Between 1967 and 1975, Tanzania implemented an ambitious project of *Ujamaa* villagisation. According to official discourse, villagisation was both a resettlement and production project, through which villages were to become schemes in which people lived and worked communally. This paper analyses the representation of *Ujamaa* villagisation and gender dynamics in Gabriel Ruhumbika's *Village in Uhuru* (1969) and Severin Ndunguru's *The Lion of Yola* (2004). By placing the texts in their historical contexts, reading them against the official discourses about villagisation, and situating villagisation within the state's fascination with modernisation, the article examines the representation of gender dynamics against a backdrop of *Ujamaa's* core principle of equality of all human beings. It argues that the two novels portray gender relations in the fictionalised *Ujamaa* villagisation period as both monoglossic (in that they reflect the state and *Ujamaa's* ideal of human equality in some aspects), and heteroglossic (because they show contradictory relationships to *Ujamaa'*s ideal of human equality). The novels suggest that this 'doubleness' leads to rural modernisation that is contradictory in terms of gender relations.