

People's Democratic Republic of Algeria
Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research
Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou
Faculty of Letters and Languages
Department of English



Domain: Foreign Languages

Branch: English Language

Option: Literature and Interdisciplinary Approaches

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master in English

Title:

The Representation of Nigerian Women in Flora Nwapa's Efuru (1966) and Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus (2003)

Presented by:

Titem NADI

Supervised by:

Dr. Sabeha LARABI

Panel of Examiners:

Chair: Dr. KHELIFA Arezki, MCA, Department of English, UMMTO

Supervisor: Dr. LARABI Sabeha, MCB, Department of English UMMTO

Examiner: Mr. LAOUARI Med Larbi, MAA, Department of English UMMTO

Academic Year 2019/2020

Dedication

I want to dedicate this dissertation:

To my precious parents and brothers who have always been there for me. I love you all.

And

To my best friend 'thiziri' for her incredible support and understanding. Thank you

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks and gratitude go to my supervisor Dr. Larabi Sabeha, her constant guidance and honest criticism were extremely important to the accomplishment of my dissertation.

I am also very grateful to the members of the jury, for their acceptance of reading my dissertation despite the circumstances and their tight schedules.

I would like to thank the teachers of the English Department for all the knowledge, support and encouragement they have given to me.

ABSTRACT

The present research paper studies the issue of the image of Nigerian women in the works of the two writers Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* (1966), and Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003). It studies the representation of women through both female and male characters of the two novels. It deals mainly with the damage of patriarchy on both genders and the resilience of women to face this obstacle, relying on Simone De Beauvoir work *The Second Sex* (1949). These two novels are chosen for the powerful messages they hide but also for the impressive impact they leave in the reader's mind. Our investigation of the issue under study has led us to some findings. Both Nwapa and Adichie converge on the depiction of Nigerian women as being fearless fighters of patriarchy. Both novelists depict women's struggle to be independent in a society that aspires to leave them stranded.

Key words:

Female African literature/ patriarchy/ Immanence/ transcendence/ women/ men/independence

Contents

Dedications.....	i
Acknowledgements	ii
Abstract	iii
Contents	iv
I. General introduction.....	1
Literature review.....	3
Issue and Working Hypotheses.....	6
Methodological outline	7
II. Methods and Materials.....	9
A. Methods	9
Simone De Beauvoir’s The Second Sex (1949): The concept of Immanence and Transcendence.....	9
B. Materials.....	12
B.1.Biographical background on FloraNwapa.....	12
B.2. Biographical background of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	13
B.3. synopsis of Efuru.....	14
B.4 Synopsis of Purple Hibiscus.....	15
III. Results.....	17
VI. Discussion.....	19
Chapter one: Immanence and Resistance in Efuru (1966) and Purple Hibiscus (2003)).....	19
1.1. Efuru in Flora Nwapa’s Efuru as an Independent Woman.....	19

1.2 Kambili from Immanence to Transcendence in Chiamamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus (2003).....	23
1.2. a. kambili as an Immanent Woman.....	23
1.2. b. Kambili's Growth to Transcendence.....	26
1.2. c. Kambili's Becoming a Subject.....	30
1.3 Ajanupu and Ossai: Woman as a Subject versus Woman as an Object in . Efuru.....	32
a. Ajanupu as a Transcendent subject	32
b. Ossai as an Immanent Woman.....	35
1.4 Ifeoma/ Beatrice: The Resilient versus the Vulnerable woman in Purple Hibiscus.....	36
a. Ifeoma: The Independent Woman.....	37
b. Beatrice: As an Object of Reproduction.....	41
Chapter two: the Representation of Patriarchy in Efuru and Purple Hibiscus.....	46
a- Adizua: The Inactive and Uneducated Man in Efuru.....	46
b- Gilbert: the intellectual vis-à-vis women in Efuru.....	48
c- Eugene: The Supreme Patriarch in Purple Hibiscus.....	50
V.General Conclusion.....	55
Bibliography.....	57

I. General Introduction

For centuries women have been subjected to several kinds of mistreatments. They are given the name of the weak sex, because for many their physical strength is not comparable to men's power. Through centuries, many philosophers and sociologists tried to explain why women are always put in an inferior position. After several analyses, they came to the conclusion that the social system in which women are imprisoned leads them to believe they are truly incapable of doing anything that goes beyond the perception prescribed by the system. This social structure is referred to us as patriarchy.

Patriarchy as we have previously mentioned is a social system where men have endless considerations in terms of power, social status and privileges. This same system is said to discriminate women's control over their lives. Africa, the richest continent in terms of traditions uses patriarchy as an ideology and institution. It oppresses women in different ways and it prevents them from being independent. However, women are not doomed to let their lives be insignificant. They are born warriors; as a result, they constantly fight to gain some recognition. One of their best weapons against this unfair system is literature. Many female writers have pointed out patriarchy, and at the same time they gave women a chance to be truly represented as what they really are, that is combatants. Among these writers who redefined women's position and role in African society are the Nigerian authors Flora Nwapa and Chimamanda Adichie.

Gender inequality is one of the major issues of these two precedent cited writers. They point men's superiority and the image that society wants to reflect in them. In **Efuru (1966)** and **Purple Hibiscus (2003)**, the writers focus on representing the different oppression that women have to face in their respective societies, and they shade the light on how strong and courageous African women are, especially when the concern is related to their ability to

change their lives into better. The work examines the different ways that African women use to liberate themselves from the inevitable injustice of patriarchy, and it focuses also on how women turn their Immanence into Transcendence.

This piece of research investigates the representation of women as immanent and transcendent subjects in Flora Nwapa's **Efuru** (1966) and Chimamanda Adichie's **Purple Hibiscus** (2003). Our work relies on Simone De Beauvoir's theory of feminism developed in **The Second Sex** (1949). The aim of the work is to show that Nwapa and Adichie fight for the same causes and they are not afraid to depict the reality of the Nigerian society. They do not hesitate to propel women into independence, and they strongly agree on the fact that, when women's injustice becomes normal, women's rebellion is a necessity.

a) Literature Review

Flora Nwapa's first novel **Efuru** (1966) has received different reviews from different perspectives. To start with, Mary D.Mears in her dissertation entitled "Choice and Discovery: An Analysis of Women and Culture in Flora Nwapa's fiction" (2009), analyzes Flora Nwapa's novels from a feminist and dialogic perspective. She claims that Flora Nwapa has paved the way for women who were facing several difficulties to speak up, as she says: "Flora Nwapa writes about woman and their lives, issues, and concerns." (D.Mears; 2009: 05). The same critic adds that Flora Nwapa asserts women's desire to change the way society has depicted them and she wants to redefine women's position in Igbo community (ibid: 05). D.Mears believes that Efuru's character succeeded in finding her identity and self-respect is a sign that Flora Nwapa emphasizes the complexity of morals in Nigerian societies by giving a compromise through her characters. She says:

Nwapa advocates a range of solution or compromises through the characters. Her works reflect her desire to open the avenues of communication between people of different ages, education, regions, and sexes as they find individual happiness and a sense of self.(ibid: 153)

Mary D.Mears asserts that Efuru, reflects early colonial culture. The novel portrays the conditions of women in traditional Igbo society. However, the characters' acts and words express the change and the cultural position of Flora Nwapa. She claims: "the blaming of the women often create the conflict and desire for change and acceptance that Nwapa allows her characters to address in the novel"(ibid: 73)

One more interesting piece of criticism is Sanjo Ojedoja's article entitled 'An Ecofeminist Study of Flora Nwapa's Efuru.' (2018). The reviewer analyzes the novel from the relationship between humans and the natural perspective. That is, Flora Nwapa, in her novel '**Efuru**' has associated women oppression with the exploitation of nature. He says: "Flora Nwapa perceives writing as a channel to correct the perverted injustice in and around her"

(Ojedaja; 2018: 92). He also considers that her interpretation of misogyny and the exploitation of the environment as parallel forms of man domination can be taken as an eco-feminist view (ibid: 93). Sanjo Ojedaja claims that Nwapa's and Efuru's reinterpretation of the veneration of the goddess of the Lake allows Efuru to function as a postcolonial and an eco-feminist example. (ibid: 94). Through his analysis, Sanjo Ojedaja demonstrates that environmental devastation has been one of Flora Nwapa's concerns since she linked nature and the history of Igbo society with her character Efuru, and in a way or another it allows her to be environmentally responsible. (ibid: 98)

Another critic, Akoété Amouzou's article entitled 'Reconceptualizing Gender in Nigerian Literature: The Dynamics of Womanist Ideology in Flora Nwapa's Fiction' (2006). He examines how Flora Nwapa's **Efuru** contributes to the restoration of women's images and dignity and to the redefinition of the female gender. He cites: "Nwapa's creative sense must have been gingered by the realization that it is women's responsibility to reconstruct woman and recreate her image." (Amouzou; 2006: 99). He states that Flora Nwapa's description of her main character Efuru reflects the changing realities of African women, especially because it represents a sort of contradiction with the Nigerian traditions. (ibid: 99). Through his analysis, Akoété Amouzou proves that Flora Nwapa's projection of female characters as being strong, ambitious, courageous and hardworking is a strategy that shows that women's voices should be ideological voices and not covered voices. (Ibid: 103). Akoété Amouzou says: "Nwapa moves towards the creation neither of man's world nor a woman's world, but a human world." (ibid: 103)

Just as Flora Nwapa, Chimamanda Ngozie Adichie has attracted several critical attentions since the publication of her first novel **Purple Hibiscus** (2003). To begin with, Michael Oshindoro in an article entitled 'Solidarity between Women in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*' (2019), explores how Adichie builds her female characters to

reflect and to represent the different personalities of Igbo women in post-colonial Nigeria. He asserts: “Adichie carefully constructs her female characters to reflect the variegated personalities-forced or self-willed that define an Igbo woman in post-colonial Nigeria” (Oshindoro: 2019, 01). Oshindoro also puts his focus on two major characters ‘Beatrice’ and ‘aunt Ifeoma’, he argues that both of them represent the Igbo woman, they are both very powerful even if they are quite different. (Ibid: 13). He also asserts that Adichie’s voice has added to the liberation of women from generational and institutionalized subordination. (Ibid: 03). Throughout his article, Michael Oshindoro puts his focus on the complexities of power and strength of Igbo and Nigerian women in relation to their roots. He also acknowledges the differences between the two major characters, simply to describe the solidarity that Chimamanda Adichie has towards other women. He claims:

Adichie reads a different meaning to women supporting other women; that solidarity may come from other sources apart from a woman’s immediate family, a point Adichie might be making since she leaves out detailed reference to Beatrice’s family background (ibid: 17)

Ranti Williams in an article entitled “ Review of Purple Hibiscus”(2004) argues that the novel’s picture of modern Nigeria is authentic since it points out the post-colonial societies in which the personal and the political are inseparable. He also adds that Adichie’s descriptions lack subtlety and she over uses symbolism. (Williams; 2004; 01). For Ranti Williams, Adichie succeeded in building a complex picture of a man struggling with his own demons. He states that Eugene the self-made and the ultimately self-hating, is the book’s loneliest character. (Ibid: 02). He depicts Eugene’s brutality through the misunderstanding of Christianity. Williams believes that Adichie’s main strength is dialogues. He cites: “As her characters speak, one hears the voices of modern Nigeria (...) the narrative voice mostly convinces as the naïve tone of a sheltered child facing the adult world.” (Ibid: 02)

Last but not least, Daria Tunca in an article entitled ‘Ideology in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*’ (2009), argues that the novel waves a certain ideology into the account of the first narrator. (Tunca;2009, 02) .The reviewer demonstrates that Kambili has a certain ideological independence since she comes to the realization that the Nigerian society is not a one dimensional entity, and it requires to be approached from different angles. (Ibid: 10). She claims that Kambili gains in maturity after her contact with another environment, as she says: “kambili’s contact with her grandfather and elements of traditional culture allows her to gradually modify her judgments on certain issues” (Ibid: 08).

Daria Tunca also explains that Chimamanda Adichie’s novel **Purple Hibiscus** explores the differences and the solidarities of the different religious beliefs that shape contemporary Nigeria and it asserts how important is to mix between the old and the new in order to tolerate and accept others. Tunca asserts: “Adichie seems to indicate that, taken separately, none of these perspectives suffice to gain adequate understanding of Nigeria’s multi-faced cultural heritage.” (ibid: 12).

b) Issue and working hypothesis

From the previous criticism, one can notice that both Flora Nwapa’s **Efuru** and Chimamanda Adichie’s **Purple Hibiscus** have been the subject of several scholars and critics. Yet it is surprising how no previous study has undertaken the task of comparing women positions in both works. Therefore, it remains our task to study the representation of women as immanent and transcendent subjects. We assume that both authors are similar in terms of the extensive depiction of the Nigerian society. Although Nwapa and Adichie are from two different generations, the way they redefine women’s position in Nigerian society is

interconnected. We suppose that because Nwapa and Adichie have much in common including the Nigerian culture and particularly the predomination of patriarchy and the rise of feminism, we notice that **Efuru** and **Purple Hibiscus** are hidden messages to proclaim women's independence to the Nigerian patriarchal society, and to embrace women's freedom.

We intend to undertake our dissertation using the theoretical guideline of Simone De Beauvoir's theory on feminism highlighted in her book **The Second Sex (1949)**. Our selection of this theory is due to the fact that its cultural categories fit in well the perspective of our study.

We have been established our topic focus, issue and working hypothesis. In the methods and material, we summarize Simone De Beauvoir's theory developed in **The Second Sex (1949)**; we also present the biographies of Flora Nwapa and Chimamanda Adichie, with a summary of **Efuru (1966)** and **Purple Hibiscus (2003)**. In the result, we reveal the results reached through our study. In the discussion section we discuss and analyze the two novels under study to demonstrate the impact and the influence of patriarchy on novels but also on the writers.

c) Methodological outline:

This piece of research is divided into four sections; the introduction is the first section in which we introduce the purpose of our thesis, as well as the Review of The Literature. The second section is related to Methods and Materials, in which we explain the concepts of Immanence and Transcendence according to the feminist Simone de Beauvoir's book **The Second Sex (1949)**. We provide also the biographies and the summaries of the two authors Flora Nwapa and Chimamanda Adichie. The results section focuses mainly on the findings we reached in the discussion. The discussion section comprises with two chapters. The first one focuses on women as immanent and transcendent subjects in both selected works and

how they are portrayed as independent women that go beyond a patriarchal society in relation to Simone de Beauvoir's theoretical concepts of feminism. In the second chapter, we discuss the representation of men's superiority and privilege in a patriarchal society in both novels. The conclusion summarizes the major points of our study.

II. Methods and Materials

1. Methods

In order to discuss the issue of the image of women in the Nigerian literature through the works of Flora Nwapa **Efuru** and Chimamanda Nguzi Adichie **Purple Hibiscus** we shall rely on Simone de Beauvoir's concepts of **Immanence** and **Transcendence** as developed in her book **The Second Sex** (1949). We intend to borrow some notions of relevance to our understanding of the concepts above mentioned.

Simone de Beauvoir is one of the most important figures of the Twentieth Century and probably its most famous feminist. Her book **The Second Sex** is based on the understanding of women's oppression through society and through women themselves. Simone de Beauvoir's book challenged almost all the political and existential theories. She states that "one is not born, but rather becomes, woman" (De Beauvoir, 1949:14) in other words, she believes that women's identity is socially constructed. Furthermore, De Beauvoir argues that oppression limits women's immersion in society and this is due to the choices and the abilities which are limited either by their husbands (man) or society itself. The author of the book focuses on the understanding of women's oppression, and she tries to examine the different strategies and mechanisms that are able to create and to build a woman into a better person and of course into a complete independent human. She claims: "yes, women in general are today inferior to men ... the question is whether this state of affairs must be perpetuated" (Ibid: 33).

Simone De Beauvoir's concepts of **Immanence** and **Transcendence** attempt to explain women's lives, and to examine not only the problems they encounter but also the

different possibilities that are opened to them. In other words, Simone De Beauvoir rejected the traditional theory which explains that women's situation is either related to the biological myths or to the social norms, which in fact were made by men in order to express their value and 'superiority'.

According to the author of **The Second Sex**, **Immanence** is related to the situation in which women feel static and unable to undertake responsibilities. That is, they have to see the world through the eyes of the dominating men, as a result they are immersed in themselves, and they are stagnant within the same situation. Contrary to **Immanence**, the concept of **Transcendence** is related to the power and the desire of freedom. Simone De Beauvoir states: "all oppression creates a state of war. This particular case is no exception." (De Beauvoir; 1949: 849). **Immanence**, as we have already said refers to submission but **Transcendence** is rather related to revolution, in consequence **Immanence**, according to her, leads to **Transcendence**. However, **Transcendence** occurs through projects that open up release and lead to self-awareness: "when she is productive and active, she regains her transcendence; she affirms herself concretely as subject in her projects" (ibid: 813). **Transcendence** is related to the consciousness and for De Beauvoir it is an important condition to free women.

In order to understand deeply the myth around women's inferiority (**Immanence**) and to reach freedom (**Transcendence**), Simone de Beauvoir suggests three major points:

a- Being a Women is not Related to Nature: de Beauvoir completely rejected the idea that women are born inferior, and clearly the problem is not related to the natural differences, but rather to the way of raising the two different genders. A man is not born superior, but through society he learns that he has a certain privilege over women. De Beauvoir argues: "the term "female" is pejorative not because it roots woman in nature but because it confines her in her sex" (Ibid: 41). Women constantly believe that they have to play a feminine role in which

they should be passive and immanent as De Beauvoir states: “women are urged: be women, stay women, become women.” (De Beauvoir; 1949: 23). That is, women have no nature but rather history and women are told to act feminine because this is what society imposed on them. Women’s history is based on ideological and religious myths.

b- Women Placed as an Object (Reproduction): the role of women has been determined by society as being only productive. In other words, women are predestined to be only mothers and their function is based on mothering. According to society, women’s role is only limited to their capacity to bear children. For Simone de Beauvoir, the social institution of marriage is the reason behind the oppression and the inequality between men and women. Moreover, women’s capacities are limited to motherhood so they are, in a way or another, marginalized. De Beauvoir says: “woman has ovaries and a uterus; such are the particular conditions that lock her in her subjectivity.” (Ibid: 25). Men’s abilities are a symbol of domination since women are not given the chance to explore the world. “Throughout humanity, superiority has been granted not to the sex that gives birth but to the one that kills” (Ibid: 99). Consequently women determination and capacities are limited; men are given all the opportunities to become and to feel superior.

c- Women Should Become a Subject: According to Simone de Beauvoir, women should liberate themselves from the restrictions which are imposed to them by society. In other words, Women’s emancipation should be related to their intellectual abilities. Most importantly, they should be aware of their capacities in order to work and do things differently. De Beauvoir states:

For many women the roads for transcendence are blocked: because they do nothing, they do not make themselves be anything; they wonder indefinitely what they could have become, which leads them to wonder what they are. (Ibid: 320)

Liberation is not only an individual transformation but is also a social one. Simone de Beauvoir claims: “transcendence condemns the absurdity of immanence. She (woman) is annoyed at being oppressed by rules of decency.” (De Beauvoir; 1949: 357). Once women open themselves to transcendence, they start to control their lives, and at the same time, they challenge all the traditional ways of thinking as well as patriarchy.

It is obvious that de Beauvoir’s theory concerns feminism, but one can equally apply it to Nwapa’s work *Efuru* and Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus* which are novels written by African women. Yet, for the sake of relevance, we will borrow only the concepts ‘Immanence’ and ‘Transcendence’ which fit our research.

2. Materials

a) Biographical Background on Flora Nwapa

Florence Nwanzuruahu Nkiru Nwapa was born on January 13th, 1931 in Oguta, Nigeria. She is known as the mother of modern African Literature. Nwapa’s childhood was a mixture of influences. As a result, she rapidly developed an interest to writing. In 1953, she entered the University college of Nigeria, she got her degree in 1957. Then in 1958 she went to Edinburg University where she got an education diploma. In 1970, just after the Nigerian civil War, she accepted to work in east central state as a Minister of Health and Social Welfare.

At the age of 30 year-old, Nwapa wrote her most famous novel **Efuru**, it was officially published in 1966. **Efuru** was well-acclaimed by the critics, but also by one of the most known Nigerian writers Chinua Achebe. Nwapa is the first Nigerian female writer to publish a book in English. **Efuru** made her the precursor of African women writers. It also paved the way for feminism in Nigeria. Nwapa had written several novels: **Idu** (1970), **Never Again** (1975) and **Women Are Different** (1986). Additionally, Nwapa , published two collections

of short stories **This is Lagos** (1971) and **Wives at War** in 1980.

Flora Nwapa was known as being a real activist in terms of women's education and roles in the Nigerian society, and this was proved in her novels. She reevaluated women's position by giving them the choice to be independent and completely free to choose their lives.

b) Biographical Background on Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

Chimamanda Adichie was born on September 15th, 1977 in Enugu, Nigeria. She is a writer, novelist and poet. Adichie came from an academic family. She began to study medicine in Nigeria. At the age of 19 she decided to move to the United States of America, where she took up a communication scholarship. Adichie faced different sorts of racism due to her skin color. However, it does not prevent her from succeeding in her studies. In 2001 she got graduated, and then she got her master's degree in creative writing from Johns Hopkins University in 2003. Adichie was so passionate about learning; consequently she went on to follow a second master's degree from Yale University in arts in African studies. Chimamanda Adichie is considered by many as the most prominent authors in attracting a new generation of readers to African literature.

Chimamanda Adichie's first novel **Purple Hibiscus** is considered as one of her best works. It is a feminist work that challenges patriarchy in all its forms. The book was released in 2003 and it had received various critical acclaims. Additionally, Chimamanda Adichie published her second novel titled **Half of Yellow Sun**, which received the Orange Prize in 2007. Adichie's works have been translated into more than 30 languages. Most of her works have been portrayed in various publications such as: The New Yorker, Zoetrope, The Financial Times. Chimamanda Adichie has also written **Americanah** (2013), a bestseller that had reached The New York Times ten best books of 2013. Her writings are considered as

masterpieces. Adichie comes under one of the richest and most influential authors of 21st century. Her most recent book, *Dear Ijeawele, or A Feminist Manifesto in Fifteen Suggestions* (2017), deals with feminism. All her works are related to Nigeria. She tries to deal with several issues of her society, but the one she is still fighting for is patriarchy. She recently won the Pen Pinter Prize in 2018.

c) Synopsis of *Efuru*

Efuru is a novel written by the mother of African literature Flora Nwapa in 1966. The novel is characterized as a perfect image of the Igbo women in colonial West Africa. In ***Efuru***, Flora Nwapa discusses the major issues that women face in the Igbo community. The novel depicts West African culture and it is seen as the first feminist and cultural work made by an African woman.

The story takes place in West African Igbo rural community. It centers around the protagonist Efuru. She is a young woman who comes from a high respected family. Efuru is represented as a strong, kind and beautiful woman who is admirably remarkable. Contrary to other women of her community, Efuru is different in the way she perceives things. Her behaviors contradict the vision of women in the Igbo culture. She is a symbol of resistance due to her strong personality. However, Efuru seems to have bad luck with men. In fact, at the beginning, Efuru falls in love with a poor farmer with whom she runs away. She disappoints her whole family, just in order to be with her beloved one. Her first husband is lazy, irresponsible and cheater. After the death of Efuru's daughter, she decides to leave her husband.

Efuru has returned to her father who has received her happily. After her coming back, Efuru meets a gentleman named Gilbert who wants to marry her by following the traditions of their community. Efuru accepts to get married again. She has a joyful marriage. However,

Efuru is unable to bear children. Her husband seems to be desperate for not having a baby. And just as Efuru's first husband Gilbert leaves without saying anything. He does not even attend the funeral of Efuru's father. Efuru finds herself alone, childless, and without any family. However, she decides to live her life as it comes and she decides to be happy. The novel ends with a hopeful sight because Efuru is chosen by the goddess of the lake to be one of her worshipers.

d) Synopsis of Purple Hibiscus

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's first novel **Purple Hibiscus** was published in 2003. The novel is considered as one of her best works. It is said to be a post-colonial novel, because it depicts perfectly the colonialist regime in Negeria. Chimamanda tries to show the instability of her country. The story of the novel is narrated by the protagonist 'Kambili'. This technique helps the reader to understand deeply the inner side and the development of the protagonist.

Purple Hibiscus centers on Kambili Achike a 15 year old girl living in Enugu with her parents Eugene and Beatrice and her older brother Chukwuku (Jaja). She comes from a really conservative and devout catholic family. The novel opens with an extreme violent scene; Jaja is being beaten by his father. From this scene, the reader is captivated because, as the story goes on, he /she realizes the hypocrisy of Eugene and his brutality towards his family. Kambili's farther is known as a religious and generous man. However, he is reveled as being abusive and rigid. He terrorizes and forces his family to follow his own definition and structure of Catholicism.

As the story develops, we learn more about the Achike family especially about Eugene who is generally called 'papa'. In the novel, the writer focuses mainly on the development of the protagonist, and also on describing the violence of Eugene. In the beginning, all the principle characters are depicted as silent, obedient and completely submissive to 'papa', but

everything changes when they first meet their aunt Ifeoma and her three children 'Amaka', 'Obiora' and 'Chima'. Their aunt is depicted as being an independent woman. She goes against her brother's ideology, and she seems to be free. After the instability of Nigeria, Kambili and Jaja are sent to stay with Ifeoma. This shift offers to Kambili and Jaja another vision of the world. They start liberating themselves by awakening their minds.

When Kambili and Jaja return home, the violence of their father still lingers on them. Nothing has changed, everything has remained the same. Eugene's brutality has reached its peak and it becomes intolerable. As a result, Beatrice decides to poison him and she succeeds in killing him. Jaja admits and claims the responsibility of the crime. The novel ends three years after this event. Kambili has become more confident and more aware of her situation and life. Jaja, Kambili's brother is to be released. The end of the novel is optimistic since all the characters have gained their freedom back.

III. Results

Throughout our dissertation, we tried to deal with the representation of women in Nwapa's **Efuru (1966)** and Adichie's **Purple Hibiscus (2003)** as immanent and transcendent subjects. We relied on the theoretical guidelines of Simone De Beauvoir's theory developed in **The Second Sex (1949)**. The study projects the image of female characters in post-colonial Africa in terms of resistance and strength.

The thematic analysis has revealed that both novels converge to the same themes, and show certain similarities in the theme of women's position in an African society. Patriarchy and its different kinds of injustices reveal the awakening of women's desire to experience independence. Moreover, self-reliance and confidence is a frequent theme in Nwapa's and Adichie's works. We noticed that the main female characters Efuru and Kambili show similarities as women who reach independence despite the Nigerian patriarchal society. Furthermore, both of them want to free themselves from the immanence they were facing. Efuru obtains her transcendence by accepting herself as she is, whereas Kambili rejects her immanence by discovering herself and by becoming self-confident.

Our study of the two novels have allowed us to reach the result that Nwapa and Adichie are both concerned with the issue of patriarchy in Africa. Both of them illustrate how unfair African societies are towards women. The two authors also describe the position of women and their struggle to be heard and accepted as complete human beings. Moreover, they also point out the excessive power and privilege that are awarded to men in any conservative society. Nwapa and Adichie are determined to adjust the Nigerian society by giving the chance to women to express and to liberate themselves from the different restrictions that are imposed on them.

From all that has been said above, we may say that despite some divergence, Nwapa and Adichie succeeded in making their voices heard by many, and they also open the way to women to be resilient and self-sufficient in a society that never stops letting them down.

IV. Discussion

In this part of our dissertation, we shall discuss the ways into which both Flora Nwapa and Chimamanda Addichie converge to the idea that African women are more than objects. This being said, we intend to discuss women as well as men characterization in both Nwapa's **Efuru** (1966) and Adichie's **Purple Hibiscus** (2003). This analysis relies on the ideas on women of Simone de Beauvoir developed in her book entitled: **The Second Sex** (1949).

Chapter one: Immanence and Resistance in **Efuru** (1966) and **Purple Hibiscus** (2003)

This chapter intends to discuss the two novels under study thematically. We will discuss the image of women struggling to be independent subjects in a patriarchal society. To fulfill the task we will discuss women characters in both Nwapa's **Efuru** (1966) and Adichie's **Purple Hibiscus**(2003)

1- **Efuru in Flora Nwapa's Efuru as an Independent Woman**

In flora Nwapa's **Efuru**, the protagonist Efuru is depicted as a strong, beautiful, young black woman, who goes against her father and family's will just in order to marry her poor beloved one. Comparing to the traditional Igbo women, Efuru incorporates strength and courage. This is clearly revealed in the beginning of the novel "she was a remarkable woman. It was not only that she came from a distinguished family .She was distinguished herself." (Nwapa; 1966: 07). Efuru is special in her way of thinking, she says to herself "who can please the world?"(Ibid:19), a sentence that refers to her sense of freedom, but most importantly she does not value what people might say or think about her.

Efuru is also represented as a woman who respects the traditions of her community, she does not rebel against her culture, yet she likes to do things the way she wants them to be done. For instance, at the beginning her husband could not pay the dowry, Efuru worked hard

just in order to fulfill the tradition and to be able to afford the dowry to her family. It might seem controversial, but Efuru pictures the independent African woman par excellence.

In the novel, Nwapa portrays Efuru as a hardworking woman. She is financially independent; consequently, she is able to support herself but from the novel we learn that she even helps her first husband (she helped him to pay the dowry). That is, Efuru is not only a woman who has enough income, it goes deeper than that, she loves work and that makes her special. Through the story, she is represented as a woman who is really diligent in her work. In the novel it says:

But what pleased Gilbert's mother most was the fact that since her son had married Efuru things had moved well for him. Any trade she put her hand to was profitable. (Nwapa; 1966: 136)

When it comes to work Efuru's reputation is beyond reproach. She is known as being very productive and her capacities in trade are remarkable. Nwapa portrays her as a woman who is not afraid of work.

She is a good woman. I have heard so much about her. She will look after you. Her hands make money. Anything she touches is money. If she begins to sell pepper in the market, she will make money out of it. If in salt, money will flow in; I say marry her. (Ibid:125)

According to Simone De Beauvoir, work or financial independence is among the strategies she developed to lead women to emancipation, because it allows them to be valued and of course it frees them from the static condition of immanence, as she says:

They must refuse the limits of their situation and seek to open paths to the future; resignation is only a surrender and an evasion; for women there is no other way out than to work for her liberation. (De Beauvoir; 1949: 753)

Moreover, Nwapa depicts Efuru as a woman who struggles to bear children. In her first year of marriage Efuru did not bear any child and in Igbo community or in any other conservative society motherhood is related to womanhood. That is, women must bear children simply because it empowers them, and for those who cannot fulfill this achievement they are

seen as men. This is reflected in the narrative by saying "...two men do not live together. For them, Efuru was a man since she could not reproduce" (Nwapa; 1966: 24). For the Nigerian society women should bear children.

Efuru herself is obsessed with the idea of being a mother. She is scared of not being able to carry her own children. Moreover, her mother had only her, as a result she cannot stop wondering if she is going to be like her, and this is shown in the following quotation:

Efuru was very worried in the second year of her marriage. 'My mother had only me,' she said one night to herself. 'My father told me so and also she found it difficult to become pregnant. Am I going to be like my mother? But if I'm going to be like her, then I too will have a daughter like her. But what if that is denied to me? What if that also is denied to me? What will I do? Oh, what will I do?' she wept (Ibid: 24)

According to Simone de Beauvoir, women believe that mothering is what defines them as women and unconsciously they start to think that they are not only immersed in society but also they have a certain status or value. She says: "the child is the ultimate end for woman is an affirmation of an advertising slogan" (De Beauvoir; 1949: 643).

Through the novel, Efuru encapsulates a woman who is not afraid of leaving her husband. Despite the fact she is depicted as a woman who believes in romance, Efuru cannot let herself wait for a man who does not want her, as she says it herself:

Our ancestors forbid that I should wait for a man to drive me out of his house. This is done to women who cannot stand by themselves, women who have no good homes, and not to me, the daughter of Nwashike Ogene. And besides, my face is not burnt I'm still a beautiful woman. (Nwapa; 1966: 63-64)

Efuru is intelligent enough to be aware of her worth as a woman and even better she knows her potential as a human being. Furthermore, Nwapa does not depict Efuru as a woman who can stand suffering. Clearly, Efuru is depicted as a woman who does not need nor let any man define her. She is a confident, responsible woman who wants to live and to enjoy her life. She says:

Perhaps self imposed suffering appeals to her. It does not appeal to me. I know I'm capable of suffering for greater things. But to suffer for a truant, an irresponsible husband like Adizua is to debase suffering. My own suffering will be noble. When Adizua comes back, I shall leave him. (Nwapa: 61-62)

From the quotation above, one can notice the determination and the courage of Efuru in not letting herself be injured and harmed. Additionally, her intelligence gives her a great sense of responsibilities. Flora Nwapa depicts Efuru as a woman who is not afraid of letting go her husband, and she categorically refuses to suffer for a man who is as she represented him absent and irresponsible.

At the end of the novel, Efuru decides to take care of herself; in other words, she abandons the common role that is given to women and starts to accept her destiny. By choosing to follow the goddess of the lake "Uhamiri", Efuru goes beyond the role that is imposed on her. She demonstrates her inner development and she chooses to be completed by herself and not by any other human being. Efuru reflects in a way or another, an independent woman who does not stick at the same unnecessary point. Moreover, she strongly refuses to go back to her second husband because he accused her of adultery that she has never done. Consequently, she felt humiliated and disappointed, and she comes to the conclusion that in order to find inner peace and happiness she only needs herself. As the following description proves:

Efuru slept soundly that night. She dreamt of the woman of the lake, her beauty, her long hair and her riches. She had lived for ages at the bottom of the lake. She was as old as the lake itself. She was happy, she was wealthy. She was beautiful. She gave women beauty and wealth but she had no child. (Ibid: 221)

Efuru's dream reflects her inner and veritable personality. That is, she is a woman who is endlessly beautiful and rich, but above all this, she is a woman who is happy despite the fact she would never experience motherhood again. Efuru's life is worth to be lived since she has finally found a sense to her existence.

2- **Kambili from Immanence to Transcendence in Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2003)**

a. kambili as an Immanent Woman

In Chimamanda Adichie's **Purple Hibiscus** (2003), Kambili Achike is the daughter of Eugene Achike a wealthy and an extreme religious man. She is a young Nigerian woman who struggles to find her way in a world full of disagreement and oppression.

Kambili is willing to free herself from the imprisonment of her brutal father. From the novel we notice the evolution of her personality, the girl who used to be shy and fearful becomes a courageous and a strong bold young lady; as she says:

Above, clouds like dyed cotton wool hang low, so low I feel I can reach out and squeeze the moisture from them. The new rains will come down soon. (Adichie; 2003: 317)

In her book **The Second Sex** (1949), Simone de Beauvoir claims that: "the woman herself recognizes that the universe as a whole is masculine; it is men who have shaped it and ruled it and who still today dominate it." (De Beauvoir; 1949: 725). For de Beauvoir, women have the tendency to overestimate the position of men; they have created an unrealistic image of the world. In fact, women believe that they were born inferior and men dominance is justifiable. That is, as long as man represents a symbol of complete supremacy, woman will still consider herself as being inferior. Thus, she becomes static and starts to lose her confidence. De Beauvoir argues: "humanity is male, and man defines woman, not in herself, but in relation to himself; she is not considered an autonomous being" (ibid: 26). In the novel **Purple Hibiscus** (2003) Kambili seems to be alienated from any kind of self-esteem. She does not speak up for the sadistic manners of her father, because she idealizes him very much, as a result, she is easily manipulated by him. For instance, her father punishes her for anything that goes against his vision, such as spending time with her grandfather. For Eugene

this is inadmissible because papa-Nnkuwu was not a Christian, as a consequence he was considered as an idolater. In the novel, Kambili says:

I wanted to say “yes papa” because he was right but the burning on my feet was climbing up, in swift curses of excruciating pain ... I did not know that the sobbing voice “I’m sorry, I’m sorry” was mine.
(Adichie;2003: 194)

Kambili shows tolerance and love towards her grandfather. However, Eugene considers this as a betrayal, even worse he sees this as a sin. So in order to protect his daughter he decided to punish her. Through the quotation above, we may notice Kambili’s insecurities; she easily stops trying without any confrontation.

In the beginning of **Purple Hibiscus**, Chimamanda Adichie represents Kambili as someone who is physically and psychologically abused. She lives under persecution; as a result, she is unable to speak her mind. She states: “I meant to say I am sorry papa broke your figurines, but the words that came were, “I’m sorry your figurines broke, mama” (Ibid:10). Kambili is powerless she is unable to accuse her father, simply because she is terrified of him.

Kambili is very calm and shy. Adichie portrays her as someone who tries to avoid problems and misunderstandings. However, her father’s brutality leads her to be anxious, especially when things do not seem quite normal, as it is described in the novel: “I wished Sisi had said “what bottles, madam?” or “where are they, madam?” just something to keep her and mama talking. To veil the nervous movements of Jaja.” (Ibid: 13). This quotation shows that Kambili is neutral in the sense that she wants to calm things down. The quote also demonstrates the fragility of her family, everything is reduced to fear.

In **Purple Hibiscus**, Adichie focuses on developing Kambili’s personality. In the beginning she was a simple teenager with a quite complex and nearly a close minded personality. She was born in a family where everything is directed by her father.

Consequently, her interpretation of life is limited to her father's perception of things. She is not allowed to contradict her father, somehow she is static. In other words, Kambili is someone who is quite familiar with immanence, as it is described in the novel: "Fear, I was familiar with fear, yet each time I felt it, it was never the same, as though it came in different flavors and colors." (Adichie; 2003: 196). Kambili's fear puts her in a fragile and stagnant state. It seems like it is the only feeling that she experiences; as a result, she easily and freely expresses it. Kambili's life comes down to the same feeling over and over again. Suddenly, we start to believe that fear makes sense to her life; at the same time it prevents her from it.

Moreover, Kambili is depicted as being civilized, she is an excellent student: "A brilliant, obedient student and a daughter to be proud of." (Ibid: 40) She speaks English fluently or at least it was her father's obligation. Kambili says: "we had to sound civilized in public, he told; we had to speak English." (Ibid: 14). Yet, she seems to be completely alienated from the outside world. She just follows orders without questioning whether it is right or wrong.

In the novel, Kambili does everything to please her father. Besides being completely devoted to religion, Kambili's goal in life is to make her father proud of her. It is almost an obsession. She is obsessed with the idea that her father is doing well, so it is her duty to behave well and to excel in her studies, not being good enough means failure both for her and Eugene. She states:

I want to make papa, proud to do as well as he had done. I needed him to touch the back of my neck and tell me that I was fulfilling god's purpose, I needed him to hug me close and say that to whom much is given, much is also expected. I needed him to smile at me, in the way that lit up his face that warmed something inside me. But I had come second. I was stained by failure." (Adichie; 2003: 40)

In addition, through the narrative, Adichie illustrates Kambili as a very attentive girl. That is she gives attention to the smallest details. She is highly intuitive, which explains her

intelligence, as it is stated in the novel: “Kambili is intelligent beyond her years quiet and responsible.” (Ibid: 39). Kambili is quiet and discreet. She does not speak a lot; she is very introvert due to the way she was brought up: “They are not like those loud children people are raising these days, with no home training and no fear of God.” (Ibid: 59). Indeed Kambili’s education keeps her as a vulgar subject. Everything in her life is already dictated by her father, she is not allowed to express or to think unconventionally from what is imposed to her.

According to Simone De Beauvoir women have never been considered as an independent human being as she argues: “The humane male shapes the face of the earth” (De Beauvoir;1949: 99). That is, women’s position in the world has always been neglected because of men’s dominance. De Beauvoir also claims:

Her misfortune is to have been biologically destined to repeat life, while in her own eyes life in itself does not provide her reasons for being, and these reasons are more important than life itself. (Ibid: 99)

The quotation reflects the reason behind women’s inferiority. In the novel, Kambili depicts this inferiority. Moreover, through Kambili’s education we deduce that she has never been introduced to independence, even worse she is not even conscious of her immanence.

b. Kambili’s Growth to Transcendence

After visiting Ifeoma, Kambili’s perception is altered by the interpretation of religion and life in Nwasuku. Since the beginning, Kambili is exceedingly impressed by her aunt. She shows some confusion and some admiration to her incredible personality. Kambili says:

I watched every movement she made; I could not tear my ears away. It was the fearlessness about her, about the way she gestured as she spoke, the way she smiled to show wide gap. (Adichie; 2003: 77)

Kambili has never met a woman with such courage and determination. She is in a complete admiration in front of Ifeoma. Her aunt represents freedom and confidence, feelings that Kambili has never experienced, she states:

I dreamed that I was laughing, but it did not sound like my laughter, although I was not sure what laughter sounded like. It was cackling and throaty and enthusiastic, like aunty Ifeoma's. (Ibid: 89)

From the quotation above, we understand that Kambili's life was not fervent at all. But somehow, through her dream, she wanted to experience the feeling of complete happiness, unconsciously she wanted to laugh just as her aunt.

Kambili starts little by little to perceive how happy Ifeoma's family is. She is meticulously paying attention to the smallest differences between her and her cousins. Besides, Kambili is stunned by the way they are raised. Contrary to her family, everything seems to be joyful and cheerful in Ifeoma's house. Kambili depicts this as follow:

Laughter always rang out in aunty Ifeoma's house, and no matter where the laughter came from, it bounced around all the walls, all the rooms. Arguments rose quickly and fell just as quickly. Morning and night prayers were always peppered with songs, igbo praise songs that usually called for hand clapping. (Ibid: 141)

Moreover, Kambili realizes the difference of her ideology of catholicism with Father Amadi way of practicing religion. Her perception of God and life in general is the perfect contradiction of what Father Amadi claims. However, Kambili still is not able to speak out for her ideas. At the beginning, Kambili is confused by the idea that religion is not related to punishment but rather related to love and tolerance. Kambili's personality gradually starts to blossom. With Ifeoma's help Kambili finds herself for the first time able to answer back to her cousin who was teasing her. Kambili has described it as such:

I did not know where the calm words had come from. I did not want to look at Amaka, did not want to see her scowl, did not want to prompt her to say something else to me, because I knew I could not keep up. (Adichie; 2003: 171)

Kambili's description is still centered on guilt, but she is no longer able to accept the different judgments that come from her cousin "Amaka". Moreover, Kambili starts to finally act like a normal teenager; she goes beyond the limits that were imposed to her. Little by little, she silently lets herself drawn by the real meaning of life and religion. Her first laugh marks a first experience of freedom:

I laughed. It sounded strange, as if I were listening to the recorded laughter of a stranger being played back. I was not sure I had ever heard myself laugh. (Ibid: 180)

In **The Second Sex**, Simone De Beauvoir argues: "her wings are cut and then she is blamed for not knowing to fly." (De Beauvoir; 1949: 731). That is to say, women are systematically put aside, they are considered as an inferior human being, therefore their opportunities to change their situation are limited, at the same time, they are blamed for not doing enough. Kambili illustrates the quotation of De Beauvoir. Since her childhood, she is told to behave in a certain way, and going against any of the restrictions that are imposed to her is like liberating and regaining her wings.

In Nsuuka, Kambili interacts with others; consequently, she gains knowledge and wisdom. This new environment offers many possibilities and allows Kambili to discover new things about her life. For instance, for the first time, Kambili discerns a certain feeling of love towards Father Amadi. She claims: "Didn't he know that I did not want him to leave, ever? That I did not need to be persuaded to go to the stadium, or anywhere, with him?" (Adichie,2003:181). Kambili's feelings are clearly related to love, she feels safe and alive when he is with her. Moreover, Kambili has awakened her sexuality, and this is due to the different romantic feelings she has for Father Amadi, she finds joy and security in his love. She depicts this as follows:

He was looking right into my eyes. He was too close. His touch was so light I wanted to push my head toward him, to feel the pressure of his hand. I wanted to collapse

against him. I wanted to press his hand to my head, my belly, so he could feel the warmth that coursed through me” (Ibid: 227)

Furthermore, Kambili has succeeded in overcoming her shyness. More importantly, she realizes the depth of papa’s brutality on her life. She starts to understand that growth and learning should not be converged in the only direction that her father has allowed. She asserts: “Perhaps we all changed after Nsukka even papa and things were destined to not be the same, to not be in their original order.” (Ibid: 209)

Although Kambili has started to see things from a different angle, she does not rebel against her cruel father. However, when her father decides to take off the painting of her grandfather, Kambili started for the first time in her life to interfere in order to stop him from doing such a thing. She claims: “No I shrieked. I dashed to the pieces on the floor as if to save them, as if saving them would mean saving Papa-Nnukwu. I sank to the floor; lay on the pieces of paper.” (ibid: 210). Kambili is not used to go against her father’s will, but from the quotation above, we understand that she is no longer able to accept his intolerance towards Papa-Nnukwu.

In her process to transcend her state of repression, Kambili tries to find a sense to her life. From her character, we detect a certain desire of discovering the world. Kambili is craving for independence, she is perfectly aware that being secure with herself is extremely empowering. She wants to take control of her own life and to make her own decisions. Kambili goes from someone with no self direction to a flawless young lady who is aware of the importance of being free. Chimamanda Adichie has related Kambili’s independence to her ability in building up courage and being able to open up to other people. Kambili has finally found her voice as she confesses her love to Father Amadi: “I love you.” (Adichie; 2003: 276). Expressing her feelings of love is one of the most difficult things for Kambili, yet she seems to be fine with it.

In addition, from **Purple Hibiscus**, we understand that the only way for Kambili to be independent, or at least, to be less close-minded is to interact with other people. Plus, in order to live her life freely she needs to find a certain way to enjoy life and to be happy. Furthermore, she is aware of the unhealthy relationship of her family. Since she feels oppressed when her father is around. As well as, she is conscious that differences and individuality should be respected. Consequently, her freedom is directly related to herself as a human being. She wants to overcome her silence and to feel happy from within.

“You are singing along,” she said after a while.

“What?”

“You were just singing along with Fela.”

“I was?” (Ibid: 277)

The fact that Kambili sings without even being conscious about it, means that, she can express her thoughts and let her mind speak without any altercation. On top of that, she is not worried and no longer afraid about being quiet and calm. As a result, the singing means that she is completely at ease with her cousin, and she is no longer introvert.

c. Kambili Turns into a Subject

Throughout **Purple Hibiscus**, we notice that Kambili’s freedom is related to the smallest details of everyday life. Her laugh symbolizes her growth and maturity. She asserts: “I laughed. It seemed so easy now, laughter. So many things seemed easy now.”(Adichie, 2003: 284). From the beginning of the novel, Kambili seems to idolize her father a lot. As a result, she does not consider him as a simple man, she rather considers him as an incarnation of god. For her, he is immortal. However, after his death, Kambili finds herself in a new environment of silence. She hardly speaks with her mother. Nonetheless, Kambili has not forgotten her release from herself and she does not change the attitude she gained from

Nssukka. Instead, she just pursues her life. Chimamanda Adichie has associated Kambili's laugh with life, happiness and freedom. She writes:

I laughed loudly, above fela's stringent singing. I laughed because Nssukka's unatarrred roads coat cars with dust in the harmattan and with sticky mud in the rainy season. Because the tarred roads spring potholes like surprise presents and the air smells of hills and history and the sunlight scatters the sand and turns it into gold dust. Because Nssukka could free something deep inside your belly that would rise up to your throat and come out as a freedom song. As laughter. (Ibid: 299)

Regardless of Kambili's personality at the beginning and her father's brutality in terms of education and religion, she succeeded in developing her own perspective and her own way of life. Chimamanda Adichie has demonstrated that women's independence should be a necessity to their happiness. At the end of the novel, Kambili's character reflects a strong lady who consciously seeks to build her own judgment and she does no longer fit the expectations of others. In the novel, it is written:

God and I, we are simply sharing. I no longer wonder if I have a right to love Father Amadi; I simply go ahead and love him. I no longer wonder if the checks I have been writing to the missionary fathers of the blessed way are bribes to god; I just go ahead and write them. I no longer wonder if I chose St. Andrews church in enugu as my new church because the priest there is Blessed Way Missionary Father as Father Amadi is; I just go. (Ibid: 303)

The quotation above shows how mature Kambili has become. Now, she does not value things, she just lives and appreciates them. Her tolerance and her maturity is a sign of her independence. The quotation reflects her peace of mind.

Purple Hibiscus ends with hopeful words. Adichie writes: "the new rain will come down soon" (Adichie,2003: 317). Kambili is aiming for a happier future; she has developed her personality. Now, she seems to finally have found her way. Simone de Beauvoir claims that "worth is not a given essence: it is the result of a favorable development." (de Beauvoir; 1949: 833).

3- **Ajanupu and Ossai : Woman as Subject Versus Woman as Object in Efuru**

Our analysis of two other female characters named Ajanupu and Ossai is for the purpose of answering one of the assumptions we made in the issue and working hypothesis. The intention is to show the extent to which the female environment in **Efuru** plays for and against women's emancipation.

a. Ajanupu as a Transcendent subject

Ajanupu is another female character in **Efuru** (1966) she is portrayed as a strong and talkative woman. She might even seem cold and harsh with people. Furthermore, she is also depicted as a woman who is not afraid of confrontation. She does not let people take advantage of her. Through the novel, Ajanupu is portrayed as a woman who has a great complicity with Efuru. She has helped her with many pieces of advice. Ajanupu says:

You know I'm proud of you. You are a good woman. There is no woman like you. Your mother in law knows this very well though she does not show it. It is pity that this has befallen you. But don't worry, it will be all right. By the power of god it will be alright. Adizua has wronged you. (Nwapa; 1966: 83)

From the quotation above one can notice that Ajanupu is someone who is very wise and very sensitive. She tries to cheer up Efuru's pride and dignity. Additionally, she takes Efuru's side because she knows the worth and the value of such an incredible woman. She is not afraid of saying things the way they should be said. For instance in the novel, she says:

Your son who was married to such a woman. Let me tell you the truth, for it is when you are angry that you say the truth. I was one of those people who wandered what efuru saw in that son of yours. I did not say anything then. I was up in arms against those who criticized the marriage because adizua was my sister's son, and not because he was a good match for Efuru. (Nwapa; 1966: 80)

Ajanupu is a woman who tries to fix things not only for her but for others. From the quotation we can notice that she is a woman who cannot stand indignity and disgrace. She tries to fight

against her sister's perception. In **Efuru**, Ajanupu has been characterized as a woman who follows the traditions, but her strong personality makes us believe that she has the power and the ability to speak out for her ideas. She declares to Ossai:

You are the cause of your child's bad ways. You never scolded him because he was an only child. You delightfully spoil him stand on his own so that now he leans on these rich women not because he loves them, but because they are rich. (Nwapa; 1966: 80)

From the quotation, we can understand that Ajanupu blames her sister for not making her only child a responsible man. She points out the education she has given to him, as we can also notice that she is a woman who is rightful. That is, she does not make a difference between a girl or a boy since both of them need to be educated in the right way.

Ajanupu somehow illustrates Simone De Beauvoir's concept of Transcendence. It is true that through the novel and the circumstances of African societies, Ajanupu emphasizes a woman who is resigned to her household tasks and who follows the traditions of Igbo community. She even shows some pride towards her motherhood. De Beauvoir claims: "a new existence is going to manifest itself and justify her own existence, she is proud of it." (De Beauvoir; 1949: 612). Motherhood in general is what defines African women. However, we can clearly notice that Ajanupu's personality interferes in the way African societies are depicted. Her way of speaking and temperament reflect her independence.

Ajanupu does not overthrow Efuru's determination to choose another path. The support she has towards Efuru signifies that Ajanupu is a woman who is not afraid of change. She is willing to say the truth no matter who stands in front of her. Ajanupu's character is well developed because she incorporates a woman who is strong both mentally and physically.

In **Efuru**, Flora Nwapa points out the reality that sometimes women are women's worst enemy. Efuru's character goes beyond the norms. From her character, Nwapa tries to

redefine the rules of a patriarchal society. Additionally, throughout the novel, we can notice that there are some women who support change and development, whereas there are others who are submissive to their role. They do not support change, they rather stop it, either by their reflections (judgments) or by their total rejection of anything that goes beyond their abilities to do. This type of women becomes a real obstacle for women who tend to change their condition.

Igbo community is a very conservative one. Traditions should be followed without any complaint. That is, things have to remain the same. In the novel, Efuru is seen as being different, through her behavior she wanted to change some insignificant traditions, but for women of her community her behavior was unacceptable. For instance, in the novel, it is said: “A man and a woman should not be seen together, whether they are married or not.”(Nwapa; 1966: 139). That is a married woman who is being too close to her husband is seen almost as a shame. This kind of reflection reinforces the Immanence in which women are in, and it demonstrates that there are women who are unable to see things differently or to tolerate change.

Simone de Beauvoir believes that “women’s mutual understanding lies in the fact that they identify with each other: but then each one competes with her companion” (de Beauvoir; 1949:666). That is women are linked to one another, symbolically women recognize themselves through other women; but this does not stop them from being judgmental or going against each other. However, Ajanupu seems to be very supportive of Efuru and it means that she has surpassed the level of being judgmental. Consequently, she accepts the choices of women especially when it comes to their inner peace.

b. Ossai as an Immanent Woman

Ossai (Adizua’s mother) is another female character. She is described as a good person

and a good mother-in-law. She shows love and affection to Efuru, she is proud to have her as a daughter in law, and she tries her best to protect her. However, Ossai's personality is depicted as being weak, especially when it comes to her feelings. She says: "I'm proud that I was and still am true to the only man I loved." (Nwapa; 1966: 61) she still shows love to her husband who left her alone. Ossai claims:

Three harvest after, my husband came home without any warning I welcomed him; I embraced him and wept for joy. He begged me to forgive him and promised that he would be faithful to me. I took for his word. We lived together. He could not go to the farm any more. His life had changed completely and he brooded most of the time. One nkwo day he disappeared. (Ibid: 60)

From the quotation, Nwapa depicts Ossai as being submissive. She welcomed the man who left her and forgave him and even worse she trusted and believed him again. Eventually, she seems very innocent, sincere and loyal in the sense that her feelings become her downfall. That is, instead of living her life and start a new chapter, she decides to suffer and to wait for a husband who does not care about her at all.

Moreover, Ossai is illustrated as a person who cannot change her life, she does not have any willpower and it seems like her whole life is centered only on her husband. She seems desperate because she loves a man who is not responsible to take care of her. Despite the different marriage proposals, she refuses to accept any of them. She asserts:

Many men came to marry me but I refused to have anything to do with any of them. My mother talked and talked, but I refused to say yes to any of them. I was through with marriage, I said. Ajanupu scolded me, told me I was a weakling that I was wasting my life, but I did heed her. (Nwapa; 1966: 60)

This means, Ossai has several chances to leave her husband and start a new life, but instead she decides to be with him and to let her life and her youth go to waste. Her weakness is caused either by her husband or by her son. Ossai does not fight for her happiness, she rather accept defeat and chooses to suffer. She states:

What am I doing in the world? Many of the members of my age-group have died. You want to live when there is something to live for. My only son is lost. His wife has married again. What am I living for? Please leave me to go back ancestors. I have lost the willingness to live. (Nwapa; 1966: 157)

Ossai has no reason to live, simply because she forgets to take care of herself as a human being. Instead of living her life and being completely free, she gives all her energy and interest to people who do not need her in their lives. As a result, she loses hope in life as she says it herself: “you want me to live that I may continue to suffer” (ibid: 157) her whole life is a synonym of chaos.

Ossai is not aware of her strength that is why she suffers. Her happiness is attached to other people; she lets people define her world. Consequently, it is easy to her to be disappointed and to let herself down. In the novel, it is written:

My life has been one long suffering. The bright part of it came when my son married Efuru. But Adizua hated me. He hated me just as his father hated me. He did not want me to be happy. And so denied me that happiness I found in his marriage with Efuru. My son left his wife and ran away with a worthless woman. My god and ancestors, I have not wronged you. I have been upright. I have never stolen in my life. In all the long years I waited for my husband, I did not commit adultery. But I have suffered as nobody has suffered before. And you tell me to live. To live for what? What is the purpose of living? I cannot live a purposeless life. (ibid: 157)

In **Efuru**, women are portrayed differently. Some of them are clearly victims of patriarchy and victims of themselves since they let men define them, whereas others are trying to resist and to impose themselves as complete human beings. They try to go against the different restrictions that are imposed by male's domination and society. Flora Nwapa succeeded in illustrating African women as being very powerful and strong.

4- Ifeoma/ Beatrice: The Resilient versus the Vulnerable

Chimamanda Adichie in her novel **Purple Hibiscus** has illustrated two different types of women through her two female characters 'Ifeoma' and 'Beatrice'. One represents

the independent woman par excellence whereas the other represents an obedient and submissive wife.

a- Ifeoma: The Independent Woman

In **Purple Hibiscus**, Ifeoma is the complete opposite of Beatrice. She is an intellectual who works as a teacher at the University of Nigeria in Nsukka. In the novel, Ifeoma is noticeable due to her strong personality. Her character incorporates courage, strength and independence. For instance, Ifeoma does not consider marriage as a supreme institution. She believes that life can emerge from different type of situations. She says: “sometimes life begins when marriage ends” (Adichie; 2003: 76). She is rational and does not value things more than they worth.

Ifeoma is also depicted as a woman who is not afraid to stand up for her rights and to speak the truth despite the taboos and the circumstances. She is intelligent and does not let anyone deceive her. Inevitably, Ifeoma is a fearless woman, she represents something that goes beyond the status that was already given to Igbo women. She is sincere and honest, and does not allow injustice. For instance, Ifeoma’s personality is depicted in the fact that she is not afraid of losing her job, and more importantly she refuses to be intimidated by those people who try to keep her quiet. She asserts: “I am not paid to be loyal. When I speak the truth, it becomes disloyalty.” (ibid: 222). For Ifeoma it is inappropriate for her to hide the real image of the corrupted government of her country.

In a keynote address, Chimamanda Adichie argues that:

It is not possible to advocate independence for the African continent without also believing that African women must have the best that the environment can offer. For some of us, this is the crucial element in our feminism. (Adichie; 2007: 47)

From the quotation, we understand that Adichie advocates her feminism. This is illustrated in Ifeoma's character. Chimamanda Adichie tries to incorporate the basic elements of feminism in her characters. She also tries to illustrate them as perfect independent women who are able to take control of the different situations in which courage, intelligence and determination are required.

In **Purple Hibiscus**, Ifeoma embodies a woman who is aware of her capacities. Moreover, she does not overestimate the position of men, simply because she does not see any difference between the two genders. As an illustration, Ifeoma judges that women should not accept to be guided either by their husbands or by any other man, she tries to make them open their eyes on the fact that women should take their own decisions and they need to reach their own happiness with or without a husband. Ifeoma claims: "when a house is on fire you run out before the roof collapses on your head" (Adichie;2003:213). This quotation symbolizes the position of Ifeoma in terms of violence and brutality. She refuses the attitude of her brother, and at the same time she tries to convince Beatrice to do the right thing which is to leave. Nevertheless, Ifeoma is conscious that her words might change nothing for some women, but she insists on telling what most of them believe silently. For instance, she pushes other to be courageous and not be afraid of saying things. She says: "when do we speak out, eh? When soldiers are appointed lectures and students attend lectures with guns to their head? When do we speak out?" (Ibid: 224)

Ifeoma is also remarkable for the way she raises her children. In her house there are no taboos. She gives the entire freedom to her children to express themselves. In other words, she is pleased to make them brilliant in terms of confidence and independence. Furthermore, the education she gives to her children reflects the trust and hope of a better future. Kambili says:

It was what aunty ifeoma did to my cousins, I realized then, setting higher and higher jumps for them in the way she talked to them, in what she expected of them. She did it

all the time believing they would scale the rod. And they did. It was different for jaja and me. We did not scale the rod because we believed we could, we scaled it because we were terrified that we couldn't. (Adichie, 2003: 227)

The quotation demonstrates the support and the belief of Ifeoma in her children. She makes them confident enough to believe that they could do anything. She succeeds also in making themselves sufficient by completely eradicating fear and terror in their souls.

In **Purple Hibiscus**, Ifeoma represents a liberal catholic woman. When it comes to beliefs and traditions Ifeoma is tolerant and open minded. Unlike her brother Eugene, Ifeoma openly accepts her father and his beliefs. She does not categorize him as a heathen. She says: "Your Papannukwu is not a pagan, Kambili, he is a traditionalist." (Ibid: 82). Ifeoma is not a radical person, she accepts diversity and promotes change and acceptance. Another important point on Ifeoma in terms of religion is her way of thinking. She deeply believes that religion is related to faith and sincerity. For her, church is not the ultimate power in terms of reason and faith. She asserts: "Even if the church says it is not authentic, what matters is why we go, and it is from faith." (Ibid: 100). The quotation summarizes the believing point of Ifeoma, she considers that the truthfulness of her convictions are beyond the rules imposed by any given church. Adichie depicts Ifeoma as a complete transparent person. That is, she is a woman who does not hide her thinking or her beliefs to other people. She constitutes her own personality and her own judgments.

In addition, Ifeoma's widowhood does not prevent her from being independent. It rather motivates her to rely only on herself. Her attitude towards her situation is exceptional. Despite the fact that she faces some problems with money because she has to raise her three children alone; Ifeoma seems to be determined to uphold her morals. She strongly refuses to be bought out by the wealth of her brother. It is described in the novel as follows:

Have you forgotten that Eugene offered to buy me a car, even before Ifediora, my husband, died? But first he wanted us to join the knights of ST John. He wanted

us to send Amaka to a convent school. He even wanted me to stop wearing make-up! I want a new car, mwunye m, and I want to use my gas cooker again and I want a new freezer and I want money so that I will not have to unravel the seams of Chima's trousers when he outgrows them. But I will not ask my brother to bend over so that I can lick his buttocks to get these things. (Adichie; 2003: 96)

The quotation shows that Ifeoma is not yet prepared to let her freedom go away. She craves independence and seems to be entirely devoted to maintain her freedom. In **The Second Sex** (1949), Simone De Beauvoir claims: "the woman who maintained her independence through all her servitudes will ardently love her own freedom in Nature" (de Beauvoir: 1949, 745). That is, independence is a precious and a necessary thing for women especially when they get used to it.

Furthermore, Adichie depicts Ifeoma as someone who is cheerful and joyful. Throughout the novel, Ifeoma exemplifies happiness and strength; she is surrounded by positive feelings which she tries to share with everybody. Additionally, Ifeoma is someone who is very enthusiastic and authentic, her house reflects her personality. Kambili asserts:

Laughter always rang out in Auntie Ifeoma's house, and no matter where the laughter came from, it bounced around all the walls, all the rooms. Arguments rose quickly and fell just as quickly. Morning and night prayers were always peppered with songs, igbo praise songs that usually called for hand clapping. (ibid: 141)

Kambili's description reflects the stability of Ifeoma's family. Her stability is not related to material things but rather to the inner clarity and solidity of her family. The quotation demonstrates also the laxity of Ifeoma's personality; she enjoys the simplest things in life and seems to be not strict at all. Similarly, Ifeoma illustrates a complete independent woman. Ifeoma is a woman who is not afraid to speak openly for her ideas, she does not hesitate to shelter women and to give them some pieces of advice, Ifeoma is also a woman who accepts her roots and who seeks for a better future not only for her but also for her children. Moreover, injustice makes her furious and angry. She does not hesitate to protect and to defend the Igbo values and her beliefs in terms of religion, but most importantly, Ifeoma is

active in her professional life. To sum up, Ifeoma is spiritually, financially, physically and mentally independent.

Chimamanda Adichie in her lecture for ted entitled “we should all be feminists” (2012), highlights on the fact that women should be raised differently but most importantly they should change their way of behaving. She declares: “what matters even more is our attitude our mindset, what we believe and what we value about gender”. She focuses on the fact that things can be changed. She claims: “I believe deeply in the ability of human beings to make and remake themselves for the better.” Ifeoma’s character reflects that gender is not an obstacle in order to affirm who you are, and in a way or another, she challenges patriarchy.

b- Beatrice: As an Object of Reproduction

In **Purple Hibiscus**, Beatrice is another female character. Adichie depicts her as being extremely silent and completely submissive to her husband. She symbolizes the perfect obedient wife. Beatrice does not even seem to have a personality; she only tries to follow a direction that is already drawn to her. In *The Second Sex*, Simone de Beauvoir argues:

The measure of values and the truth of the world are in his consciousness; that is why serving him is still not enough. The woman tries to see with his eyes (...) she adopts his friends, his enemies and his opinions. (De Beauvoir; 1949: 784)

That is, women regularly constrain themselves to identify the world with the same perception as their beloved one. They tend to think that men are the symbol of the absolute reason and unconsciously women find themselves wallowing in immanence. For instance, Beatrice’s vulnerability and weakness is the result of her extreme overestimation of her husband.

From the beginning of **Purple Hibiscus**, we clearly notice that Beatrice is not terrified by the brutality of her husband; instead she seems to accept the humiliation and the violence that are made to her. Beatrice tolerates all kinds of dishonor because she feels a sort of

blessing for being Eugene's wife, especially when he refuses to get another wife. Consequently, Beatrice feels indebted to him no matter what. She states:

God is faithful. You know after you came and I had the miscarriages, the villagers started to whisper. The members of our umunna even sent people to your father to urge him to have children with someone else. So many people had willing daughters, and many of them were university graduates, too. They might have borne many sons and taken over our home and driven us out, like Mr. Ezendu's second wife did. But your father stayed with me, with us. (Adichie; 2003: 21)

The quotation shows and explains Beatrice's decision to be static and passive. Her gratitude obliges her to stick to her husband even if it is a matter of death. In **Feminism is for Everybody: Passionate Politics**, the feminist and social activist Gloria Jean Watkins, better known as Bell Hooks claims: "If any female feels she needs anything beyond herself to legitimate and validate her existence, she is already given away her power to be self-defining, her agency." (Hooks;2000: 95). That is, any woman who does not value and perceive herself as being enough is predestined to be powerless and vulnerable. A woman should feel self-sufficient in order to be able to define herself without associating her life with another human being. In **Purple Hibiscus**, Beatrice appears to be completely submissive to her husband; as a result she loses not only her power, but also her personality. She is simply Eugene's wife. Beatrice has no ability to define herself by herself.

Moreover, Beatrice's weakness is also revealed in her attitude towards the two miscarriages caused by the excessive violence of her husband. She argues: "There was an accident, the baby is gone." (Adichie;2003: 35). This goes with the fact that she is unable to see things as they should be seen. She hides the truth not only for the others but also for herself. Beatrice is in a complete denial, she does not want to admit that her husband is the reason behind her sadness and unfortunate life. Similarly, her second miscarriage was the result of Eugene's brutality. However, her reaction to this second loss seems to be different. She says:

You know that small table where we keep the family Bible, nne? Your father broke it on my belly. She sounded as if she were talking about someone else, as if the table were not made of sturdy wood. “My blood finished on that floor even before he took me to St. Agnes. My doctor said there was nothing he could do to save it. (Adichie; 2003: 249)

Beatrice still minimizes Eugene’s violence, but this time, she let herself to speak and give the real version of her breakdown. Additionally, Beatrice does not hide her emotions in lies or in figurines; instead she decides to express her pain in a natural way by crying and letting her tears fall. Kambili’s description states:

She cried for a long time. She cried until my hand, clasped in hers, felt stiff. She cried until Aunty Ifeoma finished cooking the rotting meat in a spicy stew. She cried until she fell asleep, her head against the seat of the chair. (Ibid: 250)

Chimamanda Adichie has illustrated Beatrice as someone who has a great friendship with Ifeoma, yet she does not want to share her ideals and values concerning equality and justice. Moreover, Beatrice judges Ifeoma’s talk as being too academic. For instance, the difference between the two women is easily noticeable. One claims independence and self sufficiency, whereas the other maintains her immanence. As it is shown in the quotation below:

“Nwunye m, sometimes life begins when marriage ends.”

“You and your university talk. Is this what you tell your students?” Mama was smiling.

“Seriously, yes. But they marry earlier and earlier these days. What is the use of a degree, they ask me, when we cannot find a job after graduation?”

“At least somebody will take care of them when they marry.” (Adichie; 2003: 76)

The conversation between the two women reflects the position and the personality of each one of them. But most importantly, it highlights how Beatrice seems to stick and to cherish marriage in general, and husband in particular. She believes that marriage is much more important than education and it gives power and value to women. Furthermore, Beatrice

believes that taking care of her family is a way to express herself as a woman, but unconsciously and all over again she finds herself in a state of immanence and oppression.

According to De Beauvoir, a woman tries to take care of her family, at the same time she tries to satisfy society, so unconsciously she allows herself to immanence because she thinks it is an activity that should be maintained. De Beauvoir states: "... An activity that brings her no escape from her immanence and allows her no individual affirmation of herself" (De Beauvoir;1949: 537). That is, once women's goals are only related to how to satisfy their families, they become weak and are unconsciously doomed in their immanence. Moreover, Simone De Beauvoir claims that sometimes women make efforts to liberate themselves from immanence but they never reach transcendence because they are too busy laying in their infinite prison, and even worse they relate their whole lives to the static condition of being a woman. She claims: "they try to justify their existence within their own immanence." (ibid: 753).

Throughout the story, Beatrice is depicted as a fragile and obedient woman. However, at the end of the novel, she poisons her husband. Her act is considered as a sign of resistance. It is also viewed as a revolution against patriarchy and oppression. Beatrice has reached the point of no return, she has been hurt and injured for so long that the only way to free herself is to kill her husband. In this aspect de Beauvoir states: "all oppression creates a state of war. This particular case is no exception" (Ibid: 849). That is, sooner or later, women who are wronged and offended will find away to reach their independence.

As a conclusion to the chapter, Joyce Banda once said "the seeds of success in every nation on earth are best planted in women and children". Throughout the discussion of the issue under study, we have shown that both Nwapa and Adichie depict two types of women in **Efuru** (1966) and **Purple Hibiscus** (2003). With refrence to De Beauvoir's concepts, women

in both novels are either victims and submissive that is 'immanent', or fighters that is 'transcendent'. Both authors highlight the fact that women have to fight for their rights by their own, and they make clear that sometimes things have to fall apart in order to make way for better things. **Efuru** and **Purple Hibiscus** are novels that defend the idea that women's freedom is not a feminine thing but rather a human right.

Chapter two: the Representation of patriarchy in Efuru and Purple Hibiscus

This chapter discusses the representation of patriarchy and men in Nawapa's **Efuru** and Adichie's **Purple Hibiscus**. Because a feminist study does not exclude the study of the representation of the male, we will discuss the extent to which both author converge in their depiction of both societies as patriarchal and men centered. The study of male characters will enhance our hypothesis that all African societies are patriarchal, and that it is for women to struggle for their emancipation.

a- Adizua: The Inactive and Uneducated Man in Efuru

Flora Nwapa's novel **Efuru** is concerned mainly with the representation of women in a society which is mostly directed by men as independent and strong human beings. However, through the novel Nwapa gives another image of African men, an image that most people try to hide because patriarchy tends to categorize man as being center and supreme. Adizua is the first male character in **Efuru** (1966), he is represented as a poor farmer who is irresponsible and absent. He might also seem as being spoiled, in the sense that he does not value the efforts of other people. Everything comes to him, he is selfish and careless. Nwapa writes:

Adizua is a fool. You were a gift given to him. He could not appreciate what he had. He did not know the value of what he had. We men are like that sometimes. (Nwapa; 1966: 128)

In a patriarchal society men privilege, dominance and superiority are considered as innate advantages. In **The Second Sex**, Simone de Beauvoir explains that a man acquires his supremacy through society. That is, a man never thinks of himself as a man. She claims: "The male prestige is not a childish mirage; it has economic and social foundations; men are without any question, the masters of the world." (De Beauvoir; 1949: 395). Through this, we

may understand that everything is linked to the society. In other words, society obliges women to feel inferior, so that men can feel their virility through women's inferiority. Moreover, Society reinforces men's dominance to the extent that they do not only feel superior but they believe it.

This is the case of Adizua in **Efuru**. He is an irresponsible man. He left his wife and daughter, yet he does not seem to have any regret. In addition, he got married to another wife. His behavior is attached to the idea he has received from his society. A man is able to do everything he wants. Women, on the other hand, have to be patient; otherwise, they will get blamed for not being good wives. As it is illustrated in the novel:

Give Adizua one year, 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 a year, just a year. After a year and you marry again, nobody in this world will rise an accusing finger at you and say you have not done well. (Nwapa; 1966: 83)

Adizua's arrogance and indignity are illustrated in the chapter five of the novel, where he loses his daughter and he does not even come to her funeral. This act can be related to his lack of self-awareness. His only child has passed away and it looks like it did not affect him. This is illustrated in the novel as follows: "A husband who ran away with another woman; a husband who did not think it fit to come and bury an only child." (Ibid: 83).

Flora Nwapa points out the bitter truth of a patriarchal society. Men are meant to be superior, yet they seem to abandon their responsibilities. Adizua chooses to run away from his family. Moreover, he completely neglected the fact that he has certain duties towards the members of his family, and the blame is not on him but rather on women. Nwapa writes: "And that woman? That devil in the form of a woman, she won't allow him to come home and bury his only child." (ibid:70). From the quotation, we can notice that the blame is not on

Adizua, simply because men are barely blamed for the things they do. They are seen as strange and incomprehensible. Generally, this kind of thinking is directly linked to the way patriarchy perceives a man. That is, Men could never be guilty of being immature and reckless.

In **Efuru**, patriarchy is not related to men's superiority in terms of power, but it is rather linked on how fast men run away when things are not fixed. Nwapa claims: "Men are such queer people. They are so weak that when they are under the thumb of a woman, she does whatever she likes with them." (Nwapa;1966: 70). In African societies men's weakness is related to women and not to their choices and irresponsibility.

In **Efuru**, Flora Nwapa also shades the light on the fact that patriarchy is sometimes the result of women. That is, women have a certain image on men that is unreachable. Moreover, older women promote patriarchy by saying that women have to accept men's flaws easily. For instance, Adizua is always characterized as a victim, at first he is victimized for his family's past, and then he is a victim of his second wife. Indeed, patriarchy and gender inequality are constructed not only by men but also by women since they do not stop promoting it through their behaviors.

b- Gilbert: the intellectual vis-à-vis women in Efuru

Flora Nwapa chooses to use different male characters in Efuru to depict the weight of patriarchy in African societies and to assert that men will always be as patriarchy portrays them. In the novel, Gilbert is illustrated differently from Adizua, in terms of personality and status.

Gilbert is a character who is portrayed as being a responsible and a well educated man. At first, Gilbert seems to be impartial. He is not really committed to his community, and he

enjoys Efuru's company. In addition to his great complicity with her, he was completely amazed by her. He is serious and he behaves appropriately, especially when it comes to show respect either for his elder or for his traditions. He states:

It is very well, Efuru. I have come to ask you to marry me. And I want you to give it very serious thought before you give a reply. I believe that in a matter like this, since both of us are adults we should behave accordingly. I don't want the courtship to be prolonged. Think of it seriously and give me your answer on eke day. In four days, I shall come to hear what you have to tell me" (Nwapa; 1966: 117)

However, through the different chapters of the novel, Nwapa tries to demonstrate how complex men can be. This is to say, men in African societies are always going to be dissatisfied, simply because society allowed them to do whatever they want. Nwapa highlights the fact that men get their free will from their community, but this does not mean they can be a source of stability.

Moreover, men in the novel are depicted almost as being insecure and uncertain. Despite Gilbert's intellectual level, he runs away from his different responsibilities. He pretends to be in love with Efuru, yet he leaves her alone and when he comes back home he hides the truth about his absence. Gilbert cannot undertake his responsibilities. His lack of courage leads him to accuse his wife of adultery, just in order to not face the truth as it is. Ajanupu confronts him, she says:

I am afraid, my people, I am afraid. Eneberi, who are you? Who is your father, who is your mother? What have you got to be proud of? You went to school. Eh? If your own brand of education is the only brand, then I am glad I did not go to school. Eneberi what happened at Onicha? Tell me what happened at Onicha? You don't know that we know that you were jailed. And here you are accusing Efuru, the daughter of Nwashike Ogene of adultery. You ... (Ibid: 217)

Nwapa illustrates men's similarity in a patriarchal society. Despite Gilbert's education, it does not prevent him from being irresponsible. Instead of showing any degree of

culpability, Gilbert prefers to turn the situation to his advantage. That is to say, men never feel guilty of their misbehavior, and they never seem to take responsibility for their acts. Visibly, men are unable to assume their mistakes (weakness), and they easily take advantage of women's supposed inferiority. Throughout **Efuru**, Nwapa shows that even with an academic degree the rules of patriarchy remain the same.

In **The Second Sex**, De Beauvoir argues: "this world has always belonged to men and still retains the form they have imprinted on it." (De Beauvoir,1949:813). That is, no matter what women do, men's superiority will always linger in their veins. **Efuru** depicts the idea that patriarchal society can be difficult not only on women but also on men.

4- Eugene: The Supreme Patriarch in Purple Hibiscus

Adichie's **Purple Hibiscus** mirrors the Nigerian society. Women, as we have already mentioned suffered in order to achieve their independence. Their empowerment is directly linked to their sense of resistance against all kinds of oppression. In Nigeria or in any given African country, men's dominance is always characterized as being a right. Therefore, patriarchy projects a certain physical and mental pain for women. Through **Purple Hibiscus**, Chimamanda Adichie depicts patriarchy in its all form. That is, she portrays men's authority and power towards women in society.

In the novel Eugene is the patriarch. He is depicted as the one who holds control, and who makes all the rules in the house. Eugene represents the authority and dominance. Moreover, throughout the novel, we notice how he succeeds in making himself a true figure of power towards his family especially towards his daughter Kambili. she depicts him as follow: "she did not seem to recognize that it was papa, that he was different, special" (Adichie; 2003: 78). The quotation summarizes the supremacy of Eugene towards his

daughter. Kambili does not consider her father as a simple human being, but she rather considers him as an untouchable man.

Adichie also chooses to depict her male character from different angles. That is, in his private and public spaces, in order to show the hypocrisy of the Nigerian conservative society. In the novel, Eugene is illustrated as an extreme religious man who is very devoted to Catholicism. The best example is his total rejection of any other traditional beliefs. His father for instance is a traditionalist not a catholic. Eugene judges that his father is a heathen; as a result he completely cuts his relationship with him. He says: "I don't like to send you to the home of a heathen, but God will protect you." (Adichie; 2003: 63). Eugene sometimes forgets that he is only a human, as Ifeoma asserts:

Eugene has to stop doing god's job. God is big enough to do his own job. If god will judge our father for choosing to follow the way of our ancestors, then let god do the judging, not Eugene. (Ibid: 96)

Moreover, in society Eugene acts as a generous and respectable man, who financially supports his friends. However, his image is completely contradictory when it comes to the way he treats his wife and children. Eugene wants to reflect the perfect family; his standards towards his family are impossibly reachable. In other words, Eugene is obsessed with the Western culture. Kambili asserts: "Aunty Ifeoma, said once that Papa was too much of a colonial product." (Ibid: 14). Eugene wants to adopt colonizers' language, behavior and culture. For instance, Eugene does not speak Igbo language; he rather prefers to speak English with a British accent because it procures him a certain privilege in society, and it makes him civilized. Kambili claims:

He asked, entirely in Igbo. A bad sign. He hardly spoke Igbo, and although Jaja and I spoke it with Mama at home, he did not like us to speak it in public. We had to sound civilized in public, he told us; we had to speak English. (ibid: 14)

In addition, Eugene is related to patriarchy in terms of his extreme violence towards his wife and children. He is a man who wants to control everything. He does not hesitate a second to harm and hurt his beloved ones, especially when he perceives that they have done a sin or they have not followed the rules correctly. Eugene believes that his violence is justifiable. He never seems to question his behavior. Furthermore, he imposes his rules and his beliefs on his children and wife, and he even forces them to be alienated from the others. He explains his authority as a duty he has to accomplish to reach his road into heaven. His extremism is illustrated in the novel as follows:

Kambili, you are precious.” His voice quavered now, like someone speaking at a funeral, choked with emotion. “You should strive for perfection. You should not see sin and walk right into it.” He lowered the kettle into the tub, tilted it toward my feet. He poured the hot water on my feet, slowly, as if he were conducting an experiment and wanted to see what would happen. He was crying now, tears streaming down his face [...] that is what you do to yourself when you walk into sin. You burn your feet. (Adichie; 2003: 194)

This demonstrates how Eugene is blinded by religion. He believes that his children are precious; consequently, they have to act perfectly without injuring his ego and of course themselves. Eugene is indoctrinated by religion, that he does not realize how terrific and painful he is towards his family.

Moreover, Eugene abuses mentally his family. It is important to mention that he is an intellectual person, he is also politically active in the sense he is disposed to criticize in his journal **The Standard** the corrupted government of his country. Subsequently, Eugene becomes a veritable tyrant to his family. His status pushes him to be arrogant and prideful. Additionally, he thinks he is the only one who is rational enough to pave the way for reason and faith. He claims: “everything I do for you, I do for your own good.” (ibid: 196). This shows how African men even intellectuals remain governed by traditions.

Chimamanda Addichie also shades the light on how Eugene oppresses his wife to the level where she is inept to express her pain. Beatrice as a woman and as his wife is not allowed to interfere or to complain when Eugene exercises his violent acts either on herself or on her children. His brutality lingers on her; as a result, she becomes static.

In **The Second Sex**, Simone De Beauvoir states: “clearly man wants woman’s enslavement when fantasizing himself as a benefactor, liberator, or redeemer.”(de Beauvoir; 1949: 237). That is to say, women’s imprisonment is the only way for a man to prove his worth, and eventually it represents a sort of advantage in terms of expressing his power and privilege. In the novel, Eugene’s oppression goes beyond his desire of being an authoritarian figure. Despite the fact of being a devoted catholic, Eugene sometimes seems to not recognize the weight of his extreme violence and from **Purple Hibiscus**, we learn that he had received the same acts of punishment from the Catholic Church.

Eugene’s character personifies the brutality and the inequality of a patriarchal society. His temperament and actions are related to the way society and religions perceive a man. Through **Purple Hibiscus**, we learn more about the injustice and inequality that women face in any conservative society. The novel confirms that patriarchy is a burden for men. First because it puts women in an inferior position and it obliges them to stay immanent and silent. Secondly, it obliges men to fit the expectations of the patriarch who isolates them from freedom. For instance Jaja rebels against his authoritarian father, because he is no longer able to stand the violence and abuse he has on him. Jaja states: “Then I will die. Fear had darkened Jaja’s eyes to the color.” (Adichie; 2003:07). From this, we understand that Jaja’s fear does not prevent him from telling the things he wants to say. He also does not seem to share the same ideals with his father, especially when it is related to religion. His grandfather is a traditionalist but Eugene considers him as a heathen, as a result he forbids his children to have

any contact with him. In the novel, Jaja says: “if we’re thirsty, we will drink in your house.” (Adichie; 2003: 67). This shows that Jaja is against the extremist ideology of his father.

Through Eugene, Chimamanda Adichie demonstrates how harsh and unfair gender inequality can be. In the novel, Eugene over uses his position and power in order to maintain things in control. He does not let his children express themselves because he knows that they might disagree with his ideas. Additionally, he is the embodiment of oppression and violence. However, in **Purple Hibiscus**, the death of Eugene symbolizes the death of patriarchy. Chimamanda Adichie wants to give a new beginning for Nigerian women. In a way or another, she demonstrates that African women’s oppression leads to resistance and at the same time to freedom.

Adichie’s novel also confirms that what is taken by power will eventually be regained by the same force and violence. Patriarchy is not the ultimate solution for a society to prosper, but women’s revolution will always be needed in order to challenge all the forms of oppression whether it is related to society or to male dominance.

Lastly, Susan James in *Complicity and Slavery in the Second Sex* (2003) in the Cambridge companion to Simone De Beauvoir argues: “freedom can only exist between equals who are not bound by relations of dependence” (James.2003:165). That is, freedom can never be bound to any type of authority. As it is the case for women’s emancipation and freedom. **Purple Hibiscus** depicts the nightmare of African women, but it also gives hope in the sense that women will always find a solution to proclaim their empowerment. Patriarchy is just an obstacle that women have to face in order to be completely free.

V. General conclusion

This piece of research has allowed us to explore and to analyze the image of women in the works of the two African writers, Flora Nwapa and Chimamanda Adichie. The representation of women differs from one novel to another but this does not mean that they do not share similarities.

In Flora Nwapa's **Efuru** (1966), the protagonist female character is represented as being simple with no intellectual level, but she challenges patriarchy with her strong and brave personality. In a Nigerian society where men are represented as the alpha, women have rarely the ability to be self-reliant. In **Efuru**, women are independent because of the way they perceive things. They do not wait for a man to be important and significant. They are illustrated as hard workers who are financially independent, and this adds something to their defiance of patriarchy. Other female characters are on the contrary represented as weak and dependent. They see that a man is a priority; as a result, they find themselves tied to patriarchy. Ajanupu is the only woman who is not afraid to show her devotion and loyalty to the every decision that Efuru makes. She is a traditionalist but at the same time she promotes change and independence.

In the subsequent chapter of our work, we have demonstrated that men in a patriarchal society are given all the rights to be cowards and selfish. In the novel, men are irresponsible; they left their families, wives and children without a hint of culpability. However, at the end of the novel, Flora Nwapa shows her optimism towards women's choice to be free and independent.

Throughout this work we have shown that contrary to Flora Nwapa's **Efuru** (1966), Chimamanda Adichie's **Purple Hibiscus** (2003) shows the chaotic impact of patriarchy on certain women, and it also demonstrates how powerful and resilient Nigerian women are. The

novel intends to reveal the importance of resistance to women who are enslaved in ‘**Immanence**’. Each female character in the novel is resilient and wants to liberate herself from the heavy weight of oppression. Each one of them uses different ways to reach her independence. Chimamanda Adichie’s **Purple Hibiscus** depicts the nightmare of women in a patriarchal society but it also gives hope and strength to them. The road to freedom is filled with many obstacles but Adichie succeeds in redefining women’s position, and throughout her novel she gives another glimmer of light to those Nigerian women who are oppressed and persecuted, but still fight for their independence.

Through the two respective works, we have demonstrated that women live in an unfair society where they are blamed for the smallest thing they do to change their situation. Patriarchy and men’s power lead women to be fearless and resilient when it comes to their independence. The two notable works converge on the idea that women’s freedom and happiness is an undeniable right. They also share the message that women are not born to be men’s servants, but they are born to be fighters. That is, they have to manage and fix their lives no matter how harsh and difficult life can be. Women should always fight for what is necessary important to their development and evolvement in society.

Our paper scope does not allow us to deal with all the issues that bind Flora Nwapa and Chimamanda Adichie. So, we invite other students to discuss these two eminent writers from different perspectives. In fact, some can treat the theme of tradition and modernity in Nwapa’s **Efuru** (1966) and Adichie’s **Purple Hibiscus** (2003) as it is a recurrent theme in both novels. We also suggest that some students treat of the affinities between the two writers’ novels. For instance, Nwapa’s **Never Again** and Adichie’s **Half of Yellow Sun** from a feminist perspective.

Bibliography

Primary sources

-Nwapa, Flora. (1966). Efurū, London: Heinemann publishers

-Adichie, Chimamanda (2003). Purple Hibiscus, North Carolina: Algonquin books. Available from: <https://www.pdfdrive.com/purple-hibiscus-books.html>

Secondary sources:

- Adichie, C. (2014). We should all be Feminists, London: Harpet Collins. Available from: [https://people.unica.it/aideesu/files/2019/11/Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie We Should All Be Femini z-lib.org_epub.pdf](https://people.unica.it/aideesu/files/2019/11/Chimamanda_Ngozi_Adichie_We_Should_All_Be_Femini_z-lib.org_epub.pdf). Accessed: November 2019

- Amouzou, A. (2006). Reconceptualizing Gender in Nigerian Literature: The Dynamics of Womanist Ideology in Flora Nwapa's Fiction. Togo, vol.007 N° 1. Revue du CAMES. <http://http://greenstone.lecames.org>

- Bergoffen, D and Burke, M. (2004). The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Stanford: Metaphysics Research lab, Stanford University. Available from: <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/beauvoir/#toc>. Accessed: 27 march 2020

-Bruneau, C. (2018). How do Patriarchy and capitalism jointly reinforce the oppression of women? , Belgium: CADTM. Available from: <https://www.cadtm.org/How-do-patriarchy-and-capitalism-jointly-reinforce-the-oppression-of-women>

-Card, C. (2003). The Cambridge companion to Simone de Beauvoir, Cambridge: The Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge. Available from: <https://www.cambridge.org/core/books/cambridge-companion-to-simone-de-beauvoir/74C8289BBBA4BE0B5532A97B498ADA50>. Accessed: may 2006

- De Beauvoir, S. (1949). The Second Sex, New York, Vintage Books. Available from: <https://www.pdfdrive.com/the-second-sex-e17304814.html>

- Hooks, B. (2000). Feminism is for Everybody, Massachusetts: South end Press. Available from: https://www.academia.edu/37728792/Bell_hooks_feminism_is_for_everybody_pdf

-Kwatsha, L. (2015). The portrayal of Single Women in Selected African Literary Texts, South Africa: LITERATOR. <https://literator.org.za/index.php/literator/article/view/1209/1882>. Accessed: 30 November 2015

- Mears, M.D. (2009). Choice and Discovery: An Analysis of Women and Culture in Flora Nwapa's fiction. [Online] <https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/2099/>. Accessed 25 March. 2009
- Okereke, G.E. (1997). Raising Women's Consciousness towards Transformation in Nigeria. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, p.28-29-30
- Oshindoro, M. (2019). 'Solidarity between Women in Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus', Online available from: <https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/>. Accessed: 08 February 2019
- Sanjo, O. (2018). An Ecofeminist Study of Flora Nwapa's Efuru, Ethiopia: IJAH: An International Journal of Arts and Humanities. Available from: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/An-ecofeminist-study-of-Flora-Nwapa%E2%80%99s-Efuru-%E2%80%99-Sanjo/bd77b173166c431a878ce796524c35ec7d4e5434>. Accessed: 10 September 2018
- Tunca, D. (2009). Ideology in Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's Purple Hibiscus: English text construction. Available from: <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/Ideology-in-Chimamanda-Ngozi-Adichie's-PurpleTunca/8a70c9444b552f29ac1b570f1b901be36be01791>. Accessed in: 1 January 2009
- Williams, R. (2004). Review of Purple Hibiscus, Zimbabwe: weaverpress. Available from: <https://weaverpresszimbabwe.com/reviews/24-purple-hibiscus/73-review-of-purple-hibiscus-by-ranti-williams>
- Wosu, k. (2017). Binary Constructs: Gender and Power Relations in Chimamanda Adichie's Purple Hibiscus. Online. Available from: http://gender-power.amu.edu.pl/JGP_Vol_8_No_2_E.pdf Accessed: 2 November 2017