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**The Use of English in Redefining African  
Identity by the Postcolonial Writer**

**Case Study : *Half of a Yellow Sun***

**(by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie 2008)**

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment for the Degree of Master in

English (Option: Civilisation and Literature)

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate my graduate dissertation to my beloved family and all my closest friends.

Sabrina Benchaa

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this humble work to my dear parents, my brothers and sister and my friends.

Imane Megoussi

## **Acknowledgements**

This dissertation would not have been possible without the dedication and guidance of our supervisor Mr. Abdelkader Kourdouli. We owe him an endless gratitude for being with us in every step, and for being patient in guiding us through our study. His advice to accomplish a good study has granted us persistence in seeking better results concerning our work. So a simple thank you would not be enough to express our grateful recognition for his constant help.

## Abstract

The use of English by African writers has caused major debate in the literary community as far as the authenticity of the work is concerned. African writings have been questioned because they are written in the language of the coloniser and not in an African language. The first part of the dissertation is based on the theoretical background which discusses the significant use of the colonial language to represent African identity. It also focuses on the postcolonial writer who has been shaped under the influence of two different cultures. The second chapter identity and its representation in *Half of a Yellow Sun* by the Nigerian investigates the issue of is shed on the manifestation author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. In the third chapter, the light of African identity in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This dissertation argues that the English language has been used as a linguistic tool which has resulted in a lingual hybridisation

## Résumé

L'utilisation de l'Anglais par les écrivains Africains a suscité un grand débat dans la communauté littéraire en ce qui concerne l'authenticité du travail. Les écritures Africaines ont été questionnées parce qu'elles sont écrites dans la langue du colonisateur et non dans une langue Africaine. La première partie de la thèse est basée sur le contexte théorique qui traite de l'utilisation importante de la langue coloniale pour représenter l'identité Africaine. Il se concentre également sur l'écrivain postcoloniale qui a été façonné sous l'influence de deux cultures différentes. Le deuxième chapitre étudie la question de l'identité et sa représentation dans *la Moitié d'un Soleil Jaune* par l'auteur Nigérian Chimamandai Adichie. Dans le troisième chapitre, la lumière est remise sur la manifestation de l'identité Africaine dans *la Moitié d'un Soleil Jaune*. Cette thèse fait valoir que la langue Anglaise a été utilisée comme un outil linguistique qui a abouti à une hybridation linguale.

## ملخص

إن استعمال اللغة الإنجليزية من طرف الكتاب الأفارقة تسبب في جدل كبير في المجتمع الأدبي، حول مدى أصالة العمل بما انه مكتوب بلغة المستعمر و ليس بإحدى اللغات الإفريقية. الفصل الأول يركز أساسا على المعارف النظرية التي تناقش أهمية استعمال اللغة الانجليزية في إعادة تعريف الهوية الإفريقية. هذا الفصل سيركز أيضا على مدى تأثير الثقافات المختلفة في إفريقيا على الكاتب الإفريقي. الفصل الثاني يهدف إلى التحقيق في قضية الهوية الإفريقية في رواية 'نصف شمس صفراء' للكاتبة النيجيرية شيماماندا نغوزي أديشي. أما الفصل الثالث فيهدف إلى تسليط الضوء على مظاهر الاحتفاء بالهوية الإفريقية في رواية 'نصف شمس صفراء'. في الأخير، هذه المذكرة تناقش واقع استعمال اللغة الإنجليزية كأداة لغوية نتج عنها تهجين لغوي.

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## **General Introduction**

Rewriting history, retrieving the lost identity and reshaping the story of the suppressed people these were the aims behind the emergence of several post-colonial writings. They were also the basics behind establishing a solid ground for presenting the true image of Africa and the African people as well. African writers tried to eliminate the stereotypes established by the former coloniser and redefine the image of African people. This has resulted in their search for their authenticity, and seeks a journey for their quest for identity.

The quest for identity is a shared theme among several postcolonial writers. Yet, the way and the tool to seek and even identify identity was not an easy task to accomplish, especially for the newly independent African countries. The use of English to express the views of each single African writer has been a shared tool to re-examine the survival of African culture and civilisation. Being under the British rule and adopting its culture and customs have certainly affected the natives' ancestral heritage. This has resulted in the creation of a new community based on the fusion between the cultures of both the coloniser and the colonised.

This fusion has created a hybrid community trying to preserve its tribal heritage while displaying different behaviours and following different customs. Being influenced by the coloniser's culture and education, African people had to face the issue of preserving their ethnic identity. Therefore, adopting the practices of a foreign culture for a long period has put African people in a critical situation when identifying their Africanity<sup>1</sup>. Thus, the use of the coloniser's language would enforce its effect on the mentality of the natives when preserving their own heritage.

The use of the coloniser's language might portray the deep effect of colonial education. Still, it was not a choice made at random by African writers. Writing in English had other aims, especially for the postcolonial writer who wanted to deliver a specific message to the coloniser. Postcolonial intellectuals sought to overcome what the British once referred to once as 'the burden of the white man'<sup>2</sup>. Therefore, the use of English was not to question the progress of a certain nation or to show some sort of inferiority. Using this specific language was for the sake of telling the truth about African people and their experiences during the colonial period. In other words, English has been used as a tool to preserve the heritage of African ancestors.

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<sup>1</sup>Africanity is the state of being of an African origin.

<sup>2</sup> The burden of the white man is a concept declared by Europeans to justify their colonial presence in several parts of the world during nineteenth century.

Because African people used to pass on their traditions and praise their heroes using only oral stories, English along with its methods and techniques came to document the history of Africans. Because of colonial education, African writers started to focus more on the written word as their only weapon to answer back the lies told by the colonisers. English has also presented an open channel of communication between African nations and the rest of the world. Although English has been linked to colonialism, still in the hands of African writers, it has been used as a tool to express themselves.

The language which once represented segregation and exploitation because of its origins, African writers defined its use according to their own terms. These writers invested in the colonial language to publicise their works. They used this specific language to describe their countries in their own ways and not as they had been described by the coloniser.

However, the use of the colonial language to define the culture of the colonised people can only create some contradictions. Therefore, in this dissertation we will attempt to answer the following questions:

- What are the main purposes behind using English to represent African identity by the postcolonial writer?

- The postcolonial writer's choice of using English only brought certain doubts about telling his African story. Therefore, to what extent has he succeeded in completing the missing oral story through the written English word?

- African writers were criticised for using the coloniser's language to restore their African identity through English. Therefore, how has the meaning of identity changed for African people?

- Why have postcolonial writers chosen to write using the coloniser's language?

On the basis of the previous questions, this research hypothesises that the use of the English language by the African writer will enhance his realistic depiction of the colonial history in African nations. African writers' use of English will express their internal struggle for being obliged to adopt a different nation's culture. Also writing in English will grant African writers different perspectives about their surroundings.

Being able to communicate on the same level as the coloniser, the postcolonial writer will have the right tools to validate his position as a defender of his nation's heritage. Using the colonial text and literary techniques will strengthen the position of writers from the Dark Continent. Their strong position will create a balance between African nations and other nations in the world. Furthermore, being able to use a different style to recount African stories will give the African writer enough space to act as a story-teller especially through writing novels.

The English language was not about creating a barrier between two distinctive languages, African and English. It was more about addressing the different communities in Africa, and most importantly addressing colonisers who came with one idea and image about Africa. English language for postcolonial writers has been a tool used to reach a specific purpose. Defining their African identity in English has changed the balance of power and granted them a control over what used to be referred to as colonial language.

The use of English as it has been explained by Bill Ashcroft et al. in their book *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (2002) became the new representation of power and African writers have used this power very well. In *Chewing over the West: Occidental Narratives in Non-Western Readings* (2009) Doris Jedamski defended the use of the coloniser's language as a new strategy to 'write back'<sup>3</sup> by the colonised people. Additionally, both Jennifer Margulis and Peter Nowakoski supported their article entitled *Language* (2012) the use of colonial language to enhance the mutual communication among African communities, and between African nations and the rest of the world.

Furthermore, in Bernth Lindfors's book *Conversations with Chinua Achebe* (1975), Achebe supported the use of the colonial language to write an African story. He defended his position for having no choice, but to use the language he has inherited after his long years of study. With regard to this, Isidore Okpewho in her book *Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart: A Casebook* (2003) spoke about African unity which it could not be realised without having one shared language which is English. Therefore many postcolonial writers have depended on the use of colonial language.

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<sup>3</sup> Write back is a phrase which explains the reactions of postcolonial writers towards the colonial discourse.

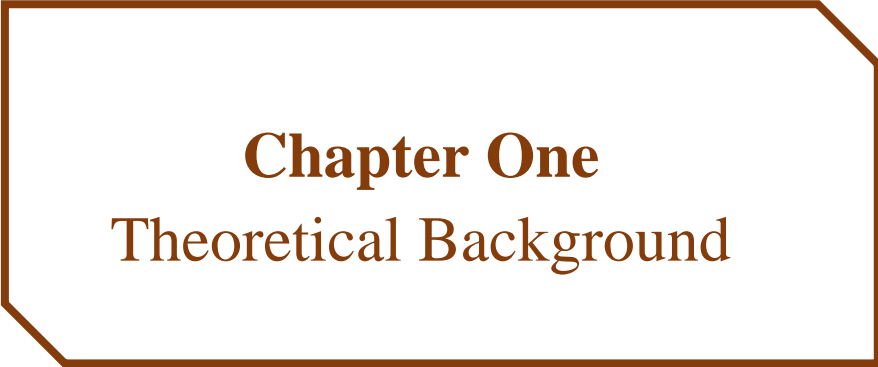
As for Ayo Kehinde's *Post-Colonial African Literature as Counter-Discourse: J.M. Coetzee's Foe and the Reworking of the Canon* (2006) he focused on the importance of narration in order to define any nation's culture. In the other hand, [Regina Hartmann](#) in her thesis *Cultural Identity in the East African Novel* (1998) dealt with the importance of identity's representation through writing novels. She defended the use of the western novel by the postcolonial writer for granting him an adequate space to act as a story-teller. Therefore, in our research *The Use of English in Redefining African Identity by the Postcolonial Writer Case Study: Half of a Yellow Sun by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie*(2008) we aim to identify the authenticity of the African novel although it is written in a non African language. In this dissertation we aim to explore the duality between the English language and Igbo expressions used by the African writers to maintain their positions as story-tellers through their novels.

The importance of this topic lies in writing a nation's history using a foreign language as in the case for African writers. Writing an African story and sharing the African experience with the rest of the world, yet using English language and still categorise it as an African story is an interesting dilemma. Trying to identify the main elements which make the African novel worth its authenticity is a sufficient reason to seek more clarifications about this topic. Identifying the basics of the postcolonial novel will surely end the allegations about its originality for being of an African production. It will also grant an adequate appreciation for using a language out of its original context.

Choosing this topic is based mainly on identifying the foundation which the postcolonial novel has built on. Reading about the quest for identity for the African writer made us wonder about its effect on his writings. Therefore, we aimed to understand to what extent the postcolonial writer has succeeded in defining his African identity using his colonial education. The relevance of this topic is based on proving the originality of the African text. We aimed to present to what extent the African writer has succeeded in reflecting his Africanity through the context of his stories rather than the language he writes with.

For this study, we will apply descriptive and analytical approaches to discuss the reasons which led to the emergence of the postcolonial writer and his writings. We will depend on our primary source which is Adichie's novel to explain the literary structure of the postcolonial novel. Other secondary resources are used to enhance the idea of African identity's authenticity. Our applied approaches make us seek the desired result of understating both the aim and elements in the African writer's quest for identity.

This dissertation is divided into three chapters. Chapter one will define specific concepts related to the African writer's role in redefining his identity. Also, the definition of the postcolonial novel as a production for reinterpreting colonial history will be another subject of this chapter. Additionally, chapter one will deal with the influence of two distinctive cultures in reshaping the postcolonial writer. In chapter two, we shall analyse the characters of the novel and how they express their identity. Chapter three will examine the manifestation of African identity through the use of English.



**Chapter One**  
Theoretical Background

A nation's identity can be measured through its historical, cultural background, and its linguistic heritage which is considered as the most important in terms of reflecting national identity. The shared language in one community is an efficient means of communication. In addition, language plays a crucial role in telling the story of its people. Here arises the dilemma of the ex-colonised nations which chose to write their history in the coloniser's language. In this chapter, we shall discuss the role of the postcolonial novel established by the African writer, who aims to re-represent African colonial history. Next, we shall shed the light on the postcolonial writer's choice of writing his own people's story and history with colonial language. Therefore, it is important to understand to what extent the colonial language has affected the writer's perspective. Then, we shall focus on the influence of two different cultures on the African writer, and how they contributed to the emergence of postcolonial writings<sup>1</sup>.

## **1. The Postcolonial Novel and the Reinterpretation of Colonial History by the African Writer**

Since the release of *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad in the nineteenth century, African writers, especially postcolonial writers aimed to correct European narration about Africa, which was not realistic and objective since it portrayed Africa as a gloomy and dark place with a hostile atmosphere and inhabitants. In other words, the African writers' main purpose was historical rectification. Before the decolonisation movements<sup>2</sup> in India and Africa, the imperialist West was the sole storyteller, credible narrator, whom the entire world relied upon to narrate about other nations and their way of life. That is why the postcolonial novel aimed, in process of redemption, to correct the negative stereotypes linked to the colonised nation especially that related to Africa and its people.

Even more, the greed of the coloniser extended to the degree of telling a history which was incorrect, since its primary reason for existence was to promote the idea that it was the coloniser who spared Africa from its brutality and ignorance. Yet, reality was totally the opposite, since Africa had its own civilisation and culture. Achebe's works (generally written

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<sup>1</sup> Postcolonial writings are the productions of a specific type of writers who recount the colonial experience and its outcomes on their nations as a reaction to colonial discourse.

<sup>2</sup>Decolonisation movements are the withdrawal of a colonial power from its colonies and the acquisition of political or economic independence by such colonies.

in English) portrayed the true image of Africa which is very rich with its various dialects and ethnicities. Therefore, post-colonialism<sup>3</sup> came to address those facts.

Postcolonial theory is the study field of discourse which tackles the subject of colonialism and its effect on the colonised nation politically, socially and economically. It operates to reconcile with colonial history on behalf of African people. This study field discusses the issues of colonialism, nationalism, identity, language and displacement<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, postcolonial literature came to examine the foundations established by the pioneers of postcolonial theory.

Therefore, postcolonial literature in general retells the history of the formerly colonised nations which are tied by the shared memory of being a victim of brutal colonisation by imperialist powers. Postcolonial literature is highly perceived in world writings, because it differentiates between stark reality and the historical and political facts provided by western powers. These powers aimed to exclude the colonised and tag them as margins or peripheries to maintain the position of these powers as the 'powerful centre' by being the sole narrator.

Furthermore, Edward Said addressed the controversial issue of colonisation in his work *Culture and Imperialism*. He tackled the main concepts related to post-colonialism in an experimental objective approach, and distinguished between imperialism and colonialism and how they operated on short and long terms. Said started with exploring the idea that narration is important for both the coloniser and colonised. He asserted:

The main battle in imperialism is over land, of course; but when it came to who owned the land, which had the right to settle and work on it, who kept it going, who won it back, and who plans its future - these issues were reflected, contested, and even for a time decided in narrative. As one critic has suggested, nations are themselves narrations. The power to narrative, or to block other narratives from forming and emerging, is very important to culture and imperialism, and constitutes one of the main connections between them. Most important, the grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment, mobilised people in the colonial world to rise up and throw off imperial subjection; in the process, many Europeans and Americans

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<sup>3</sup>Post-colonialism is an academic study which examines the culture, history and literature of postcolonial countries.

<sup>4</sup>Displacement is a coerced movement of a person or persons away from their home or home region.

were stirred by these stories and their protagonists, and they too fought for new narratives of equality and human community. [xiii]...<sup>5</sup>

That is to say, the power of narration was more terrifying, because the intellectual occupation represented a direr threat than territorial occupation due to the fact that control here was not on other nations' destiny but also on their history. Said smoothly shifted from that point of narration to simplify the subject of colonialism down to two basic pillars, which lie under 'knowledge and power'. He stated that the imperialist maintained his authority for many years in those regions due to these two facts: 'knowledge' which is knowing the other so well that you could manipulate and influence, and 'power' which is to enforce anything you would like to install in that region and reshape its destiny that way.

In addition, post-colonialism as a discipline has been designed intentionally to overthrow the entire narrations which misguided the world's vision of the colonised nation in a negative way. He also clarified the false assumptions about European countries' role to civilise those people. For Said, the ordeal began when European thinkers and intellectuals started to label anything different, new and unfamiliar to them as the 'other' in contrast to 'us'. Therefore, the colonial period in Africa has been filled with horrible memories.

The colonial period was an era marked with hideous memories of the greedy exploitation of the white colonisers. They broke every ethical and moral code, in order to develop their industry and economy, and to maintain their powerful position in the world. These colonisers always chanted the melody of how they brought peace and civilisation to savage Africa and its primitive violent people. They also promoted that through their colonial discourse. Therefore, African writers, during independence, aimed to correct the universal well-crafted misleading narratives through the postcolonial novel, in which they tried to depict the true face of colonialism.

The postcolonial novel is this literary work which was produced during the postcolonial period until the present day. It examines the aftermath of colonialism in Africa and India and other colonised countries in terms of economy, society and historical impact. The postcolonial novel opened the window to the past and depicted the horrors committed by the coloniser. Many African writers took an oath to revive African heritage and culture. One example is

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<sup>5</sup> Edward W.Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1994. Print) p.xiii.

Chinua Achebe, who explained the relationship between the African writer and his writings. He said: 'it's impossible to write anything in Africa without some kind of commitment, some kind of message, [...]' (Achebe 18). Thus the African writer gave Africa a voice, a loud and clear one. He recounts African history using the testimony of the Africans who lived the colonial experience. These testimonies are shared in several postcolonial novels as indications of the bond which links African people with their history.

The common features shared among most African postcolonial novels were the commitment to answer the question of race, and present the fact that this particular situation was originally created by colonialism. The postcolonial novel discusses events which happened in the postcolonial period and the high cost African people have paid for their freedom. It has clearly reformulated African communities and their values. Therefore, African writings are based on some important factors which led to development of the postcolonial novel.

The focus of African postcolonial literature was divided into several functional factors which had an enormous impact on Africa. These factors such as the use of the coloniser's language at the expense of the local African language has resulted in a serious identity issue, along with challenging stereotypes related to Africa and its people. In other words, the quest for independence and its consequences have changed the social and political foundation of African countries. The changes occurred in African countries because of colonialism have influenced the African writer to use his own writings as a weapon to depict the consequences occurred in his country.

The writings of the African postcolonial author were his weapon to change the dominant position of colonial discourse<sup>6</sup>. African postcolonial literature called for the emancipation of African identity, history and heritage. African writings called mainly for the resistance of hegemonic imperialist narrative and its replacement with indigenous narrative in order to regain African national dignity and to fulfil Africans' own destiny. It also served the cultural and artistic purpose of elevating literary works to a position to be called African postcolonial works.

As an example, Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* caused a cultural shock because it was such a brilliant artistic work. Achebe's novel was a significant work because it has

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<sup>6</sup> Colonial discourse is the writings of the coloniser who used them to describe the colonised nations.

portrayed African culture and has changed the stereotypical views about African stories in contrast to what was depicted in colonial writings. It was an unprecedented surprise to the western literary community that Achebe, an African writer offers them an extraordinary piece of art.

Since its first publication in 1958, *Things Fall Apart* has presented an authentic experience about life in Nigeria. Its main significance was to be released two years before Nigeria got its independence. This piece of work was translated into more than fifty languages and sold many copies worldwide. This novel created a respectable, international platform for African literature, and paved the way to many other exceptional works such as *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*, *Weep Not Child*, *Flowers And Shadows*, and *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

Therefore, the African novel aimed to set up new parameters on how any reader, especially the western one, can approach African literature. Beyond its aesthetic <sup>7</sup>form, it succeeded to elevate the rank of African stories using different literary tools. The African novel did not come as a random production; it went through a formative phase which shaped it as we know it now, a well-established literature that obliged the author to be an objective narrator, and the reader a neutral recipient. In an interview conducted by *The Paris Review* in 1994, the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe emphasised African writers' duty and responsibility to become historians to tell the history of their people away from any falsifications. Achebe said:

There is that great proverb — that until the lions have their own historians, the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter. That did not come to me until much later. Once I realised that, I had to be a writer. I had to be that historian. It's not one man's job. It's not one person's job. But it is something we have to do, so that the story of the hunt will also reflect the agony, the travail — the bravery, even, of the lions. (139)

Thus, what made the African continent regain its glorious past are its writers and mainly the ones known as international authors. Those authors sought to celebrate the past of Africa, and dreamed of reviving their ancestors' values and traditions, and eliminating injustice, misery, and destitution. They called for the Africinity of literature, which reflects Africa only through the content of the work which Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Obi Wali insisted on. In other words, the use of specific stylistic tools and an authentic African context which can deliver a

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<sup>7</sup> Aesthetic is concerned with the appreciation of notions of beauty and art.

sincere presentation of African heritage as illustrated by Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie.

To illustrate, Chinua Achebe has emphasised that African writers, whether they are aware of it or not, are committed writers. Achebe says: ‘the whole pattern of life demanded that you should protest that you should put in a word for your history, your traditions, and your religion and so on’<sup>8</sup>. Achebe indicates that the rewriting of African history by African writers is a celebration of national identity. He aimed to embrace the African patriotic spirit which is a quite amazing motivation to express one’s creativity while fighting for national history, identity, and traditions.

Regarding this, Jomo Kenyatta, the late president of Kenya, said that ‘When the Missionaries arrived, the Afrikaners had the land and the Missionaries had the Bible. They taught how to pray with our eyes closed. ‘When we opened them, they had the land and we had the Bible.’<sup>9</sup> Here President Kenyatta describes colonialism as a strategic kidnapping operation. It used religion to mislead African people and abduct their land and faith. Retrieving their land and regaining their pride for their African identity have been the main challenges which African writers have to overcome.

The assignment of the African writer was a challenging one. Unlike any other author whose mission was to create an aesthetic alternative setting within his writings, the African writer’s task was to break the already existing frame of Africa which has been created by the west. Therefore, the African writer’s main goal has been manifested in liberating African history and recalling African heritage from the white man’s captivity.

As an illustration, in his trilogy *Things Fall Apart*, *No Longer at Ease*, and *Arrow of God*, Achebe used a unique rhetorical style to unmask the vicious western experimental practices towards Africa which damaged its authentic entity and structure. Achebe revealed how the missionary endeavour divided the united African community, tribe and family and set feud between its members, and swept away the beliefs of the ancient ancestors. Achebe’s trilogy posed the question of the quest for African identity and the status of the black man in

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<sup>8</sup> Chinua Achebe, *There Was a Country: a Personal History of Biafra* (London: Allen Lane; 2012)5.

<sup>9</sup>John A. Rowe, *Jomo Kenyatta, President of Kenya*, Encyclopedia Britannica, updated 2017, < [www.britannica.com/biography/Jomo-Kenyatta](http://www.britannica.com/biography/Jomo-Kenyatta) >.

the world and his community. The quest for African identity has been put to the question because of the sudden shift from oral stories to the written word to praise the African culture.

## **2. The Effect of the Colonial Language in Redefining African Identity**

As a culture which was once based on oral stories to carry on the ancestors' traditions, colonialism came to change the mentality of the people who once were seen as inferior. However, African people who were introduced to the world as savage and ignorant used the coloniser's legacy to redefine and to reintroduce African culture and identity. The effect of the colonial legacy was so profound that it did not just shift the focus of the local communities from telling the stories of the ancestors, but it made them rethink the way they should tell those stories. Within colonial culture, the colonial language turned the balance upside down for both sides: the coloniser and the colonised.

Therefore, the language which used to be a sign of suppression and humiliation for the natives and their ways of praising their identity, turned to be the winning card for African intellectuals. African intellectuals were trained to think, write and speak in English in order to forget all what is related to Africa. But, the effect of the colonial language was to the benefit of the colonised tribes and ethnicities. Different languages existed within the local communities. The English language, being always linked to British colonialism did create a link among all the different communities across tribal boundaries as it has been stated in an article by Margulis and Nowakoski:

...the language (e.g. English) imposed by the coloniser as a more practical alternative, using the colonial language both to enhance inter-nation communication (e.g. people living in Djibouti, Cameroon, Morocco, Haiti, Cambodia, and France can all speak to one another in French) and to counter a colonial past through de-forming a 'standard' European tongue and re-forming it in new literary forms. (1996)

In other words, the English language did not just affect the locals, but it was more affected by the African tongue. The way it was used by the former coloniser to serve its purposes, the language which once was introduced as a sign for European civilisation, became

the mirror which reflected African culture and race. The existence of colonialism in African countries granted the colonisers an excuse to make their colonial discourse to be more authentic in describing African communities.

The British presence in different areas in Africa granted the coloniser a closer outlook on African life-style. the coloniser did use their colonial discourse to transmit their perception from an outsider's point of view to identify the African man as being the 'other' who cannot be part of the centre because he was seen as inferior to all what is European. Being a different race was never tolerated by the former coloniser, who considered Africa as a burden which the white man should bear and step in to bring it out of darkness<sup>10</sup>. Darkness, inferiority and otherness were the words which had been linked to African people as a way to identify them through colonial discourse. Colonial writings were the proof the British had granted to the rest of the world to justify their occupation and even elimination of a whole culture.

Moreover, the English language did pave the way for the natives to access the culture of a different nation. Indeed, the African man adsorbed the knowledge that came with the language, not for the sake of being part of a more civilised or cultivated nation, but for a higher purpose. African people acquired the coloniser's knowledge in order to understand the difference claimed by the coloniser and to erase the tribal lines that kept the existing different ethnicities unable to communicate with each other because of the existence of an unshared language.

British colonialism did cause a tribal conflict and shook the foundation by which the natives could identify themselves as one nation. Yet, African nations which exist today, with all their various ethnicities and languages, could not interact without the use of the English language as a common channel of communication<sup>11</sup>, even if this channel was brought and placed by the coloniser itself. The use of the colonial language did not lead to the death of the natives' language; it actually strengthened the position of the latter. In fact, the colonial language was a tool used by the natives to make it bear the burden of their sufferings under the colonial rule. This tool had carried the heavy weight of re-telling the colonial history of Africa

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<sup>10</sup>Rositsa Kronast, *English Colonial Language Policy and Postcolonial Literature* (Germany: GRIN Verlag, 2007) 1.

<sup>11</sup>Isidore Okpewho, *Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart: A Casebook* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003) 58.

using the pen of the African man, who managed to recount his experience as a storyteller using English words within an African context in a way to eliminate cultural inferiority. The use of English language by the African writer made it more of a tool to demonstrate his struggle.

English was a sign of struggle and after colonialism it became a product the natives were able to use to demonstrate their inner struggle to identify themselves. The use of the coloniser's language was not just about creating a connection among the different tribal regions in Africa nor between the African man and the foreigner. It was more about choosing a voice that once dared to spell words such as 'uncivilised' and 'ignorant'. Writing in English instead of African languages was done on purpose to make the same voice admit the truth which was hidden by the coloniser. Retelling the African history has been always a shared goal among African people in order to restore the truth about the colonial existence in Africa.

Restoring the truth about African experience and regaining African identity were the essential reasons behind using the language of the coloniser. Nonetheless, the English language was planted in every course of the education of African people. The legacy that each generation kept reviving was not the language, but the idea that comes within the language. For westerners who read postcolonial writings, it is the language that attracts them first because it is theirs. However, for African writers it is only an instrument by which they can portray their beliefs, history and civilisation. The mastery of the English language by the natives and especially by the African writer had granted him a powerful status over the language and everything it represents. Therefore, when the colonised people were able to manipulate the colonial language, they were able to stand and defend themselves using the language that the coloniser could understand. The sufferings of the natives under the colonial rule had surely affected African people's perspectives and behaviours.

The feelings of humiliation, inferiority and just being different had long affected African people who were obliged to behave and think against their true nature. Being able to identify oneself using the material of other people can create a contradiction or an inner struggle. Considering the way African people praised their own culture before colonialism, English language came to complete and document the stories of the natives who were proud of their cultural ethnicities. As an indication of colonial presence in African countries, English language had been used as a tool to write about the suppression of the colonisers.

The English language had also fuelled the suppressed frustration of the African race which was portrayed as being less than any other race. For that specific reason, African people did not just imitate the coloniser's language, they rather used it to tell their own version of the colonial experience, which was once told by the coloniser. The African man used the colonial language to serve his interests as it once served the interests of the British. The main issue which cracked the foundation of the African nation was how it would identify itself after it had been exposed to another culture and how it would identify African culture through a non-African language. Colonial education had cut through African minds and it changed their perspective about themselves and their existence among other nations along with their different cultures and languages. The natives have doubted themselves because the history they have shared had been erased and replaced to suit the coloniser's interests.

Colonial history in Africa had been recounted by the coloniser himself. His own description of African land, and his own opinion about African culture and customs were all passed to the rest of the world and every word written by the coloniser had carried his prejudice and stereotype. African people had been described as being outsiders in their own land, as being inferior race compared to the white race, and as being barbarian because of their own traditions and customs. Through his words, the coloniser has granted himself a higher status over a nation that depends only on oral stories which no one can hear or understand but the natives. Within colonial education, the colonised people did understand the importance of the status the English language held. Therefore, mastering the language of the coloniser had upgraded the status of the African language along with its history and culture not to the status of the colonial language, but to the international one. This was achieved by making them familiar to other cultures and nations and not by being seen as different as it has been described by colonial discourse.

Furthermore, the role of the English language from an African perspective has always been about re-establishing different grounds for its use, grounds which are based on redefining 'the truth'<sup>12</sup> claimed by the coloniser. Altering the English language by the African man has certainly subverted the hierarchal<sup>13</sup> order of both the coloniser and the colonised, in a way that neither side is more powerful and more civilised. African people were able to benefit from

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<sup>12</sup>Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures*. 2nd ed (London and New York: Routledge, 2002)07.

<sup>13</sup>Doris Jedamski. *Chewing Over the West: Occidental Narratives in Non-Western Readings* (Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2009)77.

English education to defend the African heritage and to celebrate their tribal culture. The African natives only came to define their ethnic diversity because of the coloniser who did not respect their tribal differences and put them in one category as an inferior race.

Before colonialism, African people did not really feel the need or even realise the importance of identifying themselves as one nation. Their tribal boundaries created an ethnic division among the natives who identified themselves according to their sense of belonging to a specific tribe or religion. The colonial language, which was used as a lingua franca<sup>14</sup> by the British masters to open communication between the British and the existing tribes. English language did actually benefit African communities as a way to overcome their ethnic differences, define themselves as one race which has the same land and history. The existence of different cultures in Africa had created a multicultural community which affected the life of all its members.

### **3. Shaping the Postcolonial Writer under the Influence of a Multicultural Community**

Indeed, multiculturalism<sup>15</sup> has always been linked to postcolonial writings. It fathered a whole style which depends on the mixture of more than one language and culture. Writing in English, adding African idioms and expressions<sup>16</sup> to recount colonial history in Africa has certainly created a literary style shaped according to the different perspectives which were affected by two distinctive cultures. The coexistence of two distinctive cultures as the first influence behind the appearance of postcolonial literature has served the postcolonial writer in two ways. First, it promoted an overall outlook on the writer's culture and civilisation neither from an insider's point of view nor from an outsider perspective because of the effect of his

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<sup>14</sup> Lingua franca is a language used as a common way of communication in a society which speaks different languages.

<sup>15</sup> Multiculturalism is the existence of different cultures in one society.

<sup>16</sup>Kamel M. Igoudjil. *Postcolonial Algerian Writers in French: Language as Representation and Resistance*, Academia, 170.

<[www.academia.edu/7962576/Postcolonial\\_Algerian\\_Writers\\_in\\_French\\_Language\\_as\\_Representation\\_and\\_Resistance](http://www.academia.edu/7962576/Postcolonial_Algerian_Writers_in_French_Language_as_Representation_and_Resistance)>.

colonial education, but as a person who had to understand and analyse the differences between both cultures. Second, it granted the African writer a control over the coloniser's language.

Hence, the essence of any postcolonial text is the cross-cultural element which keeps the writer in a balanced status concerning the objective of the story he/she tries to recount, and the audience he/she tries to reach. The existence of more than one culture and language in one community, especially in the former colonised African nations, is the result of the establishment of colonial education, and the adoption of European values and customs, which coexisted with the indigenous cultural beliefs. The influence of colonial education and culture has resulted in the birth of the postcolonial writer who took the lead in reviving the colonial past from an African perspective. The postcolonial writer took the responsibility to enrich the world with the diversity of African tribal ethnicities and traditions.

Furthermore, in any postcolonial text, language plays a major role in representing the work itself. The use of the coloniser's language to criticise colonial existence in African countries, and to reintroduce Africa to the whole world has created a conflict among African people who were in a phase of uncertainty concerning the essence of their African identity. The choice of the European text to express the mistreatment and exploitations of the British coloniser can only indicate the major influence of the coloniser. However, the African man who has been taught to act and think as the white man has also thought about the way his identity has been affected by the major changes which occurred in his society. The co-existence of two distinctive cultures has certainly affected the postcolonial writers' perspectives about their own countries.

Most African writers have witnessed both versions of Africa, the colonised and the independent, the enslaved and the freed. This type of writers has taken the responsibility to describe Africa during the colonial and postcolonial periods and to eliminate the stereotypical views held once by the coloniser. The presentation of the hybrid culture<sup>17</sup> in the postcolonial text has dismantled, to some extent; the hierarchy of cultural powers<sup>18</sup>, for it has undermined the status of the language set up by the colonisers as a representation of their development. In

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<sup>17</sup> The hybrid culture is the combination of two or more distinctive cultures.

<sup>18</sup> Ben Beya Abedenabi, *Mimicry, Ambivalence, and Hybridity*. Postcolonial Studies@Emory, 1998 edited July 2012, scholarblogs. <emory.edu/postcolonialstudies/2014/06/21/mimicry-ambivalence-and-hybridity/>.

any literary text, the author is the director and the scriptwriter who reshapes the leading role in his own way so it can fit within the story.

Also, in the case of the postcolonial writings, the African author chose his African identity to be the essence of his text, even if in every postcolonial writing, the colonial literary aspect is presented in every line. It is the African context which sets the foundation for the story told and turns away the focus from the language to the African content. Colonial discourse has been used by the British coloniser to misrepresent and even manipulate the heritage<sup>19</sup> of the natives in order to make them question their own beliefs and values. Therefore, the African writer has enslaved the English language and made it his own and he manipulated its structure to best suit the conditions of his/her African context.

Yet, the role of the postcolonial writer does not just lie in presenting the culture of his community, or in redefining his identity, and not in recounting colonial history as it had been lived by the natives. His role is more about reviving the lost heritage and in regaining his people's confidence<sup>20</sup> in their traditions, values, and especially in their African identity which has been reshaped under the influence of other cultural circumstances. Choosing to tell a story about the people and the land of Africa through the colonial novel was a challenge which has been set by the African writer himself to overthrow the coloniser from a high position he took up over the indigenous. Within the colonial production of the novel and through the use of the English language, the African writer has created his own space where he can demonstrate his authority over the European text without losing his African identity.

Tackling the issue of identity, the African postcolonial writer has changed his perspectives concerning the way he perceived the world around him. The influence of both colonial culture and education along with the natives' tribal traditions have resulted in shaping the way the African man redefined himself as a result of the changes which occurred within his community. Being forced to act against his true nature and to erase the traces of the indigenous culture, the African man has used the materials offered by the coloniser in order to understand the difference between the two cultures. The African intellectual man has overcome all the differences been established by the white man as a way to open up to different horizons without forgetting his ancestors' heritage. In any postcolonial production, the writer has willingly

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<sup>19</sup>Kehinde Ayobami, *Post-Colonial African Literature as Counter-Discourse: J.M. Coetzee's Foe and the Reworking of the Canon* (Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies UCLA.2006)4.

<sup>20</sup>Ayobami 7

emphasised identity loss and cultural displacement which are the results of the colonial period. These issues are the essence of most postcolonial texts because of the importance they represent for African community.

Besides, the presentation of the African postcolonial novel goes beyond being a copy<sup>21</sup> of the colonisers' literary style and a reaction to colonial exploitations. The African novel, through its content and colloquial words, is the representation of the elders' oral style through the written word. The African writer actually did not deviate from his original task as a storyteller, for he keeps the reader overwhelmed by each character who is being introduced and by the different expressions which indicate ethnicity and tribal practices. The novel, as a literary genre, has offered the African author his own space<sup>22</sup> to document and share African colonial experience and to introduce a continent unlike the one which had been portrayed in colonial writings. As the postcolonial writer has dealt with issues of restoring African values and traditions, has tried to present all of that through an authentic African<sup>23</sup> character, who despite the effect of the existing hybrid culture, still celebrates his ancestors' heritage and still feels the link to his / her land. However, the use of both the colonial text and language was not an attempt to gain the respect of the coloniser.

The creation of postcolonial discourse was not an attempt to imitate colonial discourse as a way to step into a civilised nation or to seek the approval of that same nation. This discourse aimed to overcome any cultural boundaries because of the existence of more than one language to address international readers. The process of crossing national boundaries, to mix different cultural codes and present a text which would be understood both by the local reader and foreign one has definitely changed the picture of the African individual, who was marginalised because of his tribal limitations. Whenever the postcolonial writer tackles the common issues shared among African countries, the same writer has to mention the effect of the coloniser in different ways. This is actually what makes worldwide readers interested in reading and studying the writings of those nations even if there are unfamiliar expressions linked to African

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<sup>21</sup>Jefferson Antwan, *On Hybridity and Postcolonialism*, English 911. Brown University, 1999.  
< [www.postcolonialweb.org](http://www.postcolonialweb.org) >.

<sup>22</sup>Hartmann Regina, *Cultural Identity in the East African Novel* Thesis (M.A.) (INSTITUTION / COLLEGE Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München, 1998) Deplome.de.

< [www.diplom.de/e-book/226604/cultural-identity-in-the-east-african-novel](http://www.diplom.de/e-book/226604/cultural-identity-in-the-east-african-novel)>.

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<sup>23</sup>Cheriet (Magister Thesis)77

traditions. The non- African reader, in his process of reading these productions, tries to look for the links which bound the colonised man to the coloniser's culture and civilisation.

However, the African writer, who is aware of this truth, has shown absolute determination to identify the African text compared to the colonial one. He has also succeeded in manipulating the language and creating his own literary style to match the meanings imposed by different African idioms and expressions. Through the postcolonial text, the African writer managed to carry his people's story using the English language which has yielded to his demands to best suit his African context.

On the whole, this chapter has attempted to explain both the role of the African post-colonial writer through his writings which emerged as a reaction towards colonial discourse. First, it has been shown how the postcolonial writer has used his production to reinterpret the writings established in colonial discourse. Then, this section has identified the major effect of the colonial language on the African writer, and the redefinition of his visions towards his culture. Finally, this chapter examined the influence of the multicultural community on the African writer and how this has led to the birth of the postcolonial text. As a consequence, the ensuing chapter will demonstrate African identity in Adichie's novel. Through her distinctive characters, we shall examine the way each character differs from the other in presenting African identity and perceiving tribal traditions and customs along within colonial culture.

**Chapter Two**  
Identity and its Representation in  
Half of a Yellow Sun

The shared identity for African people is an issue which arose because of the establishment of a colonial administration in the land of the natives. As an African author and Nigerian citizen, Chimimanda Adichie emphasised the importance of discussing this issue. Adichie's use of characters was based on highlighting the profound influence of western education and culture in the African community. Adichie's characters play different roles according to their position in the novel. This chapter will discuss the question of identity through Adichie's characters. Therefore, we shall focus on presenting the idea of shaping African identity in a multicultural community. Then, we shall examine the main differences between African and British men in shaping their identities in a society of two distinctive cultures. We shall also analyse the presentation of female African identity through discussing the role of multiple female characters in the story. Adichie's characters are a manifestation of the colonial period in Nigeria, therefore, it is important to recount the experience of each one of her characters.

## **1. The Resistance of the Colonial Interpretations by the Educated African Man (Odenigbo)**

During the colonial period, many African people did not just acquire the British customs, but its knowledge as well. The aim of the established education which was imposed by the coloniser differed from the aim of the colonised. The colonised man was willing to bear the lies told in the colonial books just to understand the use of colonial materials to describe the African continent and race. For the African man who was taught that he had been living in darkness, and that the white man had brought light, the former was eager to clarify these interpretations. Therefore, African people were capable of overcoming any prejudice along their way to uncover African identity which was buried under years of colonial domination.

Chimimanda Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun* has portrayed the effect of the colonial culture in an African land. It also exposed the way the African community has reacted to this culture, in which, each one of Adichie's characters has played a role in exerting this effect. Yet, these characters shared a common feature which was depicted in every event and which exposed the meaning of being a true African man or woman. Looking for the essence of African identity is the basic feature in understanding the differences between each character and another under the influence of the coloniser's existence in the African community. In other words,

Adichie's characters have revealed their pride in their African identity through their resistance to the interpretations of the coloniser.

Therefore, resisting colonial interpretations was the main reasons behind rewriting African history by the African. Changing the stereotypical views of the world towards the African people's land fuelled the African author's writings. This means that African intellectuals have used their colonial education to understand the main differences laid by the coloniser and to write their own history as they have experienced it. Hence, the author of *Half of a Yellow Sun* has used her western education to tell her African story through her characters.

Adichie's choice of personage has created this diversity of tribal ethnicities and distinct social classes. One character emerges as an example for the refusal of the imperial interpretations under the influence of colonial education. Odenigbo, a man who is able to stand out as an educated African man, and as being a member of the intellectuals' elite. Despite his western education and his changed life- style, his pride in tribal heritage of his country does not make him a less confident man. On the contrary, in each event or a gathering with his friends, he was able to defend his African identity not the one granted by coloniser, but the one he was born with, as being an Igbo man. '...of course, of course, but my point is that the only authentic identity for the African is the tribe...', 'I am Nigerian because a white man created Nigeria and gave that identity. I am black because the white man constructed black to be as different as possible from his white. But I was Igbo before the white man came.' (Adichie 11; pt. 1, ch. 1).

Despite his position as a respectable professor in mathematics, Odenigbo's respect for tribal life is neither affected by his years of education nor by his European life-style. He has always defended his ancestors' heritage by being vicious in his refusal to be identified by a foreigner. Odenigbo has resented the coloniser who denied decades of cultural traditions and replaced them with a completely different culture. The way he is engaged in the political life of his country is not the same as his fellow friends, who were educated under the supervision of the coloniser. Yet, Odenigbo's belief in the establishment of an independent African country is more profound and honest than his friends.

At the beginning of the story, Odenigbo is the first character being introduced to Ugwu by his aunt, who their lives are going to be turned upside down along the novel. In the first line,

Odenigbo is referred to as master and he is being described as a person who lives in his own world which only he can define. This can be noticed through his honest and confident replies about his country's situation to his intellectual friends, who disagree with his opinions and beliefs in establishing an independent republic. Starting with such character was a choice done for the sake of clarifying the image of an educated African man who still holds to his authentic African identity.

'There are two answers to the things they will teach you about our land: the real answer and the answer you give in school to pass. You must read books and learn both answers. I will give books, excellent books' (Adichie 6). The way Odenigbo insisted on Ugwu to cultivate himself even through colonial education, shows his acceptance of the coloniser's culture and knowledge. Odenigbo, in his own way to preserve his tribal identity chose to learn more about the people who claimed to be more civilised than African nation. Odenigbo chose to be indulged with a different civilisation just to understand the difference claimed by the coloniser. He aimed to overturn the balance of powers in his own land which has been exploited and portrayed to the world as being a land of savagery and darkness. As a man who experienced both tribal and rural life-style, Odenigbo has been chosen as a major character to present the preservation of tribal African identity.

Because of his profession and education, Odenigbo's life-style and even his appearance were fit to the position he holds. Ugwu's description of his master shows the major differences between the life of tribe and the life in city, which he got to experience because of his work with Odenigbo. As a man who constantly defends tribal heritage of his ancestors, Odenigbo has been living as a white man. He enjoyed playing tennis, and drinking tea in the afternoon. Yet, the reader cannot neglect the influence of the existing of two cultures and civilisations in one land. This influence has affected African people in reshaping their identity, especially the intellectuals who were exposed to different cultures at home and abroad. What makes this character worth its role is that being an example of many African people who used their education to dismantle the coloniser's interpretations. Odenigbo aimed to overcome the colonial barrier which created this 'white', 'black' codes and to eliminate the idea of white man's superiority over the African one.

As an Igbo man, Odenigbo praises the history of his ancestors, he also acknowledges the diversity of African community. Therefore, he denies the idea of the white man of

categorising African race because of the colour of their skins and neglects the different ethnicities which shape each community. Nigeria as an independent country was shaped as a reaction to colonial existence in Africa. It has been also established on the basis of refuting colonial practices to erase a whole culture on the basis of a stereotypical vision of white man. In his meetings with his friends, Odenigbo's celebration for the elders' history carries much pride than other members of his elite circle. His willingness to change their views makes him seen more as 'a hopeless tribalist' (Adichie 11), who talks forcefully about an outdated idea which seeks tribal unity. Being a person of his own ideas, Odenigbo's belief in an independent country led him to be indulged in the political scene. He expressed his honest opinion for the right of the establishment of the Biafran Republic<sup>1</sup> in the middle of all the chaos which occurred in the course of civil war.

At the beginning of the story, master is presented as being a confident man who is honest in expressing his pride in his origins as an Igbo man. His well constructed knowledge about his ancestors' heritage and his education has granted him an insight about other civilisations and cultures. Yet, by the end of the story, the revolutionary intellectual's personality changes completely as if the reader is being introduced to a different character. Because of the death of his mother, Odenigbo, the tribalist, has disappeared and has been replaced by a dead soul who lost its way. His mother was a typical tribal woman, who believes in superstitions and the superiority of man over woman. Yet, despite her ignorance and her belief in the 'debia'<sup>2</sup>'s magic; she was proud of her son's accomplishments. Odenigbo's mother is a representation of the authentic tribal customs and traditions, and she is the one who links Odenigbo with his Igbo origin. Therefore, her death has made Odenigbo loose his connection with his authentic tribal identity.

## **2. Shaping an Identity under the Influence of a Foreign Culture (Ugwu vs. Richard)**

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<sup>1</sup>Biafra Republic is the secessionist state which was established after the Nigerian Civil War.

<sup>2</sup>Debia is a woman who is well known for her magical skills.

As a postcolonial novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun* presents a unique character development in which it offers two-dimensions. Characters are both fictional and realistic, round and flat, emotional and rational, making interaction with each other much easier. As a major character, Ugwu's transformation in the novel is fascinating. He has changed from a clueless naive village boy to an active independent houseboy who can make decisions by himself.

Ugwu's father has two wives (one of whom his mother) and several siblings living in the same humble house. Ugwu reflects the image of a young African generation who becomes ignorant due to difficult living conditions to start to work at an early age. The evolution of Ugwu from adolescence hood to adulthood and from absolute ignorance to intellectual awareness is phenomenal. Yet, it is the impact of the civil war in Nigeria and the creation of Biafra which truly changes him to be a man as it has been portrayed at the end of the story.

As a major character, Ugwu has been a realistic African model from the very beginning. The new setting has transformed his personality from an obedient teenage to become Odenigbo's personal project. Ugwu has grown into an ambitious, functional and motivated young man, who aspires to be like his master. From the first encounter with Ugwu with his aunt walking to Odenigbo's house, the reader builds up curiosity about, what might happen to this naive little boy. His aunt focuses on preparing him for his upcoming task of being a college professor's houseboy and wants him to be submissive and obedient. She does not believe that he could be more than a servant. In fact she says that he must be grateful for this chance, and states: 'as long as you work well, you will eat well. You will even eat meat every day' (Adichie 1; pt.1, ch.1). In other words, she teaches him to be obedient, in order to eat well.

Stepping into the story's events and mainly the ones which affect the houseboy, the reader can sense a deep sentiment of longing to home, family and old life. Despite all the advantages of the new house, still for a 13-year-old boy it remains a strange environment in which he cannot fit. Ugwu's tranquil nature provokes Odenigbo and motivates him to invest intellectually in the young boy. Odenigbo has a great influence on the development of Ugwu's personality. His continuous encouragement makes Ugwu seeks improvement for his intellectual state, especially when he refers to him with the expression 'my good man....' (1). Odenigbo inspires Ugwu to evolve and makes him live up to his dreams, even if it takes him some time to figure out his essential goals. Odenigbo referred to his houseboy with many names other than his name, one of them is 'Igoramus'(3).

'Ignoramus' was the word that Odenigbo has described Ugwu with, whenever he does something unintentionally unpleasant. Though, in its meaning, 'Ignoramus' is a negative noun with potentially psychologically damaging effect, for Ugwu it means something positive. The new environment changes Ugwu's life on many levels, the life which he experiences with Odenigbo changes his insight and makes him draw a comparison between the urban and tribal life. He achieves what his master tells him to understand and differentiates between the real answer - for him as an African boy- and the answer which he ought to write in the examination paper. He also changes his habits through organizing his duties in the house and outside and still maintaining a good school record. His education has made him an active and more ambitious person.

As an enthusiastic person who seeks to improve himself, Ugwu becomes selective of his words and prefers to reveal his wit and intelligence. In order to prove his worthiness, Ugwu has occasionally replied using long English sentences in a situation which would need a simple answer in Igbo. English for Ugwu is an evidence of an appropriate education as he has distinguished from the nightly political conversations which take place at Odenigbo's house. He constantly listens to the words of each one of his master's friends. But, Ugwu has always preferred Odenigbo's English because it is a symbol of both knowledge and power. However, Ugwu's routine as a houseboy for Odenigbo changes when Olanna, his sweetheart comes and lives with him.

Suddenly, Ugwu's routine changes with the appearance of Olanna who makes a turning point in the life of the houseboy. Ugwu always feels intimidated by the idea of being eliminated if a female companion enters his master's life. His description of her as a sort of an angel expresses an unprecedented fascination. His description of other female characters such as Nesinachi, the girl of his dreams has differed from Olanna's. From the first moment he meets her, he is fascinated by Olanna's personality and appearance. He describes her as being small and thin as a pretty woman should be. Ugwu praises Olanna's appearance in a detailed description 'she looked like she was not supposed to be walking and talking like everyone else' (12). The appearance of Olanna in Odenigbo's life has made Ugwu more effective in his work and his adaptation to the urban life, and his educational improvement makes him more responsible person.

Ugwu's life in the city makes him develop a sense of responsibility towards everything he experiences. He learns to be a decent observer and listener. The daily political debates which take place in Odenigbo's house have helped elevate Ugwu's social skills. He becomes an effective person unlike the loudmouth Jomo, the gardener and Harrison, Richard's houseboy. Ugwu has several concerns about his life and its stability. There are various situations which irritated him. The repeated betrayal of both Odenigbo and Olanna has affected Ugwu and made him think what would happen to his new family. He was annoyed by the constant attempts of Odenigbo's mother to control his life from the kitchen to the bedroom. Her continual interference to keep Odenigbo away from Olanna has led to unprecedented consequences like the pregnancy of Amala. Odenigbo's baby does not only change Olanna's life but also Ugwu's.

Ugwu's life has changed completely with the coming of Odenigbo's baby which has made him more responsible. He has started to feel as a member of Odenigbo's new family, which can only be examined by their fear of the war. Therefore, when the military conscription of young boys has spread, they have tended to hide him in the house all day long. Yet, his love and fascination with Eberechi<sup>3</sup> makes him a reckless young man and leads him to be enrolled in the armed services. Ugwu's life varies because of the daily dangers he has faced in the war. His unknown fate has made him a free boy ready to fulfil his own destiny.

Despite his success in the military front and winning the title of the Target Destroyer<sup>4</sup> he is not satisfied with his life. His involvement in the rape of an innocent girl makes him a man filled with shame and internal disgrace. He considers his injury to be atonement for what he has done to that poor girl. Ugwu is heartbroken for knowing that what he has done to that girl happens to his dearest and beloved sister Anulika. His return to his loved ones is only a second chance to confess and to recount the horrors of the war in his book entitled *The World Was Silent When We Died*. As an African character, Ugwu represents the influence of a foreign culture and education, yet Adichie aims to present the same influence through a different character that is of Richard's the Englishman.

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<sup>3</sup>Eberechi is Ugwu's sweetheart.

<sup>4</sup> Adichie 183.

Richard is one of the main characters who despite his shy nature turn to be an effective individual in attaining the right opportunity to shine. He dislikes the means he uses to get into Nigeria. Still he is pleased to have this fresh start to do whatever he likes in his life. As a white-British character, he provides a clear reflection of modern-day anxieties of man. He is eager to fulfil his ambition. Richard has restlessly wondered about his mission in life and what he should be or do while fighting his internal fears, and insecurity issues. Richard has spent most of his life being excellent in matters of conformity and pleasing the others. This makes anyone doubt whether he has any shrink of individuality or self-devotion. In other words, one would feel curious to know if he has any desires, hopes and dreams like the other characters. Going through the events of the novel, the reader encounters Richard in many events where he feels alienated.

The reader encounters Richard in Lagos, but in a very lavish European style party which he often goes to with Susan. She is a high profile social personality who operates in the British embassy and knows all sorts of people. She has connections with ex-colonial administrators and Nigerian elite politicians and what she likes to call 'nouveaux riches' (Adichie 33; pt.1, ch.3). Richard is lonely, bored and alienated. All his days are with Susan and her wild temper. He spends his nights with her friends in their expatriates' parties where they gather to gossip about everyone's business but their own.

Like a five-year old boy eager to satisfy his mother, Richard feels obliged to please Susan with any attitude she prefers. He has constantly tolerated her anger and jealousy whenever he speaks with another woman. From the moment Richard has met Kainene, he has felt a charismatic attraction. She is the opposite of everything he has heard about African people. Her sarcastic tone and ultimate confidence have charmed him. He starts dreaming of another chance to meet with his black Cinderella. Richard admires everything about Kainene. She resembles the wild force of nature. All his life, he has been a dependent man: first on his nanny, his aunt, then on Susan. He enjoys chasing after Kainene and resents the cage which Susan has made for him, especially whenever she asks about his book.

Being a writer has been a mere description imposed upon Richard by his Aunt Elizabeth back in England. Richard gains his title as being a writer via his aunt's friend who fixed him with a monthly column in the News Chronicle. From a timid journalist to a promising writer, Richard has to go through a lot to prove to himself and others that he is worth his title as a

writer. First brave shift in Richard's life is leaving Susan and the comfy life that he has had with her. Richard's move to live alone and to be with Kainene has changed his life forever.

The move to Nsukka provides Richard with the freedom and autonomy which he has hoped for. A new home, respected scientific status which came with teaching at Nsukka's university and starting the composition of *Igbo-Ukwu* art book are all the privileges which Richard has enjoyed. Richard loves spending his weekends at Port Harcourt with his muse Kainene. He enjoys nature and tranquillity of the city. He is also very entertained by the good company that Odenigbo's political-social soirees have provided. His new life with Kainene has changed him to be more a Nigerian than an English man.

Becoming a Biafran, enjoying pepper soup, and being in a relationship with Kainene make the distance which Richard needs from his colonial heritage. Unfortunately, it is the calm before the storm: his affair with Olanna has damaged their relationship and separated two sisters. Although Richard has begged for forgiveness and even when Olanna and Odenigbo have come to Port Harcourt for reconciliation, Kainene is not ready to forgive them. This has made Richard anxious, not knowing what to anticipate from a woman who has been betrayed by her lover with her own sister. It is actually in Richard's favour that he has not made the first move, but it is Olanna's act of retaliation because of Odenigbo's infidelity. However, when Kainene has stayed with Richard, it is an unspoken acknowledgement of not bearing the total responsibility in this betrayal. What has made Richard's life turn upside down is not his betrayal, but rather the war of Biafra.

The war which Nigeria has waged on Biafra and the horrors it has caused changes the Biafrans and Richard is no exception. The violence which has taken place in the airport because of ethnic cleansing of Igbo people by the Hausa has shocked him. The bloody situation makes him feel helpless and wonder what if Kainene has been with him. He thinks of the cause behind his survival in chaos is simply because he is white and does not look like any of the victims. Nevertheless, the tragic war has a positive aspect which is the respect he sees in Kainene's eyes because of Madu's recognition. Madu has personally contacted Richard to ask him to write about the resistance of Biafra and the bombing which has occurred in different areas because of Nigeria and its allies. Although Adichie's male characters play major roles in her novel, her female characters play significant roles in depicting the model of ignorant and educated woman in African societies.

### 3. Identity as Portrayed by the African Woman (Olanna and Kainene)

Certainly, one of the main reasons that have made *Half of a Yellow Sun* such a success is its feminist narration in praising African women. Adichie emerges as a postcolonial writer in portraying the African woman because she tackles several significant topics. As an African woman, she writes about polygamy in Nigeria. The example in the novel is Ugwu's father who has two wives. She also deals with women's position in an African community. The author presents different types of women: Olanna, Kainene, Susan and other female characters. Each character has her own role according to the events of the story.

The first of these characters is Olanna. She is one of Adichie's main characters and the lead female protagonist. She is a descendent of a nouveau riche family own factories and mansions. Olanna has finished her higher education in Britain and has unparalleled African beauty. She is an educated rich girl and she is the typical autonomous girl. Yet, she is a dependent woman, running from a dominant relationship with her parents to a possessive relationship with Odenigbo. Therefore, she has been portrayed as a romantic character.

From the very first pages of the novel, we discover that Olanna is a helpless romantic woman who surrenders to the traditional manly figure. This indicates the lack of her father's role in her life since he is more a financial support than a father. This has surely contributed to her drift from her stable relationship with the Muslim rich man Muhammed from Kano to Odenigbo when she first sees him. However, her romantic personality does not make her a timid woman. She is rather a very social person.

Olanna can be considered as a very active person socially. She believes in family, friendship and the blood bond for she often visits her relatives in Kano. She always tries her best to get closer to Odenigbo's mother. His mother is a village woman who rejects her because she could not accept her son's love for Olanna. She also calls Olanna a witch for not being breastfed by her mother, but by her aunt Ifekra. Despite that hatred, Olanna continues to support Odenigbo and respects his choices and thoughts. This can be noticed through her discussions with Odenigbo. She also assists Ugwu with guidance and patience, teaching him how to cook

and organize and even trusts him with baby's needs. However, Olanna is not capable enough to stand up for herself despite her social skills.

Despite her political correctness and her rhetoric, Olanna does not defend herself, thoughts and decisions. She has either sunk herself in a deep depression and silence, or she becomes outraged in a chaotic way with no valid reason. However, her innocent spirit and great passion make her a compassionate, forgiving and loving woman to everybody around her. Despite her fragile physical structure, she is strong. She forgives Odenigbo's infidelity although she had cheated on him with Richard. But, she forgives him and adopts his child from another woman and raises his baby like her own. Odenigbo's baby has made Olanna a more responsible woman, yet other incidents have contributed to the significant change in her personality.

Several events have contributed to the development of Olanna from a pampered girl to a mature and powerful woman. The horrors which she has witnessed when she has been in Kano like losing the people she loves the most have certainly changed her. She is completely broken by the violence she sees. This has made her like a walking ghost over the ground. However, when she regains consciousness she becomes an invincible woman, and she cares about her family. The war in Nigeria has changed Olanna into a completely different woman.

The civil war has revealed what Olanna is made of, especially when she cares about her entire family. She risks her life several times to bring food for her child, and deals with smugglers and begs for the right medicine. She sticks to her family even when she has the opportunity to escape to Europe with her parents. Olanna is also patient with her husband's isolation mourning his mother after her death. She also fights to find Ugwu and sacrifices her time to help other refugees. But what changed her most is finding and then losing her twin sister Kainene.

On the other hand, Kainene is the iron lady, the opposite of her twin sister Olanna. Kainene is darker, sharper and with more childish features. She represents the ideal model of woman rolling in the world of money and business, which is conventionally known as men's world. Kainene becomes a very polar opposite, compared to her twin sister. She is an independent woman. From the first conversation with her and her sister, the reader is able to notice an emotional gap between the two. In her request to Olanna to welcome Richard in

Nsukka and introduce him to Odenigbo, one can recognize a superior tone as if she is doing Olanna a favour and not the other way round.

Yet, when it comes to men, in spite of her blackish skin, Kainene's type of men is with white complexion and blue eyes. Richard is her perfect type. Kainene has the same approach concerning business and men: to take the opportunity or somebody else will. Indeed she captures his heart and mind with her fierce pride, bitter sarcasm and her extraordinary features. For the bashful Richard, Kainene resembles dark Africa. Whose secrets and profoundness he has long wanted to discover. Therefore, Kainene has symbolised the strength of the African woman.

Kainene is the representation of the successful African woman who is able to contribute to the development and prosperity of her society. With her practical intelligence and vision, guided by her education, she is able to gain the trust of her father to handle all his business. To her family and close friends, she is a lady with a strong personality. She can make everybody admire her wit, even men like Major Madu. She has a powerful status because of her powerful personality.

Power and Kainene go together. She never backs down from an argument nor excludes herself from an event. Unlike her sister, she was born strong. No one has ever dreamt of contradicting her because of her stormy personality. Everyone has known that Kainene has limits which they should respect and never surpass. Kainene's business is going great and she is with a man who loves and respects her and her wishes. With her new life in Port Harcourt she feels at ease and safe. When she goes for lunch at Richard's in Nsukka and invites Olanna, she notices that there is something off about them. But, it is until Harrison talks about Odenigbo's quarrelling with Richard that the truth comes out and Kainene is devastated.

Her sister's love affair with Richard breaks something inside her. They both put her in a critical situation in which she has to punish her dearest ones. She chooses to take revenge on Richard by burning his book project and staying with him while playing with his nerves and never uttering a word of forgiveness. She also decides to push her sister out of her life and not even contact her after the riot incidents in Kano where Olanna is almost killed. These incidents have clearly indicated that her wound is too deep to be forgotten.

When the war has broken, Kainene chooses to stay in Biafra, because it was neither noble nor rational to abandon the dream nation that she has invested much in. The move to the new house in Orlu reveals a hidden side of Kainene's personality. She is a selfless individual devoting her time and effort to help other refugees despite the fact that she does her best to hide her great passion. She is a restless warrior who writes to associations for aid, monitors the camp and organizes medical visits and grades food supplies.

However, what makes Kainene change her mind about life is the incident of Ikejide beheaded by 'a piece of shrapnel' (Adichie 30). He is her steward, yet he gives her a clear lesson about how life is fragile and can end in any second. This has inspired her to reconnect with her sister Olanna and to forgive her. It seems to her that family is the only thing which matters. She has to forgive her sister since she has forgiven Richard without telling him. Her arrival to Umuahia camp to reconcile with Olanna is a bitter-sweet moment of forgiveness and pity.

When Kainene comes to Orlu, she comes back to her usual nature when she assaults a priest verbally and physically. She knows that the one who supposed to help refugees in the camp has raped a girl. She feels exploited and feels guilty because she cannot protect the girl who is under her responsibility. However, the second incident seems like a moral dilemma and leaves her outraged. She cannot believe the refugees' attack on the soldier who has eaten from the camp's crop just because he is hungry. The manifestation of Kainene's affectionate personality is depicted when she welcomes her sister along with Odenigbo and the baby. Comforting Olanna by looking for Ugwu is short-lived because of Kainene's mysterious disappearance. Her disappearance has caused a deep sorrow in the hearts of her family because after all Kainene is their rock.

Olanna and Kainene are not the only female characters in the novel. There are other female characters with only minor roles in the novel. These characters are essential enough to affect both Olanna and her sister. Odenigbo's mother affects Olanna's life by interfering in her relationship with Odenigbo. She is an ignorant village woman who believes in the power and prestige of education within family and society. But does not believe in woman's education because it can only make her arrogant. She thinks that education has no benefit for African girls because they would eventually marry and their husbands would provide their needs. She loathes Olanna for being rich and educated. She hates her because she has already noticed

Odenigbo's affection towards her. She thinks that it must be a witchcraft which creates this match. So, she stands against their relationship to the extent that she consults a well known village 'dibia' to break the magical spell which Olanna casts on Odenigbo's heart. Odenigbo's mother uses her house girl Amala to seduce her son to betray Olanna, and indeed Amala succeeds in this. She takes care about Amala and her child until the moment of birth when she feels she loses the war because the baby is a girl, not a boy who according to her would bring honour to Odenigbo.

Another significant character is Olanna and Kainene's mother. Regardless of her lack of any basic education and general knowledge, she compensates them with material splurge. Mrs. Ozobia tends to contempt anything which indicates humility. With her innate intelligence she finds a way to atone for her ignorance by purchasing social status in Lagos. She holds legendary parties where there are elite scientists, politicians and businessmen. Olanna and Kainene's mother feels her superiority and distances herself from her ugly past with expensive dresses and the rarest jewellerys. She is a selfish person who cares only about her dreams and neglects her daughters and husband. But everything changes for her, especially when her husband cheats on her. She is offended by his rude unfaithfulness when he buys an expensive house to his mistress.

Another female character is aunt Ifeka, the beloved aunt who sacrifices her breasts to feed Kainene and Olanna whose mother refuses to breastfeed them to maintain her good looks. Ifeka is a strong woman who is not ashamed at working in a small kiosk to support her husband and meet her family's needs. As Olanna's godmother, she has her share in Olanna's major decisions. Despite her small house, her hospitality and heartfelt welcome make her house a paradise. It is the place where Olanna can be herself. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie asserts that work and education are an ace card for African women because these two factors can enhance women's autonomy and independence in terms of deciding what is good for their life and community. Adichie's novel can be considered as a depiction of a set of stories told by different characters.

To sum up, in this chapter, different characters have been presented for the sake of portraying their identities according to their surroundings. These characters are affected by several circumstances which led to the development of their identities. Analysing each character, African and British, female and male is an important step in understanding Adichie's

## Half of a Yellow Sun

choice of characters. Her choice has been based on portraying a realistic image about the African society. For the ensuing chapter, we shall focus on the use of both English and Igbo in a multicultural community.

**Chapter Three**  
The English Language and  
the Manifestation of African Identity

Adichie's work is a manifestation of authentic African identity on multiple levels, each of which celebrates one side of her story. The importance of Adichie's novel lies in its portrayal of ethnic heritage which African people still hold on to and the use of both Igbo and English languages as an indication of a new literary style which celebrates the use of different tongues. In this chapter, we shall tackle the issue of the single story which provides only one side of the events. As in the case of postcolonial countries, it was the coloniser's story which has been the reference to introduce African culture. Therefore, Adichie aims to eliminate the falsehood of the single story, and seeks to depict different stories from several individuals as she does in this novel. Then, we shall analyse the way the author has used two different languages, the Igbo and the English one to present colonial history in Nigeria. We shall also examine to what extent the use of different tongues has played a major role in dismissing the effect of one dominant culture.

### **1. Recounting the African Single Story in *Half of a Yellow Sun***

*Half of a Yellow Sun* is a portrayal of African history mainly during a period of great changes. It is a story which has been told through different characters and for this specific reason each event is a reflexion of the memories of British colonialism in Nigeria. Through her multilayered novel, the author has eliminated the stereotypical writing of the existence of one single side of the story. Her aim has been set to explore the true image of African culture and history, but from a different angle which would let the reader identifies what is meant to be an African. Therefore, Adichie has used her novel to reveal the hidden stories during colonial period.

This novel is about seeking the truth from different stories and eliminating the authoritative status of the single story which has been granted by the coloniser. The British strengthened their position in a foreign land through their discourses of a single narration. The colonial discourse was meant to dismiss any doubts about colonialism. Thus, the coloniser's writings were a powerful tool to control the opinions of the world and to create a sense of inferiority among African people. In other words, the natives were unable to stand against the written word in a time where they used to depend on their oral stories. In a period when people

believed in the documented word, it was the coloniser who offered any sort of information which would sustain his interests.

Still, the existence of one narrator would only depict one side of the story. African nations were under the mercy of the coloniser. They were considered as inferior and an uncivilised race compared to the coloniser. Hence, the coloniser has considered himself as the only source of knowledge. Therefore, African people had no choice but to believe in the coloniser's words and even question their own traditions and customs. Being a nation which depended on documents to describe the other side of the world, the white man presented African nations from a stereotypical view. He also depicted African people as strangers in their own lands. Being an African woman, Adichie has projected a powerful image of the coloniser's treatments through her characters' stories.

As an African woman who has experienced stereotypical treatments, Adichie has resented this type of stories which only describe one angle of a whole image. Her refusal of the single story has come from being an African individual who was affected by the writings of a single narrator. In her novel, Adichie has granted her characters free space to reveal their own opinions about the existence of the coloniser in their land. She has given them freedom to act and react towards the major changes occurring in their country. She has chosen characters from different ethnicities and backgrounds, and this has removed the constraints existing in a single-narration story where certain opinions have been enforced on the reader. Therefore, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is written to reveal hidden stories which are marginalised by the coloniser.

As a novel which recounts different stories of native and foreign characters during colonial period, the author has stepped aside to let her characters present themselves as being part in the conflict of their country. Adichie's choice of characters has been set up as a plan to present the different communities of Nigeria. She has also aimed to share their views and their different traditions as they are, after they were covered up by the harsh descriptions of the coloniser. Going deep into the life of each individual in African society has certainly revealed some hidden events. These events have affected the course of African history from being a nation of different tribal ethnicities to being a nation which celebrates its diversity through one common language which is English.

As a reaction to the writings of colonial discourse, postcolonial production has changed the way in which history has been recounted<sup>1</sup>. The aim behind these recounts has been changed because of the status of the African writer who became recognised internationally. During the colonial period in Africa, colonial discourse has been used as a tool to criticise African people's distinct traditions and customs. As a reaction to the writings of the coloniser, the postcolonial writer has come to dismiss those productions and redefine the status of the narrator as a representative of his chosen story. The African writer has played the role of a protector of his ancestors' legacy. Therefore, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a representation of Igbo land<sup>2</sup>.

In her attempt to recount her Igbo land's colonial history, Adichie has presented some fictional elements<sup>3</sup> which have helped to present a more vivid image about the situation during the Nigerian civil war. The depiction of each one of her characters has depended on the environment they are surrounded with. Adichie has used a distinct choice of characters that represent real people who had experienced the rise of the Biafra republic. She has spiced up her story with some fictional events and sayings to enhance her vision about the future of her country. She has also revealed the effect of colonial presence on African tribes as being a member in this community. Thus, Adichie's novel is a historical story which recounts the events of the colonial period.

To recount the history of African people is not just about standing against the coloniser's writings; it is more about seeking the truth which lies behind those writings. The search of truth<sup>4</sup> in history has been the core of most of African postcolonial writings. Certainly, African writers have helped in presenting African legacy through their writings, and definitely succeeded to upgrade the status of the African storyteller. The use of the written word has worked as a link among different African communities and between Africa as a nation with the rest of the world. However, the aim of the African author lies in defining the truth and presenting it to the reader. In other words, the African writer has not forced his opinion on the reader, but rather has let it reveal itself so it would be more authentic this way.

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<sup>1</sup> Joke De Mey, *The Intersection of History, Literature and Trauma in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun*. MS Thesis.(Universiteit Gent, 2010 /2011)11.

<sup>2</sup> Igbo land is the home land of Igbo people in Southeastern Nigeria.

<sup>3</sup> De Mey 12.

<sup>4</sup> De Mey14.

Although, Adichie has used her novel to recount the major changes occurring in her country which led to the establishment of the Republic of Biafra. Still, her aim was not to describe the political situation. She has rather focused on the social and human<sup>5</sup> side of the events occurring during the colonial period. As a strategy to re-establish a whole different ground for narrating a historical story and to eliminate the stereotypical opinion of one vision, Adichie states:

The problem with stereotypes, particularly in literature, is that one story can become the only story: stereotypes straightjacket our ability to think in complex ways'; '[I] wanted to avoid making Biafra a utopia-in-retrospect, which would have been disingenuous. It would have sullied the memories of all those who died'; and 'I was [also] determined to make my novel about what I like to think of as the grittiness of being human" (qtd. in di Laurea 35).

Therefore, *Half of a Yellow Sun* is a representation of each single African and British character in the story and this would justify her attempt to revive the colonial experience through the eyes of her distinct characters. Each one of her characters has recounted his story and revealed the deep effect of colonial presence in their land.

Surely, the effect of the coloniser's writings on the ethnic heritage of African people has led to the abandonment of some tribal traditions. Yet, this effect has further expressed a completely strong opinion about African culture. Focusing on the idea of being an uncivilised race, the Englishman portrayed the natives as being strangers compared to his race. To defend his radical opinion about African people, the coloniser constantly compared between the two races and cultures. This worked for the benefit of the British who emphasised the different life-style of the African man compared to the other nations.

In her defence of the diversity of the African community, Adichie has reacted towards the narration of the single story. This kind of narrations has carried out personal feelings and opinions of the author towards particular nations and lands. Therefore, the description of colonised nations had other considerations which worked for the benefit of the coloniser. However, the coloniser's narrations had made African writers such as Chimamanda Adichie, Chinua Achebe, and many others adopt the same literary style. They tend to step inside their

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<sup>5</sup>Tesi Di Laurea, *The danger of a single story' in Chimamanda Adichie's Half of a Yellow Sun*. Corso di Laurea Specialistica in Lingue, letterature e culture modern euro americane Classe 42/S (Università degli Studi di Padova ,2012/2013)35

characters' minds and explore a range of stories which are linked for the sake of defending and portraying the authenticity of African people.

Therefore, the writer of *Half of a Yellow Sun* has abandoned any ideas which would celebrate the unity of the African people at the expense of their ethnic diversity. Adichie has stated clearly in one of her essays on the representation of African authenticity: 'I do not accept the idea of monolithic authenticity. To insist that there is one thing that is authentically African is to diminish the African experience' (qtd. in di Laurea 50). Adichie has dismissed the angle from which the coloniser portrayed the African race and the way he categorised African communities. The coloniser put African people in one group just so he could defend his idea of a race sharing the same savage behaviours. As a result, Adichie, like many postcolonial writers, tends to present a range of characters from different races, genders and tribes as an exemplification of the pride they hold as a diverse community.

Additionally, the creation of a story with different narrations for the postcolonial writer has granted him a stage of his own to react as a story-teller. In other words, this would mean a continuation of the legacy of his ancestors. To end the effect of a single narration, the African writer who has experienced its outcomes has recounted multiple stories which share a common African authenticity. Each character in an African story must swell in pride with tribal and ethnic identity in a multicultural community. As a result, Adichie's novel is considered as the product of multiple cultures.

## **2. The Validation of Igbo and English languages in Presenting African Identity**

*Half of a Yellow Sun* is the product of two different cultures. Therefore, each one of the stories told in the novel manifest this duality through the use of both English and Igbo languages. Adichie's attempt to manifest the authentic identity of African people has been portrayed through the existence of different communities linked together through shared colonial history. The colonial presence in Africa united African people against the white man as a race which has celebrated its tribal ethnicity. Yet, the use of one common language shortened the space between the different parts of Africa. The use of the English language to express the natives' culture, to react against the coloniser's stereotypical views and to manifest

African identity has worked for the benefit of many postcolonial writers. Writers such as Ngugi waThiong'o, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe and many great names have used their colonial education for the benefit of their countries.

The use of the English language in an African context has been a controversial issue for the African writer, mainly during a period of transition for African people. Yet, Adichie's opinion about the identification of African authenticity has emphasised on the importance of the story rather than the language used to write it, she states:

What is more important in this discourse is not whether African writers should or should not write in English but how African writers, and Africans in general, are educated in Africa. I do not believe in being prescriptive about art. I think African writers should write in whatever language they can. The important thing is to tell African stories (qtd. in di Laurea 93).

In other words, Adichie has clearly acknowledged the importance of the story rather than the language used. She has denied the fact that the story should be measured through its language.

In her defence of the importance of the African context rather than the choice of language, the author of *Half of a Yellow Sun* has intentionally used English and Igbo languages to recount African colonial history. Through her novel, Adichie has manifested the coexistence of two distinct cultures and the parallel use of two different languages in one community. This has contributed to portray the true image of African society in a period when it has preserved its identity in the course of major changes. Therefore, important aspects in African life were affected by colonialism such as education and politics.

Also, African writers have identified the roles of both English and Igbo languages in the postcolonial novel. The English language has been used differently by the postcolonial writer. It has been a mere tool to fulfil the goal of its user. On the other hand, the Igbo language has been a representation of the authenticity of the African story and a celebration of the natives' identity. The two languages with their different structures have been essential features for the identification of the postcolonial novel and the message it holds as a production of the African story-teller.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, the reader has shifted between two cultures <sup>6</sup>as a way to make the reader more engaged with the life of the African community. The deliberate use of English and the way it has been reconstructed with each character and in certain events can only indicate the purpose of the writer to direct the reader towards the aim behind the story. However, the use of Igbo expressions is an indication of the presence of an African voice in a non African text. As an illustration, Adichie has used several Igbo words without any translation such as ‘Na gode. Thank you, Hajia,’ ‘come, nekem, Go well, jeeofuma...’ (Adichie 20). All these expressions and many others have been left intentionally without any translation. Yet, the reader can understand their meanings from the context of story as a strategy to make them familiar to the reader. This technique would make the reader interested in the context of the story just to understand the meanings of these expressions. Both languages, Igbo and English, have been used to highlight the importance of the African context.

The common use of two different languages can be seen as one of the features which identify the African community. The common use of Igbo expressions within the English language has been expressed by the native people as new English which has been Africanised<sup>7</sup>. Adichie says:

the first thing for me is that I belong to a generation of Africans, really, who no longer speak only one language—I go back to Nigeria, and I'm speaking Igbo, and I can't speak two sentences in Igbo without throwing English words in there.[...] But again—it's an English, I've often argued, that's ours. It's not British English. It may have come from there, but we've done things with it. (qtd. in 93)

In this statement, Adichie declares the ownership of the language she speaks and uses in her writings to recount the African story. Though, she admits the origin of the English language and its legacy. Still, she claims for it as it is no longer the language of colonisers, because it has been long used by African people it became theirs.

Therefore, both English and Igbo languages are no longer seen as a representation of a colonised and a coloniser. But rather, they are two facets of one coin, each side completes the other one. The English language with its culture and education has contributed in completing the other section of the African story (the written one) after depending for years on oral stories.

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<sup>6</sup> Di Laurea. Chapter VI.93

<sup>7</sup> Di Laurea 93.

Without neglecting the tribal traditions of the African community, postcolonial writers have ensured the importance of their traditions through the use of different expressions which indicate their origins.

In her novel, Adichie has identified the background and status of each one of her characters through their use of both English and Igbo languages<sup>8</sup>. Her choice of characters has varied between educated and ignorant, civilised and tribal as an effective strategy to reflect the deep effect of colonial education, and to manifest the importance of ethnic heritage. Still, her selective choice of characters is based on presenting the common use of Igbo expressions within the English language in a community which no longer sees English as a colonial property.

Also, the use of English in African literature is not due to the fascination of African writers by the English text or a contribution to the European literature. But rather an expressive linguistic and stylistic tool, which provides an international audience who would be willing to understand African historical heritage since it is written in English. Furthermore, it provides the validation and the credibility they need to present the hidden facts about colonial history. The new literary style produced by African writers has contributed to self-exploration, i.e. African writers have been able to explore the main changes occurring in their identities under the effect of different tribal origins and the coloniser's culture and education.

There is no doubt that the choice of postcolonial writers to mix between native and foreign languages to write historical stories about Africa has created a contradiction for the reader. To present African identity, one can consider the African language with its existing varieties to fit such a task. Yet, the writings of the African man in English have turned the balance and changed the conventional definitions of all what is African<sup>9</sup>. The use of Igbo in an African novel has indicated the long-lived pride for the natives' history and religions. However, English came to trespass these tribal boundaries and worked as a tool to identify the existence of several distinct ethnic identities bound through English. Therefore, the goal of African writers not to celebrate one tribal identity over the other has been fulfilled. This rather created a channel in which they could coexist and respect each other's differences.

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<sup>8</sup> Di Laurea 97.

<sup>9</sup> Eric A. Anchimbe, 1<sup>st</sup>ed *Linguistic Identity in Postcolonial Multilingual Spaces* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007)10.

Certainly, several postcolonial writers have been affected by the coloniser's religion and standards because of the use of English in their writings. Yet, their long use of the colonial language has resulted in questioning the authenticity of African identity, not from the basis of doubting its existence, especially by the African man, but rather, to identify it clearly in the middle of the political changes of African countries. To identify oneself using a language which holds different identifications such as religion, traditions and culture can dismantle the essence of Africinity, especially for the representation of African characters. However, the African writer has set up a solid foundation through the English text, so it can hold the building blocks of his African story which would represent his authenticity in this mixture of languages.

Like many African writers, Adichie has followed the same path of the previous postcolonial authors who contributed to the portrayal of their countries as newly independent nations. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie has recounted the individual experience of each one of her characters in the middle of the establishment of Biafra. Each one of her characters is a representation of a specific social status along with their educational and religious backgrounds. Taking Odenigbo as an example, he is one of the African individuals who still believe in the essence of their tribal ethnicity and his ancestors' heritage. Although he speaks perfect English and works as a mathematics professor in an English-oriented university, he still holds on to his original identity as an Igbo man.

On the other hand, Ugwu, the village boy who knows less about urban life has learned to speak few English words just to impress his master Odenigbo, and to fit in his new environment of educated people. He figures out later on, when he attends school, the aim behind English education in Nigeria during the colonial period. He has also learned how to gain advantage from his education to know more about the history and civilisation of his country and the whole world. Ugwu learns that English is a ticket to cross his tribal boundaries. In her attempt to recount the colonial history in Nigeria, Adichie has also tried to remove all sorts of doubts about the legitimacy of Africinity in literature and identity.

### **3. Adichie's Recognition of Africinity in *Half of a Yellow Sun***

To answer the questions of the legitimacy regarding African literature and identity, we must confront the historical realities that initially explained the reason why feel ambiguous about the credibility of African legacy. We have to examine why Africa's writings are

formulated in the languages of its colonisers. Was it a sort of compulsory subordination or was it a reality that must be acknowledged with a specific end goal to convey the African message. This can be clearly answered through the writings of three generations of African authors.

African literature is manifested in inspirational writings of three generations who aimed to social unity, political consciousness and economic autonomy. The first generation of African writers were actually born during the colonial period in the first half of the twentieth century. Therefore, they were guided by the same morals of freedom and African unity. Their writings were anti-colonial/anti-imperial, emphasising on Africanity as an ultimate solution for domestic and foreign issues. The second generation witnessed colonialism and its horrors, and were melded by the excitement of the successes of the decolonisation movement which resulted in independence. The themes of this era shifted from the quest for identity to the examination of subjects which interrupted social and political development in Africa. The drastic changes in Africa's different aspects of daily life have resulted in changing tribal and ethnic foundations.

The first and second generations of African writers had to give Africa a voice. They tended to be the voice which would restore African identity and dignity for its people and land from the coloniser. Their constant efforts and big contributions have been manifested for the sake of creativity, persistence of vision and faith in the African cause in reshaping African identity. They tended to reveal the essence of tribal origins which had existed long before the colonisers' arrival to Africa. Although African writers have used a different language to identify their heritage, they managed to make the new language adapt to their literary needs.

The use of English in African literature contributed to the birth of a unique literary style. This literary style inspired African writers to go into self-exploration, where they had to keep a certain level of creativity. They have insisted on defining the distinctiveness of African identity from misleading colonial narrations. The result has been remarkable, because several works have emerged to depict the African story. Also, several writers have emerged as significant voices speaking on behalf of the African people, such as the novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, especially with her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*.

The history of Nigeria has been explored in depth in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Adichie broke the codes of the three-year bloody civil war known as the Biafran war. The story she has related in a reliable way shows how superficial things are when heard from one side. Adichie's

plot, setting and choice of characters express great appreciation for her African roots. Even though she has used English to defend her African identity and to recount African history, she succeeded in reaching her goal. Adichie's novel depicts all kinds of stories from an African perspective.

Despite the fact of writing her novel in English, she portrays an original African story of love, injustice, chaos and dream of freedom. Adichie tempted her readers with simple opening scenes about a teenager who wants a better life and sacrifices everything in order to help his family, only to accelerate scenes of love and affection to loathing and betrayal. Yet sudden changes in events and the depiction of war and starvation to death are the elements which have presented Adichie's abilities as a writer.

When examining the novel's events, the reader discovers Adichie's cleverly plotted leaps of time. She recounts her events from one period to another. She presents the tranquil past in Nsukka<sup>10</sup> where life was stable to the extent of boredom, only to return to the shocking reality of present time of refugee camps and the death of the beloved. Adichie introduces her reader to places which are very familiar to her: actual villages and towns she actually lived in. This establishes an intimate link between Adichie and her characters throughout the entire novel. Her realistic depiction of significant events makes her literary approach lie in the same category of western writers.

The literary approach of Adichie in *Half of a Yellow Sun* is indeed a western one. Yet, with a brilliant fusion of Igbo/English in which she expresses her pride in the Igbo culture. The use of several Igbo proverbs and expressions expresses Adichie's aim to renown the English language. Her goal is to make it more Africanised with all exotic traditional idioms and proverbs. Her novel's success is based on her depiction of the big issues in African societies through maintaining an authentic perspective which brings a sense of excitement to the African and international reader. Adichie examines the hybrid identity through relying on her sense of belonging. She asserts, through her literary approach, the consequences of the Biafran war. She also moves from overwhelming unity to a depiction of political corruption led by the newly rich ex-colonial administrators. Adichie's attempt is to depict how the coloniser manipulated the Nigerian people's destiny.

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<sup>10</sup>Nsukka is a town located in southeast Nigeria.

In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie revives a specific period of time (post independence Nigeria) and reveals how the coloniser did use the natives' heritage of ethnic and religious divisions in Nigeria to create tensions and gaps which later separated the sons of one nation. The coloniser also incited religious violence between Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and Fulani<sup>11</sup> people which led to the scission of Nigeria and the creation of Biafra and the death of many innocent people. In her novel, Adichie provides an honest colonial experience through her use of different characters from multiple linguistic and religious backgrounds and nationalities.

Adichie illustrates several challenges, most noticeably women's daily survival during war-time, she presents the model of the African woman in *Half of a Yellow Sun*. Her female characters have varied between hopeless romantic and ruthless realistic. Each one of her characters has been presented in a different way: the strong grow softer and faded, while the tender become strong because of the harsh experiences of war. *Half of a Yellow Sun* is about rewriting Nigeria's history and an opportunity for a personal reconciliation. Being a Nigerian, she has been involved in the war as any Nigerian writer, through losing a family member: her two grandfathers died in the Biafran war.

*The World Was Silent When We Died* has summed up great damages of war on humanity. '...how ugly truth must be, to be killed while the rest of the world silently watching' (Adichie 181). Through Ugwu's book, Adichie uncovers the history of human aids and unveils the horrifying version, true version involving more parties than appeared at that time. Through Ugwu's book, Adichie reveals the hidden partners who benefited from the suffering and death of African people.

Furthermore, the title of Ugwu's book suggests that the ghost writer would be a radical professor or an experienced political analyst: Basically someone who is white or definitely a black man educated in an elite school, only to be surprised that the author is only Ugwu, the ignorant houseboy. He is too innocent and foolish, which inspires Odenigbo to adopt him and invest in his education in order to elevate his awareness about the current events in their country. Adichie's development of Ugwu's character is unexpected to reach this level of textual and contextual creativity. Her depiction of Ugwu as an 'ignoramus' rural boy prevents the

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<sup>11</sup>Igbo, Hausa, Yoruba and Fulani are the ethnic groups which exist in Nigeria.

reader from predicting the sudden intellectual jump to become an author who eloquently expresses the pains of his nation.

Adichie has also discussed controversial subjects of religion, sexuality and identity. As a writer, she manages to create a problematic situation which contains a moral dilemma. She leaves enough space to judge and renegotiate the progress of events. An excellent example can be detected in the airport incident where Richard escapes death just because he is a foreigner. Adichie also depicts the injustice practices on other people by Hausa soldiers just because they are Igbo. These soldiers fulfil the goals of a white agenda. Furthermore, Kainene's disappearance by the end creates a sense of frustration by Adichie as an African woman who embraces the cause of Africanity and feminism in Africa. Despite her literary abilities as a writer and the ultimate strength which Kainene has, Adichie could not find a way to bring her back. She has no choice but to depict Kainene's absence as a metaphor for all those who left in a rush to save the others. Adichie's characters whether African or British have all served the course of the events of her novel, yet the deliberate use of English mainly all her Nigerian characters can only depict the influence of the colonial education on the natives.

Adichie defends her use of English, which is a linguistic technique used in her writings. Realistically speaking, she admits that she speaks more than one language like her generation. In other words, she expresses that African writers do not underestimate their mother languages. In her case, she explains the need to speak Igbo in Nigeria because it is her home. Yet, she cannot obtain a complete satisfaction without using English words to deliver the precise significance of her words. Thus, she asserts that English used by her is not British or American. In fact, she asserts the use of African English modified and reshaped by Africans to serve the required meaning.

Through her writings, Adichie argues that both form and context represent her Africanity. The context represents African stories which she portrays through her characters' memories. While the form, for the inexperienced eye it might be British or American English, yet it is English successfully combined with African expressions which makes her flexible to switch from one language to another. But, it is the content which captures the attention of the reader. The identity which Adichie tries to reveal is universal despite any hybridisation<sup>12</sup> with

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<sup>12</sup>Hybridisation is the act of mixing between two or several varieties.

another nationality. The tribal factor would always exist as the strongest part in people with African roots.

Adichie seeks to destroy the prejudices which have damaged Africa and its ethnic image. Through her novel, she aims to dismiss colonial narratives which have put Africa in a dark corner. The coloniser has portrayed African people as a miserable and ignorant race awaiting the guidance and help of the white coloniser. In *Half of a Yellow Sun*, Adichie has shown her African characters as being fully aware and committed to their identity. Therefore, she seeks to endure the intolerable independence, civil war and their horrors for greater unity and principles of African identity.

To sum up, this chapter has provided an analysis of the effect of English as a tool to manifest African identity. In her attempt to portray African identity along with its tribal differences, Adichie has reacted as a story teller. She has recounted the colonial experience through the eyes of a set of characters from different backgrounds. This chapter has dealt with the effects of the single narration which was brought by the coloniser as one of his strategies to shape the opinion of the world on African people. We have identified the use of both Igbo and English to present the essence of African identity by the postcolonial writer. Through Adichie's novel, we have tended to examine the effective use of two different languages to manifest the multicultural identities of African communities.



**General Conclusion**

One cannot claim for a better future if a person cannot relate to his past which is the basis that shapes his decisions, experience and identity. What if the identity of a whole nation and not only of an individual is been questioned. This is what Adichie has explored wittingly in her novel *Half of a Yellow Sun*. This dissertation attempts to suggest a possible answer to the question of how Adichie, like many African writers, used English in her writings to praise African identity.

*Half of a Yellow Sun* presents a story where African identity is unconventionally portrayed from the perspectives of both the natives and the colonisers. It also presents a twist of events from one chapter to another. Perusing the idea of Africanity in the postcolonial novel, Adichie has succeeded to highlight her mastery of both English and Igbo languages for the sake of presenting a historical story about Nigeria's civil war. As an African novelist with a western education, she has managed to express the existence of two distinctive cultures in her community and has still maintained the essence of her African identity.

In her novel, Adichie has presented a realistic society in which she has shed the light on moral dilemmas which emerged because of her country's political struggle. She has challenged the stereotype of Africans who fought random wars with no particular goal and could not even survive. Adichie has empowered her female characters in a way which allows them to discover their own strength during the war. Unlike her male characters who despite their majestic power at the beginning of the novel, they could not maintain their strength and they fail to stand up and fight any obstacle they have faced.

The representation of African people in this novel matches the perception of Adichie as a writer who defends and believes in the authenticity of African identity. The intimacy and depth of the relationship she creates between her characters refutes all what has been previously depicted regarding love, marriage and family in Africa. Also, her use of characters from different backgrounds depicts the intellectual development of African people.

Adichie's novel is a manifestation of African identity in a diverse community. Her choice of depicting a significant historical period in Nigeria can only show her sense of belonging to her Igbo society. Each character and each event has been presented from an insider/ outsider vision as she depicts her country's history after having lived abroad for many years. Therefore, *Half of a Yellow Sun* does not only show the consequences of colonial existence in Nigeria or in Africa in general, and it does not only portray the horrors of the civil

war. It actually represents the African community. Through her novel, Adichie tries to make the reader close to each character she chooses whether African or British in order to bring a different definition for the African community, a definition which provided by the reader himself.

The use of the English language by the postcolonial writer as a tool to redefine his African identity has been a controversial issue for African and international readers. Therefore, in our dissertation we aimed to understand both the source and the factors which led to the emergence of this issue. The importance of our research lies in analyzing the lingual and contextual choices of the postcolonial writer. Also, in this research we aim to shift the importance of postcolonial writings from the language used to the context itself.

Highlighting the aim of postcolonial writers for using English as their only language to define themselves as African writers will raise more questions about the significance of African identity. For this research we focused on the issues of identity and the use of English language, further researches could be done on the use of both African and English languages in postcolonial texts. Also, a different study could be applied on analyzing the meaning of identity in a multicultural community.



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**Appendices**

## Appendix A

### Author's Biography



Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a Nigerian author, she was born 15 September 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria. Her best known novels are *Purple Hibiscus* (2003), *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), and *Americanah* (2013). As a novelist, Adichie is often compared to the great author Chinua Achebe. She was even named several times as his successor.

She was born to an Igbo family in Nsukka not far from her mother city Abba, and her parents have deeply affected her writings. She studied medicine and pharmacy at the University of Nigeria. Then, she moved to the United States of America to study communications and political science at Eastern Connecticut State University. She gained an MA in Creative Writing from Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore. Adichie was a Holder fellow at Princeton University during the 2005-2006 academic years, and earned an MA in African Studies from Yale University in 2008.

After her initiative poetry writings and her only production in play writing, *For Love of Biafra* (1998). She had several short stories published in literary journals, winning her various competition prizes. Her first novel, *Purple Hibiscus* was published in 2003 and is set in the political turmoil of 1990s Nigeria. The story is told from the perspective of 15-year-old Kambili Achike. This book won the 2005 Commonwealth Writers Prize (Overall Winner, Best Book), and was shortlisted for the 2004 Orange Prize for Fiction.

Her second novel is *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2006), set before and during the Biafran War. It won the 2007 Orange Broadband Prize for Fiction. Chimamanda's third novel *Americanah*

was written during a fellowship awarded by the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study in 2011-2013. It was published to great acclaim in 2013. Adichie is currently married and has a daughter. She spends her time between Nigeria and the United States where she regularly teaches writing workshops.

## Appendix B

### Plot Summary of *Half of a Yellow Sun* by

**Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**

The story takes place in the 1960s the period that witnessed the independence of Nigeria. Nigerian people at this time united with a general atmosphere of optimism and patriotism, then a tribal and religious feud divide the people of one nation. A military rebellion takes place due to the colonial inherited hatred between people of Hausa and Igbo leading to the rise of Biafra. Then we witness the development of the novel's characters and how their lives change because of those events.

First, the reader gets engaged with a conversation between Ugwu and his aunt who takes him to work as a houseboy in a university professor's house. All the way she keeps telling him that he must obey his master no matter what, so he could eat meat every day. Along with Ugwu we continue to be amazed by these new scenes of the city, roads, buildings, and pathways.

Ugwu is a simple village boy, an adolescent whose main purpose in life is to work hard to be a houseboy boy. Despite his humble background, he succeeds to fit in the new environment by being a fast learner, Clever and efficient. His desire to maintain his current good life style contributes in the shift of his character from being an ignorant village boy to an educated, English speaker houseboy.

Through Ugwu's descriptions, the reader gets to know Odenigbo, the professor is the symbol of a well-educated African man, he is civilised yet proud tribal Igbo man. His affection with books and fascination of knowledge makes him an unusual and radical character. The development of softness and passion in his personality can be credited to Olanna his sweetheart, who represents the example of a modest, well- educated Nigerian woman.

On the other hand, Olanna's twin sister Kainene, smart business woman, the future runner of the family's fortune, falls in love with a Englishman named Richard. Richard is

portrayed as a writer in the making and journalist reporter. He considers himself as an Igbo man because he gets to witness the birth of the new republic of Biafra, and for mastering the language of the natives.

Along the events taking place in each character's life, at a sudden the reader gets interrupted by a different story. But this one is not told by the author herself, it is told by one of her main characters. *The World Was Silent When We Died*, the title of the book written by Ugwu, describing the civil war in his country the way he has experienced it.

## Appendix C

### Critical Reviews of *Half of a Yellow Sun*

Chimamanda Adichie's book, *Half of a Yellow Sun* received a worldwide echo for its uniqueness in presenting the Biafran conflict. Several reviews has talked the story behind the book, each review has varied between praising its authenticity, and questioning the aim behind reviving Nigeria's civil war. Adichie's novel succeeded to recount her county's colonial history through the experiences of the natives. As it has been stated in the Guardian: 'Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie brings a lucid intelligence and compassion to the painful history of Biafra in *Half of a Yellow Sun*'.<sup>1</sup> Her work has been recognised for her compassionate recognition of her people's different experiences during colonial period.

However, *Half of a Yellow Sun* has been questioned as a story because of its description of the civil war in Nigeria. The Sunday Book Review wondered whether 'we ready for a novel about an imploding nation raven by religious strife and bloody wrangling over who controls the military, the civil service, the oil; a novel about looting, roadside bombs, killings and reprisal killings, set against a backdrop of meddling foreign powers?'<sup>2</sup>. Adichie's novel has been questioned for being a war story, which depicted only on the horrors of a specific period in her country.

For being able to depict specific historical events, Adichie's work has been praised in different critical reviews. Her novel has been acknowledged as 'a powerful novel that addresses the emotional and personal consequences of the Nigerian Civil War, along with the historical atrocities that accompanied it'<sup>3</sup>. Adichie's historical story has been praised for portraying a vivid image about the long lived conflict in her Igbo land.

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<sup>1</sup>Maya Jaggi, *The Master and his Houseboy*, The Guardian.  
<[www.theguardian.com/books/2006/aug/19/fiction.shopping2](http://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/aug/19/fiction.shopping2)>.

<sup>2</sup>Rob Nixon, *A Biafran Story*. Sunday Book Review.  
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<sup>3</sup> Raquel Segovia, *Half of a Yellow Sun is a Powerful Portrait of the Nigerian Civil War*, The Culture Trip.  
<[theculturetrip.com/africa/nigeria/articles/half-of-a-yellow-sun-a-symbiotic-expression-of-fiction-and-history/](http://theculturetrip.com/africa/nigeria/articles/half-of-a-yellow-sun-a-symbiotic-expression-of-fiction-and-history/)>

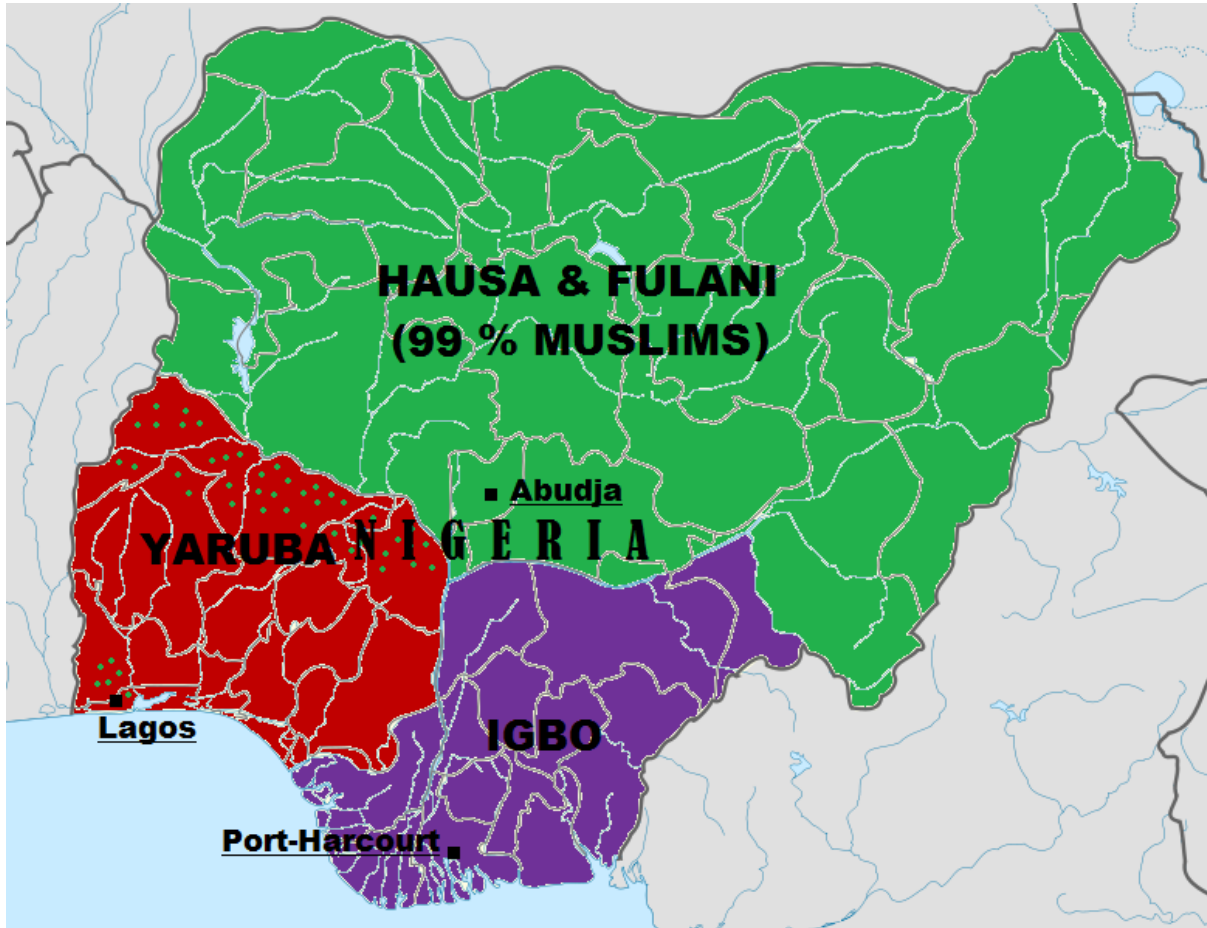
Acknowledging the talent of the young African writers, Adichie has been also praised by Chinua Achebe for her remarkable novel. He stated: ‘we do not usually associate wisdom with beginners, but here is a new writer endowed with the gift of ancient storytellers....She is fearless, or she would not have taken on the intimidating horror of Nigeria’s civil war. Adichie came almost fully made’<sup>4</sup>. Achebe praised Adichie’s work for having the courage to retell the stories of her people, and for recounting the colonial history.

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<sup>4</sup>Adichie, Ngozi Chimamanda. *Half of a Yellow Sun* (Anchor Books, 2008) ii.

## Appendix D

### Ethnic Groups in Nigeria



<http://www.nairaland.com/2453728/map-ethnic-groups-nigeria-it>