

## Portrayal of a Female Protagonist in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*

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### Abstract

This essay mostly focused on the female protagonists of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's book *Half of a Yellow Sun*. The female protagonists in this book demonstrate how they manage the conflict between Nigeria and Biafra, and how they manage to lead their nation and participate in the war on their behalf. We can see how the soldiers mistreated and exploited women and girls during the battle and how it has permanently impacted their lives.

**Keywords:** female, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*

### Introduction:

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie is a renowned African feminist writer recognized for her powerful portrayal of female characters. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie was raised on the University of Nigeria campus. Her writing has been translated into more than thirty languages and is read all over the world. She captured both the most exquisite and most repulsive aspects of Nigeria in her writing because she was born and raised there. Adichie was the fifth of six children born into an Igbo household in the Nigerian city of Enugu. She grew up in Nsukka, the university town in Enugu State. Her father, James Nwoye Adichie was a statistics professor at the University of Nigeria when she was growing up. Grace Ifeoma her mother, was the first female registrar at the university. They lived in a home on campus that Chinua Achebe had occupied before. During the Nigerian Civil War, the family lost nearly everything, including her father's and mother's grandparents. Chimamanda was born a few years after the war, but her parents were involved in the

conflict and worked at the University of Nsukka. Her uncle, Michael E. N. Adichie, was in the Biafran army and shared about his experiences to Chimamanda. Her uncle, Cyprian Odigwe, also fought for Biafra. Her cousin Pauly also talked about his experience living in Biafra as a thirteen-year-old child. All her family and friend's experiences inspired her to write about the Nigerian Biafra War. She was inspired to portray the most famous female protagonist by her mother's experiences and role in the role war.

The famous critical statement about this novel is as follows:

the gift of ancient storytellers. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie knows what to do about it ... she is fearless, or she would have not taken on the intimidating horror of Nigeria's civil war Adichie came almost fully made' 'We do not usually associate wisdom with beginners, but here is a new writer endowed with Chinua Achebe:

'I look with awe and envy at this young woman from Africa who is recording the history of her country. She is fortunate –

and we, her readers, are even luckier' - Edmund White.

This is a story of twin sisters Kainene and Olanna and their family. Kainene and Olanna were born into one of the wealthiest families in Nigeria, and despite their father's lack of education, they sent both of their daughters to London to finish their master's degrees. Olanna made a different decision and decided to work instead of assisting her father in his business. She joined the faculty at Nsukka University and decided to become a teacher after Kaiene handled the business upon her return from England. When the conflict between the Igbo and Yoruba people broke out, Kaiene was in Port Harbor, and Olanna was staying with Odenigbo in Nsukka. At first, it was just a regular dispute between the two communities, but it quickly escalated into a riot and spread across the entire nation. Olanna was in kano to meet her cousin Arize; she was there to bring Arize to nsukka for her delivery, but she could not take her as the riot started; Olanna's friend Mohammad assisted her to flee from kano. It was heartbreaking to witness Igbo people being murdered by Yoruba people in kano and other cities in Nigeria when this riot started. Olanna managed to get to Nsukka without Arize. Richard and Kainene were waiting for things to return to normal at Port Harcourt so that Richard could return to Nsukka, but sadly, war broke out after this riot. We'll study how Olanna, Kainene, and other igbo women dealt with the dispute.

### **Discussion:**

One of the richest people in the nation, Chief Ozbio, was the father of Olanna. One of the twins, Olanna, was encouraged by her father to move to Lagos and work for the family company. Instead, she chose to work as a teacher and

stayed with her boyfriend, Odenigbo, a professor at the university in Nsukka. Olanna therefore moved from Lagos to Nsukka. Olanna led a very opulent life in Lagos, yet she had a down to earth, kind nature. She had thoroughly assimilated into Odengbo's social circle and accepted his lifestyle. Doctors, professors, and other intellectuals used to gather at Odango's residence in the evening for drinks and to talk about global concerns, particularly those relating to the African continent. Odenigbo was completely in love with Olanna and wanted to marry her, but she advised him to wait a few years. Odenigbo was also a very providing guy who cared profoundly about the future of the country. Everything had been going very smoothly until that day when news came from Lagos that a coup had been carried out by the soldiers and that Nigeria is now under the governance of army. Olanna was worried about her parents who were in Lagos because she had heard in the news that many politicians had been killed in the post-coup riot Olanna's sister Kainene was in Port Harcourt with Richard and was fine, but Olanna was worried about her parents because she had heard that many politicians had been killed in this post-coup riot.

The biggest concern was that Yoruba people were attacking Igbo people because they believed that Igbo people were responsible for the coup. Everyone was worried that Yoruba people were acting aggressively across the nation. And the rumor spread that a second coup was imminent, but no one first believed them, the second coup occurred, when Olanna was in Kano, she was brave to travel to kano to escape her cousin after the first coup and riot since she knew that kano was not a secure place. Olanna planned to bring her relatives with her to Nsukka. She was able

to get to her relatives' home with the aid of Mohammad, a friend she had made in Kano. She went there and discovered her uncle, aunt, and cousin brothers' bodies on the veranda of their home, just bodies were lying there with no heads, and blood was pouring out of their bodies. She looked for her sister, but she was not there. Horrified Olanna broke their but, When Mohammad heard vandals, he dragged Olanna into the car even though she wasn't ready to leave her relatives in such situation. she was frightened by the circumstances but safe with Mohammad because he was not Igbo, he was Yoruba. She was protected by Mohammad from the vandals and placed aboard a train headed toward Nsukka. She was completely shocked by the scenes as she traveled back home after being rescued from the north and returning to the south. By the time she arrived in Nsukka, she had lost both of her legs to mental trauma and had been unable to walk for months. After a few months, she recovered due to Odenigbo's care. By the time the revolt between Yoruba and Igbo or Nigeria and Biafra, developed into a war, Biafran states were collapsing one by one, and when Nsukka was ready to fall, Olanna and Odenigbo had to leave immediately.

They spent a few days at Abba Odenigbo's home. Olanna used to gather nearby kids and teach them in that tiny community. She was concerned about the education and health of the kids. She used to teach kids wherever she went. She did not want the conflict to have an impact on young people's life. when Olanna's mother heard about Abba is going to fall, she came to abba to pick Olanna and take her to England, but Olanna refused to leave because she wanted to make a modest contribution to her country and not run away from the tragedy. Her mother gave

her some cash and jewelry, and her parents then moved to England. Olanna and Odenigbo then relocated to Umuahia after abba's fall, where Olanna began working at a school without pay but for the benefit of the students rather than for compensation. after a Nigerian air strike demolished the building, she started her class in the yard of her house. When they ran out of money, they had to leave the house where Olanna had begun school and move into a modest, two-room apartment in a building nearby after being forced to leave because they couldn't afford to pay the rent. Conflict got worse, in this situation Thousands of Biafran troops were hurt, and many of them died. The state of the nation worsens. People were starving to death. Whatever they found to eat, they could. Every leaf of green has changed into a vegetable. By this point, Olanna was completely lacking everything, much less the emergency cash her father had given her. She bought petrol from that emergency money if in case Umuahia falls and they need to move Orlu to her sister's house and as planned, they moved to Orlu after Umuahia collapsed within a few days. After Biafra lost the war, all its citizens were no longer considered to be Biafrans but rather as Nigerians.

### **Conclusion:**

The two most significant feminist characters in this book are Olanna and Kainene, who helped their country's citizens, especially its women and children when no one else was willing to do so. Being the daughters of a wealthy man, Kainene and Olanna had the option of simply escaping the situation and migrating to any country in the world, but they both chose to stay and aid their nation's citizens in this terrible crisis. They each had enough money to live a comfortable life, but they both decided to start a camp and provide for

their people using their own resources. along with providing the people food and shelter, Kainene and Olanna also supported those in need. For example, Olanna helped Alice, whose husband had left her during the war, and Kainene beat a priest for impregnating a young girl in a camp. Olanna also gave her neighbors a small portion of her groceries when she was leaving in Umuahia. Women suffer the most during this conflict between Biafra and Nigeria; they are frequently physically abused; Olanna's pregnant cousin Arize

was gang raped in Kano before being killed by vandals. Amunachi, the sister of Ugwu was also raped by five soldiers when they were living in the family's little village. This incident had a lasting impact on Amunachi, who spoke much less after that. Eberechi Ugwu's friend she was also abused by an army officer. Olanna and Kaiene emerged as heroes for their people in this bizarre circumstance. Kaiene, who was missing, may have sacrificed her life for her people; she was the true hero of the book.

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