

Dedication:

To my beloved family: parents, brother, sisters, and grandparents.

Tinhinane

To my beloved family: parents, brothers, sisters, and grandparents

Zina

Acknowledgement:

First, we thank Allah for the strength and patience he has given us to finish this work.

We would like to express our deep gratitude to our supervisor Mr. KHELIFA for his advice, guidance, patience and help to finish this research work.

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Abstract

Our research paper highlights the different representation of African women in Nigerian postcolonial and patriarchal society through analysing the work of Flora Nwapa's Efurú. The aim of our dissertation is to depict womanism in the Igbo society. In this dissertation, we have analysed different issues like positive companionship; mothering and nurturing in Flora Nwapa's work Efurú. In order to reach our purpose, we rely on the theory of Africana womanism developed by the African American writer Cleonora Hudson Weems in her work entitled Africana womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves published in 1993. The work comprises discussion of two important sections. First, we have studied woman's attitude towards positive companionship and sisterhood focusing on the protagonist Efurú and other characters in Nwapa's work Efurú. In the second section, we have explored the importance mothering and nurturing for the African woman's identity, emphasising on Efurú. After analysing the work, we have come to the findings that Nwapa is a womanist writer who deals with women's issues and daily life struggle in postcolonial and patriarchal society. Finally, we have supplied a conclusion that restates our main findings in relation to our issues.

Key words:

African women, positive companionship, sisterhood, motherhood, family centeredness, independence.

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I-General Introduction

One of the elements that build the relation between the members of society is the positive companionship. It consist on feeling a sense of closeness being with another person such as the closeness of couple, children and their parents, even between members of society.¹ Motherhood is also considered the main element in building a comprehensive family. It is due to motherhood that the family grows.²

In this dissertation, we aim to discuss the notion of positive companionship, mothering and nurturing the Nigerian community, and how it are constructed in Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*. It deals with the notion of positive companionship, mothering and nurturing .So, we have raised companionship and motherhood in *Efuru* as main issues that focuses on the women's living, sufferings, and their problems in the Nigerian culture. In this dissertation, we are going to discuss this novel and focus on how companion and motherhood are portrayed in a postcolonial African country. This will be indicated by taking Nigeria as a concrete example of post colonial and a patriarchal country. Our emphasis is to discover how these issues of companionship and motherhood are treated by man and woman in Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* which is the first novel to be written by an African woman, and internationally published .In order to understand more how women are seen in a male dominant society; this will be related to the issue of companionship and motherhood from a womanist point of view in Nwapa's *Efuru*.

In addition, we are going to focus on the heroine Efuru and her relation with other characters, How Flora Nwapa describes their connection to each other in her novel. Africans are known for their good relationship between each other as brothers and sisters .Sisterhood is a strong connection between African women especially the Igbo ones .It lasts forever and brings a sense of belonging to people; this is very important for women living in a male dominate society to band together for a strong community .³ Flora Nwapa is highlighting the

inner strength of her female characters showing that a woman can have her own mind without depending on man and be useful for her own family, herself and community in general. They challenge the society controversy for the status of African women.

In this context, Flora Nwapa wrote her first novel in English in the language of the coloniser, in which she raised many issues. The novel *Efuru* shows the importance of positive companionship and motherhood in the life of Igbo women. This work is concerned with an Igbo female, who used to live in a small village in colonial West Africa. She used to be an independent-minded and respected woman. Nwapa represents her protagonist *Efuru* carefully, her resistance to her hard conditions of her life made her a strong African woman. In this study, we are going to explore the question about positive companionship, mothering and nurturing.

a-Review of Literature

Nwapa's work has already received many critiques in terms of stylistic and thematic studies. *Efuru* was criticised by many writers since her date of publication 1966. For instance, Adewale Maja-Pearce argues in his essay entitled *A Study in Misplaced Hostility that Efuru* seems like something that we cannot change, it is an unchallengeable work.⁴ In addition, we find Eustace Palmer who accuses her in one of his works about including and mentioning too much details about the life and behaviors of the Igbo people saying that: « the novel could quite conveniently have been this length (281) »⁵ For him it is full of unnecessary information; and a good work is the one that contains the most important ones, this what attracts the reader's attention, otherwise he will be bored. He adds that the author does not master her craft which means that she has no experience a lot of things to learn about writing and doing more efforts in writing from others arguing that "it is obviously a first novel."⁶ This

is can be noticed by any reader through her use of a simple style and techniques .The novel lacks coherence and fluency.

Grace Ogot is another criticiser from Kenya who sees that *Efuru* by Flora Nwapa reflects the women's conditions of life of that period of the many novels that are coming out of Nigeria, *Efuru* is one of the few that portrays vividly the women's world.”⁷Also Solomon Ogbedel yasere,agreed with Grace Ogot in his essay African critics on African literature, he classified *Efuru* in the category of the novels in which political and sociological realities are presented and elaborated densely by the novelist .It means that the novelist narrates real events around her that the Nigerian peoples struggle every day. Dr Louisa Uchum Egbunike considers *Efuru* as a departure point for African female's writing, since it is the first novel to be written by a woman writer. ⁸ This foundational text has influenced not just the subsequent generation of African writers, but also Nwapa's contemporaries. She encouraged many other females to express their ideas, feelings, and emotions without being afraid, and it is noted that since the publication of the novel 1966, there is a steady growth in African women's writing.

Finally, in terms of style that is used by the author in writing her novel, Naana Banyiwe blamed Flora Nwapa for her use of dialogue as a stylistic element of the novel in her discussion .The dialogue may be the right choice in some situation, but it is not required in the entire novel.“The constant banter of women reveals characters as much as it paints a comprehensive, credible Social canvas against which *Efuru's* life can be blessed”.⁹

b-Issue and Working Hypothesis

Flora Nwapa deals with women's world in her work *Efuru*, their daily routine and the different obstacles that they may face in their life. Despite the fact that many writers wrote about Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, little attention was paid to the study of the positive companionship and mothering and nurturing .In the work that is used for this research, the mother of African literature Flora Nwapa depicts the Igbo culture in her independent country Nigeria .We

hypothesise that the author focused on positive companionship between the Igbo and her main character through the way she depicted her. So, our assumption is to analyze *Efuru* from a womanist perspective exploring the issue of positive companionship, mothering and nurturing .

c-Methodological outline

Our dissertation will be composed of two chapters. We start with a general introduction in which we gave general ideas about positive companionship in the Nigerian culture by referring to Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, and her depiction to Efuru as mother and other qualifications which made her an Africana woman.

We have chosen Clenora Hudson Weems's theory Africana Womanism, on which we refer to some writings of the work in order to discuss the issue that we have raised in working hypothesis section .We have relied on the book *Africana womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* of Clenora Hudson Weems to understand positive companionship and mothering and nurturing .

On the other hand, the section of results contains the different findings of our research whereas in the discussion we are going to focus on the study of the positive companionship between the Ibos (man and woman) and with others in Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, also the issue of mothering and nurturing. Finally, our dissertation ends with the general conclusion that restates the different issues rose in this research.

II-Method and Materials

A-Method

The novel *Efuru* encapsulates Nwapa's defending women's rights in postcolonial and patriarchy society , also her point of view concerning the issue of positive . In order to understand more our topic, we find that we have to present the theory on which we relied on in this research.

We deploy Clenora Hudson Weems's womanist theory *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves* explores the injustice, problems, and oppressive life of the African women. This work is composed of two main parts, the first one is concerned with the theory Africana Womanism that she developed. Africana Womanism is a term used for the first time in 1980 by Clenora Hudson Weems as an ideology applicable to all African women. According to Eagleton ideology means the complex of socially determined beliefs, ideas constitute a particular culture.¹⁰ It is grounded in the African culture, it focuses on the main experiences, needs, desires, struggles, and examines the status of African women wherever they are. This theory outlines the different experiences, struggles, of Africana women, separating them from other women of colour and of course white women. Clenora Hudson Weems in her theory established a cultural identity, in which she shows how class, race, and gender must be ranked in the fight of women against racial dominance.

The second part is concerned with the four novels *Hurston's Their Eyes Were Watching God*, *Ba's So Long a letter*, *Marshall's Praise song for the widow*, *Morrison's Beloved*, *Mc Disappearing* on which she applied the eighteen main characteristics of Africana Woman, that forms the theory of Africana womanism. They are (strong, self-manner, self-definer, family-centered, sisterhood, with male during the liberation struggle; whole, authentic, role player, respectful, flexible, spiritual, recognized, respecting the elders, ambitious, mothering, nurturing, adaptable).¹¹

In this theory, Weems emphasises on the realities of the African society. Through her creation of this ideology, she attempts to separate African women's from feminism, African male writers, and even from black feminism. She treats gender issues but without being in relation with feminist activity. In her work *Africana Womanism: Reclaiming Ourselves*, she tends to characterise the Africana woman by some main characteristics that the Africana woman should have. These distinguishing features are: Mothering: is to be a mother, the

process of raising your children. Nurturing: it has nearly the same meaning with mothering; it means to protect someone and to be responsible about him. Adaptable: the ability to adjust to different conditions of life and circumstances. Strong: having the power, or be able to resist against other forces, and pressure. Self-manner: is your own of acting and behaving. Self-definer: is the act of knowing who you are and the purpose of your life. Respectful: is the act of showing respect to something or someone. Flexible: to be ready and capable of bending easily without breaking. Spiritual: affecting the human soul as opposed to material or physical things. Recognised: is to accept something or someone for a quality or a position. Ambitious: is to have a dream to achieve all your goals. In addition, family centered, her family must be very important and the central point of her life. Role player means that they have to assume her roles as family and a society member, and respecting elders.¹²

Her relation to men based on some point that the theorist intended to explain in her book. The first one is that African women do not see the other sex as their primary enemies as the feminists do.¹³ The second one is that they do not consider their husbands as their own property, which is the case with the feminists who think that their husbands is their rights, and refuse to share it with any other woman. White men had the power to oppress their white women, also African men oppresses their women; they are also oppressed by the white society. So, Clenora Hudson Weems encourages the two sexes to work together and share the responsibilities to complete each other for exceptional results.

Hence, African womanism seems to be the most appropriate approach to explain the issue of companionship and mothering nurturing in Igbo society, and the representation of Efuru and other women characters as symbols of freedom, goodness, and progress in her society, because Clenora Hudson Weems identifies and contextualises the different experiences of African women to establish their identity in relation directly to her ancestry and their lives, struggles to prove themselves, and their relationship between each other as

women and with men counterpart. She refuses the idea that sees all men are perpetrators, and the Africans are different from the Europeans.

Africana women is confronted against sexual discrimination, race and class fought against Africana male chauvinism. Africana women hoped to be liberated to the community, responsibilities and its families.¹⁴

B-Materials

a-Biography of Flora Nwapa:

Florence WanzuachNkiru or Flora Nwapa is the first African woman novelist, born in Nigeria. She was lucky in attending school of her town Oguta . In 1953, at the age of 22 years, Nwapa entered university of college Ibaden , where she got BA degree . After that she travelled to Scotland and gained in Edinburg University her diploma in education.

She is the first African female to write in English and internationally published. It was Albert Chinualumgo Achebe who supported and helped her to succeed. Her first work was *Efuru* in 1966 at the age of 30 years. It was followed by other novels such as *Idu*, *Never again* (1975) , *One is enough* (1981) and *Women are different* (1986) . She also published two collections of short stories and many books of children. In addition, she was an essayist and playwright. Her works reflect the Nigerian society and culture. She gives a realistic image about gender issues in patriarchal society.

In (1974) , Flora Nwapa founded Tana Press , in (1977) she built her own company publishing her own and others literature , in order to inform and educate women all over the world about the important role of women in society. In the beginning, of her literary career, she had no interest in feminism, because she felt it was against men; but later on, she came to term it. She preferred to be called a womanist. In her different works, she was defending women by using them as characters. Her aim is to struggle for their independence, confronts the unjust of cultural practices, and the different problems of the African women. She always

describes women in her works as self-reliant and hardworking which is the case in this novel *Efuru*.¹⁵

b-Summary of the Novel

The story turns around Efuru, a strong and pretty African woman, who falls in love with the poor farmer Adizua. She elopes with him because he can not pay the dowry. Consequently, she supports him financially and was a very good wife for him. Her mother in law and aunt by marriage are very fond of her. She accepts to help around her house by a girl named Ogea, because she is poor. After years of their marriage, Adizua abandoned Efuru. He did not even come to bury his only daughter. Efuru discovers that he married another woman and had a child with her. She tries to look for him but she fails. So, she decides to leave his house and return to her father, who received her happily. Then, Efuru meets Gillebert, her childhood friend. He asks her to marry him, and she accepts. At the beginning, they were very happy but Efuru is not able to conceive children; this caused problems. Later on, she is chosen by goddess of the lake, Uhamiri to be one her worshipers. Efuru's second marriage also fails, so she left her husband who accuses her of adultery.

III-Results and Discussion

This dissertation reached two major findings, the positive presentation companionship in Efuru(1966), and Efuru as an independent womanist protagonist. The major findings of this analysis provide the cultural milieu of the Nigerian author Flora Nwapa. The first section deals with the positive companionship between the characters of novel.

As we have seen, Flora Nwapa 's *Efuru* deals with the story of Efuru who wants a real family and her career at the same time. She is an example about the daily problems and the woman who struggles in front of her two husbands for a better life of all the family. She is a good companion, sister, and helper for people around her. She does not always follow the

traditions of her society, but she is very useful for her family, friends, and society. African women and men were among the most exploited people around the world. Black women are oppressed by their traditional society, also by the white culture so, they are doubly oppressed. This is why their relation between each other is important not just for women but also men. For the development and progress of the country, the two genders must work together and give all the talents that they have in complementary context to achieve the goals.

In the second section the main results are Efurú as a mother, nurturer and successful African woman. The central character of Flora Nwapa's novel, Efurú failed in getting a real lover husband; despite the fact that she succeeded in her roles as a daughter and wife. She is a role player but she did not conceive enough children. Although, she is not an educated person, she is very intelligent young girl, she is a successful business woman. Efurú builds herself and her husband's finance. She shows that a man can fail and a woman can achieve the goal. Flora Nwapa tends to represent the Nigerian women, as a symbol of struggle in their daily life that they face as an example of patriarchy and postcolonial state. Efurú is a self-assertive, self-respecting and a resilient African woman.

Flora Nwapa's work is a womanist novel, because she concentrates on some common issues such as companionship, motherhood, family life and home. She tends to depict her main character positively and shows her as an active agent of change through narrating her life as a common Igbo woman. It is more her realisation of her beliefs in African Women power which is based on equal rights for women and men. Efurú as an African woman fights to contribute to improve the status of woman by creating her identity; however, she expects from her husband to be so proud of her.

Finally, our general conclusion acknowledges how Efurú found her own identity at the end of the novel, becoming an adherent of Uhamiri the goddess of Oguta Lake, after accepting her journey of childless, fatherless, and husband-less. Relationships comprise a

core part in Efuru's life. Positive companionship and sisterhood are very important concepts that brings to our protagonist plenty of laughs and help in her tough times. She tends to be a good companion, a sister and helper to challenge the harding conditions of patriarchal society. She fails in her mission as a mother , but she appears as powerful woman. Efuru is an independent minded woman, role player, caregiver. She is a concrete instance through her independence and a symbol of survival and resisted to a social pressure even during the colonial period.

Endnotes

¹ Joel James, *The Companionship principle*

² «The representation of motherhood in Flora Nwapa's Efuru 1966, Bushi Emecheta's The Joys of Motherhood (1979), and Chimamanda Adich'i's Purple Hibiscus (2003) <https://www.acamidia.edu>

³ Trenton (NJ): Africa World, Press, 1998 *Feminism and Power: From Africa to the Diaspora*.

⁴ A Maja - Pearce, *Flora Nwapa's Efuru: A Study in Misplaced Hostility* p10

⁵ Ibid p10

⁶ R. Abedelsalam Anwar Mohamaed, Breaking the silence: Efuru by Flora Nwapa. <https://fijhj.journals.ekb.eg>

⁷ Nick T.C.LU, "Between Tradition and Modernity: Practical Resistance and reform of culture in Flora Nwapa's Efuru"

⁸ Ibid

⁹ S. Kebdi, "The representation of motherhood in Flora Nwapa's Efuru 1966, Bushi Emecheta's The Joys of Motherhood 1979" <https://www.ummtto.dz>

¹⁰ Terry Eagleton *Eagleton, Ideology: Six types of ambiguity* P 280-288

¹¹ Clenora Hudson Weems's, *reclaiming our selves* 1993

¹² Oxford Ditionary

¹³ Clenora Hudson Weems, *reclaiming our selves* p 25-26

¹⁴ "Cultural Conceptualiwation of Women in Igbo proverbs" <https://www.ajol.info>

¹⁵ Emily Coolidge, "Biography of Flora Nwapa" by Emily Coolidge <https://www.sahistory.org.oz>

Chapter I: Positive Companionship and Sisterhood in *Efuru*:

Introduction:

People are primarily sociable; they always seek for physical and emotional contact with others. Relationships are the enduring connections and associations between two persons or group of people. There are many kinds of relationships blood, marriage, and emotional ones that involve different feelings. Positive companionship (between husband and wife) also sisterhood are among these connections that are very important in their daily lives. So, this chapter serves to study positive companionship in Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*.

A-Positive companionship in *Efuru*

Companion relationship is a relationship between adults that live together as a couple who can be related by family. Positive companionship refers to friendship, company, or the state of being with another person in a friendly way with whom you spend time. It is also a positive social exchange process that involves pleasurable social interactions and the participation in shared works and activities that aim to provide mutual enjoyment.¹ This indicated in holly books such as Quran and the bible, in which The Lord God says: It is not good for the man to be alone; I will make him a helper suitable for him."² (The companion principle, 13) In this verse of the bible which explains human relationship. God designs the incompleteness of human being. Neither man nor woman can live alone. He always in need for help, he is in need of a suitable companion that is woman.

This idea of a positive companionship is well developed by Clenora Hudson Weems in her theory "Africana womanism is an ideology created and designed for all women of Africana descent. It is grounded in African culture, and therefore it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of Africana women."³ A great and good relationship requires work, also it needs vacations. Both things are quite important. Africana

women intuitively understand that to have a good relationship, you have to work at it and make some sacrifices. On the other hand men are born and educated with the knowledge that at your job is working outside . Men use to show their love to their wives and support their families by going away and bring something back to them. Any good relationship is built on some basic elements⁴ Superficial qualities like good looks and emotional availability are some of the early indicators of compatibility, there are more significant characteristics that women look for in a man they hope to spend the rest of their lives with. Clenora Hudson weems talks about this in her theory Africana Womanism in which she some different qualities that the Africana women want in a man saying that: “he is her lover, her friend, her protector.”⁵Love is that wonderful feeling that human being may know. It is a great interest that involves care, responsibility, and respect. There are many types of love but it is believed that the affection between partners is the most beautiful one .⁶“Meanwhile Efuru’s husband was in his room. He felt all the pain. It seemed as if he was circumcised.”⁷.He tends to show his love and sympathy to her.This is why our protagonist Efuru falls in love with Adizua. Weems adds that: she dreams of the perfect male companion, one who will love and cherish her and regard her as his equal.”⁸

Companionship and partnership go along with friendship that creates the glue which keeps the relationship for a long term. Friendship is a desired connection between men and women; because being a friend to your partner means treating her with patience, accepting manners in which you treat other close friends. Africana women need the men to be feminist allies in their lives means that men should recognise and acknowledge woman’s strength and respect her for all what she brings to their relationship.⁹

Unlike the European and American feminists, Africana women do not see the other sex as their enemy that they have to confront. Instead they try to work and help them facing the daily life problems caused by the real oppressor which is the European colonisers such as

racism which is a belief of superiority; doctrine that makes differences among group of people based on their biological differences. African women are fighting in front of their husbands for their rights. They participate in building the future of their continent. Development has been waving and all steps forward in order to win against complicated and obstinate resistance. Even societies are more peaceful where women are found.

Africans have analysed different sides of the fights of African women for political, economic, social development. In this context, Weems said “the Africana womanist recognizes her triple plight (racism, classicism, and sexism respectively) and realizes that her struggle has been intertwined with that of her male counterpart from early on. Together they have to combat the various forms of oppression in society.”¹⁰

Racism is an ideology of racial domination in which the cultural superiority of one racial group or more is used to justify their illegal treatments of other racial groups. The term race was used first to describe people and communities in the way now we understand national identity. Later on, in seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Europeans encountered the third world civilizations, Scientists and philosophers gave the word race the biological meaning during the enlightenment period.¹¹ Later on it is used to justify the state- sanctioned economic, social, and symbolic violence directed at blacks and other minorities. Symbolic violence means invisible power or violence exercised or imposed by greater social on those of subordinate group, it is Statements, discours engraved in the minds of people for example: women are weaker, less intelligent than men.¹² Weems says that: “for the majority of black women also racism has been the most important obstacle in the acquisition of the basic needs for survival”¹³

Another remarkable problem is poverty that colonialism caused. Its consequences is still in the period of post- colonialism and this is what Flora Nwapa portrays in *Efuru*. Poverty is not having enough money in order to meet the basic needs of a simple life like food,

clothing and shelter.¹⁴ Poverty is perceived in any part in *Efuru*. Many characters suffer from hunger. A woman said to Efuru “it is only hunger troubling us”, she replied “it is a good it is only hunger .Good health is what we pray for”.¹⁵ We understand from this that starvation is a part of their life and they no longer consider it a problem. Weems argues about this problem “For the majority of black women poverty is a way of life.”¹⁶

Women contribute to solve these economic and social problems like what Efuru did .Weems said: “From the south African women, who together with their men seek to liberate their country, comes an appeal to friends and supporters to raise their voices in their behalf.”¹⁷ Efuru as a Nigerian Igbo female does not cast men as her enemy, neither embrace the solution of an ideal world without men (separatist world of women), instead she embrace a principal of complementary which enable her with her man Adizua who is a small farmer, and even with her second husband. It is collaboration between the two sexes, working together, multifaceted challenges of postcolonial Nigeria. In that case Efuru said to him:“I would like you to leave the farm, but you have to wait until the harvest and you can come to town .Both of us can trade together.”¹⁸ Adizua left the village, since his harvest was very poor .So, he joins his wife, and decides to work together to earn some money .The couple have to work hard in order to survive in these miserable conditions in trading yams; they are the first to discover trade that year .It was a risky trade because of thieves; but they succeed to make profits.

The Africana woman is man’s partner, helpmate and comrade. She may sacrifice her personal pleasure; set standard of morality in order to maintain peace and order in the household. Thereby she crate necessary environment for her companion to think more about the economic filament of their family. Africana woman tends to be a source of inspiration to man for high Endeavour and worth achievements in life. She stands by him side in all his crises. She shares with him all attainments and successes. She is the person to whom African man turns for love, understanding, sympathy, recognition, and comfort. She is the symbol of

all good things purity, faithfulness and submission and devotion to her companion. For the development and progress of the country, the two genders must work and work together and give all the talents they have in complementary context to achieve the goals.

B-Sisterhood in *Efuru*

According to Meriam Webster sisterhood means the solidarity of women. It is the closest relationship between women.¹⁹ It is a special bond that is shared by women of the same society. Sisterhood and brotherhood are the spirits on which African socialism is grounded. Every one care for the other one. It is argued that African socialism as a stance of the mind where everybody carries for one another. Igbo cultural values characterised by sisterhood and brotherhood understanding, respecting each other and the elders, confidence, acceptance of hard working, and helping others. The principal of sisterhood manifest in different ways, good relationship between women and life sacred. This value enables them to know that the other women are her sisters human beings. This spirit inculcated from childhood so that as they grow up, their solidarity between each other become stronger.²⁰

Sisterhood relationship is a valued connection for Hudson Weems this is important in the life of Africana Woman, she recites that is “one senses the essence of this strong bond between the women.”²¹ She adds that :

Africana women in her collective struggle with the entire community, it enhances future possibilities for the dignity of Africana people and humanity of all. In short, the reclamation of Africana women via identifying our own collective struggle and acting upon is a key step toward human harmony and survival.²²

This kind of relation can be seen in *Efuru* Flora Nwapa’s work between the characters. *Efuru* plays an important role in her community; she use to be a good sister to many people around her especially for women, despite the fact that, they are derived from different families. In fact, she is a real sister, helpful, and respectful. In this term, the Nigerian writer and criticizer Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyeni, the professor of literature claimed that: “ Black womanism is a philosophy that celebrates black roots, the idea of black life (...) it’s ideal is

for black unity where every black person has a modicum of power and so can be a brother or a sister or a father or a mother to the others.”²³ African people help each other to face the colonizers oppression, and the consequences of colonialism. Colonisers destroyed all the countries’ economy; they brought the territories to the under development.

This sisterly relationship is viewed first of all between the protagonist and her co-wife Nekoyeni. As Hudson Weems claims: “sisterhood is another element in the character of Africana womanist . This is found in the genuine friendship between the protagonist and her confident.”²⁴ also that : «Africana women finds the order of her priorities in her struggle for human dignity and her right as a woman dictated by the genera».²⁵ Many studies reject polygamy for their believe of a bad relationship and conflict between the principal wife and the secondary ones. In many cases, the principal wife feels superior and the secondary wives are inferior. She thinks that she had power and a higher position in the family more than the other wives. On the other hand, the old wife may be afraid too about competition over the material resources that lead to a devise strategy, the division of days visitation made by the husband in order to avoid conflict between his wives because of sexual domain.

However, in this novel, co-wives relationship engenders the spirit of sisterhood, solidarity, and concern. Nekoyeni respects Efuru as a senior wife of Gillebert and as it is involved in Igbo culture. On the other hand, Efuru loved Nekoyeni and considers her as her little sister, since she is the only daughter of her mother. She considers her as a new member and a welcomed one in her family. In Igbo culture, the family is a very important unit, all their relations emanate from the family. For this, the child after his birth learns about the relations within the family that is based on respect and love. In polygamous marriages, some women feel uncomfortable with the new added wife, because in many cases the new, the younger, and the pretty wife who hold the sexual domain. Also, when they live in the same house, the problems are about the distribution of the household and between children.²⁶

Efuru and Nekoyeni lives in the same house peacefully, without any problems. They share the household between them and with Efuru's maid Ogea. In the evening, Efuru returns from work, she contributes in the homework like all the Igbo females cook for their husband, wash, etc She is the responsible at home as a senior wife with the help of Gilbert's mother for the satisfaction of all the family members. This is shown in the dialogue between Omirima and Amede saying that:

How is your new daughter in law? Oh, very well. Efuru is such a good woman. She does not make any trouble. She is taking great care of my son and Nekoyeni. That's what it should be in the beginning. You wait and see. No, they won't quarrel. They are both good and sensible.²⁷

Some co-wives underhand illegal activities to maintain or to preserve their position for the unquestionable authority and right of the first wife, unlike Efuru who is a very kind woman and helpful one. She does not use her power and position as a first wife against Nekoyeni; this is why Nekoyeni loves her and appreciates her. The relationship between the two is more collaborative than a competitive one. Efuru help her with the domestic chores and she is a lovely mother to Nekoyeni's baby. She takes the responsibility to raise the child; this is mentioned in the novel: "Nekoyeni was near, handing things to Efuru. Remind me to buy more powder tomorrow; this is nearly finished. Now, bring his clothes. My boy, how well you look."²⁸ Efuru knows that Nekoyeni is still young, she has no experience in nurturing and mothering that are great duties in woman's life which need comfort, support, protect, and help.

In African culture, the traditional values are supported the co-wive relationship; and govern their behaviours that are based on respect. They expect a good relationship a supportative one between them free of conflict. It is up to the husband to maintain peace in his house, between his wives and to educate his children on liking each other being sisters and brothers. In this situation, he must give everyone his rights and needs, share everything equally between them in order to avoid negative emotions such as jealousy, inferiority, and

superiority. This polygamous relation encourages to discuss challenge and ideas in relation to life and their marriage and to have a good conversation, having perfect and ideal women talk that will forge friendship and sisterhood bond. Studies of women's attitudes towards polygamy found that a majority of women prospecting (60 percent) indicated that they wanted to be in polygamous relationship because they could share duties of work and to have another woman to play and gossip between each other.²⁹

Efuru is a comprehensive and patient woman. She is very tolerant with Nekoyeni, although she has sometimes bad behaviours (childish ones). Efuru believes in polygamy and shares her husband with another woman does not cause any problem. She is confident; she trusts her husband. She understands that the love of her husband to her will not be less and divided but rather, she assumes that the husband loves each one in a different way like the mother who loves her children without worrying about the issue of divisibility of love; when she has her second child; this does not mean that she no longer loves her first baby. Everyone has his place in her heart. Each one has things that make them special in the eyes of her husband, not just the pretty and the younger who gains the love of the man, also the intelligent, faithful, and the wisest one. Efuru has all the qualifications that make her a good wife for her husband that any man dreams to have. What is known about the Igbo men is that they do not love women just for their beauty but also for their intelligence, gorgeous looking, and their cooking abilities like Efuru. Gilbert is very fond of her food telling that: "my dear wife the soup is very delicious, come and eat with me."³⁰

Nekoyeni and Efuru have no doubt between each other, this is generally what destroys any connection. The insecurity of the first wife is that the second wife is her replacement and he does not love her any more. The insecurity of the second wife is that the first wife is his love and he'll never love her as much as he loves his first. This is the biggest misunderstanding that leads to different clashes. In this novel, neither Efuru nor Nekoyeni

consider the other one as a threat for her; Nekoyeni values Efuru, she is in favor of her mother: “so I said, but my mother Efuru, said he looks like Gillebert.”³¹ as Clenora claims: “Africana women and men dismiss the feminist movement as a viable framework of their chief concerns.”³² This means that the feminist movement is not the suitable framework of the African society since there is difference in point’s of view towards certain subjects such as polygamy. Efuru likes her and treats her as sister who needs her in the hard journey of life that is full of obstacles and tricky conditions.

Efuru and Nekoyeni have a good connection; each one knows her duties and does her best to fulfill the rights of the other one. No one regard the other as her rival; far of all co-wives conflicts and clashes. They are more than friends, but sisters. A sister is not just blood sister but the real sister is the one who proves it really through her action, the one who cares about you, helps you when you need it, who seeks a good and a better life for the other one and advise her when it is necessary. In this context, a proverb recites that “Not sisters by blood but sisters by heart.”³³ Efuru advises Nekoyeni when it is required.

For instance, when their husbands Gillbert was jailed, because of his foolishness, Nekoyeni refused to trust him, she insists that he steals consequently he is jailed. Efuru tries her best to quieting her, and clarify things to her “Nekoyeni was not satisfied when Efuru told her that the story was not true. She threatened to leave but Efuru tried to calm her down.”³⁴ Efuru did her best to be in favour of Nekoyeni as her grand sister in order to uplift her spirit all the time and supporting her as the African proverbs say, “Being sisters you means you have always backup.”³⁵ In addition, “There is strength in sisterhood.”³⁶

a -Sisterhood between Ajanupu and Efuru

This sisterly connection is viewed also between Efuru and Ajanupu. Ajanupu is another main character in Flora Nwapa’s novel *Efuru* who is the sister of Efuru’s first mother in law Ossai. She is a talkative, a mother of seven children. Her actions in this novel are

reflective of the Igbo extended family relationship and community spirit with women. She is ready to help her neighbours and offer them useful advice on social and medical issues. She uses to be a doctor, nurse, economist, trader, great disciplinarian, a friendly sister for everyone. Efuru finds her in a favour of her dead mother who does not really know. She is the first one to discover the pregnancy of Efuru, after that she became her gynecologist until her delivery of the baby girl Ogonim. Later on, she became a pediatrician, after the birth of the baby. “She took Ogonim from Ogea and examined her closely. «She is getting better. Let’s give her the medicine again.”³⁷ She takes care of the baby’s health and well being, as much as her societal superstition and her educational level can allow her at that period.

Ajanupu is always a valid person whenever there is a problem, because Igbo people know that no one can live alone and togetherness is strength (Igwebuiké), or we are strong together. In their culture, no one exists for himself alone “to be is to be with others.»³⁸ If one person among them is left alone with the burdens of life, he will immediately die under the weight of it. When Efuru faces some terrible problems in her business; debtors refuse to pay, she goes by herself to collect the debts, with all problems associated with the job. Ironically, when her own creditors refuse in certain situation to pay and finding excuses to show up, she resists then finally giving in. “I am not leaving your house if you give me four pounds, nineteen shillings, eleven pence, half-penny. Do you hear?”³⁹ When Efuru loses her only daughter Ogonim, it is Ajanupu who stands solidly behind her all that period to console her, protects, and offers her opinions when it is necessary. «My daughter, please weep, weep my daughter, weeping will do you good, weep let your tears flow freely.”⁴⁰ she advises her to cry because she knows that it is good for her health. Scientific studies prove crying is cathartic behaviours that serves to relieve distress, reduce arousal, and even strengthen the immune system. She remains a friend, a sister, a strong ally of Efuru since her first marriage, and although she is no longer the wife of her nephew Adizua, it is Ajanupu who looks with Efuru

for a wife to her second husband Enebri. She midwives the delivery of Nekoyeni's baby boy. She is a strong-willed, courageous woman, and has a sense of justice. Even when Efuru's father Nwacheke Ogene died, she was by her side during her bad time. Her husband is not there to attend the burial of his wife's father. Then, Ajanupu returned from the great river to sympathise with her. She debates Efuru:

Efuru listen to me. Your father lived well, and died well. He was a great man, and he died great. Luckily for him, he had a daughter like you to bury him. Why are you sad about his departure? How many of his age-group members are alive today? I don't mean just alive, I mean really alive in the right sense of the word.⁴¹

Ajanupu with other women in the village are defenders of the village customs. They insist on certain traditional practices; for instance; children should greet their elders whenever they meet them to show respect to them. These women try to train the kids of the village, whether they are their own children or not. They behave in the same way with all of them without any exception. For example Ajanupu asks Nkoyeni Eneke to greet the adults telling that: "you must greet elders, my daughter. I know your mother very well. So when you see me next time, greet me. There is nothing in greeting."⁴² Greeting is one of the treasured core values that facilitate the interpersonal relationship and cooperative reality in Igbo culture.⁴³

Finally, it is Ajanupu's aid and trust her, saves Efuru's life from death and condemnation. Efuru suddenly falls sick, many healer men (dibias) accuse her of adultery, and her illness is a god's punishment for the sin that she has committed and her refusal to confess. Her husband Gillbert and his mother Amede believe the dibias accusation, whereas Ajanupu tends to defend her after her arrival to the scene. She is very annoyed because of Gillbert's attitudes towards Efuru's illness. They quarrel for a moment; Gillbert is angry about Ajanupu's words, then he makes the mistake of slapping her; she reacts to this by "getting hold of mortar pestle and broke it on Gillbert head."⁴⁴

Her action lands him in the hospital, where he remains many days until the end of the story. Ajanupu takes Efuru to Aba hospital where she receives her complete cure. Her assistance saves the life of Efuru; she supports her when her beloved persons disappointed her. Ajanupu is the type of women who is conservative to her community, because she is a good, kind person, and a traditional one with her mastery of their traditional practices and ceremonies.

C- Help in *Efuru*

Help is another framework by Weems on which she emphasises in order to maintain a good relationship with other people. She claims that: “The African womanist try to stand by their male counterpart and help them to maintain their pride”.⁴⁵ She should help her husband and even people around her. Help refers to the different actions that a person does to make something easier for him and this how good relations are built.⁴⁶

Efuru has a good heart; she is a generous person as we have previously explained; she is abundant. She helps the one who asks for her aid to face the miserable conditions of most people of her society that are caused by the coloniser or by nature (the different natural disasters that are caused by the climate change)which is the case with Nwosu the cousin of Adizua’s mother. He is a simple farmer who plants yams. This year, he lost all his yams because of the flood that destroyed everything, just little ones left. He sold them for a small amount of money. He did not make any profit, but he even lost his capital .So, the money is not the tenth of the money used for farming. Now, he cannot feed his family that is composed of five children with the parents of course. The court messengers came to demand taxes. His wife says to them that he is not at home but they will come again.

If he must pay, otherwise; he will be jailed. His debts were approximately thirty pounds . His wife cannot do anything to help him in his bad conditions; she had no money to trade in cassava. He asked his cousin to ask her daughter in law Efuru to save them and solve

their economic problems by helping them. He told her: “please ask her to take my daughter as her maid and give me ten pounds. At the end of the year we shall give her ten ponds plus four interests and take our daughter.”⁴⁷

This indicates that they are really in need; because he has courage to give his daughter to strange people. It seems more like an exchange; Efuru is their last hope to survive and avoiding starvation.

When Efuru is informed about their situation by her mother, she decides to meet them and listen to their propositions. So, they suggest taking their youngest daughter Ogea as a nurse for her baby girl since she is looking for one in order to return to face her trade. Efuru accepts to help them although they are strangers. she was educated by her father on having good morals, and facing bad things with good ones. She gave them the money with her husband refusing to take any interests. She understands the fact that no person became poor by giving, and doing good for others means feeling good too. Adizua told them:

My wife will give you ten pounds, at the end of the year you will give us ten poundsthat’s all what we want. When you give us our ten pounds, you shall have your child. If anything happens and you cannot afford to give us this money at the end of the year, let us know.⁴⁸

Nwosu thanked the couple very much for their goodness that he cannot afford all his. Nearly all the people are poor they live on agriculture. He answered :«Thank you very much Adizua, and thank you so much Efuru. You do not know what you have done for us today. Only God will repay you.»⁴⁹ His wife also thanked them very heartily. The money was counted and given to them. This is how Ogea came to Efuru’s home; this created a good connection between the two families. They really appreciate Efuru and her father who gave her such education. She is considered a model to be followed, her behaviours and actions seem to be a solution to their problems.

Help does not mean just giving money to someone but also offering a service in order to serve others; those who are less fortunate than you. Efuru cannot see others suffer especially when it is her family or friends. She immediately intervenes and does her best in order to make others happy and comfortable in their lives. She tries to be a good example to be followed by being kind and generous whenever she can. After the hard working in the farm harvesting yams, Nwosu became ill; it is a serious illness that knocked him down this time.

For many days, he lays on the bed. His wife Nwabata consulted a dibia or a wise man who gave her some leaves but it was cure-less. Igbo people use roots and herbs to make their own medicine since most of them do not believe in science. This is very significant to their lives; they think that they have a god dedicated to healing people and they had a social status for their healers. ⁵⁰So, the situation of Nwozu becomes worse. She went to Efuru and demands her assistance “he is very ill and I don’t know whether he will recover.” ⁵¹ She loses hope since the dibia or called also the eyes of the gods could not cure him. Efuru tries to calm her and convince her that everything will end in a good way and she replied to her: “I shall take him to see doctor Uzaru. I hear he will arrive from Onicha this evening.”⁵² She thanked her for her help. She is their last chance, since Nwabata cannot do anything for her husband; she is heavy with her children. Efuru goes to see whether the doctor arrived, he is there before her arrival.

Doctor Uzaru and Efuru grow up together. Efuru used to request the doctor’s mother to take her home; one day her parents’ accept. Then she moves to her home and lived there for several years. She learnt from the doctor’s mother sieving, cooking, and baking. When she was about fifteen years old, she came to her parents’ home. The doctor asked people about her after returning from Yabba higher college; Efuru was already married to Adizua. After a long discussion between the two; Efuru told him the purpose of her visit to him; he accepts saying : “All right bring him to see me when the sun goes down tomorrow.”⁵³ The next day, Efuru and

Nwosu arrive on time to doctor's house. So, he examines her, he informs Efuru that he needs an operation. Then, she sends him to hospital and she takes in charge everything and the operation is done successfully and Nowusu now is healthy. She argues that: "you were ill, and I sent you to hospital, I paid for everything."⁵⁴

She is a sister and assistant to all the poor people in her society without any exception like her neighbour in her father's home Nona. She brought her to the doctor because she was suffering from pain in her leg. The doctor sends her to Onicha's hospital in which, she will have an operation for her leg because of a bad sore. This is showed in the novel: "It was arranged and Efuru had to buy them a few things they needed like yams, fish, pepper and salt. She paid the fare to Onicha and gave Nnona a few shillings as a pocket money."⁵⁵

Nnona is cured and came back home. Nnona and her family went to thank Efuru "we have come to see you, Efuru, to thank you for what you have done for our mother. What you have done surprised everybody that we have no mouth to thank you."⁵⁶ Despite the fact that Nwozu and Nwabata do not pay Efuru's debt because of their poor harvest, they returns pleasing her to lent them some money for the new planting season requesting her : "please help us."⁵⁷ Efuru is nervous about them; they neither give her yams as payment for the ten pounds nor apologize for not being able to pay. Efuru provide money for Ogea's parents for the second time; she says: "will ten pounds be enough for you then."⁵⁸ Nnona faces nearly the same problem; it is a question of money. Her money are stolen fifteen shillings, six pence and halfpenny. She goes to Efuru weeping in order to narrate her story. Then, she gave her the money like it is mentioned in the novel: "Efuru opened it and brought out sixteen shillings. You take this."⁵⁹ Efuru finds real happiness in aiding others and this is shown through her words with Nonna's children: "I feel happy that I have made your mother happy."⁶⁰

Efuru has a good heart that wants good life for everyone without any sufferings. She always does her best to make things easier for them this is how sisters should be and behave.

“Women forget how much we can inspire one another. No one understands us like us.”⁶¹ Ogea is against Efuru’s decisions when she gives others money. She expressed her attitude through her discussion with Efuru: “if you continue giving people money in this way. They will take advantages of your generosity and worry all the more.”⁶² She is very afraid about her mistress. She thinks that people may take the opportunity of her goodness. Efuru understands this very well, she replies «I know it very well, but what can one do? It is difficult to deny these people anything.”⁶³ Efuru shares the same idea with the writer who argued in one speech that:

I don’t want to live in the kind of world where we don’t look out for each other. Not just the people that are close to us, but anybody who needs a helping hand. I cannot change the way anybody thinks, or what they choose to do, but I can do my bit.⁶⁴

Efuru is a very good person like her mother this is why Uhamiri chooses them to worship her. Her father loves his daughter very much more than his other children because of her virtue and her respect of the elders. Ageing is a natural process that human being can not substitute with anything, if God gives this honour to anyone to experience it. This gift of God is valued by the Igbo people the aged persons themselves and their care givers, parents make efforts to educate their children to value old age people, respect, and assist them. This is a common practice that young people provide care to their elders. A good atmosphere for elderly care is provided by the communal lifestyle of the traditional Igbo society, in terms of Igbo sense of brotherhood and sisterhood relationship. Couples have the philosophical idea which is that a child is a child of all not just of his parents but he is of all his community. On the other hand, children receive correction and discipline from any elder.

Efuru use to be even a good daughter for her father, although she is married with Adizua without seeking about his permission. He is not restless; he blesses her and gave her the freedom of choice and stands independent; when she returns to pay her bride price and to proclaim her marriage. Igbo people forgive their children and always try to correct their

mistakes. Efurú loves her father very much; she use to visit him nearly every day to ask about him especially during his last days; also to see whether his maid is really taking care of him. She is a good sister, a good daughter. She sets to be an example of a real Africana woman.

Conclusion

To conclude, all aspects of life are based on relationships that need a constant focus and attention. Relationships are not built in one day. It takes some time but investing on a healthy and successful relationship leads to a happy and satisfied bound which is the case of Efurú. Relationships comprise a core part of Efurú's life, because they determine how she deals with people around her. These kinds of relationships change in importance and quality as the person develops and matures. Sisterhood offers support and proximity and social status. Positive companionship provides her with husband, friends (people around her) brings her plenty of laughs and help her in tough times. Positive companionship and sisterhood have an influence in daily lives of Efurú; it is a service association or a group of friends. From this novel, we can deduce the importance of positive companionship between couples and sisterhood relationship in the life of Africana woman, which are good for health and not just physically but in companionship and sisterhood; women are empowered because in these connections. Every woman is essential and all the desires and emotions matters. In these relations women are supported this is what led them to talk or speak about a new sense of freedom, means that being yourself at one hundred percent.

Endnotes

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Chapter II: Mothering and Nurturing in Efuru

Introduction

There are many intricate dynamics involved with domestic mothers and nurses. Mothering and nurturing are complex roles, experiences full of responsibilities and varying emotions. They are societal roles that require complete devotion, including woman's sacrifice of their needs and desires. Africana women like Efuru play other roles inside or outside home to maintain her identity, establish mental and social stimulation. The aim of this chapter is to discuss the unlimited dynamics and responsibilities, roles that are associated with Efuru as mother and as an Africana woman.

A-Mothering and Nurturing in Efuru:

Marriages are unions between individuals in order to unite their lives economically and emotionally. Marriage is the act that unite the African families in order to complete this union; the couple should give birth to babies after a small period of their marriage.¹ Africana women give a lot of importance to motherhood. It is their dream to become mother, since they are educated on the fact that their success in life, is realised just after getting married and having children. In this context Hudson Weems argued: "To marry him and to have his children."² Hudson Weems in her theory focuses on mothering and nurturing as qualifications that should be in an Africana woman saying that: "And last but not least, nurturing and mothering."³ they are central concept in the life of any Africana woman; they are considered as their mission in life that have to achieve. In Igbo society in order to be a good woman, you have first to be a good wife and a good mother. It is a big manifestation to be a woman, because they play important roles in their relation.

Motherhood is undermined in many different ways for its value and meaning of sacrifice. It is a powerful word and experience that gives a new strength to the mother. In Igbo land, mothering and nurturing was powerfully valued. Women gain their place in society as full citizens, when they experience motherhood. It is given so much importance, because they know without motherhood, there will be no children which signifies the end of the community. Motherhood is exhausting, inspiring and giving a purpose to our life. It is a gift from God that not all females get. It is a holy journey that women will travel during their lives.⁴

Efuru like all Igbo women had a duty in a traditional society which is her role as a mother. After approximately two years from her first marriage with Adizua, she worries about not having children saying that: "I am still young; surely God cannot deny me the joy of motherhood."⁵ Efuru wanted children but at the same time, she believes that it is God's choice to give them children or not. But finally, she manages to have a baby; she is a girl. Efuru asked her father to find a solution for her problem. He is older than her; he experienced more in life. Effectively, he suggested seeing her friend who is a dibia. This term comes from an Igbo dialect that means a master of knowledge or a traditional healer.

In order to be a dibia, it involves years of training and many levels of initiation. The dibia asked her to do a sacrifice to the ancestors. Sacrifice is a traditional physical or spiritual thing that Igbo people do to affect their relation to their gods or ancestors when they did a sin (mistake) to purify land.⁶ Efuru did all what the dibia recommended her, after a year she became pregnant and gave birth to female child Ogonim. He informed her that you are going to have few babies which is the case. Efuru has her baby in a quiet manner. Her husband awakens when he hears the crying of the baby. He was very happy after realising that it is reality not a dream. He takes his daughter and says "welcome my daughter. Your name is Ogonim"⁷ Adizua and Efuru went to show thanks to the dibia that helped them. It is a

traditional custom and takes with them gifts. The dibia sees something wrong in many kola nuts, so he tells them to return, but unfortunately, he dies before their visit. Then, Adizua abandons her.

However, Efuru experiences the joy of motherhood with her daughter. She is very happy after her fulfillment of her role in her family and society. It is like a dream realised for her claiming that: “Is it really true that I have had a baby that I am a woman after all.”⁸As Clenora says: “she wants a complete family, not just him, not a baby.”⁹ Efuru finds her identity: “motherhood defines womanhood.”¹⁰ she is very close to her daughter, her feelings and emotions to her daughter exemplified what motherhood is. It is deeply valued for its different capacities nurturing, scarifying, and educating. Efuru was a good mother, a good woman, and a beautiful one after giving birth to a girl. She has self-confidence in herself. She finds her purpose and goal of her life and unconditional love.

Ogonim acts as a normal child eating, playing with her nurse Ogea and other children, even her birth and growing is normal for two years. Suddenly, she gets sick, she develops a fever. For many days, Efuru and Ajanupu are taking care of her waiting for her cure but she has a convulsion that led to her death eventually. Efuru saw this misery like losing a part of herself; it was her challenge in life claiming that:

Ajanupu, my daughter has killed me. Ogonim has killed me. My only child has killed me. Why should I live? I should be dead too and lie in state beside my daughter. Oh, my chi, why have you dealt with me in this way?? When Efurusaid tears rolled down her cheeks.¹

Now, it is the end of the joy of motherhood that she thought she wins at a certain moment. It an awful tragedy, Efuru’s life seems meaningless. Her dead baby was her reason of life. Motherhood means a lot for her not just it is an obligation in her society rather it is

more spiritual, and self hood. This death means clearly the end of her first marriage. Adizua does not return to the funeral of his daughter. It is the family who prepared for the burial.

Efuru in her second marriage tried to realise her dream of motherhood. She failed; she was not able to conceive children that would complete her livings. Igbo people give much importance to children because they believe that children will take care of their parents during their old age and the couple that did not conceive children will be lonely. All Africans are insatiably desirous of children. In every society they are considered a source of pride and joy; when children reach the age of about four or five, they are often expected to start performing a share of the household duties.

Even nurturing is found in this novel. Clenora Hudson weems argued that: finally, there is strong evidence of the Africana womanist as nurturer embodied.”¹² It is to feed, protect, and help a child to develop or provide him comfort. We may say that it is part of the mother’s role. Efuru promotes Ogea the daughter of Nwozu and Nwabata , when her parents bring her because the flood destroyed all their yams and they cannot care for all five children. She was ten years old, when her parents left her with Efuru. She started crying and refused to do anything. At the beginning, she was very soft with her later; she became very firm with her. This is does not mean she hates her: but rather, she loves her so much. So, Ogea settled in the house as a nurse of Ogonim, but the relation between Ogea and ogonim is more than this. Ogea uses to call Ogonim sister when she sings to her to sleep: “My sister sleep and don’t cry.”¹³Efuru was responsible about her like her daughter. She never distinguishes between the two.For example: “sometimes, she brought them grounds-nuts, oranges and pears.”¹⁴ She was really minded her better than her poor family that could not feed her. “Here you are, my child, try this on. I brought it today for only two shillings.”¹⁵ Ogea was very happy, she wore it and it fitted very well.

With time, Ogea became very fond of Efurū, she calls her mother. Igbo women are known for their kindness, and taking care not just of their biological children, but also those are around them, mostly the ones that are kept within their care. In fact, Efurū was in favor of Ogea in her bad situations, when all her beloved persons depart her. She feeds her, dresses her, and supporting her. Clenora adds: «Displays nurturing qualities, for she is unyielding in her tender care.»¹⁶ Ajunupu is against Efurū's treat ability with Ogea claiming that "you are spoiling Ogea. You just leave her to do what she likes."¹⁷

Ogea is now very happy in her new house with her mistress Efurū. She calls her mother, like what Suuny Gupta claims: "Sister is our first and second mother."¹⁸ She learns from her how to cook, to wash, and to clean. The success of a woman should be the inspiration to another one. We should raise each other up. Make sure you're very courageous. Be strong. Be extremely kind and above all be humble. Ogea now no longer misses her parents and does not care about them. Their absence or presence does not mean for her anything and it does not make any difference. She feels that she belongs to Efurū's and she is her family. As what is said in one proverb says: "my sister taught me how to live."¹⁹

a-Efurū as a Self-Definer and a Self-Manner:

Self-definition is the definition of the person's individuality or identity and his role in life and the purpose of his creation. Clenora Hudson Weems emphasises on self-definition and self-manner of Africana women saying that: "For she defines herself in her terms, despite the stares and harsh words of her neighbors. In her unconventional behavior, she is unrepentant thereby demonstrating self-actualization."²⁰ She adds that: "Among them is the protagonist's desire to name and define herself, which is demonstrated through the work."²¹ Flora Nwapa depicts her main character Efurū as a young and beautiful girl in her twenties, an

independent minded, self-definer, and self-reliant. Women are treasured by the choice they make. Efurú is a self-definer woman, despite the fact that she lives in a patriarchal society, she had freedom of choice.

The novel started with Efurú's decision to elope with Adizua, when he was unable to pay the dowry. "You will come to me on ikwo day. Every place will be quiet that day being market day. Take few clothes with you and come to me. We shall talk about the dowry after." agreed and went home feeling very happy and light.²² She defines herself, she chooses her husband. She refuses to let anyone or anything to control her future. As Clenora Hudson Weems claims: "She decides for herself who or what is good for her."²³ She is a woman of choice, very known in her village but for herself not because her father is the leader of their village but for herself: "Efurú was her name. She was a remarkable woman. It was not only that she came from a distinguished family. She was distinguishes herself."²⁴ Efurú and Adizua proclaim themselves as husband and wife without the permission of their families. Through this action, they contradict their traditions.

The bridegroom must visit the bride's home accompanied by his family, his father, or his older member in his family, if his father is absent or died. Then, he will introduce himself and his son, and explain the main purpose of their visit. On other hand the bride's father and her family welcomes the guests and invites their daughter and demanding her if she knows the bridegroom. Her affirmation shows that she accepts, then; the wine and kola will be served. They start to negotiate about the bride price that is an amount of money or presents or both that groom should pay of their future in laws at the beginning of their marriage. In most cases the groom pays just a symbolic price; and other necessities like (wine, kola nuts, goats, etc...). It may be paid in the moment, if both of them agreed about the price or usually in more one evening.²⁵

Flora Nwapa tends to depict Adizua as an irresponsible man; he could not pay the bride price which is a fundamental traditional norm and Flora Nwapa is supporting the Igbo traditions. Efuru went to Adizua's home; her mother in law was very happy, and welcomed her but at the same time she was worried about their actions which is against traditions. She said "you are welcome my daughter. But your father, what will you say to him."²⁶ there she replied "leave that to me, I shall settle it myself."²⁷ Her answer seems that she is a responsible woman who is assuming the consequences of her actions whether good or bad; also she knows that her father loves her very much. She is his only girl with his favourite and lovely wife so, he could not do something that will herds her. After a period of time, Efuru asked Adizua to comply the traditions; he visits Nwashike Ogene who greeted them and blessed their marriage. He understands the wish of his daughter, and gives her liberty to decide.

In Igbo culture, a woman after her marriage work with her husband. Efuru refuses to move to farm with Adizua who became very lazy after his marriage. He leaves the village and come to town at every opportunity. Efuru rejects working in agriculture with him; in contrast, she decides to stay in town with her mother in law and trade like many women do. She discarded the idea of farming. She told him: "go to farm, I am not cut out for farm work. I am going to trade."²⁸ Again her choice indicated a sense of independence and self-definition also that she understands her abilities and what suited her. Most of Igbo people are farmers; they cultivate many plants such as yams, melon, pumpkin and so one. Men were dominating agricultural activities like sowing, clearing land but even women had their own roles such as weeding and harvesting of plants and even the transportation of farm produce. When there was a lot of household in the farm and the family members became insufficient consequently child labor was used. In pre-colonial period, women played important roles in trading activities, they used to sell and buy main items such as palm oil, salt, fish, Cray fish and so

many other things in daily or periodic markets, there are many who moved home to home to sell their goods and productions.²⁹

Actually, the members of the community pointed that: “why does she remain in town and not come to the farm with her husband?” Farmer answered: “she refused to go to the farm. She is trading instead and I don’t blame her .she is beautiful. You would think the woman of the lack is her mother.”³⁰ On the one hand, people blamed her; on the other hand, they praised her for her beauty and good looking. Thus Igbo women during that period engaged in trade and contribute to commerce and in the economy in general of their country, since western education was limited to males over women. Flora Nwapa argued about people’s attitudes towards women and claiming that: “a woman who does not know how to trade (whether in short distance or long distance trade) in our town is a senseless woman. She is not a woman at all.”³¹ Not just Nwapa many other writers such as George Thomas Basden a Nigerian writer born 1873 died in 1944. He published two ethnography books on the Igbo people of Nigeria. He treated this subject adding that:

On the market days, practically the whole female population moves to the market place, either to trade or to enjoy the general entrainment such gathering afford. They are the most inveterate bargain hunters; indeed, marketing together with the preparation of food constitutes the chief occupation of the women. She was lawyer family gave her freedom to bring out her talent; just few women obtained such chance to improve themselves.³²

b-Ambition in Efuru

Many works about women and their position in the African antiquity agree that their status is inferior and low. In ancient times, women had no significant political, legal, social and economic rights. However, later it appeared that women perused ambitious; for example, the desire for wealth, politics, elegance and control of their families. African women were kept in the background. They had no right to do anything in private without the approval of their guardians; they were under the control of their fathers, brothers, or their husbands. Many

works affirm that African women before marriage were usually placed under the absolute control of the paterfamilias(the man is the head of a household, patriarchal society).³³After marriage she must be under the control of her husband who had power of life and death over her. This is shown in the novel of Achebe *Things Fall Apart* in which women are described as weak and subordinated .³⁴Ambition is being strong to do something or to achieve it, or it is determination to achieve success. In ancient and modern societies, ambition is a necessity for men and desirable part of life whereas for women it is generally associated with manipulation, egotism (the believe of superiority) and self-aggrandizement.

Many women in the world struggle to embrace their talent and ambition. Many people had a negative mindset about ambition which is that self- serving, competitive, Ego-driven and not comfortable with it. These beliefs create conflict and result in ambivalence about ambition. Efuru tends to struggle with the balance of motherhood and her career. Haydan Glass and Julie Fry argued about this idea in their article entitled *The Ambitious Woman* claiming that: “ambition is a fundamental and neutral human drive. It can lead us anywhere: to greatness, to a quiet happy life. Depending on how and where we direct it.”³⁵

Woman tries to perform many roles of a mother, a wife and an employee equally well; in order to combine between her work and her family life. Ambition is not a simple thing for Africana woman. Their personal lives might be a heavy weight on the goals. They have for themselves as part of their overall perspective on being ambitious. Efuru is an ambitious woman. She wants her career and a family, because in her opinion success in a career without success in the rest of her lives is not achieving her ambition overall. She wants to be a mother, wife, professionals and citizen, all at the same time. And there is no turning back on this process. In short, she aspires to not only her family, but she makes it compatible with her professional work. For her, work is a source of self-realisation and socialisation; work is serving and living. Clenora Hudson Weems describes Africana woman and giving her

some qualifications claiming that: “Among many things, Zora Banks is self-naming and self-defining, family-centered and compatible, flexible with her roles and ambitions.”³⁶. Africana women view their own confidence and determination as the most important factor for staying on track to achieve their career ambition. There are others who say that to have confidence is having skills and qualifications to effectively perform their own job.

Nwapa disapproves the limiting the Africana woman’s roles as wives and mothers. She gives a picture of woman and diverse role and her contributions to her African society. Efuru chooses her freedom and independence and a life of economic success. As Clenora Hudson weems recites: “Africana women have always been, by necessity, independent, and responsible co-workers and decision-makers.”³⁷ She is creating new image and identity as an African woman and prescribes the one created by men who made women think that marriage and children means everything in their life. She tends to show to everybody that a woman’s ambition is not just at home, but rather there are other ways for Africana to achieve her identities and she may and still a complete one despite the fact that she is unmarried or barren.

c-Efuru as a Strong and Adaptable Woman:

Strong and adaptable are other qualifications by Clenora Hudson Weems in her work *Africana womanism: Reclaiming ourselves*. She encourages African woman to be adaptable and strong saying that: “Good things come from discipline and strength.”³⁸ Strong person means a confident and determined one, who is not easily influenced by others. Efuru is a sharp and manipulative with a strong personality. She does what she believes that is right. Efuru is considered as a model to be followed, she wants to live life freely in her way. Her behaviours and actions seem to be good solution for a woman left by her husband. Efuru faced this difficulty when her husband lost his interests towards her, then departed.

Efuru shows strength and continues her life, unlike many women who suffer in such situations from depression, stress no desire for living. Efuru faces more and more difficulties; it is nearly the same ones. She faces everything and every problem with a steady heart. First, she has known Adizua to be irresponsible and a lazy farmer. She becomes worthless when he elopes with another woman. He is permanent in his character. Despite the fact that, it is great loss for Efuru, but she faces this problem with a strong mind. As Clenora claims in her theory: "She has to be strong, strong enough to stand up."³⁹ she remains an independent woman like she was. She is not afraid, she can face everything boldly. "There is a woman behind this indifference. A woman whose personality is greater than mine, I must face facts."⁴⁰ Then, after nearly a year, Efuru loses her only daughter whom she loves so much. Her life becomes miserable, but she does not surrender. She learns how to live without them. Efuru is a courageous woman who faces her challenges, and stands up by herself and refuses to stay silent without any reaction. She recognises her journey and stay in the course.

She combines passions, self-respect and timing. She is so lucky that her mother in law supports her. She is adaptable to her new conditions. She challenges herself when her circumstances changed. She is prone to think ahead and consistently focuses on empowerment. She does not depend on anyone else: Efuru as a strong woman is not afraid of failure and trust herself to handle her own financial, emotional, mental and physical well being. She continues to work in trade. This is shown in the novel through this quotation: "She was strong and she shows not afraid."⁴¹ She is willing to be flexible. Her will power helps her to rise up the circumstances. Later, she returns to her father's house. As Clenora says "However, while they may very much love their male companions, they love themselves also enough to not allow themselves to become their companion' scapegoats in their moment of despair degradation and low self extern."⁴² Among the Igbo, women are as seen the powerless sex; they neglect contribution of women to humanity. In addition, she does not see showing

emotion as weakness: she knows that there is time and place for vulnerability and emotions. This is well interpreted in the novel for example: “Efuru did not answer; Ajanupu looked at her and saw tears flowing freely down her cheeks. She made attempt to stop the tears.”⁴³ . She does not let the opinion of the others influence her: when Efuru choose Adizua, people around her start to gossip why she married him because they do not belong to the same social class. She does not listen to any one of them. She does not feel bad about breaking societal rules. Efuru breaks the rules; when she eloped with Adizua without marriage; they just proclaim themselves married. For another time her action indicates a sense of strength.

The ability to be strong is when you struggle to survive when it seems you are in the wrong side. A person keeps going, despite hardships and setbacks, who learns positive powerful lessons from her experiences; she is a person with resilience that means inner strength. If you have a dream and goals for life, and if you try hard enough and you knock on enough doors, eventually you will find what you need and your way to realise your dreams despite of the disappointments and loss. Flora Nwapa in her first novel exposes the true distinction female identity. They are increasingly belligerent, and self-styled. In this context, the Nigerian poet, critic and activist speaks about the African women arguing that Africana women are not voiceless and powerless, but rather they are strong. They manifest to prove their presence in their patriarchal society.⁴⁴

d-Respect :

Respect is another quality of Africana womanism portrayed in this novel, which is a fundamental quality that plays an indispensable role to how the Igbo people appreciate each other and life. It is a concept, an idea respect for life and life of respect. Respect for life and life of respect are concepts and ideas that are among the basic education and values which children are meant to acquire very early like George Thomas Basden the British missionary observed: “proper behaviour is instilled rather than taught; it develops from childhood and

becomes part of his subliminal consciousness.”⁴⁴ Respectful person is one who shows honour consideration and regard for others. It is to admire , appreciate, and polite recognize. Respect is something that every person wants to receive. It is something that must be earned that many people think they are owed. In order to be a respectful person, first step is to be able to define respect and its application. The British government published white paper in 2003, Respect and Responsibility (Home Department2003).

It contains a call for respect for all: As a society, our rights as individuals are based on the sense that of responsibility we have towards others and to our families and communities. This means respecting each other’s property, respecting the streets and public places. We share and respecting our neighbors’ right to live free from harassment and distress. It is the basis of civic society.⁴⁵

Efuru is a respectful woman; this is shown through her actions. She respects herself and people around her. Before respecting others, she respects herself. We cannot think positively about others; if we do not think positively about ourselves. Basically, a person who respects himself, he will treats others in the same way he wants to be treated. She has Self-respect is a person or agent(is a person who has been legally empowered to act on favor of another person). Among others a member of community with a status and equal to that of every other people of her community that having the ability. Responsibility and sufficient control to act autonomously also roles and goals to fulfill, or simply means to have confidence on themselves and behaving with dignity. She has a good status like her mother in her society. She is well known for her roles that she plays and her aims in her life. Efuru has also appreciation of the importance of having and living by a conception of life these values and commitments that expressed in her projects that contribute to her individual identity. The most prominent consequences associated with functioning of respect in social situation is that a person who respects himself or herself like our main character of this novel does, values understands her moral status and rights as a person, She recognises the same moral status and rights in other people. Efuru acknowledges her rights as a daughter, as a wife, and as a member of her Igbo society.

On the one hand, people around her must respect her since she respects herself first and others because giving respect to others is likely to reinforce the giver's own self-respect. As Clenora Hudson weems claims that: "she insists that he respect her."⁴⁶ Respect informs people that they have a valued status in a relationship. It is important because having a valued status in a relationship satisfies the need to belong and the need to have a positive social reputation in the eyes of the other people and simply respect fulfills all these needs. On the other hand, Efuru respects people around taking in to consideration her father's words "respect your husband and your husband's people."⁴⁷ . Clenora Hudson weems argues that: "It makes for a more peaceful reality for all, and one is more inclined to wholesome and amicable relationship with others, knowing that the concerns of the people are respected and met."⁴⁸ She uses to be an active listening that is considered a way to show your respect to the others. That means to listen actively to others and to present in the conversation and to think and respond appropriately. This is in order to demonstrate to people that you care what they have to say. For example: when her mother in law speaks to her, Efuru listens attentively to her "I want you to have your bathe before there is a baby. It is better that way. It is safer really."⁴⁹ she replied " All right, mother. But my husband must be told and he will come from farm before it is done."⁵⁰. She seeks to understand others, in a case of conflict, it is easy to defend the opinion, instead she invokes your curiosity and find out the basis of the other's perspective. She apologises where she makes mistakes. She does not cover her mistakes up. She apologises and shows empathy, care and recognition. She use to be polite. It is a communication strategy which the speaker uses to achieve his goals. Choosing the level of politeness based on the relative imposition that is involved in the request. She says: "Thank you, my husband."⁵¹ The traditional Igbo values and norms system stands as basic of any office. Respect is considered one of these values.

e-Family Centeredness:

Another dominant quality of the Africana womanism is family centered on which Clenora Hudson Weems emphasises arguing that: “ Her uncompromising concern with the welfare of her unmediated family, demonstrating her great regard for family.”⁵² Also that “she still puts family needs and concern first.”⁵³ For her “family is viewed as unit of analysis, Regardless of differential access to resources by both men and women.”⁵⁴ Family is an enduring relationship, whether biological or non-biological connecting children and parents through emotional, cultural, and traditional commitment and mutual support. The Igbo give very important value to family. Family centeredness is partnership between members and families who work together within the norms and values of their individual and collective for best interest of the family or its members. As children, they assume partnership roles. Efuru uses to assume her role in her family as the daughter of Nwachike Ogene for the happiness and the wellbeing of his father saying “since my mother died five years ago, I have been a good daughter to him.”⁵⁵ Efuru considers her family as a central one in her life. When she elopes with Adizua, her father was angry about her behaviours since she does not respect their traditions. So, she works hard in order to pay her dowry and to maintain the good relationship between her and her father. Then, She said that: “The dowry must be paid. I must see this that is done.”⁵⁶ The time passes. Efuru asked Adizua to pay the dowry and fulfill the customs claiming that: “But we have to go to my father now that we have money.”⁵⁷ So, the dowry was paid, for the wellbeing of her old and sick father. She is very close to her father, so she would not annoy him. She argued: “tell my father that I shall be the last person to bring shame to him.”⁵⁸

During her first marriage with Adizua, she does her best to have a happy family. When Adizua abandons her,; he travels to Nodeni with another woman, Efuru refuses to lose hope. She asks her father to help her to find him. She waited for him many months. she sends for

him messages; she does not get any answer. She even went to look for him, but she does not find any information. For a woman, family life involves more stresses may be emotional relationship with the husband . It appears that the employment of woman can raise many and different issues such as feeling guilty for not being dedicated enough to her family and high work load both at home and at work. Many narrative reviews on sex differences in emotionality converged that woman is more emotional, and more sensitive to the sore points of family life, since women appear to be more expressive.⁵⁹

Efuru in her family assumes her function like being the chief executive of an enterprise. An Africana woman, she assigns her duties among her family members according to their interests and abilities. She provides resources in term of equipment and materials to accomplish the job. She recognises various functions in her family to meet social development. Clenora Hudson Weems speaks about the importance of the family in the life of Africana woman and what she can do to keep her family together telling that: “She shows in her commitment to him and their marriage that appreciates family-hood and that she will go to any length to maintain her life with her loved one. She works unceasingly to keep her little family together.”⁶⁰

For Igbos, the family is the greatest existing areas where everything is free. Her members are loved and accepted themselves at all times. The relationship between them is essentially affective, and there is mutuality (each to each other). They are not motivated by self- interest. Despite the fact, that living together may be difficult at time. People tend to forgive, protect and care for each other even in hard circumstances.

f- Role Player:

The dominant role of Igbo women is to make good wives for their husbands. In marriage, they are expected to be good and submissive, to do the house work and domestic chores and to bear children. In opinion Clenora Hudson Weems, Africana woman should be a role player in her family at home and outside home in front of her husband (in her society) and calls also the husband to be helpful for his wife . Weems well interpreted this idea in this sentence: “show their willingness to share the chores equally, both inside the home where he share the household chores, and outside the home, where she works alongside her husband in the field.”⁶¹ Women are elevated from childhood to hold the household and preparing them to their eventual roles as wives and mothers. The primary responsibility of married woman is preparing meals, washing, and of course raising children. Efuru plays her roles as good wife perfectly during her first and second marriage. Nwapa showed it telling that: “ Efuru went to kitchen to cook. She used plenty of fish and cooked delicious nsala soup for her dear husband.”⁶² She uses to be a good cooker; her second husband likes her meals very much. Gillbert was late in coming home that night, she waited. When he came home, she gave him his food. My dear wife, the soup is very delicious, come and eat with me.”⁶³. Sometimes they share the household together, such as washing . “She has gone to the stream with her husband. They returned from Ndoni today and they have gone to the stream to wash their clothes.”⁶⁴

Efuru is a very talented female. She is lucky among the few women who contributes to the welfare of their society through her involvement in trade and grows a wealthy trading. After her marriage with Adizua, they trade together since he leaves the farm for good; they travel to rural areas to buy merchandise (yams, dried fish, and crayfish), then will sold the goods in the town market for a profit. In Igbo community, trading was the domain of women especially in rural regions. This was her major economic and social function of Ibo women in

order to make some money to help their husbands and families and to obtain their essential needs.⁶⁵

Later, men were involved when the European traders penetrated the market in order to defend their women and exchange their produce for other necessities. Most of Igbo men were farmers after harvest; they travel to market to trade. Efuru is a wealthy trader. She does not stop her business even after her divorce. Petty trade was done by women, men and children engaged to it but mostly females. It is buying and selling agricultural goods or service but in small quantities. By time, this small business is growing thanks to the efforts by the owner who is called petty trader which is the case with Efuru. Charles Kingsley Meek British anthropologist who wrote about southern and northern Nigerian tribes argued that: “the most striking features of Ibo life is the keenness displayed by the women is petty trade.” In addition to Margret M. Green who noted that: “among the Ibo, trading is the breath of life particularly to the women. The women are the great petty traders.”⁶⁶

Flora Nwapa tended to prove the idea of Clenora that African women are role players. They are able to be leaders in economy (commerce and trade). Accordingly, claimed by a remarkable “tradition where women paddle canoes up, down across, and beyond Uguta lake, transporting passengers and their wares for a normal fee, where women are leaders in trade and commerce, where a democratic gender system recognises talent regardless of one’s sex, where confidence and perfection are nurtured in both males and females.”⁶⁷ Nwapa in her novel emphasised on the fact that Igbo could largely contribute to the different fields’ not just economy but also politics, culture, religion. Efuru is against that African women had no role in society. This novel is a concrete example to the benefits of the community that permits to men and women to contribute equally for useful gains. Efuru and her second husband work together in order to achieve “ About a month after the woman’s visit, Gillbert and Efuru went

to the market at Ndoni. They went to buy some ground-nuts which they were told abundant there at that time.”⁶⁸

African woman behaves as the humble manager of her family income. It is her responsibility to secure maximum return. Many of them prefer to prepare a surplus when someone spends less money during an accounting period, and then he takes in revenue. Instead of deficit budget is when someone spends higher than his revenue, so he needs to borrow money. She calculates loss and gain while spending money. She contributes to the family income through her own earning within or outside the home. She has a positive contribution to her family income by her work. Moreover the Africana woman sustains the growth of her society and molds the future of her nation. She has a vital role to play in different sectors for emerging complex social scenario. She can no longer be considered as mere harbingers of peace but she is emerging as the source of power and symbol of progress.⁶⁹

g-Respecting Elders:

Ageing is a natural process that we cannot substitute with anything, if God gives this honour to anyone to experience it. This gift of God is valued by the Igbos the aged themselves and their caregivers. Parents make efforts to educate their children to value old age people, respect, and assist them. It is a common practice that young people provide care to their elders. A good atmosphere for elderly care is provided by the communal lifestyle of the tradition Igbo society. Igbo people's are educated on the philosophical idea that child is a child of all not just of his or her parents . On the other hand, children receive correction and disciplines from any elders of who the child is. This is found in this novel *Efuru* for instance when Ajanupu tries to teach Ogea what and how to eat “you eat your fish last. I wonder what Efuru has been teaching you.”⁷⁰ Though taking care of old people are a collective business.

This strong respect for elders, depicted in the novel, demonstrated by Efuru's relationship with her mothers in law. She has a good relationship with Adizua's mother Ossai and her old father. She settled with her when her husband was in farm and also when he abandoned her. She considers her as her dead mother and Ossai is for her the daughter that she does not have. She obeys and cares for her when she asks her. Efuru said to her mother in law: "All right mother." The husband's mother answered her: "Certainly, my daughter. I shall send him."⁷¹; In Igbo tradition communities, care of elderly within the extended family (which is the family that includes in one household all near relatives such as uncles, aunts grandparents) and community as a whole engrained in the culture.

Efuru has also a good relationship with Amede. She provides care for her; on the other hand, she advises her to transmit their own traditions. Elderly women act as mid-wives to the women of the family, teachers' grand-children and daughters in law.

So Gilbert's mother considered herself lucky to have Efuru as her daughter-in-law. She confided in her and treated her as her own daughter. Before Gilbert married Efuru, his mother had done nearly all the housework. Now with Efuru and Ogea in the house, She had more leisure which she needed in her old age. She no longer cooked, Efuru took care of that.⁷⁴

For Igbo elders in the extended family, care-giving become less stressful because they either perform it directly or supervise those who do it. later years are the most fruitful ones of their life, they believe that their later years are the time to rest from hard labour, but still remain, respect and active vital. It is the responsibility of children to support and respect them; on the other hand, the elderly have social obligations which are multidimensional in the sense that they encompass the different fields, religion, education, politics, recreation, prophetic, and economic issues. Old people act as teachers and oral historians who transmit knowledge and cultural values to the younger generation. In many Igbo communities, the primary roles of the elders are the moral and practical education of children. When the others are outside (at work), they stay at home with the young ones. There are others, who play traditional medicine; they generally act as healers and herbalists.

Efuru also provides care for her father. Sometimes after her work; she visits him to question about his health and conditions. She asked him: “Are you well, my father? You don’t look very well to me. Does Odikma cook regularly for you? If she does not, please let me know so that I can get someone else to cook for you.”⁷³ In these tribes, female children visit their parents from time to time to supervisor how the service is rendered. It is believed that females are the fundamental care givers to their parents. They play an important role more than males especially if she is the first daughter. They are the pride of their families when it comes to looking for elders. Males are also helpful but they prefer to be financiers.

The elderly male functions as the head of the extended family. Naming ceremonies cannot take place only with the presence of elderly people. Marriage and other ceremonies between life and death take place unless old people are present to provide necessary guidance. It is also their duty to bring back peace during conflicts which the case of Nwachike Ogene, who uses to be the head of the village. With all these responsibilities attached to them, the feelings of isolation, loneliness, and worthlessness are reduced. In their opinion, elderly care are therefore not charity case, but rather it is taking and giving relationship.

Greeting is another element which is used in Igbo culture to provide respect to their elders. It is a speech event, which is used as interactional encounter. It is a very important sign of appreciating socialisation between them, as well as measure and type of relationship existing between the interactants. Also it is a means of ensuring the sustenance of the binding fabrics that hold all the community together. This is what we have noticed in this quote which is extracted from the novel :“Immediately Efuru saw the men; she came out and greeted them.”⁷⁴ Thus it is rare, to find two Igbos with any degree of acquaintance passing each other without exchanging a form of greetings. This last which is solely phatic in function is exchange even with strangers. Young people must show respect to their elders by greeting

them. This is what Efurū's father advises her in this novel "always greet them well, it costs nothing to be courteous to people."⁷⁵

Greeting in Igbo is cultural performance, it is influenced by such social variables as the sex, age, and status of the interactants that predicated on asmemeritrical relationship between any greeters as it is in wolf (Irvine 1974). These social variables of age, sex and status dictate who must initiate greetings. The younger initiates a greeting with the older, the female with the male and the status inferior with the status superior.

Conclusion

What is revealed clearly from the above discussion is that mothering and nurturing are central concerns in life of Efurū as an Africana woman, but also she plays critical roles in her family and society. She is a powerful force for social cohesion and integration. She is not just a caregiver. She is also bread winner for people around her. Efurū appears as an independent minded woman economically and spiritually that improves a balanced womanhood.

Endnotes

¹ S. Kebdi, "The representation of motherhood in Flora Nwapa's *Efurū* 1966, *Bushi Emecheta's The joys of Motherhood*" 1979 <https://www.ummt0.dz>

² *Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves*1993,P 136

³ Ibid P 133

⁴Tambari Ogbonanuir Dick, "Marriage, Tradition, and superstition in Flora Nwapa's *Efurū*" <https://www.ajol.info>

⁵ *Flora Nwapa, Efurū London: Heinemann, 1966 P24*

⁶ Oxford dictionary

⁷ *Flora Nwapa, Efurū London: Heinemann, 1966 p 32* ⁸ Ibid p 33

⁹ *Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves*1993,P136

¹⁰ Boyce,Davies *Carole Motherhood in the Work of Male and female Igbo Writers, Achebe, Emecheta ,Nwapa, and Nzekwu en Boyce,Davies Carole and Adams Gravss Anne (eds.) Ngambika: Studies women in African literature. Treton : Africa world Press, 1986*

¹¹ *Flora Nwapa, Efurū London: Heinemann, 1966 p 89*

¹² *Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves*1993,P89

¹³ *Flora Nwapa, Efurū London: Heinemann, 1966 p 45*

¹⁴ Ibid p 46

¹⁵ Ibid

¹⁶ *Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves*1993,P89

¹⁷ *Flora Nwapa, Efurū London: Heinemann, 1966 p50*

¹⁸ "Treasurequotes", <https://www.treasurequotes.com>

¹⁹ *Zoe Fang "sisterhood quotes"* <https://www.goodreads.com>

²⁰ *Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves*1993,P134

- ²¹ Ibid p 82
- ²² **Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966** p2
- ²³ **Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves1993,P 82**
- ²⁴ **Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966** p 1
- ²⁵ AronaA.R Nwabude, “Traditional African (the Igbo) Marriage customs and the influence of the western culture: Marxist Approach “. P3<https://www.scrip.org>
- ²⁶ **Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966** p3 ²⁷ Ibid ²⁸ Ibid p 5
- ²⁹Josef C. Chukwu, “Role of Women in the Growth of the Traditional Igbo Economy.”<https://www.iiste.org> vol10 2015
- ³⁰ **Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966** p12 ³¹ Ibid p 2
- ³² Gloria Ifeoma Chucku, “From Petty Trade to International Merchants: a Historical Account of three Igbo Women of Nigeria in Trade Commerce, 1886 to 1970” <https://www.jstor.org>
- ³³Akinboye,Gokea, “Women’s Ambition, Ambitious woman: the case of Caesar’s household during the Julio Claudian Era” <https://www.academia.edu>
- ³⁴**Chinua Achebe, Things fall A Part. London: Heinemann, 1958.**
- ³⁵**Wendy Mc Guinness, The ambitious woman** <https://www.mcgunnessstitute.org>
- ³⁶ **Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves1993,P133**
- ³⁷ Ibid p 28 ³⁸ Ibid p 138 ³⁹ Ibid
- ⁴⁰**Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966** p40 ⁴¹ Ibid p 32
- ⁴² **Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves1993,P78**
- ⁴³ **Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966** p 67
- ⁴⁴CharlesU.AnuolamCuanuolam, *Igbo values and care for life* <https://www.core.ac.uk>
- ⁴⁵ **White paper, Home department 2003** p 3
- ⁴⁶ **Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves1993,P 139**
- ⁴⁷**Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966** p169
- ⁴⁸**Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves1993,P 31**
- ⁴⁹**Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966** p6 ⁵⁰ Ibid ⁵¹ Ibid
- ⁵² **Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves1993,P 82**
- ⁵³ Ibid p 136 ⁵⁴ Ibid p 29
- ⁵⁵ **Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966** p 5
- ⁵⁶ Ibid p 5 ⁵⁷ Ibid p 20 ⁵⁸ Ibid p 5
- ⁵⁹ Virve-Ines Laidmae, “Woman in the Family: the Source of Stress” <http://researchgate.net>
- ⁶⁰ Clenora Hudson Weem, Africana womanism :Reclaiming Ourselves1993,P83
- ⁶¹ Ibid p 87 ⁶²Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966 p 6
- ⁶³ Ibid p185 ⁶⁴ Ibid P 174
- ⁶⁵Josef C. Chukwu’s “Role of women in the growth of the traditional Igbo economy”.<https://www.iiste.org>
- ⁶⁶ Gloria Ifeoma Chucku, “From Petty Trade to International Merchants: a Historical Account of three Igbo Women of Nigeria in Trade Commerce, 1886 to 1970” <https://www.jstor.org>
- ⁶⁷ Ademola Adesola “50 Years ... Efuru in the Context of National Discourse and Development Part 1 16december 2016” <https://www.guardian.ng>
- ⁶⁸ **Flora Nwapa, Efuru London: Heinemann, 1966** p 175 ⁶⁹ Ibid
- ⁷⁰ Ibid p 50
- ⁷¹ Ibid p 6
- ⁷² Ibid p 170
- ⁷³Ibid p 178
- ⁷⁴ Ibid p 4
- ⁷⁵ Ibid p 169

General Conclusion

This research has led us to explore the African female writer Flora Nwapa's work. The writer of *Efuru* deals in an a positive way with positive companionship, mothering, and nurturing. Flora Nwapa is well known for re-creating Igbo traditions and culture from women's point of view. We have relied on Clenora Hudson Weems theory outlined in *Africana Womanism Reclaiming Ourselves*. We have considered positive companionship and mothering and nurturing the themes of the development of the main characters.

In the first section, we have focused on Efuru the main character of Flora Nwapa's novel by discussing her attitude towards positive companionship and sisterhood. The novel captures the position of Efuru and other women of her society toward positive companionship, and sisterhood. They celebrate companionship and work together with their male counterpart for the development and progress of their country in order to combat the various form of oppression. However, sisterhood is a bound of Africana women together by shackled interests or experiences. It is unconditional and collaborative alliance between the novel's characters. . In this novel, the characters tends to create a second family under this connection, because they know very well that it is a connection that will last forever.

The second section is concerned with mothering and nurturing connection. We have attempted to show the nature of this kind of relationship between the characters of the novel, which plays an important role in the life of Efuru. She fails to be a mother, which Nwapa depicts as being essential motif in the life of Igbo women. Efuru is independent and strong woman who makes her decision; she succeeded in finding her real identity.

Throughout this dissertation, we reached the conclusion that Flora Nwapa in her fiction, shows the true nature of woman;her role in her family and society;her contribution to

the development of her community. In this novel, the narrator recreates the experiences of Igbo women in traditional and patriarchal society, their economic and social activities and their relations above all. The novel reveals the pain and misery of barren woman and the difficulties that she suffers in Igbo traditional society from. Clearly colonialism and post-colonialism complicate the lives of women and men on which Flora Nwapa emphasises in her work *Efuru*. Efuru denotes that her African society is a polygamous one and it is an accepted institution by both men and women.

Finally, Efuru appears like a courageous woman who faces difficulties and problems with success in terms of positive companionship, sisterhood and mothering and nurturing relationships that unify the novel's characters. Nwapa projects a positive image of African women. The inability of Efuru to bear more children does not destroy fully her life; she tries to find her happiness and identity. She develops a positive attitude; she is a free person and financially independent and assists many needy people in her entourage. She is a strong believer of Uhamiri the goddess of the lack chooses her to worship her. At the end, Efuru finds her purpose of life and identity as a worshiper of Uhamiri, which gave her beauty and wealth but not children.

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