

**The Quest for Female Self-Awareness in Shaping Identity****A Case of Study Flora Nwapa's Efuru**

الادراك الذاتي الانثوي في تشكيل الهوية: افيرو لفلورا نوابا كحالة دراسية

chekhnaba imane<sup>1</sup>

University of saida, dr moulay tahar

Imane.chekhnaba@univ-saida.dz

Laboratoire d'enseignement de l'Anglais à Buts Spécifiques prof. Benmoussat Smail

Dr. mehdaoui amari

University of saida, de moulay tahar

mehdaouiamaria@gmail.com

تاريخ الوصول 2022/12/24 القبول 2023/05/07 النشر على الخط 2023/06/05

Received 24/12/2022 Accepted 07/05/2023 Published online 05/06/2023

**Abstract:**

In contrast to Chinua Achebe and Ngugi Wa Thiongo who valued patriarchal authority, Flora Nwapa was among the pioneers who provided a comprehensive picture of how women are seen in current Nigerian culture. Efuru is the story of a strong, independent woman well-known for her trade abilities. She is also admired for her beauty, courage, and spirituality. Efuru creates her Female Identity through Self-realization in Colonial and Postcolonial African society. To analyze the topic of women's representation in Nigerian literature, we will depend on Simone de Beauvoir's notions of immanence and transcendence as presented in her book *The Second Sex* (1949). This has led to the fact that the character has reached her freedom after her awareness and belief that a woman can live without a man and marriage. Nwapa seems to be creating new identities and images for women than the prescribed ones created by men who made women think that marriage is essential for a woman's existence.

**Key words:** Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, female identity, Postcolonial African society, Self-realization, feminist approach, Simone de Beauvoir.

**ملخص:**

على عكس تشينوا أتشيبي ونجوجي وا ثيونغو اللذان كانا يقدران السلطة الأبوية، كانت فلورا نوابا من بين الرواد الذين قدموا صورة شاملة عن كيفية رؤية المرأة في الثقافة النيجيرية الحالية. إيفورو هي قصة امرأة قوية ومستقلة معروفة بقدراتها التجارية. كما أنها تحظى بجمالها وشجاعته وروحانيتها. تخلق إيفورو هويتها الأنثوية من خلال إدراكها لذاتها في المجتمع الأفريقي المستعمر وما بعد الاستعمار. لتحليل موضوع تمثيل المرأة في الأدب النيجيري، سنعتمد على مفاهيم سيمون دي بوفوار عن الجوهر والتعالى كما تم تقديمها في كتابها الجنس الثاني (1949)، وقد أدت النتائج إلى حقيقة أن الشخصية وصلت إلى حريتها بعد وعيها وإيمانها بأن المرأة يمكن أن تعيش بدون رجل و زواج و عليه ان نوابا خلقت هويات وصورًا جديدة للنساء أكثر من تلك التي صنعها الرجال الذين جعلوا النساء يعتقدن أن الزواج ضروري لوجود المرأة.

<sup>1</sup> - Corresponding author: chekhnaba imane

Mail: imane.chekhnaba@univ-saida.dz

الكلمات المفتاحية: فلورا نوابا إفورو ، الهوية الانثوية ، المجتمع الأفريقي ما بعد الاستعمار ، تحقيق الذات ، النهج النسوي ، سيمون دي بوفوار

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Literature is used by writers to describe their emotions, opinions, and worries about social issues. Literary works determine a community's cultural level and growth. Individuals' roles in society are also studied in the literature. Women's role has a significant influence on many levels, including social, political, and interpersonal interactions, because women are the foundation of communities, families, and nations.

Initially, African literature was produced by males who were heavily influenced by their society's patriarchal views and practices. Some feminist critics such as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie and Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi claimed that male writers often portrayed their female characters as downtrodden and submissive. African male writers see women as passive characters who lack individuality and significant issues. Works such as *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe depicted this mistreatment of women. Achebe portrayed African women as submissive and slavish servants who follow males without question. The novel's culture is completely

dominated by men, with women playing minor roles. The characters, Okonkwo's wives, put up with his bad attitude and harshness. This marginalization can be seen in practically all of his early works, including *No Longer at Ease* (1960), *The Man of the People* (1966), and *Arrow of God* (1967).

The development of African female authors was seen as a response to male works, as well as a representation of the burden of customs and conventions suffered by women in patriarchal African communities. African women have found themselves in a position where they must choose between adhering to customs or seeking equal rights with males. However, during the post-colonial era, African women had begun to resist achieving women's freedom.

Feminism refers to the political and social movements that attempt to redefine, protect, and attain equal political, economic, and social rights for women. For women, the feminist movement represents the possibility of breaking free from the constraints of the past. It is also the willingness to reconsider the false picture of women in literature. Gender inequality in African literary works is condemned by feminist literary critics.

Women's movements that arose in the framework of transnational emancipatory discourses in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century might be seen as the origins of African feminism. With the establishment of governments in Africa in the second half of the 20th century, women who had participated in anti-colonial activities and had voiced their opposition to colonial authority, such as the Aba women's riots in 1929 or the Kikuyu women in the Thuku revolt, realized that they had to continue their liberation struggles in the newly independent but still firmly patriarchal nation states. In this environment, Women created autonomous feminist movements.

Flora Nwapa (1931-1993), the mother of African novels written by women and the first Nigerian author to be published in English, wrote her debut novel, *Efuru*, in 1966 as a means of defending and combating oppressed woman states. Nwapa attracted attention to women's tales via her works as she resisted and battled gender stereotypes and societal practices created by her patriarchal Igbo community to oppress women so she brought women's voices to light by opposing and addressing gender stereotypes and the societal practices established by her patriarchal Igbo community to oppress women.

The focus of Flora Nwapa is on women's topics, their presence, challenges, and fears in traditional Igbo society. She examines various aspects of her tribal community, including their desire to be people rather than workers and housewives. People were trapped between tradition and modernity since the arrival of Christianity and Western education completely affected and changed the country.

*Efuru*, by Flora Nwapa, is a novel that follows the life of its titular character as she comes to terms with herself and her place in the world. The novel is set in Nigeria, and chronicles Efuru's journey from a young girl to a married woman. Along the way, Efuru discovers her strength, resilience and learns to accept herself for who she is. The novel is a powerful story of self-awareness and self-realization that reflects her journey of self-discovery and her own identity. Besides the role that she wants to play in her community. Flora Nwapa introduces us to Efuru, a girl who believes in her individuality. She understands her path after confronting her social and cultural reality. Efuru's journey started at the very beginning of her early age, because she is different and she comes from a very different family. She does not accept the supremacy and the superiority of man in the Igbo culture. Efuru always makes her own decisions and choices, she tries always to be generous and helpful towards her community. Through her awareness about these circumstances, she

reached her self-realization that woman's life and happiness can exist without marriage and children and her financial independence is very important to prove her place in a patriarchal society .

The purpose of this research is to provide a detailed examination of the protagonist's path to self-realization. The study's significance lies in the fact that it seeks to fill a gap in the literature by investigating self-realization in Postcolonial texts. The research also tries to look at how feminism is handled by the author and shows how Flora uses Efurú to depict women 's life under Igbo traditions. furthermore, The essay also highlights how patriarchy affects women's relationships and how the main character challenges it via her decisions and actions.

Hence, the study seeks to investigate Flora Nwapa's effort to break the silence and speak about female identity to provide a real picture of the struggle of Igbo women in Nigeria through her protagonist, Efurú, Nwapa acknowledges the possibility of a full woman that creates her own identity and reaches her self-realization by opposing Igbo traditions. As a pioneer in a generation of African women authors, Nwapa established a new style of writing to challenge some of her Igbo society's unchallenged customs that oppress Nigerian women.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Postcolonial Literature: An Overview

The term postcolonialism is sometimes composed with a dash, in some cases left unhyphenated, with the two structures used to assign similar areas of interest by various critics. The joined variant was first utilized by political specialists and financial experts to signify the period after expansionism, yet from about the last seventies, it was transformed into an all the more colossal culturalist examination in the possession of scholarly pundits and others. The unhyphenated form is customarily used to recognize it from the previous emphasis that alluded exclusively to explicit time span and to show a propensity toward scholarly analysis and the examination of different discourse at the crossing point of race, orientation and diaspora, among others.

A possible working definition of postcolonialism is a serious engagement with the experience of colonialism and its past and current impacts, both at the local level of former states and at the global level of more general global trends perceived to represent the aftermath of empire“the effects of colonization on culture and societies” (Ashcroft, et al., 2007,p. 168).

Postcolonialism frequently includes topics of slavery, migration, suppression and resistance, diversity, race, gender, and geography, as well as reactions to imperial European discourses such as history, philosophy, anthropology, and linguistics. The word refers to situations that existed throughout imperialism and colonialism, as well as those that existed after colonialism's historical closure. Postcolonial opponents have expressed increased worry about racial minorities in the West, including Native and African Americans in the United States, British Asians and African Caribbeans in the United Kingdom, and Aborigines in Australia and Canada, among others (Loomba,2005 ).

Postcolonialism, as a result of these characteristics, provides for a wide variety of applications, denoting a perpetual interaction and fluidity between the feeling of a historical transition, a socio-cultural position, and an epochal configuration. The term can also refer to the distributed system of reclaiming and rethinking the history and agency of people who have been subjected to various types of imperialism. Postcolonialism foreshadows a possible future of colonial abolition, but it also foreshadows new kinds of dominance or submission, including new forms of global empire.

Yet, postcolonialism is also deeply linked with a more particular collection of issues, which have proven to be enormously influential. The relationship between imperialism and identity has been one of the most significant. Fanon, a psychoanalyst and philosopher, offered one of the most insightful and controversial examinations of the relationship between colonized and colonizer in *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) as well as in his *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Fanon is arguably best known for *The Wretched of the Earth*, his explosive justification for violence. Fanon's writings highlighted the complicated relationship between imperialism and nationalism, which has been a critical focus of much postcolonial writing. *Orientalism* (1978), on the other hand, by *Edward Said* is widely regarded as a famous book in the development of postcolonial studies. In *Orientalism*, *Said* argued for a clear relationship between the knowledge created by oriental scholars and how they were utilized in the formation of colonial power.

## 2.2 Postcolonial African Literature: An Overview

Most African societies used oral interaction and communication. Most African oral pieces, such as songs, poetry, and recitations, demonstrate this cultural wealth and tradition. The native African is a "great storyteller". Stories are the vehicle via which values and belief systems are passed down from generation to generation. The African experience is communicated via stories.

African literature successfully engages the reader in themes affecting current African society. Articles relating to the present African context are depicted without ignoring Africa's history. Though they come from many African countries, the ability to combine creativity with the African perspective is what unites African literary authors.

In the study and examination of African literature, one may see connections to pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial dispensations. These are significant stages in the growth of African literature. Among the prominent authors of the time, each era is distinguished by its subjects, interests, and thought patterns. The past and long-term effects of events such as colonization and slavery are key themes in African literary works and link to questions of identity that characterize modern works by African authors. Contemporary African authors are laying the groundwork for the development of the African literary scene. Chinua Achebe's and Ousmane Sembene's works can truly represent Africa's classical period.

African oral tradition has recorded women's active engagement in the creation, maintenance, and change of most types of oral literature, both official and non-professional. Humankind is always struggling with many conflicts that follow the interaction between humans in society (men and women). The main cause for this is a misunderstanding of what a woman is and what a man should be, as well as what society wants from them. These conflicts have resulted in the different genders (particularly the female) adopting remedies that take into account either gender's selfish interests. The male gender is thought to be dominant due to biological advantages, physical strength, and a more solid psychological stability, and has used these to build a society that benefits him at the expense of the feminine population. This leads him to establish a patriarchal culture.

Literature is not foreign to Africa, as we had the oral form long before Europeans arrived. However, written literature in English began only when the colonists arrived. Even though our focus is on the novels of a female writer in Nigeria, there are numerous forms of written genres of literature available today. Female writing in West Africa, particularly Nigeria, does not have a lengthy history, since women first began writing skeletal in the late 1950s and more recently in the 1990s. This is due to women's historical social standing.

These writings, according to Nnaemeka (1994), seek to demonstrate how women, as speaking subjects, have been transformed into written objects by the complicity of the imperialistic

matter and the patriarchal subject, and how these beleaguered written objects are re-inscribing their relevance as speaking/writing subjects. In this regard, Nnaemeka quoted Maryse Conde who asserted:

There are very few female African writers.....what are the explanations for this dearth of talent? The educated woman is becoming such a common feature in Africa (university lecturers, doctors, members of parliament, a function which does not necessarily accompany education though, and civil servants of all ranks) that it seems very superficial to attribute this female silence to the educational gap between girls and boys. When so many women can stand up and shout slogans for emancipation or deliver political addresses for the benefit of the ruling parties, what prevents them from taking a pen and writing about themselves? (p. 132-139)

This viewpoint, while, was articulated decades ago and cannot be considered current, given the appearance of various female writers, particularly in Nigeria (being our focus). In today's culture, there are more female authors, particularly in the novel form, than male counterparts

Because women's duties were limited to being mothers and obeying wives, the African society neglected to acknowledge women's inventiveness or their roles beyond the house. This philosophy not only dominated the African people's brains for many years, but it also ruled the African literary world. As a result, while male writers celebrated the success of their works, women were always left in the dark. In this regard, Udeh (2009) clarified in her book *Trend and Issues in Nigerian Literature* that:

The female voices in Nigerian literature, therefore, came up as a total and implicit rejection of this derogatory lifestyle created by the norms of the society to restrict and subjugate women both in real life and in the fictive sphere since literature is a weapon of authority, women writers have together used it as a medium to promote and give value to the lives of women, therefore, filling successfully the guilt between the male and female characters in Nigerian novels. They based their argument on the premise that progress in society can be fostered by steering clear of sexual segregation. (p.210)

Furthermore, a detailed examination of the diverse visions of African womanhood given in the literature indicates that pictures of African women in the literature by African female writers differ significantly from those presented by their male counterparts. Because of their shared gender

experiences, female authors are

more likely to portray female characters in more realistic terms, with remarkable insight, and in meaningful relationship with their surroundings. Women authors also prefer to build a woman's universe in which female characters live as individuals in their own right, rather than as simply extensions to a masculine world. There are exceptions, of course, but in general, female authors examine other options for self-actualization outside of the sexual roles that are available to their female characters (Boehmer,1991) .

Male representations of female characters, on the other hand, are frequently from a strong male viewpoint, reflecting male beliefs, or rather misunderstandings, of female sexuality. Males authors frequently exaggerate the sexuality of their female characters, giving the appearance that women have no identity beyond their sexual duties. This can be very clear and obvious in the writings of Chinua Achebe, where he portrayed female characters such as his wives that are under his sexual desire or to serve him and bear children.

Their women are typically shown in connection to male protagonists and in supporting roles. These characters are typically used to complement the pictures of the male heroes who occupy the forefront in the works. Furthermore, masculine representations of African women are glorified and idealized. Such portraits show little or no psychological development, implying that they are mostly masculine illusions of gender (Brown,1981, p. 22) .

In his preface, *Brown* discusses how women authors are sometimes disregarded and omitted from most studies of African literature in his book *Women Writers in Black Africa (1981)* points out:

The women writers of Africa are the other voices, the unheard voices, rarely discussed and seldom accorded space in the repetitive anthologies and the predictably male-oriented studies in the field. Relatively few literary magazines and scholarly journals, in the West and in Africa itself, have found significant space or time for African women writers. The ignoring of women writers on the continent has become a tradition, implicit rather than formally stated, but a tradition nonetheless--and a rather unfortunate one at that.

Many African female intellectuals were disappointed by the representation of women in most African male-authored novels that were published before and after independence. The latter believed that certain African male writers did not portray women fairly in their writings. They



have marginalized and degraded women to second-class citizens in their eyes. So, these female intellectuals set out to develop literary texts in which they addressed shortcomings in African male literature.

Flora Nwapa is a pioneer among these female writers who deals in *Efuru* (1966) with issues such as tradition, postcolonialism, modernity, culture, sociology, psychology and in Nigerian society in particular and African societies in general. *Efuru* the first novel of Flora Nwapa is the realization of her beliefs in woman power. Despite the difficulties, the protagonist continues her life of a woman of identity. With her independence, she offers a feminist example and, above all, becomes a symbol of survival and independence even throughout the colonial dominion. Through the story, the writer seeks to explain that a woman's life may be successful and stable by achieving her financial independence and without marriage or childbearing.

It has been argued that female writers, particularly feminist female writers, emphasize women while simultaneously attempting to minimize some of the male characters they create, not as completely bad, but that men, like women, are capable of weaknesses. According to Mojola,

Nwapa's fictional universe is a world of women, for all her central characters and the most of her secondary characters are women. Their daily activities within and outside the home, their cultural and religious observances and beliefs, their individual and collective interaction with one another and with men constitute a solid structure documenting certain aspects of the traditional way of life of the Igbo people. (As quoted in Mba, 2011, p. 43)

According to Mbah, Nwapa seeks to establish a more just society by raising women's awareness of their independence and empowerment through this documenting of their actions, which may assist project women favorably. Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* is widely acknowledged and considered a crucial predecessor of current feminist ideas (1929). Early studies on Woolf stressed her position in modernism by attempting to establish a woman's writing history; this is founded on the assumption that women's distinctions are preserved in their works. Most African female authors base their opinions on this work.

Nonetheless, African female authors are maintained by a fear of living on the praecipe, which is exacerbated and heightened by their environment's sexual politics (Nnaemeka, 1994, p. 142). African female authors are well conscious of the forceful attention and judgments from critics and scholars, the vast majority of whom are male; as a result, this focus forces them to negotiate the

development of their fictional characters, particularly female characters. So, no one can deny that Africa has produced a lot of female authors who have been and continue to be able to establish themselves as writers on a national and worldwide basis and Flora Nwapa is a great example of that.

*Simone de Beauvoir* is perhaps the twentieth century's most influential figure and its most prominent feminist. Her book *The Second Sex* is founded on her knowledge of women's oppression in society and among women. Almost all political and existential ideologies were questioned in Simone de Beauvoir's book. She states that "one is not born, but rather becomes, woman" (de Beauvoir, 1949, p.14). To put it another way, she argues that women's identities are socially produced. Furthermore, de Beauvoir contends that oppression restricts women's participation in society since their choices and skills are constrained either by their husbands (men) or by society itself. The book's author concentrates on the knowledge of women's oppression, and she attempts to explore the many tactics and processes capable of creating and building a woman into a better person, and, of course, a fully autonomous human being. She claims that "yes, women in general are today inferior to men ... the question is whether this state of affairs must be perpetuated" (de Beauvoir, p.33)

Simone de Beauvoir's conceptions of Immanence and Transcendence try to understand women's lives and to investigate not just the challenges they face, but also the various options available to them. In other respects, Simone de Beauvoir criticized the traditional view which argues that women's condition is either connected to the biological myths or to the societal norms, which in actuality were constructed by men in order to display their significance of 'superiority'.

Immanence, according to the author of *The Second Sex*, refers to a condition in which women feel stuck and unable to take on responsibility. That is, they are forced to observe the world through the eyes of the dominant males, and as a result, they are absorbed in themselves and remain stuck in the same position. Transcendence, in contrast to Immanence, is associated with power and the desire for freedom. Simone de Beauvoir states: "all oppression creates a state of war. This particular case is no exception" (De Beauvoir, 1949, p. 849)

Immanence, as previously said, pertains to surrender, but Transcendence is more associated with revolution; so, Immanence, according to her, leads to Transcendence. Transcendence, on the other hand, happens through endeavors that allow for release and lead to self-awareness.

Efuru exemplifies the extreme forms that identity development frequently needs in colonial life, as well as the extremities that oppression brings forth. As it co-dependent and transcendent history independently shows, the novel exposes two opposed endpoints in identity construction. The author discusses the importance of cultural transformation and explains that the severe outcomes in identities witnessed in colonial life are closely related to oppression. The novel depicts transcendence as a continuum, with transcendence over damaging cultural expectations as the desirable end result that leads to self-realization and identity evolution.

Nwapa's protagonist spiritually transcends its cultural reality through detachment, while remaining physically on the margins of its different civilizations. When reading the work, the necessity for balance between transcendence over many types of oppression (colonialism and patriarchy) and balanced chosen social connection becomes obvious. After the probationary phase that leads to re-birth, the character continues to negotiate his or her identity by toggling between these extreme situations. The dialogue will continue until an unified identity as a moderate route represented by less extreme styles of life is attained.

### 3. Efuru's Quest for Female Self-Awareness

*Efuru*, Flora Nwapa's first novel, is set in Igbo society. Nigeria's most important tradition is Igbo. They are Nigeria's second-largest ethnic group. They live in separate villages but communicate in the same language. During colonialism, Igbos were treated as slaves and sent to the New World. The community has a belief about how things appear in the world. They worship all living things as ancestors and spirits. They believe that their faith serves as a link between the living and the death.

The novel is from West Africa and written by Flora Nwapa a famous Nigerian author entitled *Efuru*. *Efuru* is probably one of her best books published in 1966 and it was the first novel published by a Nigerian female author. the story revolves around the main character, Efuru, who from the very beginning of the novel represents to us as an unusual, beautiful, smart, intelligent, and independent woman. The very beginning of the novel revolves around her most autonomous action. Despite living in a male-dominated society, the narrative demonstrates that she is afforded independence in the community. Efuru eventually falls in love with a poor farmer Adizua. When he says, "You will come to me on Nkwo Day. Every place will be quiet that being market day. Take a few clothes with

you and come to me. We shall talk about the dowry after” ( Nawapa, 1966, p.7). Efuru pays attention to him and responds, “Leave that to me, I shall settle it myself”(p. 8).

She has moved into her husband’s house. Azidus is a poor person. However, Efuru she is a daughter of a tribal leader and she comes from a very established family, but without seeking permission from her father, without following the tradition of the Igbo Society of a bride-price, she has eloped with the person she has loved and married him. It does not mean that she does not disrespect her father. Because she knows her father well, she makes her own decision, revealing that she is not interested in materialistic life and is unconcerned with Igbo culture. She refuses to be restricted by traditional culture.

She automatically teaches us that she is capable of making her own decisions but also she is very diplomatic when her father sent his men to convince her to come back, she uses the customs and traditions to entertain them in a way that they even fail to convince her to come back. Efuru’s father abandons his hopes of getting Efuru home because he has been informed that she is happy with Adizua. He has always allowed Efuru complete freedom to live her life and be self-sufficient. Efuru is attracted to her husband's and his mother's house. Efuru is a combination of an autonomous native woman who also remains within the confines but determines factors of her own culture that uses them for the expression of her own self-identity because it relies on the native traditions of female autonomy and she creates her own space within that.

The plot is about Efuru when she got married, she had a daughter who gets ill and ended her marriage because her husband is not very reliable, leaving her and marrying someone else. Efuru instead of living with that decides to leave him and goes back to her father's house. Efuru's father, Nwashike Ogene, a well-respected member of society, battles against the Aros, he values his community as much as his daughter. Even when Efuru leaves him and his entire world, he looks quiet. He bestows blessings on her. Even Ogene is unique in the patriarchal society; he understands her desire. That's another aspect that the culture bears, you can return to your family at any time you need, and her father accepts her back with love.

As the story develops, Efuru meets more and more challenges; however, she faces them all with a strong heart. First, she loses her husband, who marries another woman. Adizua has long been known to her as a lazy and careless farmer. He lost much more value when he eloped. His personality is not consistent. Efuru has suffered a huge loss, but still, she handles it with courage.

Then, after a year, she loses her beloved daughter. Her life becomes terrible, but she is supported by her mother-in-law. She has had her own space in the house. She is not alienated from her relatives.

Efuru begins to develop a new sense of self-importance. She says, “There is a woman behind this indifference. A woman whose personality is greater than mine (. . .) I must face facts (. . .) Perhaps she is very beautiful and has long hair like mine . . . . Is she as stately as I am” (p. 54). Efuru is not shocked. She is brave in any situation. Her willpower enables her to rise firmly despite her husband's elopement and the loss of her daughter; she remains the same independent woman.

Ogene again here helps Efuru reestablish her life. He does not force her to marry Gilbert. Ogene wishes for his daughter to marry according to Igbo culture when she is prepared. she marries again to another person whom she had a kind of knowledge since her childhood, his Christian name is Gilbert, and he has some education and they have had a happy marriage at the very beginning but sadly that's marriage also ends and marries another woman, expecting her to live with that, but she refuses to do.

Nwapa's description of her protagonist is an in-depth examination of women. Her story is a study of Efuru's evolution, and both her physical and psychological development are highlighted as she seeks to self-realization . Efuru starts by following traditional sexually-oriented prescriptions for defining a woman's identity, but she progressively shifts toward a new concept of self, a better alternative for self-definition. Firstly, she seeks satisfaction as both a wife and a mother, which explains her two marriages and her efforts to make them work. She also agonizes over her childlessness in the early years of her marriage and goes to great lengths to correct this anomaly. She visits a dibia, who tells her that she will have a kid. Despite this assurance, she is still concerned about her delay and is happy when she eventually has a kid. She now feels whole as a woman ‘Efuru lay there thinking of it all, “Is this happening to me or someone I know. Is that baby mine or somebody else's? Is it really true that I have had a baby, that I am a woman after all. Perhaps I am dreaming. I shall soon wake up and discover that it is not real’ (p. 31) .

When her only daughter becomes ill, her feeling of satisfaction is threatened “If she dies, that will mean the end of me” (p. 66) .The illustration depicts a developing Efuru who is still struggling with her identity. However, the loss of her kid and the sorrow that comes with it do not turn her to a non-person, nor do the failures of her two marriages. She maintains her business and establishes herself as a serious and successful businesswoman. Furthermore, although still married

to her second husband, she becomes a dedicated worshipper of the woman of the lake. Thus, even while still married, her other responsibilities minimized her sexual one, leading her in new paths for self-realization.

Efuru is also self-sufficient, she is a wonderful, successful businesswoman and she is very generous to her Community. Because of this, they loved and respected her. After she leaves her second husband, she then lives independently. she relies on a local myth of a local lake goddess Uhamiri, who famously is an independent goddess who is asked to give everything except children but people still pray to her. The author also gives the readers an image of the mythology of that society like Uhamiri is also called Mama Wata and there are different names for the lake goddess, a question is raised here is, how the gods figure this space for Efuru, to live single and independent life because she can feel it herself with the goddess, so no one can blame her for not marrying or not having children or not living a normal life .another biggest question is that why everyone prays to Uhamiri and she doesn't have any children and they ask her for children and wealth .symbolically speaking Efuru becomes Uhamiri she has no children of her own. She refuses to love a man or even fell in love with anyone or live with a man because she is self-sufficient and does not respect Igbo traditions.

The novel enables us to discover a West African story with a protagonist who lived during the colonial time, but the Colonial law life is on the fringe of it, all we get is a purely African story with a complex and autonomous African female protagonist, and that what is unique in this novel. It includes African characters in African stories who live by their own culture but also sometimes defy it and who do not depend on whatever the colonizer brings it to articulate, so it is a kind of self. The novel also creates a space within the local Igbo culture in which Efuru creates her destiny in a very individual way through her industry .industry that she does not learn at school, which comes from the Igbo culture especially when women are not known to be good traders, they are not well-known as market traders and that's exactly what Efuru does.

Another thing, that the novel tackles, is about women's community which they build it all together, women are stronger they take care of each other, and they are living in harmony. Efuru's mother-in-law, who is deeply concerned says “You are welcome my daughter“ (p. 8).

In Nigerian custom, women constantly help one another. She provides Efuru with complete independence and a secure existence. She is there for her in every circumstance. The mother-in-law

does not want Efuru to experience pain as a result of her son's carelessness. She is also concerned that Efuru may quit the house. She says, "My daughter (. . .) My son has neglected you. But as my sister Ajanupu has advised you wisely, be patient. It pays to be patient. I have been patient myself all my life. (p. 59). On another occasion she tells, "My daughter, I can only solicit patience. Have patience. You may not wait as long as I did. I gained nothing from my long-suffering, so the world would think, but I am proud that I was and still am true to the only man I loved" (p.61).

Aunt Ajanupu is another prominent character in the story who looks after Efuru in every situation. She has the same viewpoint as her mother-in-law says, "But don't worry, it will be all right. By the power of God, it will be all right. Adizua has wronged you (. . .) Give Adizua (. . .) just a year, and if he does not come back to you and you have an offer of marriage from another man, with a good background and wealth, leave him and marry the man. Wait for (. . .) just a year (. . .)" (p. 83).

Efuru, her mother-in-law, her mother-in-law's sister and other women who might have their politics or their way of looking

life but by in large, you can see a very strong sense that the women do from different kinds of support groups in their complicated situation so we do not assume that they are living happy living without conflict but through the novel, you can see certain conflicts and how women dealt with it.

Last and not least, Flora Nwapa is an interesting figure in the Nigerian letter she publishes this novel and so many others, she was also an educationalist, working in the education department she never really called herself a feminist in the Westerner sense of the word but she was for women's rights, she is a womanist. A womanist in the sense that she wanted to articulate and rely on the African moods of Independence that the women could claim and I think Efuru is a great example of that.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

There is a restriction in Igbo culture that women should not transgress the regulations. They should be elastic in nature. So Efuru is an example of "negofeminism," which is defined as the ability of African women to adjust themselves via negotiation and compromise while integrating tradition and modernity. Efuru gives a protagonist a self-realized identity, nevertheless an identity that is removed from cultural and social life in order to remain intact. While female identity

development has remained a central theme in the work, the writer demonstrates the interconnected nature of oppression (colonialism and patriarchy) and how national and cultural factors play out at the individual level in their characters. The writer also emphasizes the necessity of human initiative in overcoming oppressive restrictions, as well as the significant disparities between the changes identified in character growth under colonial control and those observed in postcolonial life representations.

*Efuru* provides a polar opposing vision of identity construction, as the protagonist confronts her oppression (colonization) and defies cultural norms to reach self-realization. The author shows life without marriage and motherhood as an example of how Nwapa's character achieves transcendence (independence).

## 5. Bibliography List :

- Adeola, J. (1990). Flora Nwapa." In Their Own Voices: African Women Writers Talk. London: James Currey.
- Ashcroft, B., Tiffin, H., & Griffiths, G. (2013). Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts (3 ). Routledge.
- Chukwuma, H. (1994). New Generation/African Literature. Enugu .
- Ghashmari, A. (1966). A Book Review of Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*. Heinemann.
- De Beauvoir, S.(2011). *The Second Sex*. New York: Vintage.
- Emmanuel, M. (2012). *The Black Woman and Society: A Comparative Analysis of Selected Novels by Nigerian and African-American Female Writers* (Doctoral dissertation). University of California, Los Angeles.
- Loomba,A. (2005). *Colonialism/postcolonialism*. London: Routledge.
- Mears, M. (2009). *Choice and Discovery: An Analysis of Women and Culture in Flora Nwapa's Fiction* (Doctoral dissertation). Scholar Commons, University of South Florida.
- Nwapa, F. (1978). *Efuru*. Heinemann.
- Woolf, V. (1929). *A Room of One's Own*. Penguin Classics.