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Topic of Research: Women's Subversive Identities and Subjectivities in Nigerian Society: A Study of Select Works Ifeoma Okoye and Flora Nwapa

Findings

The Primary texts of my Thesis are Flora Nwapa's *Efuru, Idu, Never Again, One Is Enough, Women Are Different*, and Ifeoma Okoye's *Behind The Clouds, Chimere, Men Without Ears, The Fourth World, The Trials and other stories* and her short stories "The Pay Ticket" and "The Power of a Plate of Rice".

This study is a critical delineation of Ifeoma Okoye and Flora Nwapa as social critics and reformers who employed their literary art to bring to light the patriarchal socio-cultural norms embedded in Nigerian society. It also analyses the myths and false conceptions that encourage the subjugation of female personhood, the different dimensions of denying a woman's assent to motherhood, the suppression of infertile women, genital mutilation, gender discrimination, widowhood, and various forms of women's subjugation. It highlights the authors' thematic points from the literary texts selected for study.

Okoye and Nwapa do not only critique the emerging dynamics within traditionalism but simultaneously provide alternative roles for women in a society where drastic inequalities and gender discriminations swim in its surface and bottom. Thus, the research focuses on the way both the writers aim to encourage women to reshape a society that has been amply man-made and the way its strictures prove to be a menace in effacing women's self-hood. The study also emphasizes how a modern educated Nigerian woman wonders at her fulfillment as a thorough human being not on the grounds of becoming the mother of several children she procreates or her identity based on her role as a wife, or daughter, or daughter-in-law but

rather the identity she creates for herself in the society after striving and defying patriarchal chauvinism. The Thesis also examines the position of Nigerian women from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial period. It has tried to open up new directions from feminist perspectives by webbing out similarities and dichotomies in the views of both the writers while representing women in their texts.

The research methodology of this thesis is based on a feminist analysis by selecting certain works by Nwapa and Okoye. To justify the research topic, it has covered all the relevant points, including the socio-political and historical context. The thesis has employed a selection of secondary materials, critical and theoretical insights from the emerging fields of Nigerian studies, and also the authors with whom there are parallels and contradictions. Writings by male and female Nigerian and African authors, as well as some other relevant theorists, have been included. The thesis has been divided into five chapters. It begins with the Introduction chapter, where I have discussed how Flora Nwapa and Ifeoma Okoye claim their literary texts as representations of society. It also focuses on the development of the novel in Africa and the representation of women in male-authored works. I have also discussed the different types of feminism and the feminist voices of Ifeoma Okoye and Flora Nwapa. This chapter also explores women's roles in the Nigerian civil war, who emerged as one of the strong survivors, and how war caused a disruption of social orders.

The First Chapter is titled, "Impact of Culture Collision on Nigerian women". This Chapter engages with impact of culture collision on Nigerian Women and their position from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial changes. It has discussed how European colonialism used education as a tool to innovate a style of thinking to oppress and dominate Nigerians and change their culture and tradition. Flora Nwapa in her literary works decries the western sense of courtship and romance which created negative impact on Nigerian youngsters.

The Second Chapter is titled, "A study of Motherhood in Nwapa and Okoye's texts". This chapter deals with the study of Igbo motherhood, the importance of "communal motherhood," in Igbo society, mythical beliefs about the goddess *Uhamiri* in Igbo culture, and male child preference in Igbo society.

The Third Chapter is titled "Hierarchical Oppression of Women". It begins with the concept of patriarchy and also focuses on the writers, critics, and scholars' different views and interpretations on the development of patriarchy. It has focused on Nigerian Igbo patriarchy, Female Genital Mutilation, Role of Church priests in women's subjugation, and Women as enforcers of patriarchy.

The Fourth Chapter is titled, "Exploring Marriage System in Igbo society". The chapter deals with the types of marriage that Nigerian Igbo people follow. It engages with the pros and cons of polygamy and how Igbo women perceive polygamy in their married lives. This chapter also discusses the custom of Igbo brideprice which is a gender-biased practice where women are also treated as secondary objects.

The Fifth Chapter is titled, "Otherhood of widowhood". The chapter begins with widowhood practices in Igbo society and Okoye and Nwapa's views on patriarchal and dehumanising widowhood practices. It also talks about Okoye's personal experiences as a widow how she herself resisted following the dehumanizing and subjugating widowhood practices. It also analysed the patriarchal activities of *Umuada*, which is a social-political group of women who prove to be enforcers of patriarchy.

The Conclusion Chapter ends with focusing on the conclusions of the research findings.