

Abstract

This study is a gender appraisal of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's two novels: *Purple Hibiscus* (2003) and *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006). It interrogates how the author projects the female voice(s) in her writing. We explore how Adichie, an African woman-writer suggests a new vision where men and women collaborate in liberation efforts. African women writers often grapple with neo-colonialism, racism, misrule, poverty, gender bias, ethnic animosity, religious fundamentalism, famine and misrepresentation and in confronting these social challenges, they have created stories that seek to explore their unique condition. In our efforts to examine the political motifs mingled with gender issues in the two novels, the novels are studied as political metaphors of the Nigerian situation. The study was guided by four objectives: to analyse subjugation and marginalization of women; to explore the strategies they employ to fight patriarchy; to interrogate how women agency is linked to national struggle in the two novels and to reveal the author's vision on gender. We worked from the assumption that African women are marginalized and different forms of oppression weigh on them. Womanist ideas advanced by Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi (1996/97) and Mary Kolawole(1997) which offer a hybrid combining feminist concerns and African liberation was employed to explain the situation Africa finds itself in women's liberty and human freedom. Womanists argue that in the African context, gender cannot be handled in isolation since there are other major problems that bedevil the continent. They recognise the African man as a victim of colonialism and neo-colonialism and strive to end his suffering. A Selfinterpellative reading of the two novels provided the lens for establishing the multiple structures of meanings embedded in the texts owing to the author's socio-political background. Close textual analysis was done with a view of getting enough data for the study and description of the main arguments. The study is configured in five chapters in line with the set objectives and the stipulated research questions. Chapter one details a comprehensive background of the study highlighting the problem, theoretical foundations, review of related literature, and overall conceptualization of the thesis. Chapter two surveys avenues of female oppression, interrogating the various social-political configurations that perpetuate and marginalize the African women. It discusses the ways adopted by Adichie and her female characters to fight patriarchy. The chapter also investigates how women negotiate power from their insignificant positions. The third chapter explores how the female tale parallels the story of the nation and that way the two stories are read as national allegories. The author's vision on gender is undertaken in chapter four whereby an alternative view on gender relationships in the African context is revealed. The final chapter recaps the study and gives suggestions for further research.