gorgeous, is against marriage and yet she sleeps with both Richard and Madu. Moreover, Ugwu loves the sex he has with Chinyere, even if their age and social position are against them. Adichie's formative years are spent in an adventurous climate that's solely allowed in Western society. The practise is frowned upon in traditional African society. Arize's dialogue with Olanna reflects the social antipathy to this cohabitation. Her view is that Olanna's foreign character is due to having been too educated. In contrast to African tradition, Adichie's style of western libertarian feminism is different. Adichie aims to demonstrate that despite differences in religious rank, all men are equal. fBecause she gave in to Olanna, the author appears to be indicating that males typically behave like monsters when it comes to sexuality, and as a result are unable to focus on anything other than sex. Richard, according to Adichie, is a cowardly character. Adichie portrays males as having inadequate emotional control

and celebrates women for their strength. Despite Richard's efforts to show his love for Kainene, his dependency on her shines through as well. Richard is shown to be violently envious in Adichie's stories. As a result of his resentment over Kainene's closeness to Major Madu, he dislikes him.

If Madu asks him to share Kainene with anyone, he refuses to do so since he does not want to share Kainene.: "I don't understand how we have found out nothing about Kainene..." (HYS 429), 'We' is a word that Richard dislikes, and he "didn't know who Madu included in it." To put it bluntly, Major Madu isn't welcome here. Consequently, he must immediately question Madu: "You love her, don't you? ... Did you ever touch her?... Did you ever touch her?... Did you ever touch her?" (HYS 429-30). He acknowledges that he loves Kainene but refuses to say if he has ever touched her before or not. The novel has it that, "Richard reached out and grasped his arm. Come back, he wanted to say, come back here and tell me if you ever laid your filthy black hand on her. Madu shrugged Richard's hand off. Richard hit him across the face and felt his hand begin to throb" (HYS 430). Again, Adichie portrays males as a group of people who are unable to exercise judgement. Fighting will legitimise the situation even if Madu has been having relationships with Kainene or if he is responsible for her abduction as Richard strongly suspects? He pays dearly for it: not only is he knocked down, bleeding from the nose, but he feels he has lost Kainene for good. It is stated in the literature, "Darkness descended on him, and when it lifted, he knew that he would never see Kainene again and that his life would always be like a candle lit room; he would see things only in shadow, only in half glimpses" (HYS 430).

There is no denying that Kainene is a formidable opponent. A bold, powerful and courageous woman is portrayed by the author as being serious-minded. Assuming control of her father's business, she is determined to make her father's factories flourish and perform better than he has ever done before. Her business takes precedence over all other activities. She is always on the move, acquiring and executing contracts on her own. She says Kainene is the type of person who doesn't rely on others. She is devoted, kind, and accommodating in every way. Richard, a Briton, is shown to be loved, protected, supported, and accommodated at her home. As a result, she has a keen eye for detail. So when Port Harcourt collapses, she buys land in Orlu and constructs a house there before it is too late. It's been a while since I've been to Orlu,

but it's been a while. As the camp's leader, she ensures that the refugees are taken care of as much as she can. Then, when Umuahia is overthrown, she asks Olanna's family to come and live with her in Orlu, where she has a home. Everyone in the family has access to food, thanks to her.

Her suppliers stopped supplying her with enough food for the refugees, so Kainene started a campaign called Plant Our Own Food (HYS 389). But she does more than just urge and force the migrants to create food for themselves. In the novel, "Olanna pondered where she had learnt to use a hoe" (HYS 389). There is never a dull moment while she's around. As a result, she provides her fair share to the war effort. So it's no surprise that when she discovers that Reverend Father Marcel is sexually exploiting the poor girls before giving them food, she drives him and Reverend Father Jude out of the Refugee Camp. The fact that Richard, her lover, had an affair with Olanna, her twin sister, makes it difficult for her to forgive him. As she tells Richard, "It would have been forgiven if it had been someone else. This is not my sister" (HYS 256). She destroys Richard's manuscript out of rage. This is a symbolic act. In a way, it signifies the end of their relationship, and it also foreshadows Kainene's departure at book's end. It takes Kainene a long time to forgive Olanna. Throughout Kainene, Adichie proves to the reader that women are incredibly trustworthy, brave, creative, and responsible. You see, they aren't the pathetic, inferior creatures that men depict women to be. Eluke agrees, saying that the contemporary woman, unlike her traditional counterpart, feels she is the provider of wealth, rather than only the consumer of it (HYS 113).

His studies are not a waste of valuable time and money. A woman's education isn't only helpful to herself; it's also good to her family, friends, and the community. As a result of the author's education, Bernard Dickson and Frank were correct. Dickson quotes Frank as saying:

Education gives women a vision of human experience beyond the narrow confines of their own lives, it bestows a kind of imaginative power and awareness of beauty, dreams, possibility. Even if they cannot literally escape the imprisoning restraints of their patriarchal world, they can imaginatively transcend them through the means of books. (253)

This passage from John Mbiti is a good example of how a woman not only conceives, but also nurtures, adores, and cares for life since all human life travels through her own body

to become. It has been shown that Olanna and Kainene are modernists. Acholonu, according to Christine Odi, described modernists as having the following characteristics:

defender and protector of family values, seeker of truth and true knowledge, courageous yet humble, loving, tolerant, powerful yet down to earth.... A motherist is one who is willing to protect the natural and cohesive essence of the family, the child, the society and the environment (51)

It is clear from the text that the twins are not only wonderful mothers, but they are also outstanding modernists. In light of all of this, it's little wonder Amartya and his co-authors argue that women's liberation is fundamental to societal progress, rather than merely a female concern. Rogers, B. in *The Domestication of Women: Discrimination in Developing Societies*. writes that "the issue is not so much that women needed development but [that] development needed women" (252). In light of all of this, it is clear that women are essential to growth. Because of her African perspective, Adichie is not a radical feminist. When it comes to community life in Africa, she realises that it is the opposite in Western countries. Any type of feminism that interferes with the African communality is unacceptable to Africans, but it is accepted in the United States and the United Kingdom. Odi notes that "Most western societies encourage the nuclear life-style while the essence of the African community is communality. The African woman is identified by her relationship with others in the society" (44). Having a good sense of humour helps Olanna and Kainene get along with their family members and friends as well as the community in which they reside. Amala's daughter, conceived illegally by her husband, is an excellent example of this. Dickson warns that: "Nigerian female novelist should not see men as the perpetual enemy in their works. They should create female characters whose existence and success do not depend solely on their defiance of male dominance and victimization" (257). Adichie is not also deficient in this regard. Her female characters support, protect and accommodate the men in their lives.

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