

## THE DILEMMA OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN FLORA NWAPA AND BUCHI EMECHETA'S NOVELS

### LE DILEMME DES FEMMES AFRICAINES DANS LES ROMANS DE FLORA NWAPA ET BUCHI EMECHETA

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**Abstract :** This paper attempts to examine the patriarchal system that oppresses African women. It also explores women's ardent desire to break out of cultural bonds and assert themselves in a post-colonial society. For centuries women have been subjected to many types of abuse. In the patriarchal society, for instance, women are seen as mute. They live under the shadows of men from their childhood to their marriage. In other words, they are regarded as second-class citizens. As committed female writers, Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta lay bare the tyranny of patriarchy in the traditional African society, and they also empower women, portraying female characters playing stronger roles that were once considered the prerogative of men. African feminism is used to identify and analyze the patriarchal system and women's new status in a post-colonial Nigeria.

**Key words :** patriarchal system - gender- marriage- empowerment-education

**Résumé :** Cet article tente d'examiner l'oppression des femmes africaines dans le système patriarcal. Il explore également le désir ardent des femmes de se libérer des liens culturels et de s'affirmer dans une société post-coloniale. Depuis des siècles, les femmes sont soumises à de nombreux types d'abus. Dans la société patriarcale, par exemple, les femmes n'ont pas droit à la parole. De l'enfance à l'âge adulte, elles vivent dans l'ombre des hommes. En d'autres termes, elles sont considérées comme des citoyens de seconde zone. En tant que écrivaines engagées, Flora Nwapa et Buchi Emecheta mettent à nu la tyrannie du patriarcat dans la société africaine, et elles donnent également le pouvoir aux femmes, en présentant des personnages féminins plus forts, ce qui était autrefois considéré comme l'apanage des hommes. Le féminisme africain est utilisé pour identifier et analyser le système patriarcal et le nouveau statut des femmes dans une société postcoloniale Nigériane.

**Mots clés :** Le système patriarcal- genre- mariage- émancipation-éducation

## Introduction

African women for ages have been treated as secondary sex hence they are submissive and subjugated to men. In the same way, Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta's novels are a perfect reflection of the patriarchy in which they grew up. It is a world based on a system that is conducive to a man's pleasure and achievement. Similarly, Simone de Beauvoir in her work, believes that women are considered secondary to their male counterparts. She illustrates women are always considered an 'object' (the other) and men the 'subject' (the self) by society. She explains as well that it is due to this characterization that women always have an inferiority complex which results in their fractured identity. (1949) In short, African women should support themselves and stand for their rights. Moreover, in most African cultures, women are assigned some traditional roles. Mothers keep the roles of housekeeping, taking care of children, and farm work. Specifically, in *Nervous Conditions*, Dangarembga depicts women's perilous conditions, for example Adchu asks his daughter: "Can you cook books and feed them to your husband? Stay at home with your mother, learn to cook and clean, and grow vegetables" (1985, p.15).

The patriarchal societies also present a woman's central purpose to be her reproductive function. The Nigerian society is patriarchal in nature which is a major feature of a traditional society. (Aina, 1998) Thus, motherhood and mothering become intertwined with issues of a woman's identity and personality. In particular, the Nigerian woman considers herself a true woman only when she becomes fruitful. Many non-mothering women experience feelings of rejection and low self-esteem actually, they see themselves as a waste to their society.

Nwapa and Emecheta who are seeking to free their gender fellows from the traditional stereotypes create in their fiction a bright and positive image for their female characters. In fact, their characters overcome objections, remove barriers and ask for equal treatment. African women writers from a feminist perspective have tackled the issue of women's liberation. Mary D. Mears pinpoints the emergence of African women from the margin to the center. The critic raises women writers' voices by depicting their concerns in other words African women writers are able to provide literary work. (2009) With this in mind, the researcher will try to explore the struggle of women in the patriarchal society from the novels, *Efuru*, *Women are different*<sup>1</sup> by Flora Nwapa and *The Joys of Motherhood* written by Buchi Emecheta. *The Joys of Motherhood*<sup>2</sup> tells the story of Nnu Ego, a Nigerian woman struggling in a patriarchal society. She is unable to conceive in her first marriage, then she is banished to Lagos where she succeeds in becoming a mother. Her life is made of trials, deception, and loneliness. Nnu Ego finally stays in her new dwelling, and she dies of loneliness. Nwapa is known best for her two novels, *Efuru* (1966) and *Women are Different* (1986). She fights against the misrepresentation of the female protagonist. Besides, she also creates a more positive technique to portray female characters. Nwapa's stories produce a Nigerian female with charisma and a positive attitude. This paper analyzes

<sup>1</sup> Flora Nwapa. *Women Are Different*. 1986. Trenton: Africa World Press, The subsequent quotations from this edition will be marked (WAD) followed by the page number.

<sup>2</sup> The Joys of Motherhood. 1979. London: Allison & Busby. The subsequent quotations from this edition will be marked (TJOM) followed by the page number.

the novels from a feminist perspective. The paper consists of three parts. The first part identifies women's oppression in a patriarchal society, the second part investigates the dilemma of an African woman torn between tradition and her own convictions. And the last part focuses on the importance of education in women's life and the protagonist's struggle to achieve emancipation. The last part also deals with the mentality of the new generation.

## 1. The oppression of women in the patriarchal system

In Africa, polygamy is still practiced and remains an obstacle to female emancipation. The polygamous family is thus, known as a social structure where members maintain difficult relationships and where communication is constantly disrupted. In addition, we notice jealousy, competition, rivalry, and selfishness among wives and children. For this reason, polygamy is traumatic and disturbing to women and children. The patriarchal nature of polygamy not only leads to sexual, physical, and emotional abuse of women by their husbands, but also to their subordination. In *The Second Sex*, Simone De Beauvoir posits: "*man wants woman's enslavement when fantasizing himself as a benefactor, liberator, or redeemer.*" (1949, p.237) In other words, men take advantage of the moral and emotional oppression of women. In fact, they show off as "bosses" and impose their power on women.

In *the Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego feels oppressed in her role as the first wife. In Ibuza and all over Africa, people consider the "Senior Wife" title as honorable, and women pretend to be happy in the role. Of course, they do not agree with the whole system, but as usual, they cannot complain, because patriarchal African society forbids them to show their emotion. Emecheta explores the psychological trauma these so-called senior wives go through in silence, namely, the harrowing experiences of Agbadi's senior wives, Agunwa and Nnu Ego. The author also draws the reader's attention to the sexual neglect, public humiliation, and disrespect, her characters are subjected to. For instance, Agunwa's discernible humility and high sense of maturity turn into humiliation and heartbreak as Agbadi abandons her for younger wives. He then flaunts his sexual prowess before her. Hence she allegedly dies of the illness which afflicts her on the night she watches her oppressive, inconsiderate husband giving pleasure to Ona in their courtyard:

Agbadi's senior wife, Agunwa, became ill that very night. Some said later that she sacrificed herself for her husband, but a few had noticed that it was bad for her morale to hear her husband giving pleasure to another woman in the same courtyard where she slept, and to such a woman who openly treated the man they all worshiped so badly. Emecheta (TJOM, p.21)

Nwapa also disapproves of the belief that women's primary role is wifehood and motherhood. In *Efuru*, Nwapa ironically mimics the popular reaction to a man marrying for the second time through Efuru's own words when she knew that her husband got married for the second time:

What is wrong with marrying a second wife? It is only a bad woman who wants her husband all to herself. I don't object to his marrying a second wife, but I do object to

being relegated to the background. I want to keep my position as the first wife, for it is my right... He is the lord and master, if he wants to marry her I cannot stop him Nwapa (*Efuru*, pp. 53-55)

In the patriarchal<sup>3</sup> system, women suffer physical violence. Nnu Ego's first marriage was unsuccessful because of her inability to bear children. Amatokwu, Nnu Ego's first husband, strongly beats his wife. Does this mean a woman's central purpose is her reproductive function? In general, men use motherhood to measure a woman's social development and success. In other words, barrenness is one of the reasons why wives are beaten and battered in Africa. Childless women usually encounter unfavorable treatment from their society. Nnaife confirms this: "*Pity your ideal, Amatokwu almost beats you to death because you did not bear him a son.*" Emecheta. (1979, p.151) Emecheta is depicting how the patriarchal cultural beliefs and traditions emphasize male assertiveness and reinforce domestic violence.

Patriarchy also demands absolute virginity from the women before marriage, but men are free to lose their virginity any time they desire. In general, African women across cultures are taught, from a young age, that girls should be appealing to men and fear rape. These two characteristics are the backbone of why men are seen as more powerful than women. What is more, girls are taught to keep their virginity standards and fear what men can do to them. On the night Nnu Ego becomes Amatokwu's wife, everybody is anxious to know whether or not she is still a virgin. Umunna proudly informs his friend, Obi Idayi:

My daughter has been found an unspoiled virgin. Her husband's people are here to thank us...when a woman is virtuous, it is easy for her to conceive. Emecheta (TJOM, p.31)

Another important aspect that Emecheta observes in her novel is motherhood and procreation. In fact, children are greatly valued, especially males, and a woman's worth is determined by how many male children she has. Hence Many black African women greatly desire to have baby boys because they believe that will secure their place alongside their husbands. In this sense, the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* (1949, p.334) argued that "women are repeatedly told from infancy that they are made for 'childbearing'." Nnu Ego's co-wife in her second marriage, Adaku is labeled as being barren simply because she has only daughters. In this case, such a wife is replaced or she becomes the senior wife as she is said to be incompetent. The author points out the penalties for mothers not being able to bear a male child. She also indicates how bareness is used in the patriarchal system to humiliate women. Another example is Nnaife's wife, Adaku, who has not been able to have male children. Thus, Adankwo told Nnu Ego that she is the mother of the men. Therefore, if Adaku dies today, her people, not her husband will come for her body. Although Adaku went to Ibuza and meets the elders, the spokesman of the group, Nwakusor does not give her a fair hearing, but scolds her:

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<sup>3</sup> A form of social organization in which the father or the eldest male is recognized as the head of the family or tribe, descent and kinship being traced through the male line. *Webster's New World College Dictionary, 4th Edition. Copyright © 2010 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt. All rights reserved.*

I know you have children, but they are girls, who in a few years' time will go and help build another man's immortality. The only woman who is immortalizing your husband, you make her unhappy with your fine clothes and lucrative business. If I were in your shoes, I would go home and consult my chi to find out why male offspring have denied me. Emecheta (TJOM, p.166)

Patriarchy is the prime obstacle to women's advancement and development. Consequently, women are victims of multiple oppression such as forced marriage. A father can arrange a marriage for his daughter; this is the case of Enu Ego, whose father arranged a second marriage for her. In fact, she accepted the proposal because she wanted to show people that she is not barren but rather a complete and fruitful woman. In the following sentence, she expresses herself about her future husband: "I just do not like the man you have chosen for me." (TJOM, p.44) Over the years, she gradually learned to respect her husband and put up with his crude ways and ugly appearance. He also fulfilled her dream, she became a mother.

Another aspect of the novel is the total submission to men. In fact, a woman should accept her fate without complaining. If she fails in doing so, she will be branded as a bad and not respectful wife. Nnu Ego finds her role as mother and wife to imprison her. For example, her awareness of this is expressed with the intensity of a primal scream. She asks God when he creates a woman who will be fulfilled in herself, not anybody's appendage. For Emecheta, a truly fulfilled woman will emerge when she becomes more aware of the fluid nature of gender roles. For Aina, there are clearly defined sex roles, while various taboos ensure conformity with specified gender roles. (Aina, 1998:6) Tradition is still restricting women to specific duties and functions. The narrator says:

She is imprisoned in a code of conduct established by her patriarchal society that preaches submission. She was a prisoner, imprisoned by her love for her children, imprisoned in her role as the senior wife. She was not even expected to demand more money for her family; that was considered below the standard expected of a woman in her position. It was not fair; she felt the way men cleverly used a woman's sense of responsibility to actually enslave her. Emecheta (TJOM, p.137)

Nnu Ego has matured and realized that if women continue to obey the laws imposed by men, they will become powerless, dominated, and dissatisfied. She finally understood that she has failed to live up to the standards expected of her. For example, as a senior wife, she was forced to follow some standards. It restrains her in self-expression. Indeed, when her husband was enlisted against his will to fight with the English during the Second World War, she and her rival were terrified. This is said in the following statement:

Her culture did not permit her to give in to her fears. She was supposed to be strong, being the senior wife, to behave more like a man than a woman is. As men were not permitted open grief, she had to learn to hide hers as well. She heard Adaku crying, and she envied her freedom. Emecheta (TJOM, p.140)

## 2. Traditional role and change in *Efuru*

The second part of our work focuses on African women in a patriarchal society. In fact, these are women who conform to tradition but at some point rebelled to follow their own path. We analyze a dangerous practice that takes place in a patriarchal society. It is called "take bath" or circumcision or clitoridectomy. The apparent reason for this inhuman operation is the belief that it will enhance child-bearing. It is believed that a woman must undergo this operation before she gives birth if she wants to have a safe child. To confirm the importance of the bath, Efuru is told the story of the woman who had lost her baby boy because "she did not have her bath before she had that baby who died after the dreadful flood.... She was afraid. Foolish girl. She had a foolish mother, their folly cost them a son, a good son". Nwapa, (*Efuru*, p.14)

In addition, the traditional doctor encourages Efuru to take her bath. She said: "*I will be gentle with you. Do not be afraid? It is painful no doubt, but the pain disappears like hunger.*" Nwapa (*Efuru*, p.10). Efuru accepts the tradition without arguing and Nwapa gives us a detailed description of the process:

Efuru screamed and screamed. It was painful. Her mother-in-law consoled her. It will soon be over, my daughter, don't cry.' Meanwhile, Efuru's husband was in his room. He felt all the pain. It looked as if he were the one being circumcised. Nwapa (*Efuru*, p.14)

Nwapa shows how women's circumcision is a prelude to their public recognition. Indeed, it is a compulsory transition that prepares them for motherhood. Nwapa explains that circumcision according to Igbo tradition is undergone to prevent children from dying but Efuru's daughter dies despite the circumcision. Hence, the author indirectly questions the credibility of the tradition.

In the patriarchal society, it is also believed that the focus of existence for women is marriage. Marriage and motherhood are intertwined and inseparable. It is usually presumed that readiness for marriage is readiness for motherhood. Therefore, to get married is an opportunity to contribute freely, through procreation, to the survival of the lineage and society. In this way, Efuru gets married twice and she leaves both her husbands after her marriages are broken. Efuru's mother-in-law speaks of Efuru's good traits when her son left her for another woman saying: "My life has been one long-suffering. The bright part of it came when my son married Efuru. But Adizua hated me. He did not want me to be happy, and so denied me that happiness I found in his marriage with Efuru. My son left his wife and ran away with a worthless woman" Nwapa (*Efuru* p.157).

Another important aspect that Nwapa examines in her novel is gender preference regarding schooling. In fact, preference is given to boys' education when the resources are not enough and girls are denied education. Nwapa gives a clear picture of this discrimination in the conversation between Eneberi and his friend Sunday. Sunday sends his sister to school and has this conversation with Eneberi:

'It is a good thing that you are sending her to school. But it is a waste of time sending them to school you know'... boys should be given the preference if it comes to that. If you had a little brother for instance and there is just enough money for the training of one, you wouldn't train Nkoyeni and leave the boy.' Sunday replies: 'You are right.'

'Sometimes these girls disappoint one, you know?.... 'They get married before the end of their training and the money is wasted... in the kitchen.' Nwapa (*Efuru*, pp.191-192)

Both Nnu Ego and Efuru conformed to tradition, but Efuru in the end chose her own path which led her to freedom. She decides to take care of herself, in other words, she abandons the common role that is given to women and starts to accept her destiny. By choosing to follow the goddess of the lake "Uhamiri", Efuru goes beyond the role that is imposed on her. She demonstrates her inner development and she chooses to be completed by herself and not by any other human being. Efuru reflects in one way an independent woman who does not stick to the same unnecessary point. Moreover, she strongly refuses to go back to her second husband because he accused her of adultery that she has never done. Efuru cannot let herself wait for a man who does not want her, as she says it herself:

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

Flora Nwapa and Emecehta protest the subjugation of women in patriarchal Nigeria. Both authors have described the abuses of patriarchal society, namely forced marriage, polygamy, circumcision, and domestic violence. They claim that African women can earn equal status by challenging traditions and old habits that shackle them.

### **3. Women's emancipation in *Women are Different***

*Women are Different* by Flora Nwapa is definitely one of the important books written about the lives of Nigerian women. Flora Nwapa describes three African women who are intelligent and committed to meeting all challenges. The research will focus on the life of Rose who is the most dedicated of all the three girls. Rose got admitted to a missionary school along with the other girls. Education is one of the most significant investments a country can undertake in terms of its development. Thus every citizen deserves to receive a good education that will reduce the long-term effects of poverty. There is a saying that "Education is a powerful agent for change" and with good education, our health and livelihoods will substantially improve. But the irony of the world is that girls from their childhood are told that their focus should be on finding a good husband rather than focusing on their careers. Rose was not against marriage or love instead, she too had a boyfriend at the same time, she was ambitious and wanted to achieve a position in society through her career. In an interview by Umeh (1992), Nwapa speaks her mind in this way: "I don't accept that I am an ordinary woman who is writing about what she knows. I try to project the image of women positively". Flora Nwapa and many other African authors have shown strong, intelligent, and dynamic female characters. They have created through their writings a framework for the emergence of women.

But Rose was not the kind of girl who would shun her dreams only for marriage. She also debated in favor of girls' education. Once, there was a debate on a topic entitled, "women's education as a waste of time". This is the hypocrisy of society. And the worst



part was that many of the girls were standing against women's education. But Rose was strongly in favor of women's education and she had a huge argument with a girl named Cora who was strongly against women's education. Rose called this topic a "silly topic".

She studied hard but could not succeed in the exam for the first time. Hence, she decided to work in a girl's school and appeared for the exam for the second time and qualified. She was very happy as she was moving step by step towards her dream. She got admitted to the college and finally passed the college. Through Rose's dedication to studies, Nwapa encourages girls' education because an educated girl can educate her entire family. Additionally, Women's education is the most effective way to reduce gender inequality and stop the abuses of patriarchal society.

After her graduation, Rose falls madly in love with Mark and they later get married. She is fascinated by his domestic skills. It is believed that household chores have been mostly mainstreamed to women. African women are responsible for most of all unpaid care and domestic work, much more than their male counterparts. Actually, They spend much of their time on multiple chores that consume a lot of time and energy. This heavy burden often has a negative impact on their health, education, income generation opportunities and ability to provide adequate childcare. Nwapa's description of Mark's household chores reduces women's domestic burdens, and at the same time sensitizes African men to help maintain the home. She is uncovering the traditional values that have preserved the feminization of household chores. In Nwapa's emancipated world, the division of domestic tasks does not rely on a gender basis. However; both men and women can do domestic tasks according to their availability and without any pressure. This can be seen in the following statement:

What intrigued Rose so much was Mark's domesticity, he took over the cooking. He cleaned the house and he even baked. Rose was taught all these chores at home and ACMGS all right, but she did not particularly enjoy doing them Nwapa (WAD, p.80)

After his admission to Havard, Rose empties her bank account to send him to the United States. She was to follow him when she was admitted into Havard. He wrote a letter a week after his arrival and months passed and Rose did not hear from Mark. She later discovers that this marriage is a fake one, Mark has simply played her. She goes about her business with great effort but she controls her emotions. This scar made her stronger and she worked really hard. In only 18 months, she was appointed to the reputed post of Executive. *"She was where she was at the right time. She moved to Ikoyi, had a large office and a secretary."* Nwapa, (WAD, p.83) Nwapa is actually motivating women to never give up in life and fight so that they can achieve what they deserve and desire. Rose has risen through the ranks very quickly and holds high positions. She is a remarkable woman, she has a very good social status and in eighteen months, she becomes a high executive.

She is sent abroad for training. Rose was lucky to be in a position where she would use her brain and talent, and so she used it well. Nwapa (WAD, p.83)

Unlike Rose, Agnes is given in forced marriage to a man as old as her father. Her father only wants to profit from her dowry. This is said in the statement: *"But you know what our husbands are like. Once they are given money, they sell their daughters"*. Nwapa



(WAD,p.53) These incidents are not prevalent only in Nigeria but it is the story of most girls across the world. In the post-colonial society also, the desire to have children is very strong. And women who do not succeed in procreating feel depressed. Even in modern society, the wife is always seen as the one responsible for infertility. Hence, some men refuse to be tested, believing that it cannot be their fault. This is due to the fact that, for men, infertility and sexual performance are connected. But Rose feels incomplete because she has no children like her friends. She wishes and prays to God to grant her children. Then, she gets depressed and loses her baby. Flora Nwapa again teaches us women should not be valued by their capacity to bear a child. But she rather focuses on how women's education is central to elevating the dignity of African women as illustrated in the character Rose. Education is a major contribution to the freedom of women.

#### **4. The New generation : Chinwe and Zizi**

The story of Chinwe, Dora's daughter, gives us an insight into the new generation of African women. It is a generation that decides what is best for itself. Chinwe's example shows us that women must not let themselves die in suffering, bitterness, or cultural pressure; on the contrary, they must defend themselves, claim their rights, and assert themselves. Nwapa draws our attention to the emancipation of Chinwe Dora's daughter. Chinwe could not stand her husband's attitude anymore, she just wanted freedom and peace. Consequently, she divorced her husband and focused on her contract business. Nwapa advocates for personhood. She encourages women to break out of the oppressive and humiliating situations of marriage. In this sense, Akoété Amouzou (2006) examines how Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* contributes to the restoration of women's images and dignity. He writes: "Nwapa's creative sense must have been fingered by the realization that it is women's responsibility to reconstruct woman and recreate her image." Amouzou (2006, p.99).

The institution of marriage is sacred but when it represents a danger for the woman, the author thinks the marriage bond should be immediately removed. She makes us understand that only work can make women autonomous and can take up challenges. Chinwe's divorce is detailed in the following statement:

Chinwe went to a lawyer. She wanted a divorce and wanted custody of her children. She wanted no maintenance money for her children.  
'But you need the money,' said the lawyer,  
'No, I don't need his money. I want my children and my peace of mind and freedom. She won her case and was free.  
Nwapa (WAD, p.119)

Another aspect of the new generation is the shameful attitude of Agnes' daughter, Elizabeth nicknamed Zizi. In fact, Zizi is involved in prostitution, she wants to quickly earn money and assert herself. At 18, Zizi was already frequenting armed men and gangsters. It is said that: "Before Elizabeth was fifteen, she left home and lived with a woman known to be the proprietress of a brothel...It was in this brothel that she got the crazy name Zizi." Nwapa,(WAD, p.122). Then, she becomes a drug peddler.

Nwapa describes the excesses of modern society where there is no restriction. She raises our awareness of a social issue that is destroying the youth. African youth has become a strong commercial value for the sex industry and for the men buying sex; the sex industry does not discriminate on age and uses the existing laws tolerating pimping and prostitution to continue to flourish. Besides, the major causes of prostitution among teenage are the lack of education, unemployment, and poverty. At the age of eighteen, Zizi is caught and tried by a court of law in the United Kingdom. Her mother pleaded with the policeman, but he refused to let her go until she offered him the bride. Through Agnes's attitude, Nwapa is condemning African parents' irresponsibility. She thinks that Agnes has failed to educate her daughter who became a danger for our youth. In a conversation with Rose, Agnes said: *"Rose we were different during our time. If I think too much of Elisabeth, I will be a mental case."* Nwapa (WAD, p.123) For the author, African women should stop depending on their husbands, they should be confident and take responsibility for themselves. In this sense, Charles Nnolim in a discussion about Flora Nwapa's characters says: *"The lesson? Women shall never stop suffering at the hands of men. But the women's saving grace, their last redoubt, lies in being economically independent."*

Another fact that undermines African society is the easy life and the love of money. The novel tells us about the relationship between Zizi and Theo. A self-interested and purely egoistic relationship. Zizi marries Theo to benefit from his London flat while Agnes the mom, prays hard that neither Theo nor her daughter changes their mind before the day. She knows that her daughter will not respect the marriage vow. The author warns us against the ease that leads to passivity and self-denial. Elizabeth gets married for financial considerations. This is said in the statement below:

Theo met Zizi when she was in protective custody, liked her, and proposed to her. She accepted him. Then Theo told her his conditions for the marriage. To begin with, he did not want to marry anyone. He was too young and wanted to play around. If Elizabeth could leave him alone, not bother him in any way after the marriage, the London flat that his parents would give him, would be her own. Elizabeth agreed, and so the wedding ceremony was performed Nwapa (WAD, p.130).

## Conclusion

To conclude this analysis, I would say that Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta unfold the stories of the invisibility and marginalization of African women. They point out how women are silenced and oppressed by native patriarchy. Both authors are privileged bearers of traditional cultural values as they come from traditionally marginalized positions. Also, their narratives are grounded in the everyday lives of women. They provide a positive image of African women by empowering their protagonists. Through the female characters, both authors create things to suit their present and future needs. From her feminist point of view, Flora Nwapa balances the relationships between men and women and even tries to create masculine feminist characters. She also draws our attention to some social issues that are severely harmful and affect our society.

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