



Rethinking African Cultural Portrayal of Women with Reference to Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi's Selected Novels

Develda Seanego; Malesela Edward Montle; Mphoto Johannes Mogoboya

Faculty of Humanities, School of Languages and Communication Studies, Department of Languages (English
Studies), University of Limpopo, South Africa

E-mail: edward.montle@ul.ac.za/eddiemontle@yahoo.com

<http://dx.doi.org/10.47814/ijssrr.v5i11.702>

Abstract

The study explores a literary comparative examination of female characters from an African cultural perception using fictional texts such as *Americanah* (2013), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), and *Purple Hibiscus* (2004). The author Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi's selected novels are used as primary text for analysis. Gender role expectations are mostly influenced and perpetuated by patriarchy whereby women are marginalised by their surroundings, while men are granted the will to do as they wish. The institution of patriarchy thrives on oppressing women in many ways and silencing them is one of those various ways. The purpose of the study is to explore the experiences that surrounds African women and that of women in diaspora with regard to muted voices of marginalised females. Their inability to express themselves in the name of respecting culture and conforming to the expected behaviours. The study is a literary analysis Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2004), *Americanah* (2013), and *Half of a yellow Sun* (2006)., The author explores patriarchy through romantic relationship, family, religion. Furthermore, it is textually analysed. This current study aims to explore gender roles and equality. It is a qualitative study which is grounded on the feminist theory. The study highlights perception of feminism through female characterisation of the novel.

Keywords: *Feminism; Gender; Class; Characterization; Identity; Equality*

Introduction

One of the fascinating realities about literature is that it responds to the actual world, as the writer is able to express their views based on different situations. The study is a comparative analysis of portrayal of women in Chimamanda's selected novels. The fictional texts portrays events in an African region. The writer also investigates feminism from socio-economic and racial perspective through the eyes of the protagonist, Olanna in the novel *Half of the Yellow Sun* (2006). Chimamanda discloses the richness of black woman in an African culture and the customs through the fictional texts mentioned. She

uses the black female characters to manifest and emphasizes the type of women the society is exposed to, and her novels portrays feminism and gender roles that are taken in accordance with their societal and state laws. Thus, the study seeks to establish whether there is significant distinction between how, where, what and when feminism impacts on in diverse societies or not. Moreover, to find out if educational background or socio-economic could contribute to any kind of way, in which women are being perceived by the world.

The literary genre of the selected novels reign with the central idea of gender roles and equality. The study attempts to reveal the distinct reason why women's capabilities to the world they exist in is always questioned. The world is viewed differently, because of varied culture and norms amongst men and women. For example, men are allowed to marry more than one wife, but if a woman marries more than one husband, though it is legalised, it becomes questionable to the society that the woman does not have morals or integrity. Consequently, the researcher aims to analyse the validity of the degree of tolerance and intolerance behaviour and action between men and women in an African culture.

Feminism is not about making women stronger, women are already strong, it is about to change the way the world perceives that strength (Anderson,2011). Feminism, according to Arndt (2001), is the advocacy of women's rights focused on gender equality, the philosophy of gender equality in politics, economics, and society, and the conviction that men and women should have equal rights and opportunities. It is a philosophy that advocates for women's social, political, and other rights to be equal to men. Feminism may also be described as a topic that deals with the equality of men and women, rather than the sameness of men and women.

In this case, *Purple Hibiscus* (2005), which is narrated by a 14 year old Kumbi is used as an example to explain the cause of women to be mute and fear to utter words of assistance when they face challenges or they are being abused. Adichie explore patriarchy through the family of a strict catholic man by the name of Eugene Achike who restrains his family due to his supposed laws of God. The author is indicating the suppression of men over women who are voiceless and afraid to argue with their spouse, as they do not want their partners to feel insubordinate. The context of the selected novels *Americanah* (2013), *Half of a yellow Sun* (2006) and *Purple Hibiscus* (2005) are distinctly different in many ways, but they all share oppressive ideologies towards women in which the colonial experience in Africa. The study employs a textual analysis design to investigate gender equity problems in Adichie's selected novels. The paradigm is an appropriate approach for this research since it is a method for determining culturally specific information such as values, opinions, behaviors, and social background within a specific population.

Methodology, Sampling and Data Analysis

In terms of sampling data the researcher chose Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's fictitious work that draws on feminist writing using a purposive sampling technique. The researcher selected Adichie's novels *Purple Hibiscus* (2004), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), and *Americanah* (2013) because they are important to the theme of feminism and depict problems that African women face. The researcher gathered primary data from Adichie's novels *Purple Hibiscus* (2004), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), *Americanah* (2013), as well as critical works, essays, journals, articles, and reviews. This was accomplished by analysing and summarizing the texts. The aim of gathering data in this manner was to be able to illustrate the theory of research, feminism. Furthermore, secondary data from critical works were gathered. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Thematic analysis, according to Brauke and Clarke (2006), is a tool for finding, analysing, and reporting trends in data. A theme is also what captures the essential or fascinating detail about data collection (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis was used in this research to analyse data from the chosen novels. It is dependent on text. The researcher could explain the efficacy of African women's inclusion. In this case, the codes were clustered in order to identify the key themes and

sub-themes of the texts as well as what they convey. The researcher identified the significance of each theme, as well as what facets of the data each theme captures to explain the relationship between the themes. The themes were used by the researcher to illustrate and report on the findings. Since the study was qualitative in nature, it was critical to discuss the following aspects: credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability in order to establish the study's trustworthiness (Lincoln & Cuba, 1985).

African Feminism

Goredema (2010:34) highlights that African Feminism concerns itself not only with the rights of women from Africa, but it also includes their rights of those living in the Diaspora as many of the contributions to the literature have often lived abroad. This is the reason the study includes the work of Alice Walker despite her geographical location. African Feminism Theory is developed from Feminism Theory from the works of scholars such as Weir 2007, Aidoo 1998, and Mohanty 1998. The RoSa-Factsheet s (2004), points out that unlike Western Feminism, African Feminism concerns itself with culture rather than the woman's autonomy. A major factor in the patriarchal state of African lies in the Private-Public Divide, whereby women are traditionally associated with the private spheres such as the home and children and men are concerned with public life and social roles. African Feminism lays its foundation primarily on the concept of the importance of the community over the individual and women's reproductive role. Black communities of the Diaspora that have been displaced due to colonial practices such as slave trade share the same experiences as black communities that are still in Africa.

Feminist movement emerged during the 19th century and early 20th centuries, and further turned into a theory in order to understand and analyse the nature of gender inequality for research purposes. Women from all the parts of the world have different experiences be it from past or present leading to the future. Previously disadvantaged women such as those from African countries for instances, the African country Nigeria and South Africa are the most descendants that often share the same experiences. African feminism is a non-Western type of feminism that has little to do with Western values. The feminism in Africa encompasses all that is essential to Africa, including community, faith, custom, belief or religion, morals, rules and regulations, laws, norms, and values. As a result, this examines how African women's struggles to redefine their positions in the fight against gender discrimination have resulted positively (Cooper, 1992:77).

Western feminists claim that they share a sisterhood with black women, but the oppression of black women due to wealth, race and gender puts them in a much worse position than white women. Arndt is a German writer (2001:12). The value of the family or the well-being of society is central to African feminists. They oppose male domination and violence in family relationships. However, Hudson-Weems (2001), the African woman must refuse to be called and identified by those who are unfamiliar with African culture and what they are going through. Walker (2002:37) states:

“Feminism is the political theory that struggles to face all women; either as women of colour, working class women, poor women, disabled women, lesbians, old women as well as whites, economically privileged and heterosexual women; anything less than the vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement.”

African feminist, according to Achonolu (1991), is an epistemology and a form of rhetoric that has presented arguments that affirm the experience of African women or people of African descent in opposition to conventional feminist discourse. It is a form of justice that seeks to distinguish between women who were colonized and those who were considered colonisers, as well as a social movement that seeks to raise global awareness of African women's backgrounds, current realities, and future aspirations. Many of the contributors to the literature have lived in the diaspora, so African feminism encompasses not only women's rights but also those of those living in the diaspora. As a result, people's inquiring minds should not be constrained by geographical area, as the name implies. However, African feminism is mostly implemented and practiced on the African continent.

According to Aidoo (1999), an African literature authoress:

“I should go on to insist that every man and every woman should be a feminist- especially if they believe that Africans should take charge of African land, African wealth, African lives, and the burden of African development without believing that African women must have the best that environment can offer. For some of us this is crucial element of feminism.”

African feminism led by African women should represent African women as people capable of setting their own goals and agendas, rather than as problems to be solved. Women will be portrayed as potent, creative agents and decision makers in specific contexts by an African feminism. It should empower African women and serve them in the ways that they want (Aidoo, 2007). African women care deeply about the issue of African feminism, not just in terms of their backgrounds, but also in terms of the problems that concern them and their position in the feminist movement. The assertion that there is only one form of African feminism, on the other hand, is problematic and necessitates a strict description, but African feminism is not a simple term that can be clearly defined and delineated (Hudson-Weems, 2001).

Feminist theory is also known for its interdisciplinarity and willingness to cross conventional subject lines. The analysis of gender relation, as well as how they are constituted and perceived, is a central objective of feminist theory. Feminist theory may thus be described as critical examinations of gender and sexuality dynamics.

“We say to girls, you can have ambition, but not too much. You should aim to be successful, but not too much. You should aim to be successful, but not too successful. Otherwise, you will threaten the man”. Because I am female, I am expected to aspire to marriage. I am expected to make my life choices always keeping in mind that marriage is the most important. Now marriage can be a source of joy and love and mutual support. But why do we teach to aspire to marriage, and we do not teach boys the same? We raise girls to see each other as competitors- not for jobs or for accomplishment, which I think can be a good thing, but for the attention of men. We teach girls that they cannot be sexual beings in the way boys are” (Ngozi, 2013).

Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi used the above quote to convene a meeting with an influential woman, that feminism, racial equality, and gender equality are among their goals. *Fur* is a type of material that Beyoncé Knowles, a well-known singer, released an album in 2013 in honour of Adichie's viral *We Should All Be Feminists*, TED Talk, which was layered over Beyoncé's voice. The message of equality of sexes is conveyed in the hit song *Flawless*. Adichie went on to join Queen Beyoncé and the army of public activists who are bringing feminism into the mainstream. Women all over the world were familiar with and adored the song. African feminists, according to Oyewumi (2003), see themselves as distinct from western feminists because they claim to have specific perspectives in addition to the common sources of oppression. African feminists mostly blame Western feminists for focusing on secondary needs, such as the burden of domestic labour, while ignoring basic needs, which are the primary problem faced by African women. Secondly, African feminists decry western feminists' anti-male positions. They are adamant that men should not be disconnected from women's fight for equality in society. The main reason for such a stance by African feminists is their conviction that if they make their feminism movement engendered, they will gain widespread acceptance among men.

African feminists are opposed to various feminism ideologies for no reason other than to criticise them. Western feminists have a variety of ideas that can be appropriate for various groups of women of varying backgrounds. They have at least the social feminism theory, which takes the approach of sisterhood to fulfil the needs and abilities of each group of women. Furthermore, the sisterhood is dedicated to serving even women who are ignorant of their rights, as are the majority of African women. The tactic of singling out women in western feminist discourse without paying equal attention to men is used to give the impression that third-world societies are male-dominated and anti-women. African

feminism has been chastised by Western feminists for believing in the biological differences between men and women. Western feminists also believe in the universality of women's experiences and the sameness and similarity of their experiences (Marten, 2004). As a result, they accuse African feminism of focusing on differences rather than similarities, because of the abusive atmosphere that contributes to the continuity of women's oppression, the domestic and private spheres, where gender disparity is constituted, remain unaffected (Oyewumi, 2003). African feminists have slammed Western ideas, claiming that the answers to their issues do not come from the West. Western feminism wields considerable clout in the global debate on women's problems. It is precisely this effect that needs to be challenged, as Western feminists engage in similar forms of silence and remain oblivious to the lives of women who work on the periphery (Marten, 2004).

Feminism has influenced culture, resulting in more representation of women's needs and issues in the media, in particular. AIDS, bigotry (prejudice against homosexuals), technology, and warfare have all prompted feminist thought to change. To oppose nuclear weapons and reject emerging technologies, some feminists have mixed feminist ideals with pacifist and environmental viewpoints. Reproductive technology and surrogate motherhood, for example, are seen as ways for men to exercise power over women's bodies. Another source of criticism against Western feminism comes from feminist academics around the world, who perceive its normative prescriptions as an imposition on local cultural and religious practices in the name of women's rights. The expansion of women's rights which undergo the opposition from a variety of outlets, including cultural and religious norms, as it has in many other parts of the world.

The Status of African Women Represented in a Fictional Way

Women's lower status in Africa is a form of biological fate imposed by culture rather than nature, one that limits a woman's identity, surrounds her with taboos, and even limits her physical mobility. African feminist participation is centered on themes of feminine concern, as well as the larger fortification of patriarchal dominance. The demand for recognition and audibility of the African woman differs from that of her western counterparts, who are mainly free of these obligations.

Given the foregoing, it should be unsurprising that every African woman is acutely aware of her responsibilities and inadequacies as a woman in a male-dominated culture. The natural responsibilities of wife and duties of a mother are continuously reinforced for the African woman. According to Catherine Acholonu, "motherhood and childbearing are central to the life of African women. It is not an overstatement that motherhood is the anchor, the matrix, and the foundation on which all else rests in the African society, and especially in the family" (1995:31).

While her point is valid, it is also troubling because women are burdened with the obligations of producing children and caring for the home, thereby barring them from active socio-political activity. The girl child is taught the value of gendered roles from infancy, and by the time she reaches adulthood, she has accepted them as her life's purpose. Women, as Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo (1996:73-74) puts it, have been unfairly criticized more than any other category or class in any community. Women have faced a wide range of oppressions, including sexual, religious, cultural, political, social, and economic oppression.

This crime against womanhood is committed in every corner of the world, albeit some nations and civilizations are guiltier than others. Women are challenged with their insignificance and subordinate status in society from childhood. Olanna internalizes these videos, dooming herself to a life of uneasiness and shyness. Regardless of the odds, a woman's role as a mother is the most efficient technique of producing labor. Chinweizu recognises the vital yet unappreciated role women play in society, claiming that just because "women operate through methods that differ from those available to men does not mean that women are deprived of power and authority to dominate, because the hand that rocks the cradle is the

hand that rules the world” (Chinweizu, 1990:26). African women are educated from a young age to be obedient to all males and are limited to the major responsibilities and obligations of wifehood and motherhood.

Despite the fact that these feminine responsibilities of child bearing and nurturing are important to all of society, their amplification continues to limit women and tie them to a life of permanent domesticity. In African society, women face discrimination; their individuality is not appreciated, and their personal worth is questionable. Women in Africa face not just gender inequality as a result of African custom, but they are also limited in their ability to participate and contribute to society owing to male dominance portrayal.

While women have always created, lived, and influenced culture, women's history has a special way of behaving. According to Gerda Lerner (2005:127). While cultural and traditional practices play an important influence in women's dominance and seclusion in many civilizations, religion has an even larger part in women's ultimate subservience. The principal perpetrators are major religious organizations, whose teachings on women have been misconceived to meet the patriarchal ideology of male leaders.

According to Kate Millet, men retain patriarchal power through myth and religion, patriarchy has God on its side; for example, Eve from the bible or the book of Genesis was an afterthought produced from Adam's spare rib (Haralambos, 2004: 113). Similarly, Anthony Giddens comments that "the Christian religion is a determined male affair in its symbolism as well as its hierarchy" when it comes to the connections between religions, patriarchy, and women's oppression. While Mary, Jesus' mother, is frequently presented as if she possessed heavenly traits, God is the father, a male figure, and Jesus took the physical form of a man. Woman is depicted as being formed from a spare rib plucked from man (Haralambos, 2004:.412).

One could argue that, while the degree of oppression varies considerably, there is not, and has never been, a society in which women do not have a lower status than men, and that this oppression is not supported by that society's religious ideals. The representation of women in literature is intrinsically related to their function in any particular culture and society. Women in Africa have always faced the same misconception in texts as they do in their social surroundings. Writing is a source of inspiration for a female writer since it allows her to challenge the forces that strive to suppress women. The creative imagination's power base implies some form of power in the pen that stretches from the writer's consciousness to the reader's. The female writer is compelled to maximize her artistic potential and to use her literary production as a vehicle for improving women's consciousness.

Literature has the potential to be a powerful tool for overcoming gender gaps in Africa and boosting women's representation in text and meaning. An African feminist text, after defining African feminism, is one that opposes or questions established norms, gender-oppressive cultural traditions, or patriarchal attitudes and actions toward women in an African environment. It reimagines the portrait of the African woman through hopeful, yet realistic images of female characters, and it constructively criticizes all socio-cultural, political, and religious systems that block the holistic self-actualization and self-development of the African woman for the welfare of humanity.

African feminism is utilised as a theoretical framework for comprehending the works of modern feminine-conscious men and women writers on the continent in all of their guises and manifestations, such as public protest. Because feminism in the African setting and in African literature is an emerging phenomenon, the depiction or portrayal of women in Africa in both text and meaning must be malleable. As a result, both female and male authors are accountable for enhancing and reinventing women's roles in Africa through text and meaning. In contrast to the negative depiction and under-representation that women have faced for years as a result of male literary supremacy, African feminist theory strives to remodel the picture of women in texts and to stimulate active examination of women-centered concerns.

Gender relations critiquing in literary practice is frequently connected with deconstructing of patriarchal language usage, favorable representation of female characters, and extensive themes of gender concerns in literary writings. Modernization, the quick adoption of feminist ideologies into men and women's consciousness, and the impact of women-friendly international organizations and bodies are all elements contributing to these transformations. Education, on the other hand, continues to be a powerful engine for advancement, capable of reforming society while instilling growth skills and educating the public about the need of gender parity and balance. Women from all areas of life are breaking through historically male-dominated economic and political situations. Women are also becoming more influential in politics and governance, education and professional disciplines, as well as management and industrial progress.

Rethinking, reinterpretation, and restoration of male-dominated literature's inaccurate depictions of African people, as well as depiction of African women's realities throughout all spectrums of human life. To fulfil these literary goals, the female writer must "understand the reality of the African woman, and womanhood" (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:61). To name a few, Flora Nwapa, Ama Ata Aidoo, Bessie Head, Miriam Tlali, Buchi Emecheta, and Mariama Ba have already led the feminist call to action and set the tone for the literary rehabilitation of male writers' negative portrayal of African women. They accomplished this by showing female characters who, in the face of patriarchal opposition, battled to demonstrate their capabilities in meaningful ways. Their feminist sensibility and literary feminist defiance, on the other hand, have since flowered and grown into the colorful literary imagination of a new generation of African female writers whose priority is the restoration of a new image of the African woman, one that differs from past depictions offered by male writers and even their literary forebears.

Struggling in Search of Identity: The Connection Between Race and Gender in *Americanah* by Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi

Americanah is a contemporary novel that deals with the trials and tribulations of a Nigerian lady residing in the United States. The author introduces the figure of a new generation of African immigrants. Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi uses *Americanah* to depict the difficulties that African immigrants have in terms of adaptability and adjustment processes, as Ifemelu discovers for the first time that she is black in a cultural milieu in the United States.

The cultural environment of the United States is determined by race, which conditions people's lives and causes them to stand out in the eyes of others who are of a different skin color or race. As a result, Adichie exposes the investigation of racial relations in America and the numerous elements that influence people's lives as a result of their birth origin. The author reveals several variables affecting the central character Ifemelu, a female with a self-image who fights to establish her identity as a black woman. She is a Nigerian immigrant studying at a university in the United States. *Americanah* is a novel that explores how the relationship between race and gender poses a significant threat to female African immigrants in the United States.

These interactions and American culture have an impact on her and help her develop into a strong and independent character, while also producing a different and somewhat detached vision of Nigeria upon her return. The plot alternates between events in Nigeria and her return home from the United States thirteen years later. Ifemelu is struggling to find her identity. When she lives in Nigeria, her life is completely normal; she goes to school, she has a family and a boyfriend, and she is not burdened by racism because everyone back home is black like her. Nonetheless, once she goes to the United States, she discovers the numerous ways in which whites act as surrogates for black people because of their skin tone. According to Ifemelu, "I come from a country where race was not an issue; I did not think of myself as black until I came to America" (Adichie, 2013: 359).

The following extract from Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, demonstrates that black people become aware of their blackness only in the context of a white society: "As long as the black man remains on his home territory, except for petty internal quarrels, he will not have to experience his being for others." For the black man must not only be black, but he must also be black in relation to the white man" (Fanon, 2008: 89-90). Furthermore, the examination of Ifemelu's relationships provides insight into the brains of African immigrants who must navigate the difficult process of cultural adaptation and identity formation. Toni Morrison identifies the foundation of what she calls "American Africanism," which refers to the way black people's identities are built in the United States through American culture and customs.

Societies all over the world have certain ways in which they behave around and towards each other, and these behaviours are mostly influenced by culture, tradition and /or any forms of set of accustomed ways of living. In quiet a number of communities such as some African way where there are certain gender role expectations. These gender role expectations are mostly influenced and perpetuated by patriarchy whereby women are marginalised by their surroundings while men are granted the will to do as they wish. The institution of patriarchy thrives on oppressing women in many ways and silencing them is one of those various ways. Ifechelobi (2014:18) confirms that, "in order for men to assert their power over women the women must be silent." Being silent does not allow the victim to have a voice or an opinion rather to do as they are dictated to all the time.

African Sexual Expectations and Relationships According to Adichie's Response

Adichie's three selected novels, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, *Purple Hibiscus*, and *Americanah*, and their distinctive depictions of female sexuality and social relationship expectations. Adichie considers sexual experience defying traditional portrayals as an essential aspect for better understanding individual variance within a culture. While addressing an international audience, Adichie directs the representation of sexuality and relationship experience to fellow African women in order to empower them to have diverse sexual experiences outside of traditional motherhood responsibilities.

Adichie's novels' extensive descriptions of sexual experience will be analysed to determine the links between intimacy and public conflict. The chapter will contrast Adichie's novels to other depictions of female protagonists and their relationships to sexual experience, particularly by African women in relation to Adichie's fictional characters. Due to the extreme variety of sexual encounters, ranging from elevation to caution to fantasy fulfilment, and the evident schism between motherhood and intimacy, Adichie's work stands out from other accounts.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's novels have been characterised by critics as nationalist, representing marginalised voices, and advocating for many voices and perspectives. Critics have also largely dismissed sexual experience as a role in her portrayals, viewing her explicit descriptions of intimacy as simply amusement or a means of provoking criticism. Adichie's novels contain many episodes of sexual intimacy, not as an escape from the difficult themes she discusses, but to show the repercussions of public problems on individuals. Ultimately, the complexities of her novels' sexual experiences show that sexual intimacy for women can exist outside of the expectation of motherhood. Adichie describes the characters in her works as "human beings who have sex, eat food, and laugh."

Adichie is keen to convey the most personal aspects of human life because she believes that this is the most accurate picture of both human struggle and pleasure. Her novels, and the numerous storytellers among her characters, tell a variety of stories about Nigerian experience in the present world that Africans live in on a daily basis. Adichie emphasizes on intimacy and domestic moments in the setting of enormous cultural shifts and expectations for women, Africans, and other oppressed groups in the literary mainstream.

These intimate moments are frequently represented through graphic sexual encounters that range from pleasurable to unpleasant to nonconsensual. While her sexually graphic depictions are often viewed through the lens of entertainment, her depictions of sexual experience can be found in a variety of settings, including both expected gender dynamics, coming-of-age stories, and fantasy fulfillment and unexpected political discourse, race relations, and depictions of war.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, *Purple Hibiscus* and *Americanah* Adichie primarily isolates sexual experience from discussions of motherhood possibilities, despite the fact that typical black African women perspectives would link the two activities in discussions of female sexual experience. Adichie, on the other hand, contradicts this bond and presents a plethora of alternate options for female sexual experience. It may be argued that Adichie includes many instances of sexual experience in her novels, not to avoid difficult subjects, but to illustrate the repercussions of broader issues on individuals. The fiction texts investigate the emancipatory prospect of delinking the expectation of motherhood from female sexual experience, while noting and underlining the hurdles to liberation. Adichie emphasizes on painting a new perspective on cultural practices, emphasising the variety of voices in order to vividly depict the richness and diversity of any one culture's experience

Results and Discussion of the Novels and How They Link with African Women in Terms of Sexuality

Adichie gives various examples of the conventional relationship between women, reproduction, and marriage. She underlines her female protagonist's discontent with tradition as they seek to defy it. When Ifemelu, the protagonist of *Americanah*, returns to Nigeria after staying in the United States, she detects a pattern in every interaction she has with her erstwhile female acquaintances: "it surprised her how quickly, during reunions with old friends, the subject of marriage came up, a waspish tone in the voices of the unmarried, a smugness in those of the married. Ifemelu wanted to talk about the past, but marriage was always the preferred topic" (Adichie, :490).

Ifemelu's friends presume that everybody is concerned with marriage and children since it is the social norm, but Adichie characterizes Ifemelu as restless and uninspired in the issue. Given this marriage-obsessed milieu, Ifemelu talks about the women she grew up with in a magazine article.

Even unmarried women without children "live lives they can't afford, like many women in Lagos who define their lives by men they can never truly have, crippled by their culture of dependence, with desperation of expensive designer bag and wrist" (Adichie :521). In this society, the woman's sexual role is clearly defined as one of servitude, according to Ifemelu. The ladies she portrays measure success as the pleasure and riches of the man with whom they sleep, which has no bearing on Ifemelu's sexual experience or career aspirations.

Adichie's justification for focusing on sex in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is worth repeating: "I was determined and mesmerized to the narrative of my novel about what I like to think of as human determination and courage. A book about relationships and people who have sex, eat food, and laugh, about people who are life's fierce consumers" (Nnoli, :50-51). Her emphasis on active involvement in personal relationships demonstrates the significance of sex in her novels and its impact on her larger arguments.

Adichie explores "how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story" in her TEDx Talk (Adichie, 2013). If only single account of a narrative emerges, an audience is obligated to accept that version as the truth. In *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah* both novels about significant life upheavals and recurrent extramarital sex, the depiction of relationships is explored at varying levels of sexual liberation. *Half of a Yellow Sun* chronicles two adult relationships as well as the sexual awakening of a young houseboy named Ugwu.

The very first significant relationship is that of Olanna and Odenigbo, two intellectuals who teach at Nsukka University. As the conflict takes over their life, the two face job loss, poverty, and affairs that result in illegitimate children, among other things. Ugwu's narrative exposes the author's multifaceted perception on sexual experience as well. He enlists in the army, fast growing of age and encountering sexual experiences, conflicts, and urges to be sexually active. Kainene, Olanna's twin and a wealthy Nigerian woman running her father's business and Richard, a white British man researching Igbo ethnography and looking for a community in Biafra, have the ultimate sexual relationship. Although this couple is less impoverished, their interracial romance complicates their life as the narrative unfolds.

Sex and romantic relationships are common, and each encounter is unique due to the consequences of wartime changes and challenges. Adichie's later novel, *Americanah*, delves the characters' diverse and varied sexual experiences as they struggle between tradition and modernity as national identity simultaneously transforms and resists change. The tale begins in modern-day Nigeria and then moves to the United States of America. Adichie depicts Ifemelu and Obinze's relationship as Ifemelu is admitted to a university abroad and Obinze is compelled to remain in Nigeria.

Over the course of several years, Ifemelu confronts ethnic animosity and prejudice in America, which finds embodiment in her bad sexual experiences that fall short of her first love, Obinze's, fantasy. Obinze is unable to pursue his desire of studying abroad and eventually marries a woman who does not pique his attention. *Americanah*, like *Half of a Yellow Sun*, uses sexuality as a personal and private representation of the characters' life changes and challenges. Adichie uses sexuality as more than a tool for reproduction, connecting it with struggle and change to underscore the diversity of experiences with both.

Conclusion

Feminism is a social, political, and economic ideology that stresses the distinction between men and women through culture, tradition, norms, and values. The beliefs that women and men adapt to social roles that are compatible with feminine and masculine, respectively, according to Oyewumi (2002), several academics have criticized gender as a fundamental concept; therefore, it investigates the differences in reproductive function. As a result, the term feminism refers to a broad theory that is divided into various genres. Several scenarios occur in the three selected novels where the protagonist is subjected to various sorts of discrimination, including factors such as cultural background, gender, ethnicity or racial group and economic position. As I have established, the implications of these various discriminatory layers are tremendously deleterious and unjust to black women as they are pulled to the bottom of the social ladder.

Through Adichie's writing, we can see the specific challenges that the novel's female protagonists face. As a result, this study demonstrates that these numerous concerns are a direct outcome of the inseparability of racial and gender concerns. As a result, her blog serves as a sort of escape route from a reality that, from her perspective as an African woman, makes no sense. Themes in African novels revolve around sociological issues such as bad leadership, corruption, economic hardship, religious hypocrisy, and female subordination, and the accompanying criticism of these works focuses mostly on these concerns. The chapter explored sexual behavior in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's writings, beginning with *Purple Hibiscus* and progressing through *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*, noting how they represent the author's perspective on sex and sexuality. Throughout her novels, Adichie depicts sexual encounters as activities for achieving comfort and power, highlighting an important part of writing stories about Nigerian experience: the active role Nigerians must play in building a new national identity. One of Adichie's main goals in her writing is to reflect these dynamic people, and she critiques literature about Africa in which "we do not see Africans who act, although there are many who do" (Nnolini, :45). Her emphasis on intimate moments between two people, on the other hand, serves as a means of giving

those people a voice. Those who are not at the forefront of action or political discourse can still be active in their personal lives and express emotions related to social problems in personal relationships.

Literature is a mirror of the world's realities. The authors write with intention to enlighten what might be a mystery, therefore changing the status quo. Therefore, the authors tell a story of realities through representation of characters and convey the suppression, victimization that people go through in their everyday lives. Both the African male and female authors have their own ways of writing about the experiences of the black woman. The pioneer author and /or activist of feminism, Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi who is famously known for *We Should All Be Feminist* (2014), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), *Purple Hibiscus* (2004) and *Americanah*(2013) in her literary works. It is concluded that the three literary work explores patriarchy through family, religion, marriage, education and culture. African feminism, Womanism theories and the concept of intersectionality as references to indicate the sisterhood relationship and economic independence for marginalised women.

According to Kolawe (1997:5) African women have emerged from silence by rising above the many limiting borders imposed on them by patriarchal traditional or post-colonial structures. It is concluded that the key factors surrounding the most importantly the issue of silence. Several scholars have argued that male domination and female subservience is natural and therefore cannot be changed. some argue that patriarchal system is man -made and can always be changed. Asiyanbola (2005), concludes that it is evident that the establishment and practice of male dominance over women and children is historic process formed by men and women with patriarchal family serving as a basis unit organization.

The model focuses on examining fictional texts, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), *Purple Hibiscus* (2004), and *Americanah* (2013), but only one author, Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi. As a result, it is suggested that the study be expanded to include other writers of feminism theory or gender equality and roles in the future, so that this theme can be developed. The three chosen fictional novels/texts were authored by a black woman born in Nigeria, an African nation. Chimamanda Adichie Ngozi talks about the portrayal and representation of African women, as well as the ways in which women combat thematic concerns such as racism, gender equality, and patriarchy. Other texts on the theme of gender equality must be written by males in the future, as this issue is most relevant to them and their experiences.

This study encourages males to contribute favorably to literary output by reflecting optimistically within themselves. It is high time for men to cease watching from the sidelines when things are written about them for them. They should instead endeavor to recreate their own images in literature. Furthermore, this study suggests that males in African nations such as Nigeria, South Africa, and others regard gender roles and equality as a beneficial approach of overcoming the obstacles they experience because of their gender, race, or class. In brief the study has been summarized discussed and evaluated the role of gender equality and its effects on society. Although the pioneers of feminism theory debated the impact of gender norms, this problem still poses a few concerns that need to be investigated further.

Reference

- Acholonu, C.O. 1995. *Motherism: The Afrocentric Alternative to Feminism*. Owerri: Afa Press.
- Adawo, L., Gikonyo, L., Kudu, R., & Olga, M. 2011. *History of Feminism in Kenya*. Kenya: Onil publishing house.
- Adichie, C.N. 2004. *Purple Hibiscus*. North Carolina: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill.
- Adichie, C.N. 2006. *Half of a Yellow Sun*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Adichie, C.N. 2008. African Authenticity the Biafran Experience. *Transition*, 99(1): 45-53.

- Adichie, C.N. 2009. *The Danger of A Single Story*. Talk delivered at TED Ideas worth spreading.
- Adichie, C.N. 2013. *Americanah*. London: Fourth Estate.
- Adichie, C.N. 2014. *We Should All Be Feminist*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Adichie, C.N. 2014. *Why Can't He Just Be Like Everyone Else?* New York: Harper Perennial.
- Adichie, C.N. 2016. *Dear Ijeawele or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions*. 4th Estate. London: An imprint of Harper Collins Publishers.
- Arndt, S. 2001. *The Dynamics of African Feminism: Defining and Classifying African- Feminist Literatures*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.
- Asiyanbola, A. 2005. January. Patriarchy, male dominance, the role and women empowerment in Nigeria. In poster presented at the XXV International Population Conference Tours, Francia.
- Cooper, J. 1992. *Radical behaviorism: A productive and needed philosophy for education*. Heward publication.
- Ezeigbo, A.A. 1996. *Gender Issues in Nigeria: A Feminine Perspective*. Lagos: Vista Books. 2008. *A New Generation of African Writers: Migration, Material Culture & Language*. Durban: University of Kwa-Zulu Natal Press.
- Goredema, R. 2010. The African Woman's Struggle for Identity, African Feminism African Yearbook of Rhetoric. *Gender Rhetoric, North-South*, Vol 1(1): 33-34.
- Hogan, P, C. 1999. *How Sisters Should Behave to Sister: Women's Culture and Igbo Society in Flora Nwapa's Efurú*. *English in Africa*, 26(1): 45-60.
- Hudson-Weems, G. 2001. *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*. Troy MI: Bedford Publisher.
- Kolawe, M.E.M. 1997. *Womanism and African Consciousness* Trenton, N.J. Africa World Press.
- Ogundipe-Leslie, M. 1994. *Re-creating Ourselves: Africa Women and Critical Transformations*. Trenton, N.J: Africa World Press.
- Oyewumi, O. 2003. *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on Politics of Sisterhood*. Nigeria. Temple University press.
- Walker, A. 2004. *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*. (originally published in 1983). San Diego, CA: Harvest Books.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).