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A Multi-Disciplinary Approach to the Notion of the Female Identity in Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* and Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter*: A Comparative Study

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Statement of Authorship

The content of the present thesis has not been previously submitted to meet requirements for any other higher education institution. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the research report contains no material already published or written by another researcher except where due reference is made.

Nourelhouda BAAZIZI

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Dedication

To me, myself, and I.

Abstract

For a female to find or establish an identity of her own in an oppressive atmosphere under a patriarchal system is a bit of a difficult task. *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* are two novels depicting two female protagonists with two distinct backgrounds through their journeys toward identity formation. The focus of the study in hand is to track down the psychological process responsible for shaping the female self-identity. The main aim of this research is to explore and compare the psychological representation of the female self-identity in African and American Chinese literature by selecting *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* as samples. The comparison is drawn to provide more than one perception of the notion of female identity formation. By approaching the works from different angles, we provide a richer apprehension of the notion and the novels as well. Taking into consideration the complexity of the factors contributing to one's identity construction, we have resorted to multiple approaches and fields of study including self-awareness, self-realization, postcolonialism, feminism, and womanism. We seek to compare the two novels in terms of the different concepts and theoretical views provided to show the extent of similarities and differences between authors' views. The comparison reveals a significant resemblance between the protagonists' methods in constructing an identity and foregrounds the importance of self-awareness in the whole process.

Keywords: Efuru, female identity formation, feminist impulse, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, multi-disciplinary approach, self-awareness, self-realization

Summary in French

Pour une femme, trouver ou établir sa propre identité dans une atmosphère oppressante sous un système patriarcal est une tâche un peu difficile. *Efuru* et *Fifth Chinese Daughter* sont deux romans dépeignant deux protagonistes féminines avec deux parcours distincts à travers leurs voyages vers la formation de l'identité. L'objectif de l'étude en cours est de traquer le processus psychologique responsable de la formation de l'identité féminine. L'objectif principal de cette recherche est d'explorer et de comparer la représentation psychologique de l'identité féminine dans la littérature africaine et chinoise américaine en sélectionnant *Efuru* et *Fifth Chinese Daughter* comme échantillons. La comparaison est établie pour fournir plus d'une perception de la notion de formation de l'identité féminine. En abordant les œuvres sous différents angles, nous apportons une appréhension plus riche à la fois de la notion et des romans. Tenant compte de la complexité des facteurs contribuant à la construction de son identité, nous avons eu recours à de multiples approches et champs d'étude, notamment la conscience de soi, la réalisation de soi, le postcolonialisme, le féminisme et le féminisme. Nous cherchons à comparer les deux romans en termes de différents concepts et points de vue théoriques fournis pour montrer l'étendue des similitudes et des différences entre les points de vue des auteurs. La comparaison révèle une ressemblance significative entre les méthodes de construction identitaire des protagonistes et met en avant l'importance de la conscience de soi dans l'ensemble du processus.

Mots-clés: Efuru, formation de l'identité féminine, impulsion féministe, *Fifth Chinese Daughtere*, approche multidisciplinaire, conscience de soi, réalisation de soi.

Summary in Arabic

أن تجد المرأة أو تثبت هوية خاصة بها في جو قمعي في ظل نظام ذكوري هو مهمة صعبة بعض الشيء *Efuru* و *Fifth Chinese Daughter* هما روايتان تصوران بطلتين لهما خلفيتان مختلفتان خلال رحلتهما نحو تشكيل الهوية .تركز الدراسة الحالية على تعقب العملية النفسية المسؤولة عن تشكيل الهوية الذاتية للإناث .الهدف الرئيسي من هذا البحث هو استكشاف ومقارنة التمثيل النفسي للهوية الذاتية للإناث في الأدب الصيني الأمريكي و الافريقي من خلال اختيار *Efuru* و *Fifth Chinese Daughte* كعينة .تم رسم المقارنة لتقديم أكثر من تصور واحد لمفهوم تكوين الهوية الأنثوية .من خلال الاقتراب من الأعمال من زوايا مختلفة ، نقدم فهمًا أكثر ثراءً لكل من الفكرة والروايات .مع الأخذ في الاعتبار تعقيد العوامل المساهمة في بناء هوية الفرد ، لجأنا إلى مناهج ومجالات دراسة متعددة بما في ذلك الوعي الذاتي ، وإدراك الذات ، وما بعد الاستعمار ، والنسوية. نسعى لمقارنة الروايتين من حيث المفاهيم المختلفة ووجهات النظر النظرية المقدمة لبيان مدى التشابه والاختلاف بين آراء المؤلفين .تكشف المقارنة عن تشابه كبير بين أساليب الشخصيات الرئيسية في بناء الهوية وتبرز أهمية الوعي الذاتي في العملية برمتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: *Efuru*، تشكيل الهوية الأنثوية، الدافع النسوي، *Fifth Chinese Daughter*، النهج متعدد التخصصات، الوعي الذاتي، تحقيق الذات.

Table of Contents

Statement of Authorship iii
Acknowledgments v
Dedication vii
Abstract x
Summary in French xii
Summary in Arabic xiv
General Introduction 1

Chapter One: the Self and Identity Issues

1.1. Introduction 7
1.2. Self: An Overview 7
1.3. Identity 10
1.4. Identity Formation 14
1.5. Personality 19
1.6. Self-Identity 22
1.7. Self-Awareness 23
1.8. Self-Realization 27
1.9. Oppression 32
1.10. Identity Crisis 38
1.11. From Crisis to Identity 46
1.12. Conclusion 49

Chapter Two: Postcolonialism and Feminism Encounters

2.1. Introduction 52
2.2. Postcolonial Literature 52
2.3. Postcolonial Theory 56
2.4. Feminism 61
2.5. Black Feminism and Womanism 65
2.6. Feminism vs.Womanism 71
2.7. Why Feminism and Womanism 72
2.8. Identity Crisis in Feminism 73
2.9. Feminism and Postcolonial Encounters 75
2.10. Feministic Perception of the Self 77
2.11. Women's Quest for Identity from a Feminist Perspective 80
2.12. Conclusion 82

Chapter Three: A Multi-Perspective Reading of the Novels

2.1. Introduction 85
2.2. Efuru: A Reading of the Self 85
2.2.1. Seeking the Self 85
2.2.2. Identity Formation and Behavior Control 88
2.2.3. Self-Awareness and Self-Realization 91

3.4. Women's Oppression 94
3.5. Enduring and Overcoming Identity Crisis 96
3.6. A Postcolonial Perspective of the Novel 98
3.7. A Feministic Reading of the Novel 101
3.8. Womanism in *Efuru* 104
3.9. Different Readings of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* 106
3.9.1. Seeking the Self 106
3.10. Identity Formation and Behavior Control 110
3.11. Self-Awareness and Self-Realization 114
3.12. Women's Oppression 118
3.13. Enduring and Overcoming Identity Crisis 121
3.14. A Postcolonial Perspective of the Novel 123
3.15. A Feministic Reading of the Novel 125
3.16. Conclusion 127

Chapter Four: Comparing *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter*

4.1. Introduction 130
4.2. Comparing *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* 130
4.2.1. A Reading of the Self 133
4.2.1.1. Seeking the Self 133
4.2.1.2. Identity Formation and Behavior Control 136
4.2.1.3. Self-Awareness and Self-Realization 138
4.2.2. Women's Oppression 140
4.2.3. Enduring and Overcoming Identity Crisis 142
4.2.4. A Postcolonial Perspective of the Novels 145
4.2.5. A Feministic Reading of the Novels 149
4.2.6. Womanism 157
4.3. Conclusion 160
General Conclusion 161
Appendecies 168

List of Figures

Figure 1.1. Relations between Self-Awareness and other Self-Processes…… 27

Figure 1.2. Maslow's Initial Pyramid of Needs ……... 29

Figure 1.3. The Equation of Double Oppression ……... 35

List of Tables

Table 1.1. *Maslow's modified hierarchy of needs* ……... 30

General Introduction

We indeed have no control over our date and place of birth, our belongings, or our physical features, but we still have a choice in what we do and who we become. It is true again that external factors and inherence play a major role in the decision-making process. However, -and to a considerable extent- we can still make attempts to change and adjust the course of our life. Male or female, life is too valuable to be random or pointless, the reason why we ought to assume control over our identity and future.

Literature's primary focus is human nature and behavior; the latter is also the primary interest of psychology as a field. Studying identity, personality, and character can significantly contribute to providing clarifications and justifications concerning human conduct. Identity formation is among the widely discussed issues in literature and literary studies, and it is also the focus of our research. Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* and Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* capture life experiences through their female protagonists' vantage points. Each novel has a different author's background and different settings from the other. *Efuru* is written by a Nigerian female author and the events of the story take place in Igboland, Nigeria whereas *Fifth Chinese Daughter* is written by an American-born Chinese author and its incidents occur in America. Taking into account their oppressive circumstances, and the difference in background and milieu, the present study focuses on the effect of the psyche on shaping the female self-identity in two different literatures and societies.

The current study aims to explore and compare the psychological representation of the female self-identity in African and American Chinese literature by taking *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* as cases in point. By doing so, we provide two views of the same aspect which is the female identity formation issue. Moreover, the multidisciplinary and triangulating nature of our study gives way to generating multiple understandings and perceptions of the same phenomenon.

The study in hand also examines how both Nwapa and Wong depict the female psyche and represent the female self-identity in their masterpieces. It also aims to shed light on the authors' feminist impulse and how it affects their writing mainly *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter*. Additionally, it attempts to give an in-depth look at the notion of one's awareness of both the female self and society and how it is represented in Igbo society and the Chinese immigrant community living in the USA.

To reach the aim of our study, the following research questions were posed:

1- How do Nwapa and Wong represent the female self-identity in *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter*?

2- What feminist impulses that drove Nwapa and Wong to tackle the issue of female self-identity in *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter*?

3- How do both Nwapa and Wong portray the notion of one's awareness of both self and society in *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter*?

Efuru and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* constitute instances of two debuted works of pioneering authors from distinct geographical distributions and confessional ideologies; the latter motivated us to investigate the extent to which they are similar or different in terms of identity formation portrayal and feminist impulse. We have attempted to approach literary works from different angles employing different theoretical frameworks and fields of study. Considering that the two corpora are a depiction of a female's life experience in a patriarchal society, we have opted for postcolonial theory and its main concepts including the self, the other, Orientalism, hybridity, decolonization of the mind, and identity crisis. In addition to that, we have endeavored to account for feminism, womanism, oppression, self-awareness, Maslow's self-realization, and identity formation.

This work is organized into four chapters. The first chapter is dedicated to covering the concept of the self and self-related issues including self-awareness and self-realization as two crucial theories in the identity formation process. The second chapter is devoted to providing a theoretical overview of postcolonialism, feminism, and womanism, and highlighting the connection between these theoretical frameworks and concepts from the previous chapter. The third chapter suggests a reading of *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* in light of what the two prior chapters advance. Finally, the fourth chapter comes to draw a comparison between the two readings of both novels to set the similarities and differences between both novels' representation of the female self-identity as well as both authors' impulses behind tackling this issue. Moreover, it tracks down a psychological portrayal of the notion of self-awareness of both female protagonists.

Chapter One

The Self and Identity Issues

Table of Contents

1.1. Introduction 7

1.2. Self: An Overview 7

1.3. Identity 10

1.4. Identity Formation 14

1.5. Personality 19

1.6. Self Identity 222

1.7. Self-Awareness 223

1.8. Self-Realization 27

1.9. Oppression 32

1.10. Identity Crisis 38

1.11. From Crisis to Identity 46

1.12. Conclusion 49

1.1. Introduction

For individuals to reach their goal of attaining change or improvement in their lives, they first have to be aware of their status, and then they need to consider their past and put plans for their future. In the literary work *Efuru* for instance, the female protagonist _who carries the novel's name_ experiences constant devaluation and stigmatization within her society. However, she reaches self-realization by the end. (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p.732). The current chapter presents the cornerstone concepts that concern our thesis mainly self, identity, and identity issues. These concepts provide a convenient basis for the analysis of the corpora in the third chapter.

1.2. Self: An Overview

Self and identity are two terms that are often used interchangeably; still, they are not synonymous and there is some distinctiveness between them. The common aspect which is shared by the two is that both are represented in memory and that makes them mental constructs. Self, self-concept, and identity are "a series of nested constructs, with self as the most encompassing term, self-concepts being embedded within the self, and identities being embedded within self-concepts" (Oyserman, Elmore, & Smith, 2012, p. 94). The aforementioned terms are correlated and intricately connected which requires us to draw a clear distinction among them in what follows.

The word self has recently been used to encompass three subject elements which are subject, object, and awareness. The subject 'I' is the actor who thinks _it is, therefore, able to think_ about the object 'me'. The 'I' in this case is aware of this thinking. The ability to do the two previously mentioned actions together is termed reflexive capacity. The self is assumed to be flexible rather than stable. It is a mental construct that is sensitive to context and has a malleable nature and a dynamic structure. The usefulness of the self lies in its flexibility. Essentially speaking, people share the essence of being human but that does not

make them all the same. What the self refers to is dependent on the context; thus, the way a person may act differs from one situation to another (Oyserman et al., 2012). And From a sociological perspective, Mead (1934) saw that the self is a product of one's interaction with society and that the self uses the mind as an instrument to interact, react, and control its environment. Stets and Burke (2000) from their part regarded that the interpretation and reinterpretation of the individual's environment are what create one's identity in the end. Stryker (1980) confirmed that the self is strongly bound to society as the self makes sense only when it interacts with other-selves.

Moving to self-concepts, they are defined as the "cognitive structures that can include content, attitudes, or evaluative judgments and are used to make sense of the world, focus attention on one's goals, and protect one's sense of basic worth" (as cited in Oyserman et al., 2012, p. 72). Self-concept is then a part of the 'me' which is comprised of the mental ideas of the person's past (who they were), present (who they are), and future (who they want to become). Atwater (1997) considered self-concept as a general sense of self that includes one's perception of self, feelings, beliefs, and values related to them. He divided self-concept into three forms: body image, the ideal self, and the social self. The first is the awareness and the perception of one's own body. The second form refers to the individual's ideals and expectations. Finally, the third form which denotes one's perception of others (As cited in Iftayani & Nurhidayati, 2016).

Defining the self requires defining the other which in its turn denotes the not-self. This self/other binary opposition is generally associated with the German Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1977). As it has also been used by scholars and theoreticians including, Lorber (1994), Williams (1997), and Butler (2004/2006) (As cited in Hakkoum, 2019). The quality of otherness is what simply distinguishes the other from the self; the distinction between two opposing individuals or even social groups. However, the fact of the existence of two

opposing elements implies the existence of a superior versus an inferior one. In other words; there is always a dominant subject that sets itself in the centre and marginalizes the dominated object to the peripheries (as cited in Hakkoum, 2019). Staszak (2008) shared the same viewpoint; he posited that othering classifies groups into us and them. The in-group is at the centre and it is the one that sets the stereotypes about the out-group which is dragged out because of its lack of identity.

Boehmer (2005) pointed out that postcolonial theorists refer to the colonized as the subaltern or the colonized other or the other. The latter "signifies that which is unfamiliar and extraneous to a dominant subjectivity, the opposite or negative against which an authority is defined" (p. 21). The precedent definition eludes that imperialism is the one in absolute power and considers itself as the norm which subsequently implies that the rest is abnormal and is therefore refused.

Based on Said's argument about Orientalism together with feminism's images-of-women critique; Bhabha accentuated that The West is only displacing and projecting on The East what it fears itself to be. In other words; the pejoratively made opinions about The East are only made to make The West feel satisfied with themselves; especially when taking into consideration that the act of colonization in itself is cruel and savage enough to classify them as uncivilized. Bhabha Started from a deconstructive background and criticized the stereotyping act by arguing that colonizers have ignored the possibility of variation and change and the multiplicity of signifiers (Parker, 2019).

All in all, the self and the other are two concepts that go in parallel. Such a binary opposition was the baseline for colonial mentality and practices. The self is rather a mental construct and that is one of the aspects which distinguish it from identity. Identity is accounted for in what follows together with its processing.

1.3. Identity

It might not be as easy as it appears for one to answer the question "Who am I?" as there cannot be one single definite answer to it. A person within any group can have multiple identifications; what defines that person in a certain context would not define them in a different context. Essentialists have oversimplified the matter of identity by relating it _most frequently_ to race, ethnicity, or gender, and therefore a person's identity becomes fixed. They hold that members of a group are alike and that understanding a group requires being a member of it. On the contrary, nonessentialists and antiessentialists believe that people within one group might be different from one another and that a single individual may express different identities (Parker, 2019). Parker illustrated that:

> One person, for example, might identify as a man, a biology student, a math lover, a Chicano, a heterosexual, a Chicagoan, a Republican, and so on. Someone else might share some of those identifications, and so feel a common bond, but not share all of them. (p. 137)

The multiplicity of identities of each person is advantageous to Thoits (1986) and Linville (1987). They viewed that possessing many identities "offers alternative solutions to the problems of daily life, gives meanings to what's happening around the self and provides guidance in the choice of appropriate behaviors" (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012, p. 1121). Still, the possessed identities must go following society, or else, the person will be affected negatively when being in conflict with and rejected by society.

In the same vein, deconstructionists and poststructuralists do not view identities as stable essences but rather as historical and cultural processes (Parker, 2019). Oyserman, Elmore, and Smith (2012) cited that:

> Identities are the traits and characteristics, social relations, roles, and social group memberships that define who one is. Identities can be focused on the past-what used to be true of one, the present-what is true of one now, or the future-the person one expects or wishes to become the person one feels obligated to try to become, or the person one fears one may become. (p. 69)

Oyserman et al. (2012) also posited that personality is pragmatic, that is to say, constructed according to context. Identity is what orients the individual's attention to certain features in a context rather than other ones (As cited in Oyserman et al., 2012). Burke and Stets (2009) have exhaustively dealt with identity theory in a book with the same title and devoted a whole chapter to identities and their operation where they provided an extensive elaboration on the processing of identities. To fathom how identities operate, we need to know their components and the functions they perform. Identities are constituted of four parts namely an input, an identity standard, a comparator, and an output. How these components work shows that individuals are in control of their identity process; even though they might sometimes be unconscious or give little thought and do things habitually, they are still able to observe and adjust their behaviors. The four identity processes operate cyclically and in a continuous manner where they manage meanings and function as a control system.

The identity process starts from perception; we first need to see, hear, sense things, and interact to have input. Ergo, we obtain information about our environment via our perception and no one can tell what the other person perceives. The input of a person is embodied in the perception of their behavior, the perception of verbal and non-verbal behaviors of others, as it is embodied in other matters. "Perceptions are meanings in the situation that are relevant to the identity" (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 65). 'Meanings' in this case indicates responses to stimuli (signs) that are relevant to the perceiver's identity in a certain situation. Perceptions are supposed to match the identity standard. If the former matches the

latter then the mission of the identity process is accomplished, and the one to decide whether they match or not is the person to whom the identity standard belongs.

"Each identity contains a set of meanings which may be viewed as defining the character of the identity" (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 63). The identity standard is the component that holds the meanings that define us; it serves as a reference to which the individual returns at every perception. It is necessary at this point to mention that a single person has several identities, with an identity standard for each one of them. The identity process in this case compares the meanings of the input to the meanings in the identity standard. The comparator is the part that performs the comparison; it has access to the meanings defining the identity standard and which are stored in memory. Whenever the input does not go following the standard, i.e., higher or lower than the standard, it produces an error signal. The error signal eventually causes an adjustment to the person's behavior and the meanings of their behavior.

Arriving at the last element in the identity system, the output comes as "behavior in the situation, which behavior is based on the error signal from the comparator. The error signal indicates the magnitude and direction of the difference between the input perceptions and the identity standard along some dimension of meaning" (Burke & Stets, 2009, p. 66). The output is produced in the environment and its role is to change the previous perceptions and their meanings. When the individual changes the symbols in the situation, and when the meanings of their output match the degree of their identity standard there will be no error signal and the individual will not change their behavior anymore. However, if the output and the standards are still unmatched, the person will further rectify their behavior until it accords with the standard.

To give more clarification concerning the identity process, it would be better to give a tangible example that demonstrates how meanings flow in the identity system. In relation to the gender identity of a woman named Sara for instance, her identity standard defines how

feminine she should be. When she perceives her behavior in a certain situation she is the one to tell whether this input matches her identity standard or not. If her behavior reveals that she is acting as feminine as she is supposed to, then the goal is accomplished. If her behavior is more feminine than the standard, the comparator produces an error signal. Sara adjusted her behavior based on the error signal and acts in a less feminine manner (she tries to be more active for instance). This action is the output that modifies the former perception of the situation. Sara and the environment perceive that she is being as feminine as she is supposed to and the comparator detects no error signal this time. She does not need to change her behavior pattern anymore. However, if Sara's output is still too feminine or less feminine than the standard, she is going to readjust her behavior once more until the output matches the standard.

Putting the matter of identity in a postcolonial context; we find controversy among theorists. In the Encyclopedia of Postcolonial Studies, Hawley (2001) distinguished two models of identity. Essentialist postcolonialist critics argued, "for a pre-colonial identity, positively representing a distinct racial essence that is assumed invulnerable to individual, cultural, and historical differences" (p.240). On the other hand, constructionist postcolonialist critics believe that "social, psychical, and linguistic structures determine identity. Determination by other forces generates a split identity, which is also a point of focus for constructionism" (p.240).

Loomba (2015) on his part advanced that racial difference is an identity marker which he describes as a powerful and a fragile one at the same time. The racial difference simply means physical features and appearance. European imperialism invaded considerable parts of the world with the belief that they were superior to them. The European colonizers placed themselves in binary opposition with the colonized nations. They constructed a 'self' image of themselves by describing the colonized as the 'other'. They stereotyped the non-white races

as to be barbarous and savage. Hence, "skin color has become the privileged marker of races" (p. 128) while " 'races' are socially imagined rather than biological realities" (qt. in Loomba, 2015, p.128). The claims that are made by the discriminating groups are mere abstract beliefs that have no scientific support.

1.4. Identity Formation

Identity is a theme that is widely explored in literary works. Literary men make use of their characters to express their views and ideas; they construct in their works complex and developing identities just to make their production interesting enough. The contextual background is crucial in providing clarification for characters' behaviors and attitudes. We encounter that the subject matter of identity is treated in different manners in literature; characters can be portrayed as characters who lack a sense of identity and seek to construct one. As they can also be portrayed as individuals who pursue constructing identity as outsiders who do not conform to society (Just Jennifer, 2016, para. 1). Culler (2005) saw that readers can construct their identities and perceive matters from their own angle through reading literature (As cited in Identity and Identity in Literature, 2022).

Cinoğlu and Arıkan (2012) demonstrated in their paper that there are three perspectives in approaching self, identity, and identity formation. These perspectives are; social identity theory, identity theory, and personal identity theory. Theorists like Stets, Burke, and Hitlin believed that the first two theories share some common aspects, and integrating them would broaden the scope and the view on identity. Social identity theory explains identity from a group membership perspective, while identity theory approaches identity from the perspective of role occupation, and personal identity theory views identity from a personal perspective (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012). The authors advance that it would be even more advantageous to use the three theories together when approaching the subject of identity and identity formation.

The principal actor in the identity formation process is the self as the self precedes and produces identity. To Stryker (1980), we interact with others using the identity or the identities we have and not the self we have; if two persons are to interact, it is their identities that interact and not their selves. The same two persons would interact with each other differently using different identities just to suit the different contexts they are put in. Building on Stryker's (1980) assumption of the reciprocal relation between self and society, Stets and Burke (2003) added that society has power even over the identity formation of the self; it significantly contributes to shaping one's identity that understanding the society can greatly help to prove a better fathoming of identities. The notion of identity comes to justify differences among individuals.

According to social identity theory, group membership; i.e. belonging to and being accepted and approved by one's social group explains one's identity formation. People act following the norms of their social group (Stets & Burke, 2003). When aware of their group membership, people will be forced or encouraged to "learn the structure, dynamics of the group and change themselves to better fit in. It is at that point where we see the emergence of in-group and out-group concepts" (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012, pp.1123-1124).

Individuals tend to compare themselves to others; they regard similar subjects as in-group and think about the different ones as out-group people. By doing so, they not only obtain a sense of belonging, but they also bring about the idea of the other. The latter is very crucial for the identity formation process; in-group members in this case are going to feel unique and eventually ensure the continuity of their group. They are going to be strongly attached to the principles of the group and even adopt the group's perspective; they will cease possessing personal views and will consequently obtain an ethnocentric attitude where they would be biased by their own culture and generally have a negative perception of the other. When groups are homogenous, their members prioritize group values over personal values;

they will no longer seek to increase their statuses. As soon as group membership is activated, outer criticism does not affect group members and they would still be committed to their group values; ultimately, group members form unity in perception and action, and individual identities and differences are not taken into account (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012).

Oakes (1987) suggested that social identity theory limits an individual's function within the group to the constant pursuit of increasing group membership through their actions and behavior to maintain their membership; Salient social identity is used to refer to such type of identity follows (as cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012). Moreover, the theory at hand requires a certain degree of depersonalization; members are expected to lose their identities for the sake of the group in a way that their achievements are considered the group's achievements and the roles they play are of less value. Nonetheless, realistically speaking, special individuals within the group are needed because they constitute models for the rest of the group to follow (as cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012).

Seeing identity as the outcome of culture and as a collectivist process does not provide a holistic view of the role of the self in the identity formation process. According to Stets and Burke (2000), symbolic interactionism is a theory with a micro-level focus that gives more importance to the self than to society when it comes to the identity formation process. This theory "takes into account the importance of symbols, and individual level interactions in individuals' interpretation of the self, and therefore the formation of identity" (Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012, p. 1118). Stets and Burke (2000) held that the first step in the identity formation process is the individuals' realization and internalization of the roles assigned to them. The second step is interacting with other identities and realizing their existence; at this point, the self starts constructing itself to become the new identity that the group expects them to be. Consequently, the individual becomes a reflection of the group.

Not far from what Stets and Burke claimed, McCall and Simons (1978) advanced that identity is formed when the self realizes the role attributed to them by both the agent and the structure, i.e., by self and society (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012). The form of the theory developed by McCall and Simons focuses on the several types of identity roles that the self embodies. They give importance to the hierarchical aspects of identity roles when it comes to the matter of identity formation; a concept which is known as the hierarchy of prominence; the latter prioritizes group survival over individual membership. And as for the qualities set for measuring identity prominence are threefold; the first characteristic is the extent to which the self is supported by others in shaping identity. In addition to the degree to which the self is committed to the identity assigned to them by society. And finally, the measurement of the intrinsic and extrinsic rewards they receive from society for their submission to the norms and for forming their identity. The degree of the precedent measurements determines the level of acceptance of the member by the group; subsequently, it defines the level of the member's participation in the group (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012).

The identity formation process takes a cyclical pattern where higher levels of participation and acceptance by the group lead to higher levels of internalization of the group's norms and activities. This pattern applies to both, new members and old members of the group as well to get them accommodated to any changes in norms or rules. Support, rewards, and punishment are essential to guarantee an individual's commitment and loyalty to the group. Another concept in identity theory was introduced by Stryker (1980) which is salience hierarchy; a type of identity theory similar to prominence hierarchy but one which puts more emphasis on the role of values in the process of identity formation. It takes into consideration the negative impact of situational constraints on values, and just like

prominence hierarchy, it values the role of commitment in forming identity (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012).

Unlike how social identity theory and identity theory approach identity and identity formation, personal identity theory came to take into account what the previous theories ignore, i.e., personal characteristics. Prentice (2001) thought of this theory as one providing a more detailed insight into the self. Hewitt (1989) from his part viewed personal identity as "a sense of continuity, integration, identification, and differentiation constructed by the person not in relation to a community and its culture but in relation to the self and its projects"(As qtd in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012, p. 1128). Hewitt (1999) defined the theory as:

> a sense of self built up over time as the person embarks on and pursues projects or goals that are not thought of as those of the community, but as the property of a person. Personal identity thus emphasizes a sense of autonomy rather than communal involvement. (As qtd in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012, p. 1126)

What we now know as private life is the argument that Baumeister (1986) put forward; he explained that people's public life is controlled by society since it is exposed to others while private life is not prone to the control of society because it is kept secret. Thanks to having a private life, it has become possible for people to have a private self too. Nevertheless, this does not allude that it is possible to approach the identity-forming process from personal characteristics perspective alone; there are no individual characteristics that can be isolated from their roles or location in groups in identity formation. Ergo, proponents of the theory such as Hitlin, Burke, Baumeister, Prentice, and Stets advocated considering the three interconnected poles of identity together.

Gecas (2000) and Hitlin (2003) regarded that values and value commitment are important concepts as they have a crucial role in identity construction and production. Values

are defined as goals that work as principles that drive the individual or the group's life (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012). They affect attitude rather than behavior, and researchers attempt to study how personal values influence people in different situations. To Seligman and Katz (1996), Values and situations together establish an identity via two methods; firstly, values function in situations that can shape one's perception and behavioral choices (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012). Secondly, values direct one's choice towards being in situations that are more convenient to them; values have a role in orienting individuals to the kind of groups that are more suitable for them (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012).

However, sharing the same values does not unify behavioral choices among people and that is due to environmental factors, group membership, assigned roles, personal characteristics, and even personal factors. It is paramount at this level to pinpoint that values are not fixed; they can change at the societal or personal level. They might change either because of society or as a result of some significant personal circumstances. Change in identity incorporates a change in behavior because the individual needs to match his behaviors to his reflexive mind image; Hitlin (2003) believed in the reciprocal relationship between personal identity and behavior as they are shaped by each other (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012). Nonetheless, Swidler (1986) did not acknowledge the role of values in the identity formation matter; she saw that values are important and useful only when they are meaningful to the self. She supports her view with the example of people in the war where the value of being humane loses its meaning and is replaced by compassion for their people only. The case where, the person will normally kill the other in defence of their group (As cited in Cinoğlu & Arıkan, 2012).

1.5. Personality

"Personality refers to important and relatively stable aspects of behavior" (Ewen, 2014, p. 3). Each person has a certain consistency in behavior; some aspects of personality

can be observed while others are not, and some of them are conscious while others are not. A person who is arrogant for example would be arrogant in most situations and over a noticeable time. This person might sometimes not be arrogant when being among family members or very close friends, yet arrogance is a remarkable recurrent aspect of this individual's personality which is revealed through their speech, actions, and behavior. It is true then that personality is embodied in observable behaviors; still, many theorists assume that personality is not dependent on the existence of other people and it starts and lies within the person and it thus has invisible aspects too.

"To most theorists, personality includes virtually everything about a person—mental, emotional, social, and physical. Some aspects of personality are unobservable, such as thoughts, memories, and dreams, whereas others are observable, such as overt actions" (Ewen, 2014, p. 3). Personality is what makes each individual unique and different from the others. According to Emmanual (n. d.), personality shaping is influenced mainly by heredity, environment, and psychological factors. Personality is not purely psychological. It has a biological basis. The inherited biological, constitutional, and physical features of a person determine how they are seen by people and consequently how they see themselves. "Biological Factors consist of the nervous system, glands, and blood chemistry which determines our characteristics and habitual modes of behaviour (...) Adrenal gland, thyroid gland, pituitary gland, and endocrine gland affect personality" (p. 1). In addition to intelligence which is a factor that contributes to self-improvement, gender is also seen as an aspect that engenders significant differences within personality (As cited in Emmanual, n.d.).

Environmental factors greatly interfere in personality moulding; each social environment, physical environment, cultural environment, school environment, and language affect the individual in a certain way. It is through the social environment that we form a social self and from there that we extract our moral values and social attitudes. In addition,

climatic conditions have an impact on people and their living as well. Likewise, family, society, and schools are sources from where individuals extract their social virtues, stereotypes, imitation, and identification. The cultural environment includes the society's cultural traditions, ideals, and values that are imprinted in everyone's personality. Language is another social phenomenon that stands as a means of communication among society members; the process of interaction through language is an aspect that is involved in personality development as well. Imitation can be considered a way to form one's personality through the mechanism of identification; any individual might be influenced by a model that they take imitate in terms of physical, social, and mental characteristics. Relationships among society members are thus necessary for "the development of certain social personality characteristics like attraction towards others, the concept of friendship, love, sympathy, hostility and also isolation which is a negative orientation" (As cited in Emmanual, n.d., p. 3).

"Psychological Factors include our motives, acquired interests, our attitudes, our will and character, and our intellectual capacities such as intelligence. The abilities to perceive, to observe, to imagine, to think and to reason are examples of psychological factors" (As cited in Emanual, n.d., p. 3). The previous abilities define and direct one's reaction in each encountered situation. Eventually, an individual's personality is inevitably a patchwork of different innate and external factors that contribute in varying proportions to personality development and formation.

The definition of personality embodies stability, yet, it is necessary to denote that it changes in a certain way. Cloninger and Svrakic (1999) viewed personality as a psychophysical organized system that is in constant change and development and which determines one's adjustment to the environment (As cited in Arciero & Bondolfi, 2009).

1.6. Self-Identity

Self-identity is "conceptualized as a definition of self as a person who performs a particular role or behavior" (Terry & Smith, 2008, p. 417). It refers to a "person's self-conception, self-referent cognitions, or self-definition that people apply to themselves as a consequence of the structural role positions he or she occupies or a particular behavior he or she engages in regularly" (p. 417). Self-identity ergo gives meaning to the self as it specifies roles and behaviors and distinguishes them from opposing ones; an individual can be a father, a husband, a son, a friend, and a teacher at the same time. Giving the role of a father and a teacher to a person distinguishes them from being a mother or a director for instance. Mead (1934) and Cooley (1902) regard social interaction as the means through which identities gain meaning and individuals know who they are. Social structure and individual actions are linked as one's role is defined by their social position. There are certain expectations from every social position; behaviors should match up with roles to be regarded as appropriate by others. Fulfilling one's role as expected boosts self-esteem while the opposite leads to questioning self-worth and possibly results in psychological distress (A cited in Terry & Smith, 2008).

Identity theory assumed that self-identity is a determinant in attitude-behaviour context as repetition of behaviors makes those behaviors a part of self-concept and therefore helps in predicting intentions. Nevertheless, some inconsistency was encountered and more research was needed to reach a full understanding of the role of self-identity in the attitude-behavior field. Several methods have been applied to predict behavioral intentions. Earlier measures introduced by researchers used direct statements to measure the degree of integration of a particular role within the self. However these methods have been criticized for several reasons and thereby identity-similarity measure was developed by Mannetti and colleagues (2002, 2004). This measure was based on marketing research and it aims to compare the person's self-image and their idealized expected behavior. The difference

between the two descriptions, i.e., how similar or different from each other, is considered as a difference score, and it is the identity-similarity measure (Cited in Terry & Smith, 2008).

1.7. Self-Awareness

Leary (2004) foregrounded the benefits of having a self and the difference it makes; he considered having a self as a distinctive quality in humans as compared to most animals. Having a self-concept influences one's actions and behavior as people's decisions are based on their knowledge of themselves and their capacities. Thanks to having a self, humans can self-reflect and decide to take action. They can also think consciously about themselves and evaluate themselves according to some abstract standards and eventually react to those evaluations. The human ability goes beyond automatic mental processes that allow us to imagine the future and plan for it. The ability to self-evaluate and to prospect together can initiate self-change. Self- control too, requires self-reflection and self-evaluation. Leary added that the intentional actions which we take are "the result of idiosyncratic patterns of physiology, experience, and environment, and not a self-directed decision" (Leary, 2004, p. 10). He once more noted that the capacity to be aware of our thinking, feeling, and behaviors is purely human; an animal thinks about moving in a certain direction, but a man can decide to move in a certain direction while he thinks and knows that he is moving in a certain direction. Practically speaking, having a self is the one behind the present human development; "science, philosophy, government, education, and health care would all be impossible if people could not consciously self-reflect" (Leary, 2004, p. 12).

Self-awareness is not innate as it develops around the age of 18 to 24 months old. It is only at this age that children become aware of themselves, of their perception by others, and of the state of mind of others too. Some people believe that despite all changes they went through in their lives, they feel that _essentially_ they are still the same because of the presence of the inner self. According to what experiments have shown, this self _which is

responsible for self-relevant thinking, self-evaluation, and experience of time_ is located in the frontal lobes of the brain, the reason why individuals who have damaged their frontal lobes face difficulties in experiencing some self-related activities normally (Leary, 2004). Leary's purpose in his book was to show that having a self is a blessing and a curse at the same time. He explains that humans live in two different worlds; an internal and an external one. The former is the abstract inner world where we talk to ourselves, remember things, or plan for our future. The external world is the real tangible surrounding world where we live. However, being preoccupied and brooding can be harmful; matters should not take more thinking than what they need and deserve because overthinking is undesirable as it hinders us from consciously living the moment.

One among several self-theories is Objective Self-Awareness. According to Duval and Wicklund (1972), it refers to the capacity of directing conscious attention towards the self and is generated through reflections on the self. "Objective" indicates that the person's attention is directed inward towards the self, and they are hence the "object" of their own conscious focus. Self-awareness represents one of the four levels of consciousness; while consciousness is focusing one's attention on the environment and processing external stimuli; self-awareness is focusing one's attention on the self and processing self-information (Morin, 2011, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p.733).

The inclusion of self-processes is necessary when it comes to the study of personality. Self-processes have a direct effect and control over personality. They are dynamic and intricately interconnected which results in dynamism and constant change in personality (Morin & Racy, 2021). Trapnell and Campball (1999) regarded self-awareness as an umbrella term for any kind of self-focused attention. Self-awareness comprises two other sub-processes; self-reflection and self-rumination. The former is healthy self-directed attention that is usually linked with positive results and openness to experiences. Whereas the latter is

an unhealthy and uncontrollable sort of self-directed attention leading the person into self-absorption and it is therefore associated with negative outcomes and psychological dysfunctions (Cited in Morin, 2011, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, pp.733-734).

Self-reflection in its turn has two different methods; either through self-distancing or self-immersion. Self-distancing, on the one hand, is when the self observes itself with an outer objective eye; self-immersion on the contrary takes place when the self observes itself with an inclusive involving eye. Moreover, self-distancing includes autobiography (thinking and recalling one's past experiences using episodic memory) and prospection (imagining and planning for one's future using episodic future thinking). The relationship between autobiography and prospection is crucial in reaching self-regulation (goal-attaining); in other words, constructing future thoughts depends on personal experience (Cited in Morin & Racy, 2021, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022,p.734).

At this juncture, it becomes notable that self-awareness is quite effective and necessary for goal accomplishing. Nonetheless, in the case of self-immersion, the latter would lead to self-rumination and therefore the individual falls into the trap of anxious and uncontrollable self-focus. There are two forms of self-rumination; the first of which is "negative private self-focus, which triggers thoughts about one's standards and is associated with depression when one falls short on some of these standards", while the second form is "negative public self-focus, which evokes thoughts about others' opinion of oneself (Theory-of-Mind) and leads to increased social anxiety" (qt. in Morin & Racy, 2021, p. 376, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p.734).

Thus, it is worth emphasizing that for an individual to change (self-regulate), they first need to be aware of what to change (self-awareness) (Bandura, 1991). Self-regulation represents "a complex long-term process involving the attainment of numerous goals and sub-

goals, such as successfully graduating from university" (Morin, 2017, p. 6). It is constituted of several self-control instances. Self-control is "a single short-term effort at resisting the temptation or delaying gratification, like studying instead of watching a movie" (As cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, pp.734-735).

Another aspect that plays an important role in self-regulation is self-talk (talking to one's self loudly or silently (Hardy, 2006); this activity facilitates self-regulation and is initiated by self-awareness. It is present in all self-processes which renders it the glue that joins those self-processes together (Morin & Racy, 2021). Equivalents of this term are phonological loop, self-statements, internal dialog, inner speaking, verbal thought, self-directed, subvocal, covert, communicative speech, and inner speech. The letter refers specifically to the silent talk to the self and it is present in self-awareness and self-reflection (Hurlburt, Heavey, & Kelsey, 2013, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022,p.735).

The diagram below summarizes the correlation among the main self-processes which have been defined previously. The positive processes that eventually lead to self-regulation are distinguished from the other negative processes with the use of colors.

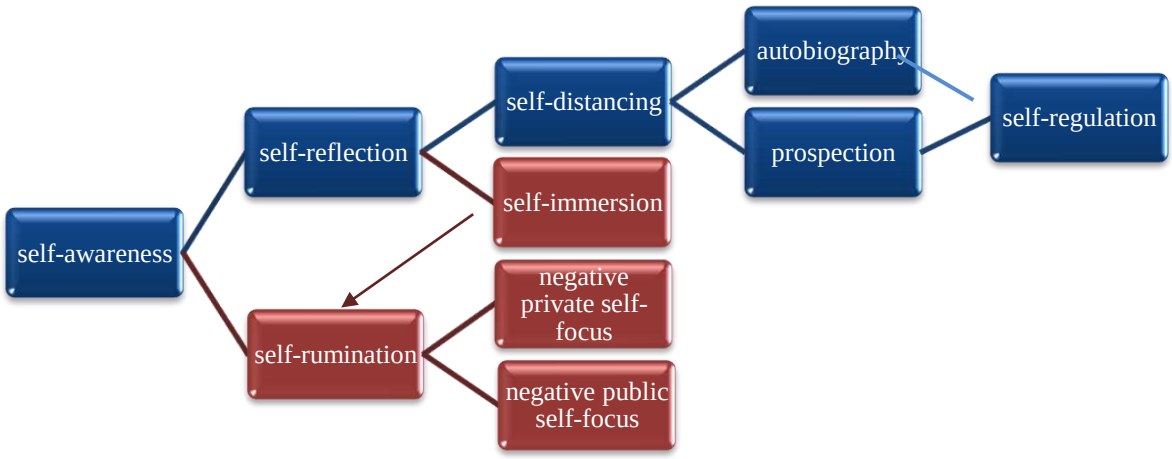

Figure 1.1. Relations between Self-Awareness and other Self-Processes (Adapted from Morin & Racy, 2021, p. 368, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022,p.736)

All in all, Objective self-awareness is an intricate process that is comprised of many inter-effected sub-processes. Self-awareness is a crucial step in self-development because individuals obviously cannot self-improve if they are not aware of what to change (As cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p.736).

1.8. Self-Realization

Carl Gustav Jung believes in the constant possibility and ability to self-develop, according to him, man is always in pursuit of what advances them towards being perfect and complete (Cited in O'byrne & Angers, 1972). In the same token, Karen Horney posited that man naturally seeks self-realization; the real self is the inner force of growth that is within all human beings yet unique to each one of them. Put differently, man is by nature likely to self-develop and fulfill his potentialities (See Horney, 1950, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p.736).

Self-realization is then a complex process that can be approached from several perspectives. It was first introduced by Jung and has become later on a very important concept

in Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow's systems (Rusu, 2019). Self-actualization is an equivalent term that was initially coined by the neurologist Kurt Goldstein; he "claimed that every organism had a master motive or a unique innate drive, and the realization of this inner drive is what he termed self-actualization" (As cited in D'Souza, 2018, p. 2). Maslow further explored the term at hand; he defines it as the realization or fulfillment of the individual's talents and potentialities. This definition remains the basic one despite all other variant contextual definitions (D'Souza, 2018, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022,p.737).

The view of the self-actualization concept that we intend to follow henceforth is Maslow's view advanced his hierarchy of needs theory in 1943, where he first suggested a hierarchy encompassing a set of five human needs. They are namely; physiological needs, safety needs, love and belonging needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs. Afterwards, some modifications were brought into the hierarchy and the self-realization needs section itself was substituted by the following needs; cognitive needs, aesthetic needs, self-actualization needs, and self-transcendence needs. At this stage, the needs were divided into deficiency or lower needs (D needs) and being or higher needs (B needs). The form and the table below represent the former and the latter hierarchy of needs (cited in D'Souza, Adams, & Fuss, 2015, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p.737.)

Figure 1.2. Maslow's Initial Pyramid of Needs (Adapted from D'Souza 2018, p. 2, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022,p.738)

The pyramid above was not originally introduced by Maslow himself but was rather a business invention, yet it has been broadly taken as a representation of his theory of motivation in different fields ever since (As cited in Sosteric & Ratkovic, 2020). The following table classifies the D needs and the B needs with their definitions.

Table 1.1. *Maslow's modified hierarchy of needs*

	The need	Its definition
D needs	Physiological needs	The need for rudimentary life essentials (food, water, shelter, clothing)
	Safety needs	The need for safety (personal safety, financial security, health)
	Love and belonging needs	The need for friendship, family, romantic partner, intimacy, and affiliation with a club or organization (social needs).
	Esteem needs	include needs for recognition, attention, fame, competence, mastery, and self-confidence
B needs	Cognitive needs	Generally, they refer to understanding the universe through reason, thought, and learning; to pursue knowledge, meaning, morality, and truth.
	Aesthetic needs	They include the need for beauty, art, order, and symmetry.
	Self-actualization need	It refers to realizing one's full potential through introspection, contemplation, and self- discovery.
	Self-transcendence need	It is the ultimate need; the need to go beyond one's self. It can be manifested through spirituality, deep meditation, peak experiences, flow, social activism, or using one's fully realized potential to render the world a better place.

Note 1.1. Adapted from D'Souza et al. (2015, p. 29) (As cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, pp.738-739)

Maslow notes that it is natural as well as necessary for the individual to first satisfy their deficiency needs before attempting to self-actualize; i.e. they should not pursue self-actualization at the expense of fulfilling their deficiency needs; otherwise, they risk suffering depression or frustration (As cited in D'Souza, 2018). The satisfaction of needs is regarded as

impossible by Maslow; needs are supposed to be relatively well satisfied; relatively well satisfied differs and depends on the empirical investigation as well as factors such as personal predilections and cultural stipulations (As cited in Sosteric & Ratkovic, 2020). According to Maslow, self-actualizing people:

> (…) tend to pursue knowledge, meaningfulness, justice, truth, science, beauty, goodness, and wholeness. They are not slaves to their biological needs and their ego and are free to explore themselves and the universe (…) self-actualizing people spent significant amounts of time understanding themselves and figuring out their true innate potential. Once they figured out this drive, they typically concentrated on using their potential on tasks outside of themselves thus rendering the world a better place. (As cited in D'Souza, 2018, p. 3, as qtd in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, pp.739-740)

The Self-actualization view is supported by many other prominent psychological life span theories; they all agree on the path of growth idea where mentally healthy humans go through certain stages during their lifetime. Human beings then self-actualize through time thanks to the growth motivation path where they move farther from self-interest towards social interest; their attempt to satisfy self-actualization needs is hence bound to age and it augments in adulthood (D'Souza, 2016, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022,p.740)

Nevertheless, some individuals do not self-actualize despite having their lower needs satisfied, in this case, one wonders what the explanation might be. Maslow suggests a few possible causes including genetics, low socioeconomic status, anxieties and fears, social marginalization, and poor education. Meta-pathology is the term that he coined to refer to the state of failing to attain self-actualization in late adulthood (Cited in D'Souza, 2018, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022,p.740).

Another inquiry that comes to one's mind is whether self-actualization can be measured and how. The personal Orientation Inventory and the Short Index of Self-

Actualization are two measures known the most. They determine the self-actualization level based on the person's beliefs, views, and values. However, more recent methods rely on measuring self-actualization based on the person's actions rather than beliefs (D'Souza, 2018, as cited in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, pp. 740-741).

1.9. Oppression

The scenario of colonialism engenders two poles; i.e., oppressor and oppressed. As for the former, it is also termed the dominant group or the agent group; it is the one to enact oppression and benefits from it. Whereas the latter is the group that endures oppression; and it is also called the subordinate or target group (Hardiman et al., 2007; Kirk & Rey 2007; Tatum, 2003 in William 2012). According to Namhata (2011), "Oppression can be in the form of armed struggle, economic disparity, racism, casteism, religious intolerance, slavery, lynching, and other societal reservations, including gender bias" (As qtd. in Hakkoum 2019, p. 40). Difference underlies oppression and the shape that oppression embodies thence depends on the difference upon which it is based.

Hakkoum (2018) clarified in her thesis that oppressed communities are regarded as social minorities. She proceeds; the word minority does not imply being small in number, but rather being socially marginalized and interiorized. It is minor because it "is different from the supposed to be the superior majority in terms of ethnicity, race, and political, economic or religious belongings" (As cited in Hakkoum, 2019, p. 29). Muslim immigrants in non-Muslim countries are then regarded as minorities, not for their small number but for having a different religious background.

In his Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Friere (2014) delved deep into the subject of oppression and says that the unfair social order sets the oppressor at the top of the hierarchy where they enjoy all the privileges they can while the oppressed suffer total deprivation at the bottom. He perceives that both oppressors and oppressed people have been dehumanized as

the first have their humanity stolen and the second one has stolen the humanity of the others. He thinks that the oppressed should overcome this limiting situation and struggle to restore their humanity and regain their liberty.

According to Collins (2002), oppression can be seen from three dimensions, they are economic, political, and ideological dimension. The first dimension is embodied in black women's poverty and their exclusion from having intellectual jobs and rather doing labor to ensure their survival. The second dimension refers to black women's political subordination or denial of access to many political practices such as voting or attending educational institutions. The last dimension is the ensemble of ideas and stereotypes formed concerning African American women and which are instilled into American society. The negative qualities glued to black women allow and perpetuate the sexist as well as racist practices conducted against them. Collins assumed that the three aforementioned dimensions function together as a tool to subordinate, suppress, and guarantee black women's demoted social status. She stated that " this larger system of oppression works to suppress the ideas of Black women intellectuals and to protect elite White male interests and worldviews (p.5). She supported her contention with further illustrations such as how African American women are distanced from occupying leading positions in social institutions of knowledge validation. She also pinpointed the exclusion of black women from the making of the fundamental feminist studies and research; mainstream feminism work was conducted by white women on white middle-class women only.

On the other hand, Young (2000) stated that oppression can take various forms. She cited the five of them in her article as follows; exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence. However, the corpora that the present study is concerned with demonstrate marginalization and violence only, ergo they are the ones to be elaborated for.

Marginalization refers to considering and treating a group of people as less important; this importance is based on factors such as gender, ethnicity, race, and class. Therefore, these minorities are excluded from social practices and deprived of certain privileges due to being different. Looking back in history, girls were not allowed to attend schools because they were regarded as lacking the skill to do so, females' role in society was limited to mothering and housekeeping. Another act of marginalization that can be still seen all around the globe is the one based on race; being a foreigner or having a different skin pigmentation is a sufficient reason for receiving different treatment in a formal or an informal situation.

Violence on the other hand is the most explicit type of oppression and it signifies any actions or utterances that are used to hurt people. Being a member of a particular social group can make one prone to physical, sexual, or verbal violence. One of the most common images of violence is domestic violence where women are constantly abused by their partners because of their gender. The history of African Americans in the USA is full of instances of violence and intimidation. The white people mistreated them for their race and suppressed their demand for their rights in equality in the cruelest ways.

Mullay (2002) and Williams (2012) agreed that those who belong to more than one social group are double oppressed. Put differently; being a woman who belongs to a minority group makes that woman oppressed twice, once for her race and twice for her gender. An American Chinese female for example is oppressed in the broader society for her racial background as she is oppressed for her gender by the American society and the males of her community as well. The equations below illustrate how oppression is multiplied when the individual belongs to more than one social group. The addition of social groups goes in parallel with the multiplication of the effects of oppression.

Oppression = a + b + (ab)

Oppression = race + gender + (race x gender)

Oppression = Chinese American + Woman + (Chinese American x woman)

Figure 1.3. The Equation of Double Oppression (Adopted from Mullay, 2002, p. 145)

Undergoing oppression can immensely damage one's self-esteem and perception of matters. It can lead to what is known as internalized oppression. It is the case where the individual oppresses himself by taking the oppressor's stereotype for granted. Pheterson (1986) accounted for internalized oppression as "the mechanism within an oppressive system for perpetuating domination not only by external control but also by building subservience into the minds of the oppressed groups." (p. 146). The oppressive ideology, in this case, becomes cognitively instilled and it is thereafter exhibited in the behaviors of the oppressed. Pheterson added that there are factors to this concept including "self-hatred, self-concealment, fear of violence and feelings of inferiority, resignation, isolation, powerlessness, and gratefulness for being allowed to survive" (p.146).

At this juncture, it would be significant to tackle the concept of racism, as it is considered relevant to the matter at hand. Ashcroft et al. (2007) defined it as "a way of thinking that considers a group's unchangeable physical characteristics to be linked in a direct, causal way to psychological or intellectual characteristics, and which on this basis distinguishes between 'superior' and 'inferior' racial groups" (p. 181). Van Dijk (2008) puts forth that racism is "a complex societal system of ethnically or "racially" based domination and its resulting inequality" (As qtd in Hakkoum 2019, p. 48). Briefly, it is then a manifestation of oppression based on the ideology of racial difference.

As mentioned earlier, people can be looked down on because of their race and that is racism, similarly, sexism refers to oppression which is based on the ideology of gender difference. The French feminist Michel (1986) elucidated that sexism is an "…attitude which demeans, excludes, underrepresents and stereotypes people on the basis of gender" (As qtd. in Hakkoum, 2019, p. 51). She perceived that men are not supposed to be put in juxtaposition in the first place, because they are not opposite to each other but rather distinct from each other. No matter to what extent developed and civilized we seem to become, we still find that racism and sexism are two social phenomena that are still present in our modern life. Mankind could not get rid of seeing their difference in race, ethnicity, or gender as a privilege that allows them to feel superior to others.

Only a few studies have been conducted in the context of the current subject, i.e. a psychological approach to postcolonial literature, namely self-awareness and self-realization in postcolonial feminist writing. Jorgensen's thesis (2018) tackles identity creation and self-realization in colonial and postcolonial African literature by comparing three different corpora of three different female authors including Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*. Jorgensen highlights the possibility of identity formation after oppression as well as the extreme forms that are often necessitated by identity creation in an oppressive kind of life (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022,p.741).

It is for instance depicted in *Efuru* how the protagonist transcends and reaches independence –although difficult- through defiance of patriarchal expectations and exigent social norms that confine the female merely to marriage and motherhood. Awareness –in this case- plays an important role as it spares the individual the adherence to social roles and would eventually guide them to self-realization (Jorgensen, 2018). Jorgensen (2018, p. 2) also pointed out that the three discussed novels denote the necessity for:

> the balance between transcendence over various forms of oppression (colonialism and patriarchy) and balanced chosen social connection. This balance begins as toggling between these extreme states after the probationary phase and necessary madness that leads to rebirth as characters begin identity negotiation. The negotiation continues until a cohesive identity is realized as a middle path represented in less extreme forms of living. (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022,pp.741-742)

Additionally, the Foucauldian thought in Madness and Civilization is considered applicable to the corpora in hand as the latter portrays how women may enter into a phase of temporary hysteria or madness due to their delicate nature when they are exposed to challenges beyond their capacity. Nonetheless, it is this temporary madness that –normally- leads to change and re-birth of identity; the crisis or the difficult experience represents an opportunity for personal growth that can help to transcend the temporal madness to eventually reach a stronger identity (Jorgensen, 2018, as cited Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022,p.742).

Gbaguidi (2018), on the other hand, deals in his paper with the theory of man's supremacy over women in the postcolonial female narrative, in addition to women empowerment through education in Flora Nwapa's *Women are Different*. He mentions how women's status has changed in postcolonial Africa vis-a-vis her position in pre-colonial Africa; women at first had a voice and were not oppressed by culture, however, they lost their rights afterwards and have become even dehumanized (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p.742).

He also focuses on how African female writing came in opposition to male writing which used to limit the female to a certain ideal model. Female literature came to rectify the woman's representation by picturing her the way she is supposed to be and the way she can be; i.e. an individual that does not exist only to serve within the boundaries of the house as a wife and a child bearer, but rather an active effective person within her community. Hence, Nwapa empowers her females by giving them the lead and by projecting them as strong,

independent, and defiant to submit to the other gender. Nwapa resorts to a middle path where she shows the need for collaboration between the two genders where each of them completes the other rather than attempting to prevail over them (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, pp. 742-743).

Ikonne's (1984) article is another study conducted on two of Flora Nwapa's early novels; *Efuru* and *Idu*. It addresses the matter of society and women's quest for selfhood. Ikonne also regards the socioeconomic antifeminism of the patriarchy as the main reason behind women's frustration to attain their self-assertion (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p.743).

He pinpointed how some women become the enemies of themselves as a result of internalized disesteem and the patriarchal system that views the female as a mere property of her husband. Nwapa's works are a rebel against the established norms where she pictures the husbands Adizua and Gilbert as irresponsible while Efuru is independent and a decision maker who moves forward with her life and does not depend on her husbands. Nwapa delivers the concept of the independent unmarried childless beautiful woman by making referring to the lady of Lake Uhamiri who is wealthy and whole on her own (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p.743).

1.10. Identity Crisis

The online APA American Dictionary of Psychology defines an identity crisis as "a phase of life marked by experimentation; changing, conflicting, or newly emerging values; and a lack of commitment to one's usual roles in society" (p. 1). The period is thus characterized by a feeling of uncertainty and instability; however, Erikson (n.d.) considered the state to be normal and necessary during adolescence to reach maturity. The concept has been also used to describe any state of ambivalence during later stages or periods in life. People enduring an identity crisis wonder what their roles, beliefs, and values are. They

question who they are as a consequence of experiencing significant change or stressful events in their lives (Very well mind, 2022).

Baumeister et al. (1985) distinguished two types of identity crisis in their article; namely motivation crisis (identity deficit) and legitimation crisis (identity conflict). The former occurs when "the individual experiences a lack of guiding commitments but struggles to establish personal goals and values" (p. 407). The individual in this case fails to be committed (to make a decision) despite their attempt for commitment. Legitimation crisis on the other hand happens when "the person has several commitments which prescribe conflicting behavioral imperatives in some situations, such that at least one commitment may have to be betrayed" (p. 407). In the second type, the individual has different commitments (identities) that don't go in accordance and they, therefore, cannot commit to all of them.

The identity crisis is another outcome of postcolonialism. Ninkovich (2001) defined it as "a period of disorientation in which values and relationships once taken for granted are thrown into question. Questions of self-adjustment that bedevil individuals caught up in an identity crisis like" who am I?" and "where do I belong?" (p. 16). Hence, identity is in crisis when the individual is in a state of confusion where they are in search of their identity or in an attempt to form one. Ashcroft et al. (2004) postulated that cultural denigration, as well as the issue of place and displacement, are among the reasons behind the crisis of identity; those who had their sense of identity destroyed would endeavor to develop or restore an "effective identifying relationship between self and place" (p. 8). Displacement encompasses the various forms of dislocation such as "migration, the experience of enslavement, transportation, or 'voluntary' removal for indentured labour" (p. 9).

Bhabha denoted that imperialism created unstable identities; a status to which he refers with the term hybridity (Nayar, 2015). The latter is one of the controversial concepts in

postcolonial theory. It basically "refers to the creation of new transcultural forms within the contact zone produced by colonization (…) Hybridization takes many forms: linguistic, cultural, political, racial" (Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 108). Thus, since the cultural and racial exchange happens as a result of the contact between the colonizer and the colonized, each of them influences and is influenced by the other. Hybridity emphasizes the existence of an in-between identity; one which is the outcome of the native and the colonizer's culture. Bhabha claimed that the contradictory and ambivalent space where such hybridity takes place is called Third Space. Nevertheless, hybridity was regarded as a threat to the purity of the superior race and their dominance since they were not supposed to mix with different cultures due to their inferiority (Nayar, 2015).

Transcultural exchange is quite inevitable as a result of constant contact among cultures; there is no pure, fixed, or stable culture because of the correlation between original and imperial entities especially when bearing in mind that any nation has either been a colonizing or a colonized one. By the same token, Hall (n.d.) proclaimed that identity is incomplete and therefore it is constantly in process. To him, identity and hybridity are strongly attached when it comes to the identity of the colonized and the colonizers (as cited in Abdessettar & Abdessettar, 2019).

"the in-between space that Said calls interstitial space locates his understanding of cultural diversity that empowers the marginalized and exiled to compromise a position between past and present and ironically accepts and denies the other" (Ashcoft et al., 1999, p.6). Said (n.d.) held that postcolonialism results in diversity in cultures and identities which leaves the colonized in a middle state. Similarly, Bhabha theorized the term liminality to refer to the "space where the colonized is seeking to escape the identity of the colonial subject and move toward the identity of the white man but has not yet acquired the white man's state/status" (Nayar, 2015, p. 98). Liminality is a transitional state where the subject crosses

the borders but remains in between their motherland and the adopted country with their identities not fully formed, with a sense of uncertainty and instability.

The mastery of the dominant group allows it to construct the image they want not only for themselves but to deprive the dominant groups of constructing an image of their own too; a condition that Du Bois (1903) has labeled as double-consciousness. The latter is defined as: "a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity" (p. 09). More elaborately; the image of the blacks is defined by the whites, the image of Muslims is pictured by non-muslims, the image of women is drawn by men, and likewise. Additionally, Du Bois mentioned that double consciousness causes the individual to experience a two-ness; a state of having two different souls within, resulting in a split in their identity that eventually hinders them from having a clear sense of their identity. A Chinese American citizen, for example, finds himself representing two identities; Chinese and American, however when it comes to reality, he thinks that he represents both yet he is practically none of the two and he is even lost between them.

In a similar vein, Fanon (1967) believed that by dint of devaluation, the colonized attempt to wear white masks over their black skin; in other words, they seek to live and behave like the colonizer to prove that they are equal to them. In his White Masks Black Skin, Fanon postulates that the inferiority complex within any individual pushes them to imitate their superiors and embrace their standards. The colonized quest to show how white they can become a result of the feeling of mediocrity that has been previously implanted by the colonial discourse. Nevertheless, even when dark-skinned people imitate the whites, they would still be regarded as inferior –by nature- and they are always viewed with a degrading eye which would subsequently force the colonizers' predominance.

However, Heckman (2006) thought that not only do diasporic groups feel in-between; even those who are still in their homeland feel the same. Another category of colonized people who found themselves in-between is the one that the colonizer chose to grant special treatment. Colonizing nations conducted several methods to attain their goals; including which was reshaping the identity of the colonized by inserting a colonial identity. They formed a group of the educated elite who received a European education. This class could later identify with both identities but they were lost in between them, not to mention that they were rejected by the Europeans and their people alike (Boehmer, 2005).

When observing the complicated affair of an identity crisis, one tends to wonder what could be done to improve such a situation. Sofield (1999) noted that it is very difficult for postcolonial societies to find their identity because they are in a state of hybridity. She perceived that even negotiating identities by compromising between their damaged identity and the present identity would not help because it would only lead to forgetting their national identity. Sofield eventually concluded that it is possible to build a strong sense of identity by negotiating two conflicting cultures. She advanced that identity can be re-invented in the same manner that postcolonial writers do by giving the example of Chinua Achebe. Communities should make use of their education to empower their culture and build their identity guided by postcolonial literature which opens the door for a strong new national identity to take place (as cited in Cheriet, 2015).

Numerous studies and research works have been conducted on the subject of an identity crisis. They all approach identity crises in different literary corpora and attempt to provide answers and clarifications. Karmi (2021) intended in her article to identify the female identity crisis in addition to dissociation disorder and self-fragmentation of the main character in Kafa Al-Zubi's *X*. Al-Zubi names her novel *X* after the female protagonist to allude that this protagonist represents all females who endure X's dilemma. Karmi analyzed the novel

using psychoanalytic and postcolonial theories. The examination of the corpus showed that the female's personal and social identity is constrained and she is psychologically confused because of the socio-religious fabric of patriarchal society. The patriarchal society hinders the female from realizing her selfhood and independence. Because of her poisonous traumatic past, X feels dissociated and self-fragmented which leads her to eventually become suicidal. In the end, X decides to rescue herself and forget about her past; she could achieve self-realization by reconciling with her identity and becoming able to live the life she longs for. X finally breaks free from her fear and social complexities that harmed her individuality.

Another research that deals with an identity crisis depicts the issue of identity in David Yoon's *Frankly in Love*; a novel that revolves around a Korean-American who toils to maintain his original identity while blending into the American community. In her thesis, Oktavia (2021) aimed to reveal how the main character's characteristics are portrayed, how he experiences an identity crisis, and how that crisis is revealed through his characteristics. To reach the previously mentioned aims, the researcher approached the text from a psychological perspective; she used M. J. Murphy's theory of characterization, Erikson's psychosocial development, and the two kinds of identity concept by Baumeister, Shapiro, and Tice. The results of the study showed that Frank Li's dual identity is the beginning of his identity crisis and that the type of his crisis is identity conflict; he is unable to make choices, and he has a feeling of guilt and emotional paralysis. Frank Li is very conscious, passive, naïve, and indecisive and those are four out of six characteristics that reveal his identity crisis.

Every Woman for Herself by Trisha Ashley is another corpus that captures the subject matter of identity crisis. Silitonga and Ambarita (2020) in their article shed light on the causes behind the identity crisis of Charlie _the main character_ and the impact of the crisis on her, in addition to how she overcomes her identity crisis. The study concluded that Charlie's identity crisis is due to her divorce and other unpleasant experiences that she goes through.

Charlie is also involved in an accident which makes her blame herself and regard herself as a murderer. Besides, Charlie underestimates herself and does not appreciate herself. The identity crisis caused her to become pessimistic and alienated from society. To cope with her issue of identity, she decides to regain her life by doing her hobbies and socializing with others, she changes her perception of men and decides to dedicate her life to herself and enjoy her life as a single woman.

Kumar (2020) examined and compared in his paper the identity crisis suffered by women protagonists in the novels of Arundhati Roy and Kiran Desai. Kumar noted that Roy absorbs the matter of collective and individual identity, whereas Desai provides interesting fathoming of diaspora identity. Both of the writers deal with the issue of women's identity crisis and provide an overall view of it. Kumar deduced that both authors detected many dimensions of womanhood and wifehood as they portray women's internal and external struggles in different manners. Roy demonstrates the concerns of her women protagonists and the identity crisis they suffer; wives in Roy's novels are proactive, rebellious, and seek their individuality away from their husbands. However, Desai draws an idealistic picture of Indian women; she presents the main female character as compliant and surrendering to her abusive husband.

Abdessettar and Abdessettar's (2019) dissertation is concerned with exploring the issue of identity and hybridity in postcolonial literature by taking Ngugi Wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat* as a case. The researchers aimed to scrutinize the influence of the colonizer's dominance on Africans and to depict the African's perception of their colonizers. The study projected how hybridity and the construction of identity are represented through the linguistic and socio-cultural aspects of Kenyan people in the novel. They also attempted to investigate how the concept of identity and hybridity are expressed by the author. Postcolonial theory is used to account for the commitment of the Kenyans to their identity construction in reaction

to British imperialism. The study concluded that Kenyans were unavoidably affected by colonialism; however, the desire for independence was a purpose that they shared.

Similarly, In his article, Dizayi (2019) attempted to locate the identity crisis in postcolonial theory. He noted how Fanon and Said viewed and hypothesized the issue of identity and to what extent their speculations are essential in postcolonial studies. Dizayi concluded that both Fanon and Said see identity as influenced by colonialism and the crisis happens due to the sense of inferiority which Western systems insert. The sense of inferiority drives colonized people towards impersonating the West and then it becomes a dilemma for them to recognize their identity as they always feel estranged and homeless.

Zohdi (2018) shed light on the status of the emigrants who travel to their colonizer's countries to receive an education and then go back to their countries to benefit their motherlands. However, their emigration comes at a price; the emigrants risk having a merged or dual identity. Zohdi attempted to approach the work of Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North* through the lenses of Bhabha's theory of hybridity and ambivalence. The investigation revealed that emigrants either obtain a merged identity or lose their own identity as a result of their hybrid life in the colonizer's country; a life where they are in between two cultures, languages, and identities. The narrator in the novel regains his original identity as he comes back home and meets his grandfather, while the other intellectual _Mustafa Saeed_ loses his identity and unconsciously becomes a part of his colonizer's system where he is torn between his past and present life.

Dizayi (2017) works on the crisis of identity in postcolonial literature in his doctoral dissertation, by taking Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* and Naipaul's *The Mimic Men* as corpora for analysis. The study focuses on identity and its construction in formerly colonized countries within the framework of postcolonial theory. The results of the study show that

emigrants suffer the impact of colonialism when becoming citizens of the colonizer's countries. The colonizer's strategies succeeded in making the colonized lose their sense of identification and become mimics of their host countries with a sense of homelessness.

1.11. From Crisis to Identity

As cited in Kasinath (2013), Marcia (1966) extended the work of Erikson's theory of identity and categorized four statuses of identity; i.e., identity diffusion, foreclosure, moratorium, and identity achievement. These statuses differ in their degree of crisis and commitment. Crisis and commitment are two variables that can be high or low in each identity status. Crisis on the one hand is the phase where the person is actively exploring options and considering the available choices concerning occupations, values, and beliefs. Commitment, on the other hand, is the decision that the individual makes and the extent of their commitment to identity (as qtd in Kasinath, 2013). Marcia's four identity statuses were initially set for adolescents. However, since Erikson's identity crisis was extended to regard adults as well, we have then referred to Marcia's statuses as applicable to adults too. The statuses are processes for an identity establishment task which makes it possible for them to keep developing and changing during adulthood. Adults may experience the previously mentioned statuses as they may move from one status to another (as cited in Kasinath, 2013). In the same vein, Para (2008) cited that early researchers are the ones who assumed that identity development begins in adolescence. However, modern researchers advance that identity is formed in a later stage; i.e., during early adulthood. This delay occurs due to the change in life style where people delay their commitments in employment and marriage untill later stages in life.

In identity diffusion status for instance both crisis and commitment are low; this status takes place when individuals are not giving any thought to their options in occupations, roles,

or values. They are hence in stagnation, neither committed nor experiencing progress. However, in identity foreclosure status, the person does not undergo a crisis because they have foreclosed all other options without any consideration; still, they have a strong commitment as a result of parental guidance or approval. And that is the opposite of identity moratorium status, in which the individual is experiencing a crisis by exploring possibilities but has not yet taken a decision. Finally, identity achievement status; is characterized by having a high degree of crisis and commitment as well. The individual in this case has fully explored their options; besides, they have made their commitment. Additionally; it is worth mentioning that identity moratorium and achievement tend to be developmentally more mature as compared to identity diffusion and foreclosure. In a state of moratorium or achievement, the person is either in the process of evaluating possibilities to reach a decision or they have already considered the options and made a commitment (as cited in Kasinath, 2013).

Marcia's theory about identity statuses has been also used to account for ethnic identity formation in adolescence. Ethnic minority adolescents need to spend a longer period of the moratorium to form a firm identity. Minority groups face the challenge of being exposed to two different cultures, they start with being unaware of the differences until they eventually reach an integration of cultures. As cited in Kasinath (2013), Phinney (1990, 2003) advanced four outcomes for ethnic minorities;

> They can try assimilation, fully adopting the values and behaviours of the majority culture and rejecting their ethnic culture. On the opposite end, they can be separated, associating only with members of their ethnic culture. A third possibility is marginality, living in the majority culture, but feeling alienated and uncomfortable in it and disconnected from the minority culture as well. The final alternative is biculturalism (called integration), maintaining ties to both cultures. (p. 3)

Steinberg (2005) and Marks, et al., (2011) agreed that being proud of one's own ethnic belonging has a positive influence on mental health; it improves problem-solving skills and lessens emotional problems. Those who are brought up aware of their own ethnic heritage tend to be more appreciative of others' heritage (as cited in Kasinath, 2013).

Not knowing who one is or what plans for the future seem sufficiently problematic; it is a real issue for an individual to undergo a crisis. Still, a crisis is not a dead end but rather a phase that can pave the way for achieving a new identity. The will for improvement and change is possible at the different stages of life provided that one decides to commit. Regardless of the outer hindrance or facilitation that people encounter, they cannot attain change unless it springs from within them.

There is a lack of literary studies tackling the subject of identity statuses. Suseno (2021) analyzed the four identity statuses in Saikaku's short story *Two Old Cherry Trees Still in Bloom*. He focused in his analysis on how could the short story be a medium to teach something by taking the previously mentioned corpus as a sample. He highlighted how Saikaku implements the four statuses in his work and how he brings his readers to think critically to see how to gain harmony in life as an individual and a member of society through personal and social identity. The researcher used coding analysis in his work and determined two kinds of codes for each identity status category. These codes are as follows; unknown and uncertainty for identity diffusion, sympathy and admiration for identity foreclosure, struggle and chasing for identity moratorium, and settlement and completion for identity achievement. The author communicates in his short story that comes in harmony with the rest of the community and requires implementing an identity moratorium to develop one's curiosity and gain background knowledge. He also accentuates that being admired by others is needed for the sake of maintaining curiosity and reaching achievement.

1.12. Conclusion

The current chapter provided an understanding of the notions of self and identity and some of their related theories and terms mainly those which are compatible with the corpora under study, and we therefore intend to utilize them in the analysis. The differentiation among the concepts of self, identity, and personality is drawn. Self-awareness and self-realization are elaborately covered as they constitute two necessary processes that provide a demonstration for goal accomplishment and achievement. The identity system and its components were tackled to track down the functioning of identity. Furthermore, light has been shed on identity crisis as an issue facing identity but one which can still set the ground for identity change and development; i.e., identity formation. Marcia's identity statuses were also included because they account for the relationship between crisis and identity formation.

Chapter Two

Postcolonialism and Feminism Encounters

Table of Contents

2.1. Introduction 52

2.2. Postcolonial Literature 52

2.3. Postcolonial Theory 56

2.4. Feminism 61

2.5. Black Feminism and Womanism 65

2.6. Feminism vs.Womanism 71

2.7. Why Feminism and Womanism 72

2.8. Identity Crisis in Feminism 73

2.9. Feminist and Postcolonial Encounters 75

2.10. Feministic Perception of the Self 77

2.11. Women's Quest for Identity from a Feminist Perspective 80

2.12. Conclusion 82

2.1. Introduction

In the present chapter, we endeavor to provide an overview of postcolonial literature, Postcolonial theory, together with feminism and womanism as they constitute a convenient theoretical framework for our research. By opting for all the previous theories, we aim to obtain a richer apprehension of the corpora at hand.

2.2. Postcolonial Literature

Commonwealth literature, *Littérature Contemporaine d'esxprssion Anglaise*, or *New English Literature* have been used as alternatives to the term *Postcolonial Literature*. However, they were regarded as inaccurate because they historically or politically misrepresent the concept. Postcolonial Literature (PL) does not refer to literature produced in the post-independence period only, –which roughly dates back from the 1960s onward- it encompasses works written even earlier; works that were a manifestation against political power. Intellectuals who were a part of the colonizing educational system forged works that preceded independence and contributed to it. The term in hand hence should not be perceived from a chronological perspective only but from a functional one as well. It should neither be restricted to black-skinned people; Scottish literature is an instance of literature that was written in the 18th century and which was produced by white people as a reaction to the English invasion (Döring, 2008).

> According to Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (2004), postcolonial literary works have:
>
> special and distinctive regional characteristics (…) They emerged in their present form out of the experience of colonization and asserted themselves by foregrounding the tension with the imperial power, and by emphasizing their differences from the assumptions of the imperial centre (p. 2).

Postcolonial authors then distinguish their works by making them different from their colonizers'; they do not submit to their literary traditions and they create literature that

represents them. They make use of language as a tool of resistance. Since colonizers use language to perpetuate colonialism and establish the conception they want of the world, postcolonial writers resist that by creating an adapted form of empirical language (Ashcrotft et al., 2004). Ergo, postcolonial writers -regardless of their origins- use literature as a means to resist their colonizers and ex-colonizers and react against them. They employ it to reconstruct their tarnished image with the purpose of "a reshaping of dominant meanings" since the colonizer claims that they possess neither history nor cultural identity (Boehmer, 2005, p. 177). Colonialist ideology (also referred to as colonial discourse) is founded on the colonialist's claim of their superiority as opposed to the inferiority of their colonized.

For anti-colonialists, decolonization does not take place at the level of politics only, but at the level of the mind as well. The novelist Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o calls for the decolonization of the mind; he asserted that colonized nations should use their native tongue when writing instead of using the language of their occupiers as thought and language are closely related. The Kenyan Ngũgĩ writes for his own people using his mother language. Conversely, other authors regarded that using European languages is preferable because it allows their work to extend to a wider range of readers including their own people. Chinua Achebe for example considers that numerous writers around the world write literature using their own version of their antecedent colonizer's language, i.e., an adapted form of it. Achebe uses African English rather than British English in his works. Albeit the advantage of universality gained from using European languages, Ngũgĩ (1987) disagreed once more with the label given to literature produced by Africans. He opined that such hybrid literature should not be called African but Afro-European (Parker, 2019).

Tyson advanced that postcolonial criticism is regarded as a subject matter and a theoretical framework as well within the field of literary criticism. As for the former, it is concerned with the analysis of literature produced by colonized and formerly colonized

cultures as a response to colonialism; this includes all the works written from the day of colonialism till the present. Some of this literature includes works written by the colonizers too. The analysis of any postcolonial literary work is called postcolonial criticism despite the theoretical framework being used. Postcolonialism as a framework considers colonialist and anticolonialist ideologies from different perspectives which makes this framework applicable to any work of literature where these ideologies exist even if it does not belong to the postcolonial writing category (Tyson, 2006).

In her thesis, Tiab (2019) has chosen to work on five of Chinua Achebe's works; *Things Fall Apart*, *Arrow of God*, *Man of the People*, *No Longer at Ease*, and *Anthills of The Savannah*. She attempted to provide a postcolonial reading of the previously mentioned works as they embody the life of Nigerians in three different phases; pre-, during, and post-colonial periods. They also deal with the most prominent matters in postcolonial literature including Hybridity, Mimicry, Ambivalence, and the loss of Identity. The study also encompassed a quantitative analysis of the Algerian students' reception and perception of both African and Nigerian literature. Algerian university students were surprised at the encounter with Nigerian literature and the totally distinct culture it portrays. The examination of the works revealed that Achebe gives great importance to foregrounding the rich Nigerian national culture which existed before British imperialism. Achebe does not criticize British imperialism only but his own people as well; he brings to light the negative characteristics of his people or his mother culture that contributed in a certain manner to their collapse in the face of British colonialism.

Achebe also criticizes the leadership in Nigeria in the post-independence epoch where they do not perform their role effectively. Achebe made use of literature to spread awareness and make changes in people's thinking and improve his people's lives; he puts great emphasis on the fact that Africans should go back to their roots to regain their full independence. As for

education in Nigeria, Achebe does not completely reject the British educational system in his country, he only refuses the Western societal ideals that the system attempts to implant because those ideals lead the natives to feel inferior and to have a negative attitude towards themselves as a nation. Tiab indicated the significance of including postcolonial literature in the university syllabus of a postcolonial country such as Algeria; such literature raises awareness of Africa's history and present situation as Algeria is eventually an African country that endured European colonialism just like other African nations.

Hakkoum (2019) explored in her thesis how the ideology of oppression is expressed and defied via discourse by taking a set of Langston Hughes and Maya Angelou's poems as a case to study. To reach the aim of her study, she triangulated postcolonial theory, feminism, womanism, and critical discourse analysis together. All of the previous constitute the theoretical framework that can elucidate the power of hierarchies from many perspectives. The study revealed that oppression strongly affects the individual's identity; oppressed subjects are left in a state of uncertainty and frustration because they are not practically free as they cannot define their identity. Instead, the oppressor takes the role of deciding what and who they are. The analysis also showed that the act of oppression and the discourse used by white Americans have led African-Americans to react, resist, and celebrate their blackness using literary discourse and its devices as a tool. For authors to express themselves eloquently, they manipulate discourse at its different levels in a way that form effectively and accurately serves content. Hakkoum's aim in shedding light on the motifs of the discourse of the oppressed in the poems of Hughes and Angelou was to show how is discourse used to serve as a transmitter of ideology. Both of the poets want to be part of the wider American counstellation while still preserving their own identity as black people; they seek a linear non-hierarchical social order. Oppression turned out to be the result of intolerance towards

difference; the latter created the two opposing poles known as the self and the other, where being the other hinders one from having a clear sense of the self.

Karagic (2013) conducted a comparative study of the two corpora, namely Albert Camus' *The Stranger* and John Maxwell Coetzee's *Disgrace*. Taking into account that *the Stranger* is a pre-independence work while *Disgrace* is a post-independence work, the comparison is drawn to examine the representation of the *other* in both novels, in addition to the depiction of power relations and hierarchy between the colonizers and the natives. The close-reading analysis revealed that both authors' portrayal accord with postcolonial theory's conception of the *other*; colonized people are pictured negatively. Similarly, they both designed the plot from the perspective of the white man protagonist. nevertheless, when it comes to the representation of powers in the novels, colonizers are the ones in total power in *The Stranger*, but that is not the case in post-independent *Disgrace* where the colonizers are no longer in a superior position as the natives start taking over. Karagic also remarks on the presence of a sense of dichotomy in both literary works as the *Us* vs. *them* concept is thoroughly manifested. Finally, the researcher noted that the findings of the research in hand cannot be generalizable to all postcolonial literary production but are rather restricted to the concerned corpora; the peculiarities found in these corpora are not forcibly the same in other ones.

2.3. Postcolonial Theory

From the early nineteenth century forth, many French, British, Spanish, and Portuguese colonies in Asia, Africa, and South America gained back their freedom one after the other. The term postcolonialism is used to indicate the period that succeeds the end of colonialism/imperialism (Childs & Williams, 2013). However, there is big controversy around the term postcolonial; starting from its spelling reaching to its concern. Critics claim that writing the word hyphenated and with no hyphen generates two different meanings. "Post-

colonialism" refers to the period that comes after the end of colonialism while "postcolonialism" alludes to the impact of colonization on societies from the day they were colonized till the present (Sawant, 2012). Nonetheless, some theorists do not interpret the prefix post- as chronologically coming after but rather as conceptually going beyond. Concerning this, any counterattack and rejection of colonialism and its ideologies is a transcendence of colonialism (Child & Williams, 2013). Thence, the concept of postcolonialism has been employed by critics from the 1980s on to:

> (…) cover all the cultures affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. We also suggest that it is most appropriate as the term for the new cross-cultural criticism which has emerged in recent years. (Ashcroft et al., 2004, p. 2)

"Yet the term still continues to be used from time to time to mean simply 'anti-colonial' and to be synonymous with 'post-independence', as in references to the post-colonial state" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007, p. 170). The term postcolonialism is hence not limited to what it initially seems to refer to; it is related to colonialism, independence, and any decolonizing ideologies.

Therefore, the effect of colonization on the formerly colonized countries does not cease with the simple formal end of colonization. Even after independence, those countries remain culturally or even economically bound to their precedent colonizers. This dependence makes it controversial to judge whether these colonies can practically be regarded as post-colonial or not (Loomba, 1998). By the same token, the term has recently been employed to refer to the examination of "the processes and effects of, and reactions to, European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to and including the neo-colonialism of the present day" (Ashcroft et al., 2007, p. 169).

However, Childs and Williams (2013) posited that the term in hand should not be limited to a certain historical epoch or a certain colonial empire because that would be "unacceptably Anglocentric or Eurocentric" (p. 1); colonial periods cannot be limited because there have been many periods of colonialism and even colonizing powers themselves have been colonized at a certain point of time. Consequently, the term should be related to the aftermath of colonization as well instead of confining it to specific times and colonies. In the same vein, Boehmer (2005) outlined in *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* that writings of women as well as those of indigenous peoples were added under the category of postcolonial literature because their situation is perceived as strongly representative of postcolonial writing; they share the fact of being marginalized, underestimated, and unwanted.

Another point to mention is the distinction that Leela Gandhi made between the terms postcolonialism and postcoloniality. She uses the former to refer to the theory; the theory that aims to "project a retrospective look on the past of the countries touched by colonization and to make of the colonial discourse and the ideology of domination that lay behind it critical" (Cited in Halimi, 2014, p. 41). As for postcoloniality; it is the condition that the theory addresses; the condition that was undergone and experienced by the colonized. Halimi also cited in his thesis the three historical periods that postcolonialism takes into consideration: "the pre-colonial, colonial and the post-colonial one. In other terms the origin, the causes as well as the consequences engendered by the colonial fact" (Halimi, 2014, p. 42)

Aime Cesaire, Frantz Fanon, Ngugi Wa Thiango, Edward W. Said, Bill Ashcroft and his collaborators, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Homi Bhabha are names of the leading figures whose notable works have contributed to the development of postcolonial criticism (Sawant, 2012). The Palestinian American Edward Said's Orientalism in particular is considered a significant pioneering work in the field.

> Said argued that descriptions of the East in these terms generated a discourse that produced and then continued to reproduce the East in such terms, and that has continued to reproduce the East and the colonized or formerly colonized world in such terms up to the present day. In constructing the East, Orientalist discourse also constructed a West that was everything the East was not: rational, hardworking, kind, democratic, moral, modern, progressive, technological, individualist, and the center of the world, the norm against which everything else was a deviation. (Parker, 2019, p. 358)

He denounced that the West has produced a negative image of the Orient, i.e., the Indian subcontinent and the Islamic Middle East. Western Philosophers, poets, novelists, economics, and political theorists have pictured the Orient as uncivilized, passive, irrational, sensual, and ruled by emotion while depicting an opposite view of the East; a positive one.

> The colonizers believed that only their own Anglo-European culture was civilized, sophisticated, or, as postcolonial critics put it, metropolitan. Therefore, native peoples were defined as savage, backward, and undeveloped. Because their technology was more highly advanced, the colonizers believed that their whole culture was more highly advanced, and they ignored or swept aside the religions, customs, and codes of behavior of the people they subjugated. (Tyson, 2004, p. 419)

It is then concluded that the West's opinion of the West is not built on a logical basis but on a pejorative and arbitrary one. The East took their superiority and the West's inferiority for granted; they stereotypically rejected and looked down on them.

Crafting on that, colonizers regarded themselves in the "center" of the world; as the supposed to be "self" while they considered the indigenous native colonized as the "savage" "other" who is unlike them which makes the natives too inferior to be considered "fully

human" (Tyson, 2004, p. 420). Without forgetting to mention that colonizers have always claimed that the drive and the pretext for their colonial expansion were to civilize the uncivilized. Darwin's theory of selection besides Herbert Spencer's ideology of the survival of the fittest increased the colonizers' belief in their supremacy and justified their actions (Cited in Hakkoum, 2019).

It is also necessary for more clarification to tackle the two types of colonies. Scholars divide European colonies into settler colonies (also referred to as settler-invader colonies by Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2007), and occupation colonies (also called exploitation colonies or colonies of conquest). However, Ashcroft et al. (2007) designated that these two types "provide the abstract poles of a continuum rather than precise descriptive categories or paradigms" (p. 193). Settler colonialism is when the colonizers move to a new place to settle and stay there. Argentina, Australia, Canada, and the United States are instances of such a kind of settlement where Europeans displaced and marginalized the existing population and then outnumbered and replaced them. Colonizers –afterwards- go unaware of being settlers and act as if no indigenous people had existed before they set foot in the colony which made the inclusion of settler colonies within postcolonial studies a debatable matter for scholars (Parker, 2019).

On the other hand, occupation colonies are where Europeans _for economic and political reasons_ spent some time dominating the natives, but did not intend the remain permanently in the colony. This is what happened in "colonial India and Nigeria, the colonists remain a small proportion of the population. Typically, they leave their metropolitan homes to do their work exploiting the colony, and then they return home and other colonizers replace them" (Parker, 2019, p.349).

2.4. Feminism

For a better understanding of the corpora under scrutiny, we have as well opted for feminism in addition to postcolonialism. The concept of modern feminism was first introduced into the English language in 1890. It came as a reaction to misogyny; the latter refers to the marginalization and underestimation of women as a result of putting men at the center. The principles that feminism holds are shared with those of identity-related studies such as postcolonial and race studies. We encounter development and change of the concept through time due to the debates among feminists. Diachronically speaking, feminism has undergone three waves; each of them had its particular focus, goals, and recommendations (Parker, 2019). Hooks (1984) regarded that the feminist movement is important and its significance goes beyond eradicating sexist oppression; it can also pave the way for other liberation struggles against other forms of oppression.

The first wave of feminism demanded women's right to education, to vote, and to own property. The first phase came as a consequence of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792, where she argued that women are as rational as men and they are therefore equal to them (Castle, 2007). These feminist demands have not been officially recognized in the USA until 1920 and in the UK until 1928 (Parker, 2019). On the other hand, the second wave of feminism started around the 1960s; it was the outcome of Simone de Beauvoir and Germaine Greer's works which denied the existence of any natural distinction between men and women; they revealed that women are not born inferior but they become so as a result of patriarchy. Kate Millet and many other feminists rejected the patriarchy and perceived it as the one causing women's oppression (Castle, 2007). This wave had an essentialist view which sees all women sharing the same identity (Parker, 2019); the latter led to third-wave feminism; a wave that came to object to its precedent and recognized the differences among women.

Third-wave feminism had an anti-essentialist view that took into account the fact that not all women are straight and belong to the middle-class white women category; some are for instance lesbians or black and suffer from oppression for their gender and race (Castle, 2007). At such a point, one wonders how feminists define themselves. Do they just define themselves as belonging to one of the waves? Parker (2019) clarified that feminists today "draw on all three waves to pursue nonessentialist, political, and cultural agendas" (p. 187) even though they may be in favor of third-wave feminism.

At its beginnings, feminist literary criticism was closely tied to second-wave feminism. The impact of this wave can still be touched in modern times. "The popular feminism that most people encounter in journalism, in the mass media, and the caricatures from fearful antifeminists continues to rely on second-wave feminism to represent all feminism" (Parker, 2019, p. 188). Likewise, modern readers' perception of feminist literary criticism is influenced by the ideas of early feminist literary criticism. Dobie (2012) noted that employing feminism as a tool in analyzing literature has not started until the early 1960s. Feminist criticism can be considered a rich area of study as it has many critical perspectives and triangulates from other fields and movements which hinders it from having a clear-cut definition; even principles and methods to approach literature are a point of disagreement among feminists.

Showalter revealed how American, French, and British feminists perceive feminism differently (As cited in Dobie, 2012). American feminists call for female writers to overwrite the stereotypes that have been previously established by male writers because they represent a falsified image of women's nature. As for British critics; they have a Marxist view on the matter of feminism. They object to the exploitation of women in life and literature. They inspect how the structure of society results in the oppression of women. French feminists on the other hand are influenced by Jacques Lacan's views on language and the development of

women. In addition to Hélène Cixous who believed in *l'Ecriture Feminine*, i.e.; the existence of some peculiarities related to women's writing style that distinguish it from men's style. However, when considering the differences among feminist groups, what is common among them is that they are all "gynocentric, trying to find ways to define the female experience, expose patriarchy, and save women from being the other" (p. 106).

Ultimately, it is significant to spot the light on some of the issues arising among feminists. First of which is the minority feminist affair. Some females are doubly victimized; once for their gender and twice either for their race, economic status, sexual orientation, or similar reasons that make them underestimated. They are hence looked down on by men both black and white, and by white women in their society as well. Another issue that faces feminist critics is the un-universality of women's status around the globe; women's social position remarkably differs from one country to another as thresholds of women's access to power and freedom vary according to societies. As a result, sisterhood is an aspect that is very difficult to reach in the feminist movement. Ergo, doubly oppressed women and those who are not from the UK or the USA feel ignored and excluded from the movement and literature which eventually makes feminism seem unrepresentative of their state as a whole. The last problem that has been encountered by feminists is the emergence of deconstruction since the 1970s. Such a revolutionary theory has greatly impacted the field of feminism because it conceived matters. It destabilized the definition of feminism and its concepts because it questions the meaning of matters and therefore flips the binary oppositions of feminism (Dobie, 2012).

Tiwari (2021) attempted in her thesis to approach Subin Bhattarai's *Priya Sufi* from a feminist perspective. She aimed to cover the feminist issues tackled in the novel, including gender discrimination, women's position in society, inequality, patriarchy, gender roles, and political and social factors. The researcher analyzed various extracts which she selected using

a purposive non-random sampling procedure. The text was approached from a thematic perspective. The analysis reached the result that religion, submission to social norms and conventions, in addition to tolerating violence have all contributed to making females discriminated against and dominated by society. Females' tender nature is another factor that brings them more discrimination as they do not react aggressively towards it. Moreover, females' upbringing instructs them to be polite and submissive to men and family's authority; they are programmed to always satisfy and please their patriarchal society and meet their requirements. Women believe that it is destined for them to be exploited and discriminated against although it is very clear that men and society are the ones behind their status.

Chakrabarti and Sarkar (2021) published a paper that seeks to provide an alternative understanding of the Witches in Shakespeare's *Macbeth* employing a feminist perspective. By doing so, they discovered the witches' trauma and detected their mischief as the root of their rebel. The witches are regarded as an example of individualistic women -or even social groups- within society who are discriminated against and marginalized for their unconventional attitude. They are positioned in a continuous clash with society for their identity. They are approached as exploited subjects who behave as they do to prove themselves. The study also aimed to draw attention to the consequences of oppressing such social groups. Chakrabarti and Sarkar believed that when fathoming the role of Lady Macbeth, Hecate, and the witches in society can help sympathise with them as they are rejected only for not matching the feminine roles that are preset by patriarchy.

Shlltoot (2016) did his dissertation on three of Nwapa's novels; namely *Efuru*, *One is Enough*, and *Women are Different*. The researcher aimed to explore the problems of African women that are a result of their customs and traditions. He also aims to set light on how the author presents women's issues through her characters. Finally, he intends to foreground Nwapa's invitation to improve women's social state and demand their freedom. The study

showed the numerous issues which African women undergo which are: patriarchy, marriage, infertility, polygamy, female education, and women's financial independence. These issues seem to be caused by the norms put by their patriarchal society.

Li's (2014) doctoral dissertation is another study that approaches literature using feminism besides poststructuralism and postcolonialism. The dissertation is concerned with Chinese American women's autobiographies and autobiographical writings by taking Jade Snow Wong's *The Fifth Chinese Daughter*, Maxine Hong Kingston's *The Woman Warrior* and Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club* as cases in point. Feminism provides the right framework for examining the issues of female consciousness-raising, sexual discrimination, and gender institution in Chinese American women's writings. The study aims to explore Chinese American women's family relationships and to show their experience of being silenced and how they find their subjective identity using a feminist perspective. The researcher also focused on explaining how can the Chinese American immigrant family be a site of oppression, resistance, and empowerment at the same time. It is a site for oppression for the Chinese American daughter by her father and sometimes even her mother. It is a site of resistance of the daughters to their parent's oppression. And it is a site of empowerment as their mothers or grandmothers help them install their female subjectivity to eventually reach success.

2.5. Black Feminism and Womanism

Starting from the baseline that mainstream feminism excludes black women who are stigmatized not solely for their gender but for their race and class too, the black feminist movement came to do them justice. As cited in Torfs (2008), Hooks (1992) argued that black feminism is a movement that can liberate the black community and bring all men, women, and children together. Black women activists have long been fighting against subjugation; however, their movement did not begin until the late 1970s, with the lead of many figures

including Michele Wallace, Bell Hooks, Angela Davis, Nell Irvin Painter, and Audre Lorde. Each contributed in their way from writing manifestoes to raising awareness and forming organizations (Amistad DigitalResource, n.d.).

Feminism and black feminism are indeed related however the latter is a specific movement that cannot be included in the former as black women consider themselves different from white women. Put differently, black feminists belong to the working class which certainly causes them to have different needs from those of white feminists. White feminists did not prioritize treating black females issue of racism. Intersectionality is the term advanced by Crenshaw (1991) to refer to "particular forms of intersecting oppressions, for example, intersections of race and gender, or sexuality and nation. Intersectional paradigms remind us that oppression cannot be reduced to one fundamental type and that oppressions work together in producing injustice" (Collins, 2002, p. 18). In this regard, Crenshaw (1989) believed that when treating the case of black women, they should be treated as black and women without separating the two statuses. Even though they are independent but the interaction between them cannot allow them to be treated separately.

Black feminism is not black people's sole movement and philosophy of resistance. Alice Walker coined the term womanism first in 1983 in her *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens* where she describes how and who a womanist is. Womanism is a word which roots back to black culture. Womanism incorporates having a certain set of qualities including being grown up, responsible, serious, loving to other women and the wholeness of all people, and being loving to black culture (as cited in Torfs, 2008). Regarding the word womanism, Brewer (2020) noted that it is needless to precede it with black because it already indicates its relation to blacks; it holds its specificity in its meaning and roots. Walker resorted to womanism because she too believed that feminism is not serviceable in the case of African American women. She opined that:

> Feminism is the political theory that struggles to free all women; women of colour, working-class women, poor women, disabled women, lesbians, and old women - as well as white, economically privileged, heterosexual women. Anything less than this vision of total freedom is not feminism, but merely female self-aggrandizement. (As qtd in Halimi, 2014, p.75)

To her, feminism and womanism are essentially different and the juxtaposition of the two is similar to the juxtaposition of the color purple and lavender. But as for black feminism, Walker equates the two in contrast to other thinkers who contend that the two concepts are not synonymous, and what is surely common between them is their concern of fighting sexism and racism against black women (As cited in Halimi, 2014).

Womanism viewed black women as valuable still without demonizing their male counterparts; it cherished black women's role in building the future and noticed how they essentially have something in common among them. As Davis highlighted:

> Through her four-part definition, [Walker] draws her reader's attention to the importance of women's intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual wholeness, and she stresses the need to create a global community where all members of society are encouraged to survive and survive whole. Madhu Dubey argues that Walker's womanist project seeks to "integrate the past and present, individual and community, personal and political change, into a unified whole. (As qtd in Torfs, 2008, p. 21)

Womanism's ultimate goal and higher purpose are building a well-structured society; Walker focuses on solving gender oppression problems in a friendly peaceful manner without holding a grudge against men. She proclaimed that womanism stands for the liberation of the whole race with a universalist non-separatist view which calls for the coexistence of the different sexes and races in total harmony, where they tolerantly survive together while still preserving their distinctiveness and integrity. She also appreciated motherhood as a part of a woman's

identity and referred to the mother-daughter relationship in which mothers pass their experiences to their daughters and mentor them. Additionally, Walker perceived that a womanist is a person who loves food, dancing, and folk, who loves to persevere, and who loves themselves; she gave importance to self-love as well. In the last part of the definition that Walker introduced, she made the comparison between womanism and feminism and stated that they are distinct from each other (as cited in Torfs, 2008).

Womanism did not emerge among African Americans only, the attempt to rehabilitate women's status took place in Africa too. To Kolawole,

> African womanism highlights female bonding and collective actions as part of the larger struggle of all Africans, of all Blacks, all women, and indeed all dispossessed, undermined, or oppressed groups. It respects the family unit and motherhood. It does not seek to achieve emancipation by hating men or non-Africans or people of other races [...] African womanism is centered on the need for positive gender self-definition within historical, geographical, and cultural contexts. (As qtd in Halimi, 2014, p. 78)

Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi said that she reached the philosophy of womanism on her own. Her womanism was not based on Walker's; yet, she found many shared points between the two (As qtd in Halimi, 2014, p. 78).

Buchi Emecheta (1988) explained how and why feminism does not suit her as an African woman. She stated:

> I will not be called a feminist here, because it is European. It is as simple as that. I just resent that […] I don t like being defined by them. It is just that it comes from outside and I don't like people dictating to me. I do believe in the African type of feminism. They call it womanism, because, you see, you Europeans don't worry about water, you don't worry about schooling, you are so well off (As qtd in Halimi, 2014, p.74).

According to Ogunyemi, womanism is a

> the philosophy that celebrates black roots, and the ideals of black Life, while giving a balanced presentation of what black women do. It concerns itself as much with the black sexual power tussle as with the world power structure that subjugates blacks. Its 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 other. (As qtd in Halimi, 2014, p. 78)

At this juncture, it becomes clear that Afro-American womanism and African womanism were somewhat acclimatized versions of feminism. The disparity in living conditions of women around the world has led to the derivation of movements that are more compatible with those conditions than feminism. Black women whether in America or Africa have demands that can be seen as significantly different and more basic than those a white woman would demand in Europe and America.

Among the recent studies dealing with the topic of womanism is the conference paper entitled *Women's Independence as a Pathway to Freedom*. Njoku and Ezeano (2016) approached Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* and Sefi Atta's *A Bit of Difference* using womanism as lenses for scrutiny. The study revealed that both literary works show how can women achieve their freedom by defying the existing patriarchy. Nwapa and Sefi portrayed women who are independent and whose survival does not depend on marriage; women who do not perceive marriage as their final purpose. Their female protagonists do not conform to the sociocultural traditions and prove themselves to be successful in their lives and play their roles as effective individuals in their society. Both authors allude that women can find their strength by looking within themselves and by focusing on the different ways to be independent.

Hami (2015) attempted to see womanism's development through time (from 1970 to 2004) in seven of Alice Walker's novels; namely, *The Third Life of Grange Copeland*, *Meridian*, *The Color Purple*, *The Temple of My Familiar*, *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, *By the*

Light of My Father's Smile, and *Now Is the Time to Open Your Heart*. The thesis aimed to analyze how womanism was embodied in Walker's early literature before coining the term and how it came to its full picture in later works. The analysis of the works revealed that the first works introduced the concept of womanism as a universal one. Later on *in The Color Purple*, Walker emphasizes the importance of female bounding for women to achieve their self-realization and overcome their struggles. In *Possessing the Secret of Joy*, she points out the subject of the female body and feminine sexuality by treating the matter of female circumcision and its negative effects on women. Moreover, in *The Temple of My* Familiar, the author talks about the unification of both body and spirit as well as that of man and woman. She draws an alternative unconventional picture of marriage where the couple live in love and their freedom is still not hindered. She also further develops the notion of spirituality and its positive side in her last two novels by depicting spirituality as a resolution for conflicts. The study also revealed that the inclusion of spirituality in the novels is what eases the tension which is caused by the reconciliation of man and woman.

Orjinta (2011) conducted a study on womanism in three selected works of the German writer Heinrich Böll; *The lost honor of Katharina Blum, Group Portrait with a Lady, Views of a Clown and Women in front of a River Landscape*. Orjinta aimed to expose the author's womanistic view in a set of works that were written by a non-black writer long before womanism was even conceptualized. His thesis explores the concept of women in different religions by finding the relationship between religion and women's depiction in the above-mentioned corpora. The researcher concluded that the author made use of different literary elements to provide factual concerns about women and criticized the oppressive practices of patriarchy and religion over women without attacking men. The study has proven that Heinrich Böll is a womanist whose literature can be Africanized.

2.6. Feminism vs.Womanism

They are certainly related; feminism came before womanism and womanism emerged to accomplish what the former lapsed to cover. Feminism emerged in Europe and the USA to ensure giving women have their rights the same way as men. However, it was Eurocentric; it only served middle-class white women and it, therefore, neglected African American women because of their skin pigmentation and social class. Black women were still victims of racism and classism which necessitated a specific suitable movement for them that would look at their different levels of oppression. Womanism is black women's feminism; it is Afrocentric and it values black women and considers them essentially distinct. Feminism is female-centered; on their way to bring justice for women, feminists were waging war against men, and men were regarded as opponents of women. On the contrary, womanism has a humanist non-separatist view that defends both genders and prioritizes the survival of the family and therefore the whole society, men and women together in harmony and completing each other. In the same regard, womanism is not concerned with sexism only as feminism is, but with racism as well; it decrees that people of different racial belongings also should live together peacefully. It simply calls for a reconciliation between genders and races. Eventually, womanism is not merely an ideology and a movement like feminism but also a philosophy and a lifestyle, which departing point and focus is culture and spirituality.

Malotra-Gaudet's (2015) article was concerned with juxtaposing the three notions of feminism (as a general term), radical feminism, and womanism to explore them in Toni Morrison's *The Bluest Eye* and *Home*. The researcher aimed to demonstrate and prove why the novels at hand can be considered womanist but still not feminist; she approached her study of the different elements in the novels to show what makes these literary works instances of womanist rather than feminist ones. Morrison depicts in her novels the struggle of African-Amercian women in their society and that is one of womanism's first principles. Morrison

does not exclude the opposite gender and sheds light on the lives of black men and boys in white American society as well. She also gives importance to the community of black women and their roles. When examining the texts, the researcher found that they do not belong to the feminist literary canon as they do not comply with the principles of feminism.

Sonkamble's (2011) research paper aimed to explore Flora Nwapa as a womanist writer rather than a feminist one by examining her novel Efuru. To reach his goal, the researcher juxtaposed the main principles of the two concepts: feminism and womanism. After considering the novel in relation to those concepts, he concluded that Nwapa is a womanist and Efuru is a manifestation of womanistic ideals. Her work is a projection of the assault to prove one's self and potential instead of fighting against patriarchy. Additionally, it demonstrated a struggle for survival and liberty rather than an endeavor to obtain the freedom of sex. Finally, Nwapa attempts to raise appreciation of the black culture by referring to the respectable pre-colonial status of women in Igbo society. The status was shaken as a result of the influence of the British colonizers' culture.

2.7. Why Feminism and Womanism

Opting for a certain theoretical framework cannot be done haphazardly. The theoretical framework is supposed to provide answers to the questions posed in any research. In the case of our study, feminism is the realm that can provide insights concerning women's perception of themselves and their demands for equity vis-a-vis their opposite gender. Wong attempted in *The Fifth Chinese Daughter* to depict her female protagonist's thoughts and vision of the world as well as her community's perception of her. Wong focused on showing the different obstacles the protagonist encounters in her life and how she overcomes them and eventually reaches self-realization and proves to her counstellation that she is worthy just like any other man. Nevertheless, when carefully reconsidering what feminism encompasses and what it excludes; one makes the link that since mainstream feminism speaks for white women

only, it, therefore, excludes all colored women. By colored we refer to all non-white European races including black Africans and yellow Asians. In our case, the American-Chinese author -Wong- is a yellow female who is excluded from mainstream feminism because she is not to the middle class white women category. Third-wave feminism seems to be more serviceable for her since she belongs to a minority group; she endures racism over and above sexism. First-wave and third-wave feminism constitute the convenient framework for approaching *Fifth Chinese Daughter*.

Womanism, on the other hand, is compatible with black women's concern for liberation from patriarchial restrictions. Efuru is represented as a female protagonist who lives in Nigerian society and who strives to survive without marriage or children in a society that limits women's function and purpose to marital commitments and birth-giving. Efuru does the best she can to maintain a stable marriage; however, when that was not possible, she decides to carry on with her life independently. Efuru symbolizes the wise, strong, and loving African woman who fulfills her role in contributing to the betterment of her society. Nwapa also gives importance to capturing the Nigerian culture, traditions, and community including both men and women.

2.8. Identity Crisis in Feminism

As previously tackled in this chapter, an identity crisis is a state of uncertainty and questioning of who one is and where one belongs. In the context of feminism, a woman falls into a state of crisis as a result of the imbalance and the inequality created by the patriarchial society, i.e.; a society dominated by men. A woman finds a difficulty to fulfill herself under the patriarchial ideology and struggles to find her identity. And that is where the role of feminism comes in; it raises their awareness of their worth of independence and self-realization (As cited in Buran, 2020). Seemingly, the patriarchy's description and prescription go in favor of men by alienating women's role/roles, interests, and potential. Speelman (2001)

asserted that identity is socially and culturally constructed; likewise, a woman's identity/identities are constructed and instructed by the society she belongs (As cited in Buran, 2020). Thus, the patriarchial ideology would only limit the woman's identity to what is conventional and restrict her from crossing the boundaries and breaking the conventions. In such a case, the woman's feeling of dislocation from one's community or attempt for change causes her an identity crisis.

It is inevitable for an ordinary individual -including a woman- to experience what Josselson (1998) referred to as questioning what has been taken as a given. The patriarchy has already defined the woman's identity; Friedan (2001) mentioned that the consensus on the woman's identity is rather predetermined by their biology. Friedan added that women are in the face of an ever-existing identity crisis which makes the quest for what she calls a "full human identity" the pursuit of every woman. Moreover, she considered the depression of women an identity crisis that is caused by the traditional social roles assigned to them, i.e., the role of a wife and a mother (As qtd in Buran, 2020). Put differently, women who follow their desire and rebel against their traditional roles isolate themselves or are isolated by society, especially since gender is constructed socially rather than biologically.

In the same vein, Friedan criticized the feminine mystique for calling for women's dependence on men as it neglects the matter of their identity and perceives that their identity is related and restricted to the subordinate position of being somebody's wife or mother; the reason why feminism invites women to be economically, socially, and psychologically independent. Women should be self-reliant and self-gratifying so that they can be complete on their own. When they do not need men's financial support they can subsequently dispose of being socially and psychologically dependent on them. At first, the woman is going to be torn between the different identities that she seeks to embrace; the professional, social, familial, and maternal identities. However, after a journey of struggle and self-search, she can reach

self-fulfillment and therefore achieve her new true identity (As cited in Buran, 2020). All in all, a woman can go beyond the societal traditional expectations when it comes to what and who they want to be; they can be what they seek and what they decide to be including being single, unmarried, or successful working women.

In her essay, Alcoff (2006) viewed that approaching women's identity using the concept of gender as positionality can be a solution to the identity crisis issue. Alcoff conceived that gender can also be dealt with from a non-essentialist vantage point where it becomes seen as a position that an individual occupies. In other words; the concept of woman is no longer defined based on "a particular set of attributes but by a particular position, the internal characteristics of the person thus identified are not denoted so much as the external context within which that person is situated"(p. 148). In this case, the positional definition of woman "makes her identity relative to a constantly shifting context, to a situation that includes a network of elements involving others, the objective economic conditions, cultural and political institutions and ideologies, and so on" (p. 148). The external context is the one determining a person's position in relation to their surroundings; whether they are in an active strong position or a passive weak position for instance. Alcoff claimed that women's position within society is what constructs their identity. However, this does not imply that women are passive and have no role in reconstructing that identity; they –as subjects- can actively use their position to change their perception of facts and therefore view those facts otherwise. Facts have always existed, but the issue has been in the way they were perceived. Feministically speaking, women have a low position in society and that is something we can decide to change.

2.9. Feminist and Postcolonial Encounters

Fields of study and theories intersect and have converging points; feminism and postcolonialism are cases in point. Both of them aim to react, rectify and adjust existing

systems or regimes. They seek change at the social, cultural, and political levels, not only to "bridge the distance between the centre and the margins but also to bring the knowledge of and from the margins to the centre" (Parashar, 2016, p. 371). Leela Gandhi accounted for the exchange between the two arenas, she advanced that feminism inspires postcolonialism to 'produce a more critical and self-reflexive account of cultural nationalism'(As qtd in Parashar, 2016, P. 371), while "postcolonialism offers feminism the conceptual toolbox to see multiple sites of oppression and to reject universalisms around gendered experiences of both men and women" (As cited in Parashar, 2016, p. 371).

Postcolonial criticism is relevant to approaching feminism and has always concerned itself with gender topics. Bahri (2016) conceived that the two of them overlap and are thus inseparable. She noted that postcolonialism's concern with gender issues dates back to Said's Orientalism. Parker (2019) clarified how the latter spotted the light on how the West-East relationship is comparable to the men-women relationship. In terms that the orientalist discourse and the misogynist discourse function identically in a way that positions West/men as the self and keeps East/women as the other. Both discourses associate positive, good, and civilized characteristics with the colonizer who is at the center whereas giving negative, bad, and primitive qualities to the colonized who is at the margin. This is a similar contention that Iragaray had as well; she described the status of 'woman' and 'postcolonial' as being situated in a "dark chthonic region of otherness and non-being", i.e., "being outside representation itself"(Ashcroft, 1989, p. 23).

In the same vein, postcolonial and feminist literature share the same focus of interest as both treat matters of marginalization and liberation; however, a clash engenders between feminists and postcolonialists when the latter prioritize tackling affairs of decolonization, anti-imperialism, and nation-building _which is regarded as central to them_ on the expense of approaching gender questions. Postcolonialism is hence criticized for being exclusive of

considering sexism against women in the same manner as Western feminism is excluding the problem of racism. The tension between the two spheres is the reason why postcolonial feminist critiques are directing attention to the undeniable and unbreakable connection between colonialism, patriarchy, and capitalism. Postcolonial feminism grants enough attention to both postcolonial and feminist issues which makes it a dynamic domain of discussion (Bahri, 2016).

2.10. Feministic Perception of the Self

The significant importance that feminist philosophers grant to the concept of the self, is due to the vital role that the self plays when it comes to the formation of identity. The prevailing conception of woman situates her in a secondary position; as De Beauvoir deplored: "He is the Subject, he is the Absolute—she is the Other" (as qtd. in Anderson, Willett, & Meyers, 2021, para. 1). Hence, being classified as the other assigns the woman to be a non-subject; therefore she is not an agent which makes her less than the average human. Women have not been accepted for their nature; they have always been put in juxtaposition with men, they were regarded as the deviation in comparison to men who are considered the norm, the basis on which they were inferiorized. Considering that men have dominated the different fields; they are the ones who made language and conceptualized notions; the Western paradigm of the self sprung from a patriarchal system which generated a masculine model Anderson et al., (2021). In short, the consensus has long emanated that "The self is essentially masculine, and the masculine self is essentially good and wise"(para. 5).

Feminist philosophers have consequently criticized the classical traditional views of selfhood, and have provided alternative corrective reconceptualizations. The two predominant approaches to the self are mainly the Kantian ethical subject and the utilitarian homo economicus. Both of them advance the freedom, autonomy, and rationality of the self. However, the distinction between the two lies in their focus.

> The Kantian ethical subject uses reason to transcend cultural norms and personal preferences to discover absolute truth, whereas homo economicus uses reason to rank desires in a coherent order and to figure out how to maximize desire satisfaction with the instrumental rationality of the marketplace. They isolate the individual from its relationships and environment, as well as reinforce a modern binary that divides the social sphere into autonomous agents and dependents. (Anderson et al., 2021, para. 3)

Ergo, the previously addressed models neglect the influence of both, the exterior factors such as the intersectionalities that construct one's social identity, and the intrapsychic aspects including fears and desires on the individual's conscious life. Counter to what these approaches postulate, feminism considers selfhood as a dynamic, relational, multidimensional phenomenon.

Moreover, feminist philosophers viewed the Kantian and homo economicus perception of the self as misleading because it is not neutral and it rather embeds a description of a male. As cited in Anderson et al. (2021), their perception associates rationality and independence with masculine nature while it denotes women as sentimental and unprincipled which have always made them–in the eyes of the public- inadequate for taking part in spheres such as law and commerce. Women are instead confined to domestique life. Such a social classification is due to the definition of the self itself; seeing one's self as rational and self-righteous automatically leads to reckoning the other as inferior and subsequently discriminating against them. The standpoint of Western and American societies is built upon a misogynist view that shows empathy and trust in men while it undermines and questions women's credibility on the other hand. (Manne 2019) uses the term "himpathy" to refer to the phenomenon of masculine favoritism and social empathy towards men over women.

In their article, Anderson et al. (2021) noted that previous views on the self-lead feminists to argue that the self should not be seen as a mere metaphysical issue for

philosophy, because it can be also approached from ethical, epistemological, social, and political angles. Based on the shortcomings of the existing approaches, feminists rather perceived the self as an intersectional heterogeneous phenomenon that is dynamic and relational to unconscious desires and social connections. The lenses through which feminists use to fathom selfhood are based on different theories such as poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, narrative theory, and local knowledge. The aforementioned theories do not perceive selfhood as homogeneous or transparent; additionally, they situate the self within its cultural and interpersonal context without excluding the body.

From a psychoanalytical point of view, Kristeva saw the self as a subject or a speaker who can use the personal pronoun 'I'; hence, she drew attention to the symbolic and semiotic dimensions of language. To her, every discourse is inevitably consisted of these two elements where the symbol stands for controlled consciousness, and the semiotic refers to the uncontrolled unconscious. She highlighted that:

> Since the rational orderliness of the symbolic is culturally coded masculine, while the affect-laden allure of the semiotic is culturally coded feminine, it follows that no discourse is purely masculine or purely feminine. The masculine symbolic and the feminine semiotic are equally indispensable to the speaking subject, whatever this individual's socially assigned gender may be. Every self amalgamates masculine and feminine discursive modalities. (as cited in Anderson et al., 2021, p. 12)

Additionally, the semiotic decenters the self the same way as the unconscious does; the semiotic aspect of language reveals what is repressed in one's unconscious since every discourse holds more than one meaning or interpretation. Hence, thanks to semiotics, we can situate what society is oppressing and therefore make the change.

Moreover, African American feminists including Williams (1991) and Crenshaw (1993) drew attention to the intersectionality of the relational self; they believed that gender,

race, and class interrelate and function inseparably. “Intersectional theory aims to capture those aspects of selfhood that are conditioned by membership in subordinated or privileged social groups. Accenting the liabilities of belonging to more than one subordinated group” (as cited in Anderson et al., 2021, para. 34). Crenshaw (1991) demonstrated that being an individual who belongs to many subordinated groups is similar to being a pedestrian who receives multiple simultaneous vehicle hits. And Lugones (1992) perceived that such individuals’ position is similar to the state of a ‘border-dweller who is not at home anywhere’. “intersectional border-dwelling can be a model of positive identity that registers the multiplicitous nature of the self” (para. 34). It is true then that border-dwellers do not have a sense of belonging anywhere; however, multiplicity should be looked at as a positive aspect which can account for the fragmented character of the self and explain the opportunities for resistance to repressive societal norms.

2.11. Women’s Quest for Identity from a Feminist Perspective

To every action there is a reaction; women’s unsatisfactory social status spurred their pursuit of an improvement to their state. Mill commented on gender discrimination in societies stating:

> The female sex was brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character was the very opposite to that of men; not self-will, and government by self control, but submission, and yielding to the control of others; to make complete abnegation of themselves, and to have no life but in their affections. (As quoted in Halimi, 2014, pp. 63-64)

Women have long been destined and designed to meet men’s needs and desires; as a result, they started questioning the roles assigned to them by society. Women were defined as mere objects whose role was limited to serving men; they were set in a position inferior to men and were therefore expected to submit, sacrifice, and resign in silence (As cited in Halimi, 2014).

Women's first step towards reform was through being aware enough to question their state and status in society. From the early nineteenth century on, women took a stand and initiated their liberation movement, i.e., feminism. As quoted in Halimi (2014); Lerner (1993) believed that "The control men had over women was examined and this established the ground on which women stated their concerns about being subjugated to men" (p. 65). Put differently, women's abnormal social status generated a feminist consciousness; the latter is defined as an awareness of women's socially determined subordination, and women's belief in unification to set matters in the right way. It also refers to women's urge as well as the ability to replace the existing social organization with another organization that equates women to men in their right to autonomy and self-determination.

In a female's quest for identity establishment, she has two methods to follow; either by forming an identity that conforms to social norms or by forming an identity that does not conform to those norms. Norms are the reference for accepting or rejecting one's conduct. Hence, there is either conformity or deviance from what is socially accepted and agreed upon when it comes to identity formation. Compliance and private acceptance are the two types of conformity. The former refers to according to one's behavior to social norms without actually embracing their belief only because the group expects them to behave so, while the latter refers to conforming in terms of beliefs and behavior **(**Conformity and Deviance, n.d.).

According to Deutsch and Gerrard (1955), there are two reasons for individuals to conform; either normative conformity or informative conformity. As for the first one; it is resorting to conformity because of fear of rejection by the group or seeking to fit in the group. In this case, the individual is usually complying in terms of behavior but internally refusing the group's norms. The second reason refers to conforming as a result of the need for a group's guidance or because of lacking knowledge or being lost in a situation. In such a case, the person is internalizing the group's principles and accepting them (Mcleod, 2023).

Nonetheless, an individual -or a female in our case- might seek her individuality and independence from the group. In other words, some value independence and self-sufficiency; they value individuality over group and they therefore tend to be non-conformist females.

2.12. Conclusion

The points covered in this chapter are pertinent to identity-related theories which we have seen convenient for our study. As we aim to shed light on the identity formation of the two female protagonists, postcolonialism, feminism, and womanism would only enrich our investigation and support our claims. We have also foregrounded the ties between identity crisis and feminism, postcolonialism, and feminism, to set clear the significance of our work.

Chapter Three

A Multi-Perspective Reading of the Novels

Table of Contents

3.1. Introduction 85

3.2. Efuru: A Reading of the Self 85

3.2.1. Seeking the Self 85

3.2.2. Identity Formation and Behavior Control 88

3.2.3. Self-Awareness and Self-Realization 91

3.4. Women's Oppression 94

3.5. Enduring and Overcoming Identity Crisis 96

3.6. A Postcolonial Perspective of the Novel 98

3.7. A Feministic Reading of the Novel 101

3.8. Womanism in *Efuru* 104

3.9. Different Readings of *Fifth Chinese Daughter* 106

3.9.1. Seeking the Self 106

3.10. Identity Formation and Behavior Control 110

3.11. Self-Awareness and Self-Realization 114

3.12. Women's Oppression 118

3.13. Enduring and Overcoming Identity Crisis 121

3.14. A Postcolonial Perspective of the Novel 123

3.15. A Feministic Reading of the Novel 125

3.16. Conclusion 127

3.1. Introduction

Our human nature is an aspect that unifies us, yet we remain different from one another. Each individual possesses a self, an identity, and a personality of their own. Self is flexible in terms that it accommodates itself according to context and situation. Yet, we cannot expect two different selves to act, react, and interact similarly in the same situation. The current chapter endeavors to approach two different protagonists in two different novels _namely *Efuru* and *The Fifth Chinese* Daughter_ and cast light on their behavior and psychology by taking into account the previously tackled theories and notions including self, identity, personality, oppression, and identity crisis. We intend to look at all of the formerly mentioned concepts in *Efuru* and *The Fifth Chinese Daughter* respectively. Thence, the characters Efuru and Jade Snow Wong constitute the focus of our analysis; we intend to scrutinize their attitudes, perception of the world, and conduct to bring to light the construction and the functioning of their identities as females while taking into consideration their roles and connections to the other individuals in their communities.

3.2. Efuru: A Reading of the Self

3.2.1. Seeking the Self

Self is in one way or another bound to society and it only makes sense when it meets other selves. Each one of us has a self-concept; a set of mental abstract ideas connected to our perception of ourselves, and information about our past, present, and future; which makes all of us sufficiently knowledgeable about ourselves. We subsequently become aware of the other. The self and the other comprise a long-existing binary opposition that is based on centering oneness and marginalizing otherness. In the case of *Efuru*, men are situated in the center and women in the margin. Women are regarded as replaceable and dispensable; they are always watched by society, not accepted for who they are, and not appreciated for their

accomplishments. Women's role and life purpose are restricted to being a wife and producing children. Efuru, and despite all the good qualities she possesses, she was miss-valued.

Her community considered her incomplete just because of not having children; although it is not something she has control over, and although she did give birth once before and her child fell sick and died. In Igbo society, women themselves contribute to perpetuating patriarchy. Women take the side of the husband instead of supporting the wife. Omirima feels so concerned and provoked that she goes to Giblert's mother and attacked her saying: "(…) 'Did Efuru give you medicine that you have lost your senses? You see your only son married to a barren woman, this is the fourth year of the marriage, and you sit down and hope.'" " (Nwapa, 1966, p. 221). Omirima adds: " 'But can't the husband do anything about it? He is to blame for letting a woman rule him. I am sorry for him... This news is like a fairy-tale, azigba - woo.'" (p. 221). It becomes so obvious that the majority of women suppress and underestimate each other; the women of the village could not accept the fact that Efuru did not get pregnant right after her marriage. To them, a woman who is not productive is similar to a man, and "two men do not live together" (p. 23). Consequently, they wondered and complained about why her husband did not remarry to have children.

Even when it comes to the relationship between Efuru and her first husband Adizua; a few years after their marriage, Adizua's attitude towards his wife completely changes. Adizua shows great indifference to her and started ignoring her; a behavior that his wife could not justify since she did not offend him in any way. "Efuru would then go to bed and think. 'What is wrong?' she would ask herself. 'How have I offended my husband? What am I going to do to win him back. Has he found another woman?'" (p. 58). Efuru, despite all the good qualities she possesses, receives inappropriate treatment from her husband. He causes her great sadness and brings her to a bitter inner struggle. Eventually, he abandons Efuru without any prior notice to leave with another woman. Adizua acts in a very self-centered manner that only

confirms the extent to which a wife/woman can be devalued and even dispensable. Woman, in the case of such a society, is ranked as the subaltern who stands in the margin as opposed to men who consider themselves the dominant subjectivity. Nwapa attempts to defy patriarchy by portraying a paradox existing in Igbo society. She portrays a society that supports the emergence of the binary opposition of genders despite the mediocre quality of some of the men represented in her novel.

Considering Adizua's mistreatment of his wife, in addition to his option of remarrying in the course of the story, the reader remembers Efuru and Adizua's encounter and love story. In the start, she accepted him and agreed to marry him although he was even able to pay the dowry. It is clearly stated in the beginning how Adizua is beneath his wife. "Efuru was her name. She was a remarkable woman. It was not only that she came from a distinguished family. She has distinguished herself. Her husband was not known and people wondered why she married him" (p. 1). One of the farmers once told his fellow: "Don't you know that he has married a very beautiful woman? How the woman agreed to marry him still remains a mystery to everybody" (p. 7). The same as what a woman was telling her friend when they saw Efuru in the market after finishing her feasting. The first one asked: "'Who is Adizua? Who is his father? Is he known?'. And the other one answered: 'He is not known. And nobody knows why she ever married him, and besides, not a cowrie has been paid on her head'" (p. 16). Efuru has been a supportive wife, when "'He could not afford the dowry. Efuru had to work hard trading in so many things and when they got the money they went and paid the dowry' " (p. 110). Still, the circumstances of their marriage did not spare her from receiving degrading treatment from her husband's part later on.

When it comes to the matter of identities, not complying with or not matching social expectations can lead to social rejection. According to Efuru's community, an adult female human being is expected to be a wife who can give birth to children. However, when she

could not get pregnant in her second marriage, her community regarded her as barren and deprecated how Gilbert was still interested in her and did not go in search of another wife. Being an odd one output one in a stressful situation where they get bothered by outer comments and remarks that would only shake their self-confidence.

3.2.2. Identity Formation and Behavior Control

As for behavior adjustment, the components of identity function like a control system to keep one's conduct within the parameters of their identity. Efuru perceives her environment and compares her perception to her identity standard. When they first got married, "Efuru refused to go to the farm with her husband. 'If you like,' she said to her husband, 'go to the farm. I am not cut out for farm work. I am going to trade.'" (p. 5). Adizua went to work on the farm while she stayed in town. The farm was very far and life was very difficult there, and since she knows herself as a woman of trade, she simply states that farm work does not suit her, and acts accordingly.

Also, when Efuru learns that Adizua has left for Ndoni with another woman, she seeks advice from Ajanupu, her mother-in-law, and her father. The three of them asked her to be patient and wait for her husband's return. However, Efuru's attitude has always shown how much self-aware she is. When her mother-in-law told her about the sufferance she endured with Adizua's father, Efuru decides that she is unlike her mother–in–law and that self-suffering does not appeal to her. She says to herself: "I know I am capable of suffering for greater things. But to suffer for a truant husband, an irresponsible husband like Adizua is to debase suffering. My own suffering will be noble. When Adizua comes back, I shall leave him" (p. 73). Although she sympathizes with her mother-in-law, she does not get convinced or influenced by her sad story to bear Adizua's mistreatment.

Even after discussing the matter with her father, she decides that as soon as Adizua comes, "it is going to be a straightforward business, cut and dried and no-nonsense" (p. 76). She wonders how her mother-in-law, Ajanupu, and her father do not see that Adizua is quite satisfied with this woman and does not want her anymore. So, Efuru once again tells herself _loudly and clearly_ that she is not the kind of woman who allows herself to wait until her husband drives her out of his house. She believes that she can stand by herself and that she is the daughter of a respectful man and family. Besides, she is still beautiful. Hence, although Efuru is in a dilemma, and despite her advisors' encouragement to stay in her husband's house, she keeps reminding herself of what she accepts for herself and what she does not. She keeps thinking of leaving her husband because she knows what she is worth; her self-concept influences and guides her actions and behavior. Hence, she does not allow for such devaluation and humiliation. She sorrowfully tells Ajanupu:

> I am fed up with this. I don't know how I can go about tolerating this. God in heaven knows that since I married Adizua I have been faithful to him (…) But Adizua has treated me shabbily. He has treated me the way that only slaves are treated. God in heaven will judge us.' (p. 68)

Efuru made one more attempt and went in search of her husband in different towns, but it was all in vain. At that point, Efuru firmly made up her mind to leave Adizua for good. "She told herself that even if Adizua came back and begged her on his knees with a bag of money, she would not listen to him" (p. 108). Efuru goes back to her father's house, unlike Adizua's mother, who passively surrendered and stayed in her husband's house waiting for his return. Even though Adizua's mother has pled for Efuru not to leave, Efuru frankly refused and acted according to her identity standard; her self-identity is what determines her attitude and behavior. Consequently, she acts like a strong, independent, self-aware woman. She went back to her father's house to move on with her life. Now with a simple comparison between

Efuru and her mother-in-law, one can easily notice the difference between both identities and therefore personalities.

By the end of the story, Efuru falls so sick that people believed she was going to die. The reason for her sickness remained mysterious. However,

> Amede told her son Gilbert, who was, of course, incredulous at first, but when Efuru's condition grew worse and it was obvious to the little town that Efuru was guilty of adultery, Gilbert spoke to his wife: 'Efuru, my wife, the gods are angry with you because you are guilty of adultery, and unless you confess, you will die. So you should confess to me and live. I won't ostracise you, you will still be my wife, and I won't allow anybody to molest you. So confess and live. (pp. 274-275)

Gilbert's accusation to Efuru of adultery is the final straw. It is at that point that she leaves him. Efuru tells her story to her friend Doctor Difu, and then he asks her:

> 'You will not go back to him?' 'I thought you were my friend, Difu?' Efuru said horrified. 'I am your friend. I have always been your friend.''If you are my friend, why then do you want me to go back to the man who accused me of adultery? You don't know the seriousness of the offence.' (p. 280)

Efuru feels very offended this time, she tells the doctor that: "(…) I have nothing to say to Eneberi. He will forever regret his act. It is the will of our gods and my chi that such a misfortune should befall me'" (p. 280). Even when Difu insists that she must make up with Gilbert, she tells him "'Difu, it is not possible'" (p. 281). Gilbert's final act surpasses Efuru's threshold of endurance.

At this juncture, it becomes necessary to point out that dissimilarity in personalities is due to the amalgamation of several factors; including biological, environmental, and

psychological factors. Likewise, the formation of one's identity should not be seen from one angle only; self, society, social role, personal characteristics, and values can all contribute to one's identity and identity formation.

3.2.3. Self-Awareness and Self-Realization

Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* demonstrates women's self-awareness and self-realization. The protagonist _Efuru_ is a self-focused person; she has her thoughts and attention directed towards herself. She also initiates self-talk to reflect upon her issues, identify the problem, and think of a solution for it. Efuru does not stand passively in front of the situation her marriage has got into, she rather reflects upon it and tries to improve her status. When she confronts the fact that her marriage is holding her back and that her husband is not worthy, she decides to end that marriage and resumes her life (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p. 743).

After a few years of marriage, Efuru notices that her first husband Adizua starts to act strangely and changes his attitude towards her; he would come home late every night and not eat the food she prepares as usual. Efuru wonders one night and asks herself: "'What is wrong?' she would ask herself. 'How have I offended my husband? What am I going to do to win him back. Has he found another woman?'" (p. 58, as qtd in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p. 744).

Because of her husband's indifference, Efuru spends another night feeling very sorrowful; she goes back in memory and thinks about her past starting from her mother's death to the day she gave birth to her daughter. Efuru goes deep in thought in an attempt to apprehend her husband's behavior and she eventually assumes that it is all because he has found another woman; a fact which is confirmed later on. As a consequence, Efuru stops being sad and she firmly decides that she will quit loving Adizua. She even sets her mind on leaving Adizua as soon as he comes back home and taking her daughter with her. After searching for Adizua for a whole month in different towns, she finally packs her baggage and

returns to her father's house. She tells her mother-in-law that she cannot wait for Adizua and she cannot allow herself to wait until he comes back and asks her to leave, especially since his behavior shows that he is no longer interested in her (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p. 744).

After abandoning Adizua, Efuru resumes her life normally. She falls in love again and gets married to Gilbert. They live together in harmony for a while. She even comprehends his jailing in Onicha as she knows that he was not imprisoned for stealing. She even brings him a second wife when she could not give birth to a child. However, when Gilbert accuses her of adultery, she can bear it no more and she simply leaves him. Efuru reflects in a self-distanced manner and does not accept her husband's accusation. This is how Efuru puts it when Difu asked her to tell him how she left Gilbert:

> (…) a rumour went around that I was guilty of adultery - that I, Efuru, the daughter of Nwashike Ogene was guilty of adultery. My mother was not an adulterous woman, and neither was her mother, why should I be different? Was it possible to learn to be left-handed in old age? (p. 279).

People related Efuru's severe sickness to committing adultery. However, according to Igbo mentality, people follow their fathers' steps. People tend to have a character that is similar to their ancestors. And since Efuru's mother and grandmother were chaste, it would be illogical for Efuru to become adulterous.

> Then (…) Eneberi, my husband, of all people, asked me to confess that I am an adulterous woman. Ajanupu saved me. I was too weak to do anything. But Ajanupu said a few home truths to Eneberi. I hear he is in hospital on account of the injury given to him by Ajanupu. (p. 279).

Efuru eventually self-regulates, she leaves Gilbert when he crosses the limit this time and goes back to her father's house. she says that she will go back to doing what she has been

doing before; to her normal life. She once got over Adizua and now she is getting over Gilbert.

Additionally, individuals are in constant pursuit of perfection and wholeness; they constantly attempt to fulfill their potential and prove themselves. This is because they have a drive or a need, i.e. a need for self-realization. Nonetheless, any human being has basic needs to fulfill _at least relatively_ before seeking to achieve higher needs; having a certain need in the hierarchy of needs fulfilled paves the way for the next one to be sought for or fulfilled as well. Efuru follows the growth motivation path where she moves away from self-interest towards social interest. She has her basic physiological needs from food and shelter attained. Besides, she enjoys personal and financial security; Efuru is self-reliant and is a good trader as described by one of Gilbert's friends: "Her hands make money. Anything she touches is money. If she begins to sell pepper in the market, she will make money out of it. If in salt, money will flow in" (p. 156, as qtd in Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p. 744-745).

Efuru's family, friends, and acquaintances admire her and appreciate the character she has which makes her a widely recognized personage on the one hand and builds her self-confidence on the other hand. Not to mention that Efuru belongs to a respectful family and is the beloved daughter of Nwashike Ogene who is described by one of the farmers as:

> (…) the mighty man of valour. Ogene who, single-handedly, fought against the Aros when they came to molest us (…) His yams were the fattest in the whole town. And what is more, no man has ever seen his back on the ground. (p. 7)

When all the previous needs are achieved, the way is paved for the B needs to be satisfied as well. Efuru is a person who explores herself and quests to understand the universe through reason. She seeks to realize her full potential as she plans for her future and effectively tries to take decisions when it comes to her life. When her first marriage collapses, and as soon as she looses hope of Adizua's return, she _without hesitation_ leaves her first husband's house with

the intention of moving on with her life. When she meets Gilbert, a very pleasant and responsible man, she gives their relationship a chance and marries him. She does her best to make their marriage successful, however, when Gilbert changes after coming back from jail, and when he accuses her of adultery as she falls severely sick, Efuru abandons him and returns to her father's house (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p. 745).

Furthermore, Efuru is socially active as she is not interested in herself only, but she even takes part in helping others and improving their lives in numerous instances and manners. She lends money to Ogea's parents because they are in need. She helps the old woman Nnona to go to the hospital to receive a suitable check and treatment for the leg she has long been suffering from. She simply transcends herself and participates in rendering the world a better place through her good deeds and by being kind to others. At the end of the novel when Efuru dreams of the woman of the lake who is generous, beautiful, wealthy, and happy although she is childless; in other words, the woman of the lake is still a goddess even though she has no children. She is perfect and complete on her own and those are characteristics that Efuru and Uhamiri have in common (Baazizi & Ghounane, 2022, p. 746).

3.4. Women's Oppression

However, one of the obstacles to realizing one's self is oppression. Oppressors act inhumanly by dehumanizing oppressed subjects. The latter undergo unfair treatment from their society as a result of their difference. Being treated as a second-class citizen restricts the individual's freedom and hinders them from fully embodying their identity/identities. Oppression can also be internalized and spring from within, where individuals loose their self-esteem and embrace the oppressor's ideas. Oppression takes five forms and can be looked at from three dimensions. In the context of *Efuru*, women are marginalized because of their gender; being female is regarded as a good reason for being inferiorized. In marriage, for instance, men are the ones in total command where the wife cannot argue if the husband

wants to remarry for example. That is what Efuru told herself when she was wondering why Adizua is hiding the matter of his relationship. She says; “He is the lord and master, if he wants to marry her, I cannot stop him’”(p. 65). It is also instilled in their society that “It is only a bad woman who wants to have a man all to herself” (p. 75). Expressions similar to this one recur throughout the novel and are said by different characters. Although it would have been very natural that a woman wants her husband for herself only.

Moreover, a girl’s education is believed to be needless and useless. As Gilbert told his friend Sunday when he was his sitter attending school; he told him: “It is a good thing you are sending her to school. But it is a waste sending them to school you know” (p. 242). Gilbert justifies his point of view by adding that boys win the priority when it comes to education. This is because girls disappoint you by getting married before completing their learning and that is a waste of money. Even though Sunday tries to argue by advancing that girls should be permitted to complete their education. Sunday also holds that women can gain money through education. However, Gilbert disagrees with him since he reckons that all women end up in the kitchen. Gilbert gives no further arguments and leaves the discussion. Inequality in treating girls is very obvious; girls’ chance of receiving an education and completing their studies and maybe even making money is equal to that of boys, however, schooling is confined to boys only in Igbo society.

The unjustifiable abusive exclusion of females from education can be perceived from an ideological viewpoint. Females’ educational status in society is the result of the ensemble of the ideas spread concerning women. The stereotypes instilled in the society's mind that women’s place, purpose, and final destination are domestic life and duties, i.e., being a wife and a mother. To overcome such oppressive practices and freely prove one’s identity, it is paramount to conquer patriarchal views by challenging, breaking, and rebelling against them.

In other words; oppression can still be a fertile ground for identity creation. An oppressive atmosphere might lead to identity loss as it might still lead to identity formation.

3.5. Enduring and Overcoming Identity Crisis

From what has been said till this point, we have not covered every concept pertinent to identity. An identity crisis is an inevitable phase that can be experienced by individuals of different ages. Whenever someone is experiencing confusion and uncertainty about their decision-making, that means they are enduring an identity crisis. Going through significant change or stressful events puts one in a state of confusion where they are in search of their identity or in an attempt to form one. Nevertheless, the crisis is not an end in itself, but can rather be a route to achieving identity. When Adizua left for Ndoni with the other woman, Efuru did not sit still; thoughts were running through her head because of Adizua's suspicious behavior once. And once again when she overhears the conversation between the two women in the market. Then, all of her doubts were confirmed. She begins to actively consider the matter and explore the available options. Efuru is experiencing an identity moratorium status as she is undergoing a crisis but has not yet reached a decision/commitment. Efuru proceeds to evaluate possibilities by both contemplating and consulting advice from others. After a while, she moves to an identity achievement status. Efuru finally decides what to do with her irresponsible husband.

Likewise, when Ogonim_Efuru's only child from Adizua_ died, Efuru couldn't cope with the grief she felt inside at first. The amount of sorrow that descended on her was so great that she cried hysterically while rolling on the floor the moment she realizes Ogonim's death. she was shocked that "Sometimes she would take Ogonim from Ajanupu, look at her, shake her head and hand her back to Ajanupu (...) She raised her hands and asked the gods and her

ancestors where and when she offended them…" (p. 84). Efuru calmed down after a while and started brooding;

> Efuru was quiet. She did not say a word to anybody. She did not even hear Nwasobi when she was blabbing like a woman possessed. When the woman said she was sorry, she simply nodded. Ajanupu watched her all the time. She saw that she was thinking very much and that was bad for her health. And what was more she was not crying anymore. (p. 88)

Ajanupu was worried about Efuru, she asked to shed tears for relief and release some of the sadness within. However, Efuru told her that her "… grief is the kind of grief that allows no tears. It is a dry grief". Efuru lost the sense of life and felt hollow and empty. She mourned saying:

> '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 Efuru said this tears rolled down her cheeks. (p. 89)

Efuru goes through some difficult days because of Ogonim's death. She struggles, thinks, and tries to manage her daughter's death; her experience puts her in a status of moratorium. It took her time before she could go back to her normal life, "Each time she remembered her dead daughter she locked herself up and wept" (p. 102). She also felt sad and miserable at that time because of Adizua as she was waiting for his return. Adizua was told about his child's death and still never bothered to come back. After a period, and when Adizua did not show, she went back to her father's house. she was in a better state as she accepted her new self. She cleaned and decorated her father's house, went back to trading and her usual social activities, and started seeing Gilbert. She once again settled down; she is in an achievement status.

3.6. A Postcolonial Perspective of the Novel

Boehmer (2005) set women's writing within the category of Postcolonial Literature. Female writers make use of literature to write back not against imperialism or imperialism only, but against patriarchy too. They defy and dismental patriarchy by reconstructing the distorted image of women; they seek to provide an image that is drawn by them personally _women_ not by men. Ergo, the act of writing itself is defiance; daring to depict women's personal and social life with all of its details and from their own perspective is the first step towards liberation. *Efuru* constitutes an example of patriarchy challenging; it is the first literary work authored by a woman, which was written in English and published internationally. Men have long situated themselves as first-class citizens who can look down on women based on an unjustifiable inherited binary opposition. An opposition that places men at the center and women in the margin.

Men see themselves as the 'self', while women are the other. Their actions signify such a mentality and *Efuru* provides a few instances of some self-centered men. Adizua, following his father's steps, abandons Efuru without giving any notice. He, for no obvious reason, leaves his wife and daughter and does not return even when he is told about his daughter's death. Exactly as his father abandoned him and his mother before. Gilbert on his part, put Efuru in an embarrassing situation when he did not attend her father's funeral. It seemed as if he too has abandoned her. After four months of absence, he reappears and Efuru learns that he husband has been jailed for committing foolishness. Efuru did not insist to know Gilbert's felony, as long as he told her that he did not steal, that was enough for her. It is only because she is good-hearted that she was satisfied and relieved to know that her husband did not steal. "He told me he went to jail through his own foolishness. He did not steal. As foolish as I was I believed him. I did not as much as press him to tell me the foolish

act." (p. 279). By being in jail and not attending Nwashike Ogene's funeral, Efuru felt very embarrassed;

> She was very sad. Gilbert was not at the burial of Efuru's father. He was not at home when the old man died. He was sent for, but he did not return. It was four weeks after the burial and Efuru's husband was not back. It was a disgrace and Efuru felt like killing herself. She cried as she had never cried before. (p. 259)

Maybe Gilbert should have been wiser and more careful not to commit any acts that would get him jailed.

During his prison time, Efuru's father died and Nkoyeni _his second wife_ gave birth to their son. Efuru sadly talks to Difu about those times, she says; "'He returned four months after my father's death. It was a great humiliation. Our people gossiped. My friends were sorry for me; my enemies laughed at me. When he returned, he looked sick and miserable. We were concerned…" (p. 278). When he came back, he was first hiding the matter from Efuru and Nkoyeni which made Efuru even angrier;

> She was angry because her husband, with whom she had lived for nearly six years, could, at that stage of their married life, hide something from her. Angry because she had again loved in vain. She had deceived herself all these years, as she deceived herself when she was Adizua's wife. (pp. 265-266)

This was not the only thing that Gilbert hid from Efuru. Gilbert had an affair in Ndoni and he has a baby boy with the woman he was with. Many of Gilbert's actions reveal how inconsiderate husband he is. His final act when Efuru fell sick was worse than any mistake he ever committed before. He accused Efuru of adultery and asked her to confess to him to be healed. This was a grave offence to her that she could not forgive.

Gender discrimination is thence present in the novel. We can touch it in men's actions and women's speech. Efuru trades and makes her own money; for example, when Ogea's parents needed to lend money from her, she could not decide on her own or discuss the matter with them without referring to her husband. When they came to ask for the money Efuru told them: "My husband has just gone to the back of the house. He will soon be here. A woman has no say in these things.'" (p. 43). It is strange enough to note that Efuru is not a decision maker although she is making money and even though she is wise enough. An equivalent expression such as 'what can a woman do' is recurrent in different instances. Such an expression stresses and confirms women's status in society. At Efuru and Adizu's dowry, one of the men told Nwashike Ogene that "Adizua's father would not have allowed this if he were alive. I was not in town when it happened (…) there was nothing I could do about it. Adizua's mother was there, no doubt, but what can a woman do?" (p. 21). Hence, to a certain extent, and for different reasons, women are not considered decision-makers or takers.

Another aspect that results from colonialism is the inevitable contact zone created at the encounter of two cultures. As a result of the colonization of the white people, Nigerians can notice the influence of white folk's culture and habits on some of their people. Colonialism established schools in Nigeria to spread Christianity and Western culture and education. Consequently, those who attended school were not really appreciated for who they have become. White people's manners are very strange to Igbo culture. Omirima and Amede's conversation reveals their attitude towards such differences. Omirima complains to Amede about her daughter-in-law's manners; she tells her "'(…)It's only my daughter-in-law. She went to school and so she thinks she knows everything. She is so lazy. Have you ever known a woman, brought up in our town who sleeps until the sun is up?'" (p. 245). Amede was surprised in her turn and wondered where she could have learned such strange behavior. Omirima replies that it is from white women; to both women, not waking up when the cock

crows and being lazy are unacceptable. Amede adds: “Yes, an idle woman is dangerous. I pity these white women you know. How can one sit down in a big house all by oneself and do nothing? It must be a difficult life’” (p. 245). Society believes that education corrupts women’s mentality by instilling strange habits and by opening their minds to the world and that leads them to reject their own customs and traditions.

3.7. A Feministic Reading of the Novel

The relationship between men and women is identical to the colonizer_colonized relationship. Postcolonialism came as a reaction to colonialism, whereas feminism came as a reaction to misogyny. As a character, Efuru is underestimated and undervalued. Despite all the good qualities and distinct personality she possesses, both of her husbands mistreat her. She is not appreciated for what she does and for what she is. For a woman who has accepted Adizua and supported him regardless of the social differences between them; Adizua was considered an ordinary or less than average man, while Efuru was beautiful, wealthy, and the daughter of a very good family. Adizua asked Efuru to marry him and she accepted, but he had no money for the dowry. So she stood by him and together they collected money and got the dowry paid. Eventually, Adizua deserts Efuru and Ogonim for some other woman who people say that she is not a good woman. She left her husband after telling him that he is not the real father of the child they have; besides, she disposed of her three-year-old daughter and left her to her mother without thinking about coming back. Such marginalization is what feminism came to eradicate. Efuru is not supposed to be belittled or treated unfairly.

School attendance is among the principal demands of first-wave feminism. In Igbo society, girls don't have to attend school. For them, girls are destined for domestic life and boys are the ones who have the right and the priority to go to school. Since girls and boys are

scientifically proven to have equal capacities and potential, they deserve equal chances and opportunities. However, Gilbert views that

> (…) 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.' (p. 242)

Gilbert believes that girls' education is pointless because they get married and quit school before finishing. What is conventional is that they are not allowed to finish schooling if marriage comes in the middle. When Efuru was searching for a wife for Gilbert, she was told that the girl she seeks is attending school and that is going to hinder the marriage. But Efuru sees that "That is no hindrance. She will have to leave school if we decide to have her as Eneberi's wife'" (p. 227). Marriage should not be a hindrance to receiving an education. Girls can first finish schooling and get married afterwards. They can even get a degree and work as teachers. Women have the right to improve and accomplish the same as men.

Feminist writing including *Efuru* is characterized by being gynocentric; aiming to portray women's actual life, unraveling patriarchial practices, and spreading self-awareness among women. Nevertheless, the lifestyle and concerns of women differ from one society to another. Nwapa portrays issues typical of Nigerian women such as patriarchy, marriage, polygamy, infertility, and education. She also seeks to raise awareness among women by exposing patriarchial practices that hinder women from having a life of their own. Only because Efuru could not give birth to a second child, her society considered her unproductive. They regard the woman as a child-making machine and reject any woman who falls outside this model. Nwapa in her turn counterattacks by revealing and proving the existence of other sorts of productivity for women. She portrays Efuru as a very active member of her society; Efuru offers help to her people in several instances and affects others' lives positively. She

lends Nwosu and his wife money when they were in need, and she sees Nwosu through his treatment.

She does the same with Nnona; an old woman who had a sore leg as she takes full care of her hospitalization until she recovers. Nwapa hints at men and women's equal capacities through Nnona's daughter thanking speech; Nnona's daughter was so grateful for what Efuru did. She thanked her saying: "'Thank you very much (…) we are happy that you have helped our mother. You have done what only men are capable of doing and so you have done like a man. We have no words to thank you" (p.164). Efuru is also represented as a good trader who makes money flow; she is financially independent and not in need of a man to support her. Nwapa stresses the importance and necessity of financial independence in taking decisions. Efuru had no problem leaving her first or second husband because she was not dependent on any of them; she simply returns to her father's house and resumes her life and activities.

Ajanupu is another model of a strong leading independent and wise woman. She is a steady woman of valor who allows no soul to cross their limit with her. She plays the role of Efuru's consultant who advises and supports her through thick and thin. She is the one who defended her in front of Gilbert and confronted him when he accused Efuru of adultery. Efuru was so sick the moment Gilbert accused her that she could not talk. The reason why she sent for Ajanupu to come and do the talking instead of her. When she arrived and knew what she was called for, she was enraged and she replied saying;

> Eneberi, nothing will be good for you henceforth (...) Our ancestors will punish you (…) From henceforth evil will continue to visit you. What did you say? My god, what did you say? That Efuru, the daughter of Nwashike Ogene, the good, is an adulterous woman. (p. 275)

Ajanupu could not bear Gilbert's accusation because she knew who Efuru is. She came at him with words wondering who he thinks himself he is to accuse a woman like Efuru of adultery. She even mentioned his prisoning at Onicha, which made him loose his temper. "Gilbert gave Ajanupu a slap which made her fall down. She got up quickly for she was a strong woman, got hold of a mortar pestle and broke it on Gilbert's head. Blood filled Gilbert's eyes" (p. 276). Ajanupu saved Efuru and told Gilbert the words he deserved to hear. And that was not Ajanupu's only act of valor; when thieves came to her back yard; Ajanupu was home alone, yet she had the nerve to shout saying: "You thieves who are digging in the back-yard, I am waiting for you. When you finish digging, come in. I will show you what a woman can do." (…) Come in and steal. Come in and lick your blood" (p. 225). Her brother-in-law heard her and knew what was happening, so he fired a gun through his window. They got scared and escaped.

The exploitation of women is an aspect that can be detected in the novel. Ajanupu exposed her nephew's intention when she was scolding her sister Ossai for not doing anything concerning Adizua's leave. She blamed her for not going in search of Adizua and accused her to be the reason for his bad deeds. She told her; "(…) You delightfully spoilt him and failed to make him responsible. You failed to make him stand on his own so that now he leans on these rich women not because he loves them, but because they are rich." (p. 97). Ajanupu disgraced how Adizua was exploiting Efuru and taking advantage of her. He turned out to be in pursuit of money and not seeking to keep a wife and build a family.

3.8. Womanism in *Efuru*

Efuru represents a clear and full manifestation of Igbo life with all of its details with a special focus on Efuru's life. Nwapa's protagonist endures issues that are typical of African women. Feminism indeed came to free women, nonetheless, women's status and troubles are

not identical wherever. Black feminism, womanism, and African womanism all came to improve black women's situation. Nwapa's novel is a work that celebrates blackness; it richly draws a portrait of what women's life is like in a Nigerian community. Efuru's character embodies the characteristics of womanism. Nwapa represented Efuru as a seriously valuable individual with an important role in contributing to their society's construction; she is a self-aware independent person who proves her ability to improve herself and her community. Nwapa values the present and the past of Igbo culture, she grants importance to individuals and the community as a whole; it is all depicted in her work.

Nwapa also calls for the coexistence of the two genders; Efuru was presented as a woman who strives to have a successful marriage and a stable family life. She does her best to maintain both her marriages going, however, that was impossible because of Adizua's leave and Gilbert's mistrust and humiliation. Motherhood is granted the significance it deserves as a woman's identity yet without disregarding her integrity; Efuru is a wife who seeks to have children and tries to be a good mother, but when her daughter dies and she could not have children, she was convinced that she can be complete on her own, even if that meant not bearing children. The final scene in the novel carries this message when Efuru dreams of the woman of the lake when she falls asleep; this goddess was:

> As old as the lake itself. She was happy, she was wealthy. She was beautiful. She gave women beauty and wealth but she had no child. She had never experienced the joy of motherhood. Why then did the women worship her? (p. 281)

This dream draws the similarities between Efuru and the woman of the lake to signify Efuru's wholeness; ' a mother' is only one among many other identities that a woman pertains.

Moreover, Efuru and the majority of her community respect, preserve and celebrate all that is related to their folk and culture. Festivals, dancing parties, and gatherings among

members of the same age group are events that have a considerable status; they are held regularly. It is through such association that men meet women and choose their wives for instance. All of the above-mentioned aspects make *Efuru* a womanistic literary work and grant Nwapa the title of a womanist.

3.9. Different Readings of *Fifth Chinese Daughter*

3.9.1. Seeking the Self

Snow Wong, the American Chinese girl, adolescent, and woman, has her life story told in the novel. The novel shows what life is like through the eyes of Jade Snow along the different stages of her life. She is brought up à la Chinese at home, and when she goes out, she encounters the foreign American lifestyle. Jade Snow's first five years of her life were purely Chinese, at the age of six, she starts going to an American public grade school. It is at that point that she discovers the outside world; she realizes the existence of a different universe that goes beyond her little one. In *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, the community being portrayed is a remarkable one; it is a minority group of Chinese people within a larger American society. What makes this society remarkable is their degree of commitment and discipline; they faithfully follow the same system of life as in their home Chine.

Being in contact with society enables one to distinguish themselves from others. However, from a postcolonial point of view, the self is the concept that stands for those who belong to the dominant subjectivity, while, the other refers to those who are extraneous to that subjectivity. Jade Snow is a Chinese-American female; she is regarded as the other by her male counterparts and by American society equally. In her society, a woman's role in her family –whether as a daughter or a wife- is of great significance, however, that does not give any right to surpass men's status; a woman is always under man's supremacy. Wong provides us with an autobiography that records how she has always been underestimated and her

accomplishment undervalued or overlooked. Jade Snow's father once explains to her how paramount and sacred is a woman's role in bringing up children and consequently building a strong nation. He says: "We must have intelligent mothers. If nobody educates his daughters, how can we have intelligent mothers for our sons? If we do not have good family training, how can China be a strong nation?" (Wong, pp. 14-15). Nevertheless, this importance does not give her the right to have any saying in the house or even concerning her life; she is literally silenced.

A Chinese-American girl's upbringings instruct her to be an obedient serving individual who is disciplined to follow instructions and social and cultural conventions. In her family, Snow Wong's father represents the total source of authority, while everyone else is trained not to question, object, or even comment upon any of his decisions or actions. Right from the beginning, her parents recommended:

> Jade Snow, at school a teacher will be in charge, who is your mother or your father at home? She is supreme, and her position in all matters about your education is as indisputable as the decisions of your mother or father at home. Respect her accordingly. (p. 12)

What they said was taken for granted; keeping things in order comes as a priority for them. "(…) No one ever troubled to explain. Only through punishment did she learn that what was proper was right and what was improper was wrong" (p. 3). Thus, Snow Wong at that age was programmed to do the right thing and act properly to avoid punishment.

When Snow Wong wanted to resume her studies and go to college, she asked her father to help her with the fees. However, he replied that providing for her brother's advanced medical training comes as a must, whereas there is no way to help her complete her studies

even if she has the ambition to be more than an average American or Chinese girl. His answer came as follows:

> Generations of sons, bearing our Wong name, are those who make pilgrimages to ancestral burial grounds and preserve them forever. Our daughters leave home at marriage to give sons to their husbands' families to carry on the heritage for other names. (p. 109)

Mr. Wong's reply has set the boundaries for Jade Snow's ambitions, dreams, and purpose in life. He points out that a son's mission is to bear the family name and assure family continuity. However, a daughter's final destination does not go beyond marriage life, i.e., being a wife and a mother; the reason why, average in her father's eyes was enough.

Mr. Wong represents absolute power, the patriarchy which controls and has the upper hand. He is the one to take decisions without bothering to be considerate of his daughter's wishes and ambitions. His firm way of talking always reveals his attitude towards his daughter. When Jade Snow sought her father's financial support, he told her there is no way he can provide her with the necessary money. In his response,

> (…) Jade Snow could not detect either regret or sympathy in his statement of fact. She did not know whether his next words were uttered in challenge or scorn as he added, "If you have the talent, you can provide for your own college education. (p. 109)

Such an attitude is pejorative, to say the least. Women can be more than wives and mothers, such identities should not hinder them from having advanced studies or from having equal support as their male counterparts since they have no less capacity and potential than them. Patriarchy constantly attempts to predetermine women's identities and roles in society. Although having multiple identities is beneficial and life-facilitating, societies tend to reject and repress those who seem discrepant from them.

There are a few aspects that form one's identity and personality; Jade Snow's family has got a great impact on her. Her family's perception contributes to shaping her character and constitute the source of her drive, perseverance, and will. Her father tells her: "Education is your path to freedom" (p. 108), and her grandmother encourages her by saying: "Be a good girl - and study hard" (p. 108), while her older sisters once told each other: "Daddy thinks that Jade Snow is so intelligent," sceptically, "but let's see if she can bring any honors home to our family" (p. 108). As a consequence of her father and Grandmother's recommendations, Jade Snow becomes aware of the importance of education and sees her future in entering college.

She is committed to proving herself as a successful individual, she vowed to "resolve to be a credit to Mama and prove that the unkind predictions about her children were wrong" (p. 108). She becomes determined to improve her status and rectify her image in the eyes of her family. She even prayed so many times asking: "Give me the strength and the ability to prove to my family that they have been unjust and make them prouder of me than anyone else" (p. 108). Jade Snow questions her father's answer this time and thinks that her father cannot know what advanced education means to her. She says; "I can't help being born a girl. Perhaps, even being a girl, I don't want to marry, just to raise sons! Perhaps I have a right to want more than sons! I am a person, besides being a female!" (pp. 109-110). She knows her own mind; she wants to be more than a wife and a mother, and she does not see why would her gender prevent her from pursuing her dreams. She believes that she too -as a female- has feelings and a mind and can therefore realize achievements. The thirteenth chapter in the novel has entitled *A Person as well as a Female*; it is the chapter which the previous quotes are retrieved from. It principally depicts Jade Snow's early attempts in seeking economic independence and autonomy. The title relates this independence and autonomy to becoming more than a female.

3.10. Identity Formation and Behavior Control

Each person has a reference for their actions; people do not act randomly but usually based on the parameter of their personality. When Jade Snow's father did not support her college education, Jade Snow did not simply surrender; she questioned his decision and felt imprisoned because of her cultural background at first. Afterwards, she went out for a long walk on her own to release the stress and to put a clear plan of action for herself. "(…) she was not going to give up her education. She felt that it was right to go on with it, and she must try to provide for it alone. She would try to get a scholarship to college" (p. 110). Then she considered her capacities; whether she had talent or not, after that she thought and realized that she could always do her best to achieve her goals, even if not at the same pace as her peers. Hence, what she did was stay focused and remain on the right track. "She was concerned only with doing what was immediately at hand, and putting her best into it. So she continued to keep people's houses clean, exhausted herself studying, ignored her family, and got straight A's except in physical education" (p. 111). This is not the first time Jade Snow worked to gain money that can cover her expenses; when she was in high school, she could afford all her needs as a fifteen-year-old girl.

By doing so, she was "establishing firm habits for earning a living and being a good homemaker, following the traditional Chinese pattern for women" (p. 106). Depending on herself to make a living is something which became habitual for her. She did that when she was in high school, and now that her father could not support her financially to start college, she once again relies on herself to afford her education. Self-reliance and determination are two traits in Jade Snow's personality; regardless of what the challenges and the obstacles may be, she eventually adjusts her behaviors and actions into the actions of an autonomous individual who does not back down or give up but rather sets plans and takes action.

With time, Jade Snow became deeply influenced by her college education; sociology widened her horizons and further stimulated her critical thinking. After a lesson about children's rights and freedom; Jade Snow directly related what her instructor said to her life. She realized and concluded that it is then her right that her parents try to understand her and not demand unquestioned obedience from her. She thought that they have no right. She said: "My parents demand unquestioning obedience. Older Brother demands unquestioning obedience. By what right? I am an individual besides being a Chinese daughter. I have rights too" (p. 125). At that point, she considers the possibility that her parents might be wrong. She wondered:

> Could it be that Daddy and Mama, although they were living in San Francisco in the year 1938, actually had not left the Chinese world thirty years ago? Could it be that they were forgetting that Jade Snow would soon become a woman in a new America (...). (pp. 125)

To her mind, times are changing and her parent should no longer expect her to live like a woman in old China, as that does not suit the modern American life they are in.

Jade Snow decided to communicate the idea of personal freedom to her parents; she believed and embraced the idea that it is her right to be free and independent. There was an evening when Jade Snow was going out to meet her friend Joe, and she prepared herself to leave without asking her parents' permission in advance; a behavior which does not accord with their house protocol. He asked her when she finished preparing herself: "Where and when did you learn to be so daring as to leave this house without the permission of your parents? You did not learn it under my roof. "(…) "And with whom are you going out into the street?" (p. 127). When Jade Snow remained silent, her father told her she was not going to leave as long as she refuses to tell them, "Very well," Daddy said sharply. "If you will not tell

me, I forbid you to go! You are now too old to whip" (p. 89). For her that was the moment to talk; the old Jade Snow used to obey and if she was to wonder or question, she would talk in her head only. This time she dares to speak out; she tells her father:

> "That is something you should think more about. Yes, I am too old to whip. I am too old to be treated as a child. I can now think for myself, and you and Mama should not demand unquestioning obedience from me. You should understand me. (p. 128)

Jade Snow is adjusting her behavior to the new identity standard she has set for herself; she now wants to express herself like a Chinese woman growing up in American society. She perceives the difference between the Chinese culture and the American one, and she asks her parents for some freedom and autonomy.

It is not only Jade Snow who realizes the sociocultural difference between her and American society; the American community regards her differently due to her race. When she was in high school, she was the only Chinese girl in an American school. In this school, she did not risk making friends, and she was exposed to bullying for the first time. One of the schoolboys seized the opportunity when he finds himself alone with her to call her names; He excitedly tells her: ""I've been waiting for a chance like this," (…) With malicious intent in his eyes, he burst forth, "Chinky, Chinky, Chinaman" (p. 68). Jade Snow remained calm, which provoked Richard to through an eraser on her, but he missed. Jade Snow was leaving and paying him no attention when he threw another eraser at her; "In a few minutes, her tormentor had caught up with her. Dancing around her in glee, he chortled, "Look at the eraser mark on the yellow Chinaman. Chinky, Chinky, no tickee, no washee, no shirtee!"" (p. 68). Richard was discriminating against Jade Snow because of her race; her physical features and appearance set her as racially different from the others.

Because of her skin color, she is identified as different from the rest, the surrounding society is the one that imagines these racial boundaries and gives them significance. Jade Snow found no justification for Richard's behavior, there was nothing that sets Chinese people and their culture inferior. She thinks to herself:

> Her ancestors had created a great artistic heritage and had made inventions important to world civilization - the compass, gunpowder, paper, and a host of other essentials. She knew, too, that Richard's grades couldn't compare with her own, and his home training was obviously amiss. (p. 68)

Richard is projecting his demerits on Jade Snow and his perception of her is purely pejorative. Eventually, she concludes that such discriminating behaviors have no real tangible justification or basis; she even saw that all people's racial characteristics are features that no one has control over them, the reason why it would only be persecutory to bully them. "She concluded that perhaps the foreigners were simply unwise in the ways of human nature, and unaware of the importance of giving the other person "face," no matter what one's personal opinion might be" (pp. 68-69). Racially speaking, everyone is a foreigner to someone else, however, that does not give anyone the right to reject the other or undervalue them.

The remarkably strong kind of personality Jade Snow possesses is a consequence of her upbringing, she was raised in a strict serious environment. She can commit herself, she is self-reliant and self-confident. In an incident in her Chinese school, Jade Snow was exposed to punishment as a result of passing a note during assembly; she was stood out till the end of the assembly, and then Mr. Dong -the disciplinarian- asked the ones who have been stood out to go to the principal's office to receive their punishment. Mr. Dong told Jade Snow that she must be punished to teach her a lesson, however, she told him that she is as guilty as the other girls who have passed her the note, thus, she refused to be the only one being punished. She

said: "(…) If you whip me, you should also have here all the girls from my row, with their palms outstretched. And I won't hold out my hand until I see theirs held out also!"" (p. 64). Mr. Dong and Jade Snow herself were astonished at such courage; he surprisingly asked how she dared to question him.

> "The new Jade Snow spoke again, "I speak only for what is right, and I will always question wrong in the way my Daddy has taught me. I am willing to bring him here to submit this matter to his judgment. Until then, I hold out no hand."" (p. 64).

Being righteous and speaking out courageously for what is right is a quality that Jade Snow acquired from her father; she is greatly influenced by the principles her parents have instilled in her, the principles that are deeply rooted in their mother culture.

3.11. Self-Awareness and Self-Realization

Objective self-awareness plays a crucial role in making change and realizing one's self; being aware of one's self is the first step towards self-realization. At an early age, Jade Snow starts directing her conscious focus towards herself. When she first started school, she was attending an American public school; it is there that she began to notice the existence of a world different from the one she is raised in. Her parents do not show or express sentiments; they are very serious and tend to blame Jade Snow for any trouble she finds herself in. Comforting her or hugging her is not among their habits. Whereas, Ms. Mullohand took her in her arms and comforted her; "As Jade Snow cried out, the teacher was there. She leaned down and held Jade Snow closely, rubbing her fingers, wiping the tears which fell involuntarily as the pain gradually flowed into her numb hand" (p. 20). She felt good being hugged, and she realized how Americans are different in terms of showing affection and expressing feelings; it is then that she started comparing her parents' ways and the 'foreign American ways'.

The difference that Jade Snow realizes causes her a feeling of discomfort, whenever she experiences an incident, she actively considers the situation concerning the principles her parents taught her. In her first year at junior college, and when she grew up enough not to be whipped anymore, Jade Snow risks the consequences and dares to question her parents' recommendations; they forbid her from going out at night, but she simply refused to obey and argued that she now deserves some freedom. She wanted to convince them about the modern truth of freedom; but her father warned her saying: "You will learn the error of your ways after it is too late" (p. 129). Her parents surely rejected her claims:

> (…) You have lost your sense of balance," (…) "You are shameless. Your skin is yellow. Your features are forever Chinese. We are content with our proven ways. Do not try to force foreign ideas into my home. Go. You will one day tell us sorrowfully that you have been mistaken. (p. 130)

And that was the end of their argument, her parents no more controlled her movements and she went in and out freely.

Jade Snow's attempt to break free from her parents' command was not an easy decision to take, after being aware of her status as a female at home, and after reflecting upon what she learned in college, she has become convinced of her right in autonomy and liberty. She took the risk of ruling her own life; as "It had been simple to have Daddy and Mama tell her what was right and wrong; it was not simple to decide for herself" (p. 130). She was indeed affected by her education and the American lifestyle she was part of, but that does not mean that she has blindly submitted to the new foreign ways. Jade Snow distances herself and tries to objectively weigh both philosophies and cultures before deciding what to embrace and what to reject. For her, both had features to criticize, therefore, she sought to find a middle way. "There was good to be gained from both concepts if she could extract and retain her own

personally applicable combination"(p. 131). Being eclectic about what to choose from the two cultures was not an easy task to do on her own, but she was determined and persistent. Jade Snow was even more aware of herself as well as of the world surrounding her, and that has positively affected her personality:

> At eighteen, when Jade Snow compared herself with a diary record of herself at sixteen, she could see many points of difference. She was now an extremely serious young person, with a whole set of worries which she donned with her clothes each morning. (p. 132)

At two years older, she has grown "a little bit wiser in the ways of the world, a little more realistic, less of a dreamer, and she hoped more of a personality"(p. 132). She is walking steadily towards self-regulation through prospection; Jade Snow is now planning for more schooling to assure having a career in the future. Every experience she has gone through has taught her something about life and has in a certain way contributed to her identity formation and personality construction. "Boys put her down as a snob and a bookworm. Well, let them. She was independent. She was also frank - much too frank for many people's liking. She had acquaintances, but no real friends who shared her interests" (p. 133). Jade Snow had a serious character that only helped her regulate and realize herself.

Jade Snow has gone through a very long journey till she realized herself, her long-term education and schooling, the different jobs she has occupied, and the different provisions she has always made to afford her life and learning requirements. But they have all paid off in the end. Her road towards gaining appreciation was a difficult one; most of her prayers were in supplication to God to enable her to prove herself successful and worthy to her family and therefore gain their recognition.

> In her bitterness, Jade Snow made a solemn vow to God as she knelt in bedtime prayer. “To make up for this neglect and prejudice, please help me to do my best in striving to be a person respected and honored by my family when I grow up. (p. 93)

Her prayers were answered as she could eventually start her own independent business at the age of twenty-three. She saw the project as her life purpose, and she dared to hold on to it until it sees the light of day. Jade Snow and her new enterprise caught attention:

> Chinatown was agog. A woman in the window, her legs astride a potter’s wheel, her hair in braids, her hands perpetually messy with sticky California clay, her finished products such things as coolies used in China, the daughter of a conservative family, running a business alone - such a combination was sure to fail! (p. 244)

Chinese and Americans alike did not believe in her at first, and when her business prospered, they were all astonished and curious about the secret behind her success. “Then those who had laughed hardest stopped. After two months, the mud-stirring maiden was still in business! After three months, she was driving the first postwar automobile in Chinatown”(p. 244). Jade Snow accomplished her small projects which all lead her to the ultimate dream, the dream of having her own niche. Having her own niche sets her free from suppression; because then, “How far she would get would depend on how hard she wanted to work, not on anyone else’s whims or prejudices” (p. 236). She finally received the recognition she always sought; her father, the person she looks up to the most feels honored by her accomplishment; he tells her that he once wrote to his cousin in China that he disproves the status that the Chinese culture has degraded its women to, Mr Wong told him: “I wish my daughters to have this Christian opportunity. I am hoping that someday I may be able to claim that by my stand I have washed away the former disgraces suffered by the women of our family’” (p. 146). To him, Jade Snow is the one who could realize his dream.

According to the Chinese tradition, reaching twenty-three and remaining single is an oddity; for them, a woman only belongs when she gets married. A woman's family is her husband's family and her only home is next to her husband. The last paragraph in the novel ends thus: "And when she came home now, it was to see Mama and Daddy look up from their work, and smile at her, and say, "It is good to have you home again!" (p. 246). Jade Snow's parents' reaction signifies that they have become satisfied with her, it shows that they have accepted her as she is. Jade Snow finally feels relieved.

Looking at Jade Snow's personal development, we find that she could always attain her goals because she is never random; she perceives matters, considers them, looks for options, then sets plans for herself and commits to them. The fact that she was always aware of herself and constantly in attempt to take action and control the course of her life, has allowed her to realize herself despite all obstacles. She realized herself as an American Chinese woman among her community and family.

3.12. Women's Oppression

Forgiveness from Heaven is the name of the youngest member of the Wong family. Mr. Wong is very delighted and wants to announce the baby's coming; he says "At last we have the happiness of another son to carry on the Wong name. We must have a fine celebration when his age reaches a full month." (p. 25). When he was born, the Wong family held significant festivities. One of the older sisters explains:

> "This joyfulness springs only from the fact that the child is at last a son, after three daughters born in the fifteen years between Blessing from Heaven and him. When Jade Precious Stone was born before him, the house was quiet. There was no such display." (p. 27)

Jade Snow was still little at the time, but her older sister's words meant something to her; she concluded that the baby boy is more important to her parents than herself and her younger sister just because of his gender. Discrimination based on gender difference starts within the family and continues in society although people have no choice over their gender.

Moreover, Mr. Wong represents the source of total authority at home; whatever he says must not be questioned or objected and whenever he talks, it would be with finality. Throughout the whole novel, there is no incident where Jade Snow's mother disagreed or questions any of his decisions. She always follows him and refers to him. There is an instance when Jade Snow comes home exited with her report card to sign, but her father examines and signs without paying any attention to Jade Snow's promotion. She asks:

> ""Daddy, did you notice that I have skipped a grade? I am going to a new building! I have been promoted two grades. Isn't it -". Daddy quietly stopped the child's rush of excited words, "That is as it should be." That was all he said, with finality." (p. 19)

When her father's answer disappointed her, she ran to her mother who simply asked her: ""What did your father say?"(…) "He said, 'That is as it should be'", Jade Snow replied, crushed. "Your father was right," was all Mamma said, also with finality." (p. 19). Jade Snow did not receive the appreciation and encouragement she expected and wished for.

Additionally, Jade Snow's advanced schooling and career never had any importance or received encouragement; her older brother tells her that she lacks imagination and personality when she consulted him about intending to become a dressmaker in the future. Daddy commented on Jade Snow and Mamma's discussion about the remaining years of education for her. He says: "Some people who take up a profession study at college six or more years. But you are a girl, so you need not worry about that. It will not be necessary for you to go to college" (p. 18). For him, all that a girl needs is basic learning and there is no

necessity for college since there is no necessity for work. And when she told her father and the rest of the family at dinner time about her plans in entering junior college in San Francisco and finding work to cover her future expenses, "Everyone went on eating. No one said a word. No one was interested enough to be curious. But at least no one objected. It was settled" (p. 122). So, neither Daddy nor anybody else said a thing or showed interest.

Outside her home, Jade Snow once more faces discrimination; this time not for her gender only but for her race as well. She is mocked and bullied at school for being Chinese; the incident of Richard who threw an eraser at her and called her names remained with her forever. For her, he was representative of all oppressors who undervalue the Chinese for their race. Jade Snow belongs to a Chinese minority in a larger American society; where she is most of the time inferiorized and prejudiced. When she was at her store making pottery, two foreign officers were observing her and one of them wondered how the potter's wheel functions. His fellow answered: "Oh, she sits there and kicks it with her feet" (p. 245). They were standing near enough that she could hear them "and was amused that they did not observe the one-third horsepower motor which Daddy had installed on the wheel, hung almost at their eye level." (p. 245). Which made one of them describe that as "unnecessarily primitive". Both men concluded that ""(…) you can't teach the Chinese anything new!""(p. 245). Foreigners stereotypically believe that Chinese people are less advanced or developed than them.

Jade Snow is enduring double oppression, i.e., sexism and racism. She is marginalized for both her gender and race; however, she is aware enough not to internalize oppression. She has always fought for the sake of improving and proving herself as a woman and as a Chinese woman. Jade Snow empowered herself with all that patriarchy has imposed on her, including discipline, determination, seriousness, severity, self-reliance, and courage. She has always been self-dependent, she never relied on a parent, a brother, or sought a husband. She never

submitted or held back until she realized herself, and still believes that her journey is never over as long as life is ahead of her.

3.13. Enduring and Overcoming Identity Crisis

When people are experiencing instability and questioning their values and in search or attempt to form an identity, then they are surely undergoing an identity crisis. When her father told her that he cannot afford her advanced schooling the same way he financed her brother's education, Jade Snow started questioning her father's decision. For the first time in her life, she was not convinced and she could not blindly take what he said for granted. To her, this time, Daddy does not know everything and he is unfair. She wondered: "How can Daddy know what an American advanced education can mean to me? Why should Older Brother be alone in enjoying the major benefits of Daddy's toil?!" (p. 108). Jade Snow questions and rebels against a principle that prioritizes males over females; a patriarchal principle that has long been followed. Driven by her ambition, and guided by her parents and grandmother's prior recommendations, she intends to complete her studies at college. She objects to the restrictions that confine women to house life and mothering.

Jade Snow seeks a different identity from the one her mother's culture and society require from her. As soon as she steps outside her home and went to school, she encounters a contrasting milieu which made her feel perplexed. Miss Chew and Miss Mullohand for example were unexpectedly unlike her father; Miss Chew –despite having authority over Jade Snow since she is her teacher- never spanked any of her pupils. Similarly, Miss Mullohand was even a tenderer; she is Jade Snow's loveliest teacher. Jade Snow always recalls how Miss Mullohand reacted when Jade Snow was hurt. "She leaned down and held Jade Snow closely, rubbing her fingers, wiping the tears which fell involuntarily as the pain gradually flowed into

her numb hand" (p. 20). Little Jade Snow directly linked her teacher's behavior to her mother's previous reactions when Jade Snow went to her mother crying.

On the other hand, Mama never comforts Jade Snow, instead, she always puts the blame on her and severely punishes her whenever she comes complaining. That is why Jade Snow finds that:

> It was a very strange feeling to be held to a grown-up foreign lady's bosom. She could not remember when Mama had held her to give comfort. Daddy occasionally picked her up as a matter of necessity, but he never embraced her impulsively when she required consolation. (p. 20)

The contrast between the teacher's treatment and her parents' puzzled her to the extent that she did not even know how to react when Miss Mullohand hugged her. As a result of being raised in an immigrant Chinese family, where she is trained according to Chinese terms while living in an American atmosphere, little Jade Snow is confused and her questioning is stimulated. Cultural clashes and the issue of place create an identity crisis.

And from crisis a new identity is born; contact between two different cultures allows new transcultural forms and hybrid identities to exist. Jade Snow, born Chinese in an American country, inevitably grew up to be a hybrid individual who is neither purely Chinese, nor purely American, but the amalgamation of both.

> Thus Jade Snow-shaped by her father's and mother's unceasing loyalty toward their mother country, impressed with China's needs by speakers who visited Chinatown, revolutionized by American ideas, fired with enthusiasm for social service (…) arrived at the perfect solution for the future of all thinking and conscientious young Chinese, including herself. (p. 135)

Jade Snow made the best she could of her situation as an American Chinese by staying connected to her roots and benefiting from what American life has offered her. She did not allow the other to construct her identity but rather struggled to eventually reinvent a strong sense of identity by negotiating two conflicting cultures.

From an identity status point of view, in her early years, Jade Snow was always guided by her parents. She was never allowed to discuss or decide for herself, the reason why she was in an identity foreclosure status where she was committed while foreclosing all options. As a child and most of her adolescence, she could never help but blindly obey her parents' instructions. However, a few years later, she gradually gained her independence, with which she gradually learned to think critically about matters. Eventually, she rebels against her parents and takes control of her life. At that point, Jade Snow retains a consistent pattern of reaction; whenever she faces a situation; she approaches the matter by reasoning and considering her options. She constantly experiences an identity crisis. Usually, she self-talks and sometimes seeks advice from Joe or somebody; after that, she reaches a decision and commits to it, i.e., she moves from identity moratorium to identity achievement each time.

3.14. A Postcolonial Perspective of the Novel

Fifth Chinese Daughter is the first work published by an American Chinese female author. The work is an autobiography; therefore, it is a piece of writing that is produced from Jade Snow Wong's perspective, whose purpose has always been to create a better understanding of Chinese culture for Americans. The purpose goes hand in hand with the purpose of any postcolonial piece of writing, i.e., drawing one's own image. Writing from one's own perspective is in itself a dismantling of patriarchy; patriarchy to women is as colonialism to the colonized. Besides, belonging to a minority and being out of place have a lot in common with being colonized; indigenous people's demeaning status situates them in

the same rank as the colonized. In the case of Jade Snow Wong, the character or the author_ which are the same_ belongs to a marginalized, underestimated, and unwanted category of society. She remains colonized in the eyes of patriarchy for her gender, as she is so in the eyes of American society. Former colonies and third-world populations remain forever inferior in the opinion of former colonizers.

In the incident where her American schoolmate –Richard- bullies her chortling ""Look at the eraser mark on the yellow Chinaman. Chinky, Chinky, no tickee, no washee, no shirtee!"" (p. 68); Jade Snow totally ignored him and headed home without paying him any attention.

> Everybody knew that the Chinese people had a superior culture. Her ancestors had created a great artistic heritage and had made inventions important to world civilization - the compass, gunpowder, paper, and a host of other essentials. She knew, too, that Richard's grades couldn't compare with her own, and his home training was obviously amiss. (p. 68)

Because she knew that there is nothing that makes Chinese people an inferior nation, she considered him ignorant and did not bother herself answering him. Even at an individual level, Richard's bad manners and his grades were way behind hers at school; which meant that he was only projecting on her characteristics which he knew he possessed.

The West constructed a negative image of the East since they were the ones in power; they allowed themselves to center themselves as the self with all the possible positive qualities while marginalizing the East and associating it with all opposite negative qualities. Said's Orientalism constituted the motive behind Jade Snow's "desire to contribute in bringing a better understanding of the Chinese people so that in the Western world they would be recognized for their achievements. She wanted to silence the narrow thinking of all the

"Richards" (p. 235). Jade Snow was fully aware that the West's opinion about the East/Orient is purely stereotypical and prejudiced and has no scientific logical basis. The West's act of diminishing the East and colonizing them is in itself an uncivilized act that simply negates their claim about being civilized.

3.15. A Feministic Reading of the Novel

Not far from Said's Orientalism, feminism came to do justice to women who have long been prejudiced for their gender. Men, being the ones who made language and constructed meaning, too constructed the image of women. Women are second-class citizens who are unequal to men and who live by patriarchal terms. Feminism came to claim women's right to vote and study because education expands their opportunities and assures them of a better life. Through her experience, Jade Snow Wong tangibly portrays the importance of education. Since she could achieve more, Jade Snow wanted to be more than what the patriarchy assigned her to be. At an early age, she aspires to be good at what she does and she achieves her goals through perseverance and hard work. She critically and autonomously realizes that oppressive patriarchal constraints have no logical or biological basis.

Appreciation and recognition are something hard to receive in the Wong house; due to being too humble, disciplined, severe, and serious, there was very little emotion being expressed or shown. They always keep a distance from each other and show great respect for one another. Discussions are very rare and short, objections are repressed, and compliments are hardly ever said. Jade Snow once consulted their Older Brother about choosing to become a dressmaker in the future; her brother discouraged her saying ""you need personality to meet people and sell to them, and the trouble with you is that you're so mousy, you lack both of these needed qualities" (p. 92). Jade Snow replied that she will go to school and improve, but her brother did not believe in her. He answers her saying: ""Don't be silly, you either have

personality and imagination or you don't. You don't acquire them from books" (p. 92). He simply shook her self-esteem for a while with his judgment and made her feel down by not believing in her.

When she decided to complete her education in college, she went to report it to her father saying:

> ""Daddy," (…) "I have made up my mind to enter junior college here in San Francisco. I will find a steady job to pay my expenses, and by working in the summers I'll try to save enough money to take me through my last two years at the university."" (p. 122)

Although she is progressing in her schooling, Jade Snow is not encouraged because her advanced learning falls out of her father's interests. Nobody commented concerning what she said, but she was happy that nobody objected. According to "Wong family fashion, they weren't preventing her from having her own way, nor helping" (p. 242). Her family usually shows no support or objection, the reason why Jade Snow grew even more autonomous.

At this juncture, it becomes necessary to remind that Jade Snow's trouble is not only in being a female in a patriarchal society but also in being Chinese in American society. Hence, she is doubly victimized; she is stigmatized by men both Chinese and white, and by white women in American society as well. In her case, mainstream feminism does not fit her well as a movement; it does not see or speak for all her needs. Jade Snow struggled to form her identity as a second-generation American Chinese daughter; she forges her way out by prioritizing her learning and career and by defying all stigmatizing patriarchal boundaries.

3.16. Conclusion

The present chapter was concerned with providing different readings of the corpora under study. We have attempted to look at the *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* in the light of the different concepts and theoretical frameworks we have elaborated on in the previous chapter, including self-awareness and sef-realization theories, identity statuses, postcolonialism, feminism, and womanism. Approaching the two novels from different angles only engendered a deeper understanding and appreciation of them.

Chapter Four

Comparing *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter*

Table of Contents

4.1. Introduction 130
4.2. Comparing *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* 130
4.2.1. A Reading of the Self 133
4.2.1.1. Seeking the Self 133
4.2.1.2. Identity Formation and Behavior Control 136
4.2.1.3. Self-Awareness and Self-Realization 138
4.2.2. Women's Oppression 140
4.2.3. Enduring and Overcoming Identity Crisis 142
4.2.4. A Postcolonial Perspective of the Novels 145
4.2.5. A Feministic Reading of the Novels 149
4.2.6. Womanism 157

4.1. Introduction

Authors speaking for women's concerns and depicting life through females' perspective are numerous; Flora Nwapa and Jade Snow Wong are two instances. As modern female authors, they certainly have points in common, as they also have different points. Similarly, if we come to compare their novels, namely *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, we certainly would find both similarities and differences. This chapter aims to compare the two literary works based on the previous readings we have provided; we intend to forge an elaborate rich comparison and spotlight the similarities and differences between them.

4.2. Comparing *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter*

If we would start, it is better to start with both novels' contexts; *Efuru* is written by a Nigerian author and depicts the life of an Igbo woman. On the other hand, *Fifth Chinese Daughter* is written by an American-born Chinese author who captures her very own life story from childhood to adulthood. Both works were produced in the modern period and both of them are their author's first literary production. *Efuru* was the first work to be published by a Nigerian or African female and Fifth Chinese Daughter was the first work to be published by an American Chinese, which makes both authors pioneers in the category they belong to. The primary purpose behind both pieces of literature is to provide writings about women which are produced by women themselves instead of men; female writings provide a more accurate picture of women, one which is unbiased with manly prejudices.

On the one hand, Efuru is told from third-person singular point of view; it consists of more dialogs than narration which shows the author's focus on the characters. Dialogues put forth the mindset of the different characters in the novel; conversations give the reader access to know more about characters' sayings and deeds through their own words. It also exposes the Igbo social mentality and cultural background, beliefs, and principles even more. On the

other hand, Fifth Chinese Daughter –although it is an autobiography- is written in third-person-singular pronoun; a fashion which roots back in Chinese literary form. Wong explained in her introduction to the 1989 edition that such use reflects a cultural disregard for the individual in her mother's culture, she justified that she has maintained her psychological detachment from her personal importance although she has succeeded in establishing her individuality on a local and international basis. Contrary to Flora Nwapa, Wong relied more on narration than on dialogs in her narrative; events were told from Jade Snow's viewpoint.

Moreover, when it comes to the themes of both corpora, they are to a great extent common; however, the focus and prevalence of themes differ according to the settings of each story and novel. *Efuru* captures Efuru's life in the phase of adulthood where she is at the age of marriage. As a consequence, major and consistent themes in *Efuru* include marriage and motherhood. Regarding Efuru's character, features, and circumstances, the subject of motherhood is given a large space and importance. Because of her sociocultural background and society's pressure, child bearing occupies Efuru's mind day and night in her first and second marriages.

> "Efuru went home that night with a heavy heart. (…) It was the fact that she was considered barren. It was a curse not to have children. Her people did not just take it as one of the numerous accidents of nature. It was regarded as a failure." (Nwapa, 1966, p. 207)

Unproductiveness is unexcepted among Igbo people. In spite of her beauty, character and economic independence; society could not bear her bareness and considered her less than 'a woman' and saw that her husband must immediately remarry to have children.

Next to motherhood, great attention is dedicated to the theme of marriage. Taking into account Igbo society's tolerance for both polygamy and women's undervalue, remarriage is

recurrent all over the novel. Although annoying and hurtful to any female, polygamy is oversimplified by both men and women to the extent that women themselves repeat the expression: “It is only a bad woman who wants her husband all to herself.” (p. 62). Actually, Efuru’s society instructed her that marriage and motherhood are two aspects upon which her full human identity depends. Yet, Nwapa proves and demonstrates how a wife and a mother are only two identities among the many identities which a female might embrace, and without them, she can still be a full human being.

Fifth Chinese Daughter’s principal themes include education and multiculturalism. The novel covers the life story of an American-born Chinese female; from her early years of childhood till early adulthood. According to American norms and her family’s fashion, girls attend primary and middle school to attain basic necessary learning and which would be enough for them. However, Jade Snow who learns from her father that education is her pathway to freedom; she decides and commits to finish schooling and get advanced learning. Jade Snow maintains her diligence at school to assure a future niche for herself. The corpus provides a detailed account of her long educational journey until she finally accomplishes her dream and establishes her business. Briefly said self-fullfillement and self-actualization are the core of the narrative and education is the means for the protagonist to realize her goal. By the same token, finding her identity in a multicultural context is another central theme in the work. Jade Snow toils to manage her way through two opposing cultures and lifestyles; she difficulty negotiates her mother culture and the foreign one in an eclectic method. Eventually, Jade Snow turns out into an interesting unexpected combination. The influence of the foreigner is to a greater extent touched in Jade Snow’s life than in Efuru’s due to differences in settings and circumstances. Jade Snow finds herself in the middle of an American society where she is inevitably exposed to a large body of American sociocultural mentality; she could not stay immune to American culture’s impact.

Fifth Chinese Daughter's principal themes include education and multiculturalism. Education Due to the time span which the autobiography covers, in addition to the place where events take place,

4.2.1. A Reading of the Self

4.2.1.1. Seeking the Self

The protagonists Efuru and Jade Snow are placed in patriarchal communities where their identities and roles are predetermined by society. "A woman belongs to the family into which she marries, and only finds a home with her husband; therefore, if she died unwed, she would have established no family and would belong to no home" (Nwapa, 1966, p. 228). A Woman has a compulsory and definite destination, and that is next to her husband. A relationship in which men consider themselves the self while women are the other; men are first-class citizens who are situated in the center, while women are second-class citizens who are situated in the margin. There is an ever-existing binary opposition that is begetting women's subjugation; this opposition caused women a loss of their self and identity. The latter made both females pursue repositioning themselves and finding their identities.

Efuru for example is the other in her society due to her gender. After a few years of marriage, Adizua became indifferent to his wife and paid her no more attention. She asked him where he went the night before after asking her to prepare food for him, but he made no answer. It made her wonder; "'Adizua, are you deaf? Why don't you answer me?' Adizua was still busy examining the blunt knife. He was looking at it as if his whole life depended on the result of this examination" (p. 61). He simply avoided quarrelling with her as a result of a lack of love. Despite all her good qualities; she is undervalued and mistreated by her husband.

Jade Snow's situation is even more complex as she is the other for two reasons; her gender and race. Jade Snow's efforts go unnoticed and her improvements are usually

unappreciated, whether at home or outside. When she first started her pottery enterprise, people's reactions were a mixture of astonishment, curiosity, and mockery, principally because she was a woman.

> When Jade Snow went around Chinatown, many storekeepers laughed at her. "Look, here comes the mud-stirring maiden. Sold a pot today? Ha! Ha!" Strangers turned to stare long and curiously. Caucasians came from far and near to see her work, and Jade Snow sold all the pottery she could make. (Wong, 1950, p. 244)

Being a pioneer put her under the spot, but Jade Snow proves herself successful shortly after when her business remarkably prospers.

Hence, women's belittling and inferiority have become instilled in both societies' minds in a way that made it the norm, and any attempt to break that norm is refused or repressed. According to Igbo society, a woman cannot stand alone; her legitimate place is at her husband's house raising her children and minding her own chores. Omirima goes to Gilbert's mother -Amede- particularly to ask her about Efuru's pregnancy; "It is a year since your son married. One year is enough for any woman who would have a baby to begin making one. Find out quickly and if she is barren (…) start early to look for a black goat. Besides, there are other girls you will like to have as daughters-in-law.'" (p. 174). Efuru's sterility is seriously provocative to her society to the extent that it classifies her as abnormal. Nevertheless, what Nwapa does is rebelling against those norms by portraying Efuru as an unmarried childless independent complete female. Ikonne's article rested on a similar conclusion; he highlighted the effect of patriarchy on women by referring to the socio-economic antifeminism in society as the factor causing internalized disesteem among women and hindering them from self-assertion. Ikonne also pointed to Efuru's strong character and independence vis-à-vis Adizua and Gilbert's irresponsibility.

Similarly, Wong defies patriarchal norms by advancing a model of a successful independent complete female protagonist which is not compatible with the one put by Chinese society. At the age of eighteen, Jade Snow

> had put aside an earlier Americanized dream of a husband, a home, a garden, a dog, and children, and there had grown in its place a desire for more schooling in preparation for a career of service to those less fortunate than herself. (pp. 132-133)

Jade Snow seeks education and a career before seeking a husband and married life.

Treating the East or women as incomplete is only a projection of the West's or men's incompleteness. Men belittle women only to cover their incompleteness or to just feel complete; "Adizua was not good at trading. It was Efuru who was the brain behind the business. He knew this very well" (Nwapa, 1966, p. 39). Adizua disvalues Efuru despite her good character and the potential she has, only because he is aware of his worth. Not far from Richard's or the American society's attitude towards Jade Snow; they –being the West- regard the Orient as uncivilized and inferior in so many ways, whilst, there are facts and evidence that refute such assumptions. Jade Snow thought about how foreigners are

> unaware of the importance of giving the other person "face," no matter what one's personal opinion might be. They probably could not help their own insensibility. Mama said they hadn't even learned how to peel a clove of garlic the way the Chinese did. (Wong, 1950, p. 69)

What Efuru and Jade Snow achieve by the end of the novel denies all that dichotomy stands for.

4.2.1.2. Identity Formation and Behavior Control

Who one is or what one becomes is not random, people do have control over their behaviors and identities. Identity has a system that functions like a cycle in a fashion that individuals can perceive and adjust their conduct. In both corpora, the authors portray how their protagonists constantly adjust their actions following their own identity standards. Efuru is an aware independent woman who is proud of herself and her belongings. She is socially active as she makes many attempts to help people in need; she helps Nwosu and his wife on several occasions. When his wife comes crying to Efuru telling her about his difficult health condition; Efuru simply says: 'All right, I shall take him to see Dr Uzaru. I hear he will arrive from Onicha this evening' (Nwapa, 1966, p. 117). Also, the way she reacts when her first husband abandons her, or when her second husband accused her of adultery, shows that she is not a passive weak woman. Even when her daughter dies, she took her time to grieve and then she just tried to carry on with her life. After all that she endures, she is courageous and self-confident enough to go back to her starting point, i.e., her father's house, and resumes her life normally.

Likewise, Jade Snow's personality develops in the course of the story, but what is consistent about her is how she adjusts her actions each time to the newly set identity standard. When she decides to rebel and become a daughter who questions her family's authority; she first prepares herself to go out without asking her parents' permission, and when her father forbids her to leave, she just seizes the opportunity to communicate her new idea of her right in personal freedom. In the same way, when she sought employment advice from the college placement office, she was told not to seek American business houses, but rather Chinese ones. To Jade Snow's mind, racial prejudice

> had never interfered with her personal goals. She had, on the contrary, found that being Chinese had created a great deal of favorable interest, and because of its cultural enrichment of her life she would not have traded her Chinese ancestry for any other. (Wong, 1950, p. 189)

Hence, to her; "this was one piece of advice she was not going to follow, so opposed was it to her experience and belief. She was more determined to get a job with an American firm." (p. 189). And that is exactly what she pursued.

By dint of difference in settings and conditions, Efuru is not directly exposed to racial discrimination; the events indeed take place in Igboland during white men's control; still, she does not come into direct contact with them. However, Jade Snow had to endure racial segregation starting from school and in several instances later on in her life; the incident of her schoolmate Richard who bullied her, the college placement office interviewer's advice which was not to seek equal competition with Caucasians because she is Chinese, and the conversation of the two high-ranking Caucasian Army officers at her pottery store, all show the discrimination faced by an American born Chinese female.

Looking at the two female protagonists' personalities, we can notice their distinctiveness; the latter is the outcome of several factors. More than once, Efuru proves to have a strong independent personality with a good character. One of the reasons behind that strength is her upbringing; she belongs to a respected family and her father is a remarkable man of valor. Not only that, Efuru is a good trader who makes money flow which significantly contributed to her independence and autonomy. Her agreeable character is very similar to her mother's; Nwashike Ogene says that Efuru and her mom have a lot in common; he tells her:

> (…) Your mother prospered in her trade. She was so good that whatever she put her hand to money flowed in. When she sold pepper, she made huge profits; when she sold yams or fish, she made profits also. She was so rich that she became the head of her age-group. (Nwapa, 1966, p. 187)

Efuru has inherited her good qualities from her mother.

By the same token, Jade Snow's resulting personality is the patchwork of her family training and the different kinds of experiences and education she received. They have all affected her in a certain way; she acquired righteousness and many other virtues from her father. "Jade Snow was said to resemble her father. Like Daddy, she developed angular features, became dark-complexioned, serious, skinny, sensitive, independent, and not at all adorable." (Wong, 1950, p. 89). People also acknowledge that she has her father's cleverness. An idea that converges with Li's (2014) doctoral dissertation which highlighted how family can be a site of oppression, empowerment, and formation of subjecthood at the same time. As much as her family system suppresses Jade Snow, as much as it contributes to her identity construction. Her home training taught her discipline, self-reliance, and autonomy, next to her education which has revolutionized her thinking and made her who she is.

4.2.1.3. Self-Awareness and Self-Realization

People's decisions, actions, and behavior are also based on their self-knowledge and awareness of their own capacities. Thence, self-awareness is a key aspect in regulating one's conduct and actions to achieve goals. In what concerns self-awareness, Efuru and Jade Snow have followed the same path towards self-regulation. In situations that require consideration or decision taking, Efuru and Jade Snow actively direct their attention toward themselves; they explore options and discuss the subject with others to consult them. When they reflect and examine the issue at hand from different angles, they try to think as objectively as

possible. Of course, for anyone to set long-term or short-term goals they need to first refer to their experience and make use of it, in addition to using imagination to think about the future and set plans. Following this process, they self-regulate and reach their goals. That is what Efuru effectively did when she decided to leave Adizua when he deserted her for another woman, or when she went back to her father's house when Gilbert accused her of adultery.

And that is also the case for Jade Snow when she wanted to assign to college, when she sought to carve out a niche for herself, or when her father fell seriously sick and her mother felt insecure. When some enemies were menacing her family's security and union, she had an "overwhelming desire to be of concrete assistance. She yearned to carry some of Mama's burden for her" (p. 81). Jade Snow "resolved to try always to be a credit to both parents. She resolved, too, that when she grew up she would do something to make them take back what they had said" (p. 81). And to achieve that " (…) she decided to begin by doing well whatever task was at hand, from washing the dishes to studying her lessons" (p. 81).

As for self-realization, both Efuru and Jade Snow were driven to satisfy their self-realization needs; looking at both personages, we find that they have both sought perfection and wholeness as they have fulfilled their basic needs and moved to fulfilling higher needs. They de-centred themselves and aimed towards social activism to make the world a better place. Efuru constantly stood by those in need; she helped Nwosu and Nona to receive medical care and supported Nwosu and his wife financially through their crisis. At a very young age, Jade Snow aimed at proving herself to her family and gaining their recognition; she always aspired to be a source of pride for her parents. Nonetheless, growing up as a conscious Chinese individual, her focus was not limited to her self-interest only. Jade Snow also maintained a strong

> deep desire to contribute in bringing better understanding of the Chinese people, so that in the Western world they would be recognized for their achievements. She wanted to silence the narrow thinking of all the "Richards" and the "placement officers. (p. 235)

She always had an enthusiasm for social service as a means to accomplish her desire. At college, Jade Snow took "social service courses (…) to prepare her for service in her community, especially with young American-Chinese" (p. 175). She always wanted to help those in need. At a certain stage, social service did not seem to be the solution anymore, she thought about writing and making pottery.

Efuru and Jade Snow successfully attain their goals by the end; they prove themselves to be successful independent effective socially- active women. They could be more than what society and patriarchy required them to be.

4.2.2. Women's Oppression

Moving to women's oppression issue; being a part of a patriarchal society made them prone to exploitation, violence, and marginalization. The latter is mostly depicted in Efuru's relationship with her first and second husbands. Her first husband indirectly exploits her and then suddenly deserts her although she has always been a good wife. While her second husband boldly accuses her of adultery and asks her to confess. Even women in her society were internally oppressive as they oppress one another; they contribute to perpetuating patriarchy by passively conforming to social traditions.

In *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, women's oppression is embodied in the Wong family system, in addition to the American society's perception of Jade Snow. It is also detected in Mama's fear when Mr. Wong fell very sick. For the first time, Mama opens her heart to Jade Snow and expresses herself; She cries saying:

> If your father does not live, what will I do? (…). Some unkind ones have already taunted me, saying that they will never see our children grow. They say that I do know not the customs or language of this country and for survival, I will be forced to abandon you and to marry another. (p. 80)

Because she is a woman, other men dare to threaten her security; they say she will be forced to leave her children to remarry as soon as her husband dies because she is a woman and she is simply defenceless without her husband.

Furthermore, Jade Snow is not allowed to express herself at home; everyone is supposed to show blind obedience to their father and then their mother. Jade Snow is undervalued vis-à-vis her brother/brothers and her attempt to complete her studies is discouraged. She has no control over her own life until she rebels against her parents and gains a measure of freedom. Additionally, Jade Snow is mistreated and discriminated against by American society due to her gender difference. Hence, Efuru faces sexism, while Jade Snow undergoes both sexism and racism; Jade Snow is doubly oppressed.

When speaking in terms of dimensions, oppression takes three dimensions. Those dimensions were suggested by Collins (2002) based on black women's oppression, however, they can apply to both *Efuru* and Jade Snow too since she too belongs to a subjugated minority. Efuru is financially and indirectly exploited by her first husband. Besides, she does not seem to be the one taking the lead or sharing authority in marriage. And for the ideological dimension; women's inferiority is instilled in Igbo society's mentality and internalized among their women as a result of patriarchal influence. Jade Snow was denied a job in American business firms because of her race and she would certainly be denied any other higher position in the political system and that is a political dimension of oppression. The economic dimension can be clearly seen in *Fifth Chinese Daughter* when she occupied

the position of a secretary and her boss told her that she –as a woman- cannot be granted the chance of having better positions at work because men have priority over women for economic reasons. Lastly, the ideological dimension of oppression is seen throughout the novel in the Wong family's and society's prejudiced and stereotyped perception of Jade Snow.

4.2.3. Enduring and Overcoming Identity Crisis

Being in a crisis can be a transitional phase that paves the way for an identity establishment. An identity crisis is a state that both protagonists experience. On several occasions and for many reasons, they encounter situations where they feel lost, question the already established beliefs, and explore their options to overcome the dilemma. People's ways of treating matters differ according to their personalities and identities. Some would stagnate and remain passive; neither considering nor committing to a certain decision, and some would explore and not commit to their decision, and some would foreclose all options and simply commit because they are guided. Efuru is always portrayed as an aware person who explores and considers the available options and choices concerning her future life to finally reach a decision and commit to it; hence, Efuru is either in moratorium or achievement status. By the beginning of the novel, Efuru agrees to marry Adizua, she expresses her great love to him saying that she would drown herself if he does not marry her. She was simply ready to do what is required to reach her aim. "When the woman saw that he was unable to pay anything, she told him not to bother about the dowry. They were going to proclaim themselves married and that was that" (Nwapa, 1966, p. 1). Then when Efuru asks Adizua about the dowry, he says:

> ‘You will come to me on Nkwo day. Every place will be quiet that day being market day. Take a few clothes with you and come to me. We shall talk about the dowry after.’ Efuru agreed and went home feeling very happy and light. (p. 2)

Adizua’s reply indicates that he does not have money for the dowry at present. He wants to marry Efuru first, and then pay the dowry later.

Shortly after, Nwashike Ogene sends his men to Adizua’s house to bring Efuru back home, however, she shows them that she is happy in her marriage and tells them: “My husband is not rich. he is poor. But the dowry must be paid. I must see that this is done’” (p. 5). She gives them a promise to set things right and she stays in her husband’s house. Efuru helps her husband raise the money needed for the dowry and calls her father and people to gather for the occasion of fulfilling their dowry. Efuru in this case is in an identity achievement status where she is experiencing a high level of crisis and commitment; she established a new identity.

As for Efuru, she has been through life-changing events where she was obliged to take difficult decisions; like when Adizua’s behavior changed towards her, or when she went back to her father’s house after Adizua left. She also had difficult times and felt empty when her daughter died, it was a life-changing event that put her in a dilemma; when Ogonim departed this life so early, she left her mother in great sorrow. When she died, Efuru felt empty because she was too attached to her daughter. In earlier thoughts, she said to herself: What will I do if I lose her?’ (…) ‘If she dies, that will mean the end of me’ (p. 79). Efuru, was so attached to her daughter that she felt that they are one. As if she has no independent identity, she says: ‘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” (p. 89). All that Efuru considered herself at that moment was being a mother, and when her daughter died, she

felt like dying too. However, she gradually recovers from this trauma and resumes her life normally. In Jorgensen's thesis, it was noted that when women face challenges beyond their capacities, they might undergo a temporary hysteria as a result of their delicacy. He pointed out that Efuru's reaction when Ogonim died is a sign that she has not yet formed an independent identity. However, adversity can pave the way for an identity rebirth as what happened with Efuru. Oppression or adversity is not necessarily a dead end if the protagonist starts an identity negotiation; the latter continues until a cohesive identity is reached.

On the other hand, Jade Snow experiences all of the three statuses; identity foreclosure, identity moratorium, and identity achievement. During early childhood, she was an obedient daughter who blindly follows her parents' orders and instructions. She was intimidated and guided by punishment for her conduct; wrong behaviors brought her punishment and she, therefore, sought to always do what was right. As soon as she was granted some freedom by her parents and there was room for her to be in control; she turned into a self-aware individual who actively considers possibilities pertinent to her life decisions. Consequently, Jade Snow bounces between identity moratorium and identity achievement status. Just like Efuru, Jade Snow is undergoing either high crisis and low commitment or high crisis and commitment.

When she was indecisive about whether to go to university or private college, "she wrote to her junior college sociology teacher to ask his opinion. For days she received no reply. Knowing that she must not delay longer in answering the dean, still in a paralysis of indecision, she sought Joe" (Wong, 1950, p. 152). She called him and explained herself:

> Oh, Joe, I have to talk to you! All I ask is one evening. (…) I don't want to be a pest. But you know more than anyone else how long I have wanted to go to the university. Now suddenly there is another alternative and I want your advice." (p. 152)

After meeting and discussing, Joe's suggestion came reasonable enough for Jade Snow to take. She made up her mind to try the private women's college for a year and see what it becomes of it.

4.2.4. A Postcolonial Perspective of the Novels

Nevertheless, from a postcolonial point of view, Efuru's identity was not directly affected by the colonizer. The colonizer's influence and control are alluded to in several instances throughout the novel. Omirima reproves Amede's allowance to Ogea to go fish on Irie day, she tells her:

> I saw three girls - all school girls, on Orie day, going to fish (…) I took a cane and chased them. (…) As I was returning from the market in the evening, I saw them returning from their fishing. That's what they learn in school - to disobey their elders. (Nwapa, 1966, p. 247)

She says that such violations and disrespect to their costumes are the reason behind their recent misfortunes.

When Ajanupu passed by Efuru's by night, Ogea was sweeping the floor. Ajanupu scolded her saying "(…) Don't you know you are sweeping out the wealth in this house? You don't seem to know anything about our customs, and yet you did not go to school. Only school children are ignorant of our customs and traditions" (p. 269). Education is represented as a destroyer of Igbo people's culture. Even when it came to dancing parties; "the Church frowned at such associations. The Church regarded it as pagan to continue dancing with your age group when you were in school. When your parents sent you to school, you automatically became a Christian" (p. 103). Nonetheless, "some non-Christian parents in other lands specially requested the school authorities not to teach their children the articles of the faith and the Bible" (p. 103). Schooling, Christianity, and some other deterring practices of British

occupation have certainly touched Igbo people, however, their rejection, resistance, and awareness of white men's domination and influence are also clearly shown in the work.

However that is not the case for Jade Snow, as a result of being in a contact zone with the foreign culture, she compares and contrasts her own upbringing to the foreigner's manners; at that point, she starts being uncertain and unstable and therefore questions the principles which she has long taken for granted. Jade Snow's complex affair makes her feel perplexed and sometimes lost; she falls into a state of hybridity where she eventually and inevitably gets influenced by the foreigner's language and culture. In this case, Jade Snow is in a double-consciousness state where she is in search of an identity to form one. Eventually, she grew up to have an in-between identity; one which is neither Chinese nor American but a combination of both.

Jade Snow was exposed to Western literature as she regularly read books for joy and escape; "(…) she delighted in the adventures of the Oz books, the Little Colonel, Yankee Girl, and Western cowboys, for in these books there was absolutely nothing resembling her own life" (Wong, 1950, p. 69). She remembered her foreign teacher's consolation at school when her mother was crying, "she tried to comfort Mama. Remembering the action of her teacher when she had been hurt in the schoolyard so long ago, she awkwardly put her arm around Mama's bowed shoulders and timidly patted her" (pp. 80-81). Such closeness is foreign to both of them, however, that is how Jade Snow saw to console sad Mama; in the foreigner's way. By the age of college, her thinking was no longer the same as it was tremendously revolutionized by what she has learned. The college developed her critical thinking and analyzing skills, and it polished her personality. Jade Snow successfully negotiated the two conflicting identities and established her own identity.

Postcolonial literature came to liberate minds and reconstruct the tarnished vision of colonized people. About the decolonization of the mind, Ngũgĩ believed that previously colonized people should not use their colonizer's language but rather their mother tongue because language and thought are strongly related. On the contrary, many postcolonial authors prefer to use the language of their occupiers to have a better chance to spread their literary production by reaching a wider range of readers including their ex-occupiers. Besides, Chinua Achebe noted that the language used by the colonized is an adapted version of the foreigner's language; and that is a way to distinguish themselves. The Nigerian Nwapa on the one hand uses Nigerian English; the latter is an accommodated hybrid form of Standard English.

When reading Efuru, one cannot ignore the distinct language use; the work is loaded with vocabulary borrowed from Nigerian, especially diction which is rooted in the Nigerian culture and has no equivalent in English such as the Nigerian weekly naming system, salutation names, and greeting expressions, in addition to some interjections that are particular to their language. The work is also rich with the different cultural practices and beliefs that represent the Nigerian identity. Wong writes in English too; the difference between her and Nwapa is that she is an immigrant whose family was displaced from their motherland, while Nwapa's motherland has been invaded by the British states. The language in which *Fifth Chinese Daughter* is written is purely English; nonetheless, it explicitly manifests all cultural aspects that the Chinese have transported with them from mother China, including food, manners, education, different customs, and celebrations. Jade Snow's primary purpose behind writing her autobiography was to make her mother's culture understandable to Americans. English served as an effective means for both authors to assure that their works reaches a wide range of audience; eventually, the novels indeed spread worldwide and were translated into several languages.

Linking the two literary works to postcolonial theory and criticism, both of them depict the ideology of domination. According to Boehmer's (2005) identification of postcolonial literature, *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* fall within the category of postcolonial literary canon as the first is written by a woman, whereas the second is written by a non-indigenous woman author. What women and non-indigenous share with colonized people is that they are all marginalized, underestimated, and unwanted. This makes the literature produced by these people have aspects in common; they all aim to write back against the discriminating institution and to construct their own image.

When taking a closer look, we find that the image of the Orient or the East is formed by the West, and the image of women is constructed by men. These stereotypes govern people's dealings and perceptions of one another in a way that deprives the inferior side of having equal chances in representing themselves as who they are. However, that image is an inaccurate one because it has no true strong evidence or basis. Women in Efuru's society are considered of less value than men; men took the role of defining women's role and position in society as they positioned themselves in the center while degraded women to be in the margin.

In American society, Jade Snow's picture is predetermined by both American society and men as well. In their minds, it is instilled that the non-Western population is inferior and thus deserves dehumanizing treatment. Based on a dichotomy of positive vs. negative description, they have built a superior vs. inferior dichotomy, one upon which a whole society's system stands. For instance: "Everyone in the Wong family made much over the male child born into their family in fifteen years, but Grandmother, Daddy, and Mother especially doted on Forgiveness from Heaven" (p. 28). The fuss made upon the birth of the second male member of the Wong family tells a lot about gender bias in the Wong family and the Chinese community as well. Briefly, the colonizer-colonized relationship is plainly

manifested in a patriarchal society's view towards women, as it also dominates the connection between minorities and the larger societies of which they are a part.

4.2.5. A Feministic Reading of the Novels

For the previously tackled issues, feminism has come to make things right because women have not been taken seriously and were deprived of their rights as humans. Among common points between the two novels is their attempt to be gynocentric, they attempt to define the female experience, expose patriarchy, and raise awareness among women so as spare them from being the other. *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* give a detailed account of life from their protagonists' vantage points. The first novel portrays the life of a Nigerian female in Igbo society, and the second novel reports the life of a Chinese female in an American foreign society. Protagonists' inner thoughts, beliefs, views, and perceptions of themselves and their society are put in relief. The authors deliberately expose how patriarchal practices stand in women's way to improve themselves and degrade them. Eventually, tracking Efuru and Jade Snow's path towards self-regulation and self-realization only spreads awareness and proves how possible it is to form or find one's identity.

A woman falls into an identity crisis when she is denigrated and treated unequally. In a society dominated by men, fulfilling herself becomes a difficult task since her role and identity is described and prescribed in advance. Social norms in Efuru dictate to women that their primary and ultimate purpose is to be a wife and a mother. Consequently, any sample which falls out of this model will be rejected. An old made or a barren childless woman is definitely rejected by the community; a status which puts women in an endless quest for a full human identity. To improve their situation, women need to seek economic, social, and psychological independence; they need to be self-reliant and self-gratifying. It is only then that they gain liberty from dependence on men.

According to Igbo people, an unproductive woman such as Efuru is incomplete; she is not a 'woman' since she does not serve the purpose she was intended for. However, Nwapa shows how eventually Efuru can be complete on her own, without children or a husband. In a certain period, Efuru starts dreaming of the woman of the laket –the godess Uhamiri. The dibia describes her saying that she is "(…) a great woman. She is our goddess and above all she is very kind to women" (Nwapa, 1966, p. 192). And as a confirmation of what he says, Efuru tells him:

> 'What I have noticed so far each time I dreamt about the woman of the lake was that in the mornings when I went to the market I sold all the things I took to the market. Debtors came of their own accord to pay their debts.' (p. 183).

Her father and the dibia interpret her dreams as an invitation to worship from Uhamiri.

Efuru becomes a worshiper of Uhamiri later on; one night she was thinking about Uhamiri and her riches, jewelry, and all the valuable things she has "Then suddenly it struck her that since she started to worship Uhamiri, she had never seen babies in her abode. 'Can she give me children?'(…) 'She cannot give me children, because she has not got children herself'" (p. 207). The subject of children has always been on Efuru's mind; it has always been an issue and a valuable thing for her to have children. But when she reaches this conclusion, Efuru realizes that she cannot have children. When she deduces this conclusion, she realizes that she "was growing logical in her reasoning. She thought it unusual for women to be logical. Usually intuition did their reasoning for them" (p. 208). By denoting Efuru's reasoning, Nwapa is refuting men's supremacy in being logical and reasonable. She is alluding to women's equal capabilities to men.

In the final scene of the novel, Efuru sleeps peacefully and dreams of Uhamiri,

> her beauty, her long hair, and her riches. She had lived for ages at the bottom of the lake. (…) She was happy, she was wealthy. She was beautiful. She gave women beauty and wealth but she had no child. She had never experienced the joy of motherhood. (p. 281)

Nwapa alludes to the importance of motherhood and still alludes to the wholeness of women if they do not experience mothering. Efuru is likened to Uhamiri as they both have everything but children, and this means that they are both whole and complete as they are. Nwapa once more exposes the paradox existing in society; she closes with a rhetorical question; "Why then did the women worship her?" (p. 281). She ironically addresses the contradiction between what her society requires from her as a woman and what her society does. In other words, her community refuses unproductiveness; still, they worship and cherish an unproductive godess. Nwapa criticizes patriarchal stereotypes and foregrounds women's value, completeness, and ability to self-fulfill.

Similarly, from cover to cover, any aspect can be a medium for the author to send a message or communicate an idea. Jade Snow Wong's order in her family is something that is significant in her mother's culture and which she made use of. The corpus is an autobiography and the author's choice of title is apparently not random or haphazard. A connection can be found between the title and the protagonist's character; the Number five is regarded as a good number in Chinese culture. It also refers to the Chinese Five Elements; Gold, Wood, Water, Fire, and Earth which are considered the basic elements of everything in the world. "People with the lucky number 5 usually tend to pursue freedom. They do not like to be bounded by their surroundings or other people. (…) their hedonism helps them to freely control their lives by themselves" (para. 1, Travel China Guide). Jade Snow is captured as a self-fulfilling character with a free soul and a distinct member of her family; a female who could dismantle patriarchy and defy stereotypes and prove herself worthy and equal in spite of all obstacles.

Wong, although raised according to Confucian philosophy and teachings, could develop her own independent worldview and could eventually establish a sense of self. Following traditional Chinese conception, gender is defined by socio-moral roles where each gender executes the role assigned to them; traditional Chinese discourse grants little attention to the gender identity concept as it prioritizes social and familial roles in defining one's identity. Confucianism defines males and females by the principle of roles only and places women beneath the man in a subordinate position despite their interdependence (Tam & Yip, 2010).

Mr. Wong introduces his wife as his inferior woman; "Yes, Uncle Bing; have you met my inferior woman?". Mama nodded, smiling ever so slightly, and remained absolutely silent" (Wong, 1950, p. 49). Mr. Wong is the center of authority at home, and Mrs. Wong is rather a periphery. She would always refer to him when it comes to decisions and permission; the unity and solidarity of the family is very obvious from the outside however, the husband's supremacy seems to create a little friction in their relationship and causes Jade Snow's mother negative feelings. In an instance of expressing her feelings of fear and grief, her mother tells her:

> I have told your father repeatedly not to run around giving his best to community organizations, at the expense of his own business and personal health. (…) Then he tries to take a one-man stand (…) and works himself into a frenzy of ill-temper when his stand finds no sympathy. (Wong, 1950, p. 80).

She extends by saying; ""And then who suffers? Not only himself, but I and his family!" In Mama's bitter complaint, she abruptly revealed to Jade Snow that the united front, a composite of Daddy and Mama, might not in privacy be so united as it had always appeared." (p. 80). Obviously, a relationship with unequal sides might engender certain issues at a certain

point. The nature of Jade Snow's parents' relationship puts some pressure on her mother as she feels secondary and marginalized.

One of first-wave feminism's demands was female education. The latter had a major space in the *fifth Chinese Daughter* as the author shows and emphasises its role and importance in polishing her personality and forming her identity. At an early age, her father instilled in her mind how important education is for her; as an individual and as a future mother. Later on in her life, " (…) Jade Snow agreed with Daddy that education was the path to freedom. Forgotten was her early ambition to be a stenographer" (Wong, 1950, p. 108). The idea grew with her and she believed that education is her salvation to assure a future career and therefore attain her goal of proving herself to her family and society. Wong successfully captures how a female can as well pursue her dreams and find her identity. She portrays Jade Snow with a myriad of positive good qualities; an image which is contrastive to the one advanced by patriarchy. When Wong highlights Jade Snow's success against all odds, she is but providing an attestation for women's achieving capacities and strong will and determination even through difficult conditions that men themselves might not face throughout their way.

As a movement, mainstream feminism has been criticized for not being able to take into consideration the sufferance of the different types of women; as women's living conditions vary. Efuru or Jade Snow's lives do not resemble the lives of those who mainstream feminism came to defend. Efuru lives in a tribal society undergoing imperialism and suffering from hunger. The following conversation reveals how hunger is a concern for most Igbo people: "'Yes, Omeifeaku. And how is everybody in your home?'. 'They are well, and yours?'. 'We are well. It is only hunger troubling us'" (Nwapa, 1966, p. 8). In another instance, Efuru replies to Nwosu and his wife saying: "'We are well,' (…) 'It is only

hunger.'" (p. 42). Such statements are reiterated throughout the novel and that gives an idea about the lifestyle, priorities, and troubles of Igbo society.

Polygamy and circumcision are also two aspects of the work that cannot be disregarded. During the period in which Adizua neglected Efuru, she knew that a woman is the cause behind her husband's indifference. In her mind, she says: "(…) How long will he continue behaving in this way? And how long will I continue to tolerate him? There is a limit to human endurance. I am a human being. I am not a piece of wood. Perhaps he wants to marry this woman. What is wrong in his marrying a second wife" (p. 62). The situation becomes unbearable to Efuru and Adizua's indifference is unjustifiable to her. From a centrifugal perspective, a husband's pursuit of another woman deeply hurts his wife's feelings. However, due to women's diminution which patriarchy internalized, she tries to convince herself that she can accept the idea of sharing her husband with another woman. She resumes:

> 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. (pp. 62-63)

Again, from a centrifugal perspective, regarding who Efuru is and her history with Adizua, Adizua's decision of remarrying is quite unfair towards a wife such as Efuru. Besides, looking at his deeds, Adizua could not be a good husband for one wife, let alone become a husband with two wives.

Circumcision, on the other hand, is practice that Igbo people perform shortly after the woman's marriage a ritual which they refer to as 'having a bath'. They believe that it is obligatory for several reasons; Adizua's mother tells Efuru:

> ‘A young woman must have her bath before she has a baby.’. ‘I am not pregnant yet, mother.’. ‘I know, my daughter (…) I want you to have your bath before there is a baby. It is better that way. It is safer really.’(p. 6)

Igbo people refer to the whole; when the woman doing the circumcision came, she tells Efuru and her mother-in-law the story of a woman who did not have her bath before the child’s birth. She says that Nwakaego’s daughter “ (…) did not have her bath before she had that baby who died after that dreadful flood.’ ‘God forbid. Why?’. ‘Fear. She was afraid. Foolish girl. She had a foolish mother, their folly cost them a son, a good son.’” (p. 10). Even the dibia confirmed to them that the baby died because his mother did not have her bath.

“Efuru screamed and screamed. It was so painful. Her mother-in-law consoled her. ‘It will soon be over, my daughter don’t cry’” (p. 10). Women are obliged to undergo great pain and fear in circumcision. When Ajanupu came to visit Efuru, she asked her: “Is it very painful?’. ‘It is much better now. It was dreadful the first day.’. ‘Gbonu, my daughter. It is what every woman undergoes. So don’t worry’” (p. 12). Executing such a practice at such an age is certainly traumatic and risky in so many ways. And since readers cannot separate themselves from the work they read; as an Algerian Muslim female reader, ‘I’ could but sympathize with Efuru for all that she endures.

Moving to the case of Jade Snow, the latter does not struggle to dismantle patriarchy only, but imperialism as well; she does not endure direct imperialism of course but its consequences. During her job as a secretary, her work was limited to answering calls and maintaining files; “She was no longer contributing anything special. She now saw that as a secretary she could not always do the work she wanted. Neither could she hope for advancement except as secretary to a more and more important person” (Wong, 1950, p. 234).

Jade Snow found herself deviating from her social service and self-improvement projects, which made her consult her boss about the situation. He answered her frankly:

> "Don't you know by now that as long as you are a woman, you can't compete for an equal salary in a man's world? If I were running a business, of course, I would favor a man over a woman for most jobs. (p. 234)

Her boss summarizes for her the whole economical system, he once more confirms to her the position that patriarchy has granted her.

He further explains:

> You're always taking a chance that a woman might marry or have a baby. That's just a biological fact of life. But you know that all things being equal, a man will stay with you, and you won't lose your investment in his training. (p. 284)

Her boss adds that being smart is not sufficient to grant her equality with men at work; from an economical point of view, and by dint of biological facts, men's responsibility, and social position, men have priority and preference over women to have an opportunity of a suitable job and a good salary. Not only that but, she was also exposed to rejection for being Chinese; when she sought advice from the placement office, the interviewer advised her to approach Chinese firms only, he elaborated: "After all, I am sure you are conscious that racial prejudice on the Pacific Coast will be a great handicap to you" (p. 188). Jade Snow's situation is more complex, she is doubly oppressed as she faces racism and sexism. In this case, third-wave feminism is the one that speaks for Jade Snow's concerns as a woman and an immigrant at the same time.

4.2.6. Womanism

Womanism on the other hand came as a special version of feminism as a result of black women's special conditions. Because feminism was Eurocentric, there had to be an Afrocentric humanist non-separatist womanism. The latter springs from black culture, it stands for having certain attributes such as being mature, responsible, loving, and distinct. In what follows, we shall examine the qualities which Efuru possesses in relation to the definition of the word womanist. Efuru is depicted as a mature committed character who acts reasonably and takes responsibility for her own actions. when she agreed to marry Adizua and help him pay the dowry, she simply committed herself to that decision and made sure that they –together- raise the needed money for it. Additionally, Efuru is represented as a good trader who makes profits which assures her financial independence, autonomy, and self-confidence. She is distinct for being courageous and self-reliant in taking her own life decisions and seeking self-regulation.

Similarly, she is seen as a good wife who prioritizes her family's stability and continuity. She does her best to know the matter behind Adizua's attitude and thinks about how to win him back. She even went to her mother–in–law and told her: "'My husband is not happy with me,' she continued. 'I don't know what is wrong. He comes home very late and won't eat my food. I don't know what to do'" (Nwapa, 1966, p. 59). Efuru was ready to do whatever to have her husband and family back, even if that meant getting him a second wife. She was too patient, even when Adizua left for Ndoni, and did not respond when he was told about his daughter's death, she remained in his house and waited for his return for a considerable period. Ajanupu blamed her sister for Adizua's act saying:

> ‘Now, your son, instead of settling down with Efuru and working hard to rebuild the family which your husband left in such a mess, did exactly what his father did - this time your son ran away with a woman who had left her husband. (p. 97)

Efuru tried to do what Adizua failed to, she toiled to keep her family going, however, it was not possible since her husband was foolish and reckless enough not to come back.

Moreover, Efuru is not a self-centered individual, she is an agreeable loving, and kind person who cares about others. Nwosu and his wife came to her when they were in need, and they pleaded with her:

> ‘(…) if you take my daughter Ogea and give us ten pounds, I shall forever be grateful to you. We shall pay you at the end of the year, either in yams or money, (…). This life is so miserable, one wishes to die and go and rest with one’s ancestors.’ (p. 44)

Efuru agreed to lend them money and keep the ten-year-old Ogea with her until the end of harvest. Efuru takes the initiative in helping others and supporting them as she is compassionate and actively involved with her community’s concerns.

A womanist is also someone who loves and appreciates black culture. Efuru seems to appreciate her blackness, she takes part in parties and social gatherings; “It was after the festival in which young men and young women looked for wives and husbands that Efuru first met Adizua. Adizua asked her to marry him and she agreed.” (p. 1). She also attends festivals with other women; “The Owu festival came at last and Efuru enjoyed it very much. She went out with other women and as they were watching the Owu dancing” (p. 27). She tells Ajanupu: “‘(…) last years was wonderful. I enjoyed every bit of it.’” (p. 27). Social gatherings and festivities are a part of Igbo people’s cultural identity where they socialize and spend a good time. The author sends a message that she appreciates such festivals; Ajanupu says: “‘When I was a young woman,’ (…) ‘Owu festival really used to be Owu festival. None

of us young girls cooked for our mothers. We dressed gorgeously and watched the dancers till the end of the day.'" (p. 27). In another instance,

> (…) her mates came for her. They told her that one of their age-group was performing the ceremony of the second burial of her father and so they must go and dance with her. Efuru went with them. They danced all day. (p. 30).

She maintains a good connection with her community and does not miss social celebrations or gatherings with her age group.

Additionally, womanism views black women as essentially distinct and valuable and cherishes their role in society. It also values motherhood as a part of a woman's identity. Efuru longs to become a mother and when she had Ogonim, she was very delighted. After delivering the baby, She:

> lays there thinking of it all. 'Is this happening to me or someone I know? Is that baby mine or somebody else's? Is it really true that I have had a baby, that I am a woman after all? Perhaps I am dreaming. I shall soon wake up and discover that it is not real. (p. 33)

Efuru was so happy with the baby that she could not believe it finally came. Efuru, later on, took good care of Ogonim and did her best to be a good mother and made a balance between her daughter and her trade.

Womanism's starting point is black culture and spirituality; the latter is present in *Efuru* and is manifested in her spiritual beliefs. Most Igbo people are pagan and only a few of them are Christian. Efuru tells her father about her recurrent dream:

> ‘I dream several nights of the lake and the woman of the lake. Two nights ago, the dream was very vivid. I was swimming in the lake when a fish raised its head and asked me to follow it. Foolishly I swam out to follow it. (p. 182)

She tells him the whole dream and when she finished, “The old man laughed softly. ‘Your dream is good. The woman of the lake, our Uhamiri, has chosen you to be one of her worshippers. You have to see a dibia first and he will tell you what to do.’” (p. 183). The dibia confirms saying: “‘(…) Nwashike Ogene, your daughter is a great woman. The goddess of the lake has chosen her to be one of her worshippers. It is a great honour. She is going to protect you and shower riches on you” (p. 109). He, later on, gives her instructions to follow as an Uhamiri worshiper, and Efuru respects those laws.

In short, Womanism’s philosophy focuses on the complementary relationship between man and woman and on the survival of the whole including both genders and all races. It seeks to settle matters peacefully and calls for self-love. It does all the previous while taking into consideration the pride and distinctiveness of black culture and black women.

4.3. Conclusion

The current chapter endeavored to highlight the similarities and differences between the *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* by taking into account the concepts and theoretical elements which we have earlier introduced. The comparison aimed to show similarities and differences between both authors’ portrayal of their female protagonists’ identity formation and self-realization through their works.

General Conclusion

As an Oppressive regime, patriarchy has certainly affected women's position, self-esteem, and self-perception; a situation which organized society in a hierarchical order where women are the subordinate marginalized minority. Such relegation constituted a solid motive for stigmatized women to quest for establishing a sense of self and identity for themselves. As a means to bespeak their concerns, spread awareness, and defy patriarchy as well, women's quest for identity has been a widely approached topic in literature. However, establishing one's identity is a complex process that has many dimensions.

Identity formation issues are among the main themes discussed in postcolonial literature. Nwapa's *Efuru* and Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter* are instances of literary works exhibiting the journey of a female's quest for identity. Psychologically speaking, one's psyche is the center of command for one's decisions, actions, and behavior. Prior to reaching an identity, one goes through a set of intricate processes. Ergo, as readers and researchers, inquiries were raised in our minds about how a female's identity is formed in two different settings and literature.

The main aim of this study was to explore and compare the psychological representation of the female self-identity in African and American Chinese literature by taking *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* as cases in point. The theme of female identity is extensively explored aspect in *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, nevertheless, it has not been approached from the perspective of self-awareness theory, Maslow's self-realization model, or Marcia's four identity statuses theory. The amount of novelty and significance of our research lies in the choice of approaches in addition to its multidisciplinarity, both of which bring about a stronger account for the notion under scrutiny.

From a pentrifugal perspective, Nwapa and Wong are prejudiced and stereotyped as inferior, secondary, dispensable, and replaceable, as a juxtaposition to all opposite positive

adjectives associated with men. As a consequence of the status granted to them, and from a centrifugal perspective, women undergo an identity crisis where they question the dominating system and therefore seek to break free from the patriarchal dichotomy. To form a female self-identity, women need to be self-aware first; their identity crisis is not necessarily a dead end but can rather be a phase that paves the way for an identity establishment; they can move from an identity moratorium into an identity achievement status. Put differently, as objects, Women's identity is constructed by society's perception; however, as subjects, women can use their position and actively change their perception and subsequently establish an identity.

Nwapa and Wong tackled the issue of female identity as a reaction to the patriarchal order of their societies. Feminism in particular and postcolonial writing in general have existed to resist and write back against oppressive discriminating regimes. The authors' impulse was to rectify their tarnished image which was predetermined by the misogynist masculine society; they wrote to expose patriarchal methods by spreading awareness and suggesting ways to overcome segregation.

Nwapa and Wong demonstrate how self-awareness is paramount and preliminary in self-regulation; any self-development or self-improvement project starts with the individual's awareness and perception of herself and her environment. The sub-processes following awareness lead straight to self-regulation provided that the person moves through the positive sub-processes instead of the negative ones. Human beings -including women- have a drive for self-growth and self-realization.

In the third chapter, we have attempted to make use of the concepts and theories accounted for in earlier chapters to provide different readings of the corpora under study. *Efuru* and *Fifth Chinese Daughter* are two postcolonial literary works that were authored to rebel against the ever-existing patriarchal rules that have long governed societies. The reading

of the texts has revealed that the man/woman dichotomy has created a vertical arrangement that situates men on top while women are denigrated down below. To counteract marginalization, women made use of literature to reconstruct their image on their own, a factual realistic depiction that spares them from being the other and moves them from the margin.

In their writing, Nwapa and Wong aim to account for their dilemma and struggle and demonstrate potential pathways to freedom. They illustrate how possible it is to realize one's goal of gaining one's freedom and improving one's status. The identity system operates as a control system for Efuru and Jade Snow's behavior. Their self-awareness enables them to set standards that can always get them one step closer to their liberty. Constant adjustment of behavior helps them eventually form an identity. Self-realization theory is only another demonstration of self-growth motion the same way Efuru and Jade Snow ascended the hierarchy of needs till ultimately arriving at self-realization.

Moreover, *Efuru* and *Jade Snow* underwent many forms of oppression as a result of their gender; Jade Snow faces even racial discrimination because of her racial difference. Efuru and Jade Snow's identities and personalities are the patchwork of several internal and external factors; factors which have built distinct aware active non-submissive individuals. A postcolonial context can be a reason for an identity crisis; where individuals suffer dangling unstable homeless identities. Unlike *Efuru, Jade Snow* was more exposed to foreign culture; however, she could successfully and skillfully build a strong identity by negotiating and maintaining ties to both conflicting cultures and identities.

Whichever circumstances, both protagonists could overcome the crisis and build identity by moving from moratorium identity status into achievement status; they move from

actively exploring options to reaching decisions. However, in her early years, Jade Snow was experiencing an identity moratorium as a result of her parents' guidance.

Taking into account each protagonist's milieu and each author's background, womanism is the philosophical and ideological framework suitable for *Efuru* because womanism is African women's feminism. On the other hand, first-wave and third-wave feminism are the ones compatible with *Fifth Chinese Daughter* since it is an autobiography of an American Chinese who undergoes discrimination due to her gender and race as well.

Women's identity is constructed by their position in society. However, the position is a matter of perception only; as soon as Efuru and Jade Snow started seeing facts differently they could actively change their perception of themselves and towards facts, consequently, they could change their positions and establish their identities.

Further investigation and research can be conducted on Nwapa's *Efuru*. The latter can also be looked at through the lenses of sociolinguistics; the language used in *Efuru* can be the focus of a sociolinguistic investigation that takes into consideration the different linguistic phenomena displayed in this corpus. The author's linguistic choice of Nigerian English and the code-switching carry certain significance and serve certain purposes which unraveling would only add to the appreciation of the novel.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*

1.1. Author's Biography

Flora Nwapa (Florence Nwanzuruahu Nkiru Nwapa), was a Nigerian author, teacher, and women's rights activist, she is considered the mother of modern African literature, and the first African woman novelist to publish in the English language in Britain. Flora was born on January 1931 in Oguta, Nigeria. The daughter of an Igbo chief. Nwapa played a critical role in promoting African women's literature. Her first novel *Efuru* (1966), received international acknowledgement[i]. She went to University College Ibadan, where she earned a bachelor's degree in English language. She earned a Master's degree from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland[ii]. Flora had three children and was married to Chief Gogo Nwakuche. Flora was a womanist, (she doesn't consider herself a feminist). Nwapa's most famous works include *Efuru*, *Idu*, and *Never Again*, among others. Her works focused on the experience of African women in patriarchal societies[iii].

In addition to her writing, Nwapa was a champion for women's rights and worked to promote education and provide young girls and women with opportunities and empower them through various organizations. Her works are often set in her native Igbo culture, and she often writes from the perspective of female characters. Her first novel *Efuru* (1966), received an international acknowledgement, it tells the story of a young woman in Nigeria who defies traditional gender roles and expectations to pursue her dreams and desires. Nwapa was also a publisher; she founded the Tana Press, one of the few publishing companies in Nigeria at the time that focused on publishing works by Nigerian women.

Nwapa passed away in 1993, but her legacy lives on as a pioneering voice in African literature and as someone who made advancements for African women and a role model for future generations of African women writers and activists.

1.2. Characterization

Efuru, the heroine of the novel, is a beautiful woman, self-determined, independent, intelligent, kind, and ambitious, she is respectful of her people's traditions while also trying to break free from the limitations they impose on her. Efuru is admired by everyone in the village for the beauty and kindness that she bestows on them; she is also open-minded as she marries someone of her choice and does not allow room for others to deter her from following her heart's desire.

Nwashike Ogene, Efuru's father, is a strong wise man. Ogene is highly respected in his community mainly because he is deemed an excellent fisherman and the fact that he was courageous in his old days. He has a loving relationship with his daughter Efuru, whom he raised alone after her mother's death, and he allows her to return home after her husband leaves her.

Adizua is Efuru's first husband, a man she had met at a festival, they fell in love immediately and got married. Adizua does not amount to Efuru's social strata, he is poor and deemed a nobody, he is also lazy and careless, yet Efuru marries him nevertheless. Adizua treats Efuru with love and care, until one day he drastically changes, and decides to leave her for another woman.

Gilbert is Efuru's second husband, his pagan name is Enerberi. He is educated and seems supportive of Efuru's ambitions, yet one day he accuses her of adultery and they part ways because of that accusation.

Ogonim is Efuru's firstborn daughter, whom she loses at the age of two. While Ajanapu is Efuru's aunt-in-law, i.e., Adizua's aunt. She is a talkative strong woman, and she is close to Efuru and treats her like her daughter. Ogea is Efuru's maid, helps take care of Ogonim, and bonds with Efuru.

Nwabata is Ogea's mother, a poor woman who begs Efuru to have her daughter work for her as an assurance for paying back the ten pounds they lent from Efuru. Nwosu is Ogea's father; respects Efuru a lot and appreciates her, especially since she was in charge of his treatment when he was very ill.

Ossai; Adizua's mother and Efuru's mother–in–law, is quiet and reserved, and passive unlike her sister, Ajanupu. Amede is Gilbert's mother, she was welcoming of Efuru as her daughter-in-law and was always nice to her. Omirima is a woman who gossips a lot and is envious of Efuru. Dr. Difu is the village doctor who notices that Efuru is an intelligent woman and he befriends her. And Nona is the woman with an injured leg, whom Efuru helps by taking her to the doctor Difu.

3.3. Plot Summary

Efuru is a novel by Flora Nwapa, it tells the story of *Efuru*, a beautiful woman who lives in a small Igbo village in Nigeria. She is the daughter of Nwashike Ogene, a leader of his tribe. Efuru is liked by everyone in the village. However, she faces many challenges in life. She marries Adizua without following traditions, which upsets her people and is believed to disgrace them. Efuru supports her husband financially and is good to him, yet Adizua leaves Efuru without any prior notice. Efuru loses her daughter later on and Adizua never comes back.

Efuru goes back to her father's house, who is very welcoming of her return. After a while, Efuru meets Gilbert, an educated man, who asks for her hand and follows traditions in doing so, they live happily and in harmony at the beginning of their marriage. Later on, because she cannot bear children, she brings him a second wife. Gilbert gets imprisoned for four months in Onicha, and when he comes back Efuru forgives him when she knows that he did not go to jail because of theft. By the end, Efuru falls gravely sick, people thought she was going to die. She was accused of adultery, the reason why Gilbert asked her to confess to him

her sin to live. Efuru found the incident very humiliating that she leaves him and goes back to her father's house again and resumes her life.

After all, she went through, the protagonist comes to the self-realization, her worth is not measured by her ability to give birth or by having a husband, or by amounting to her community's expectations, on the contrary, she realizes that she is perfectly whole on her own, by just being herself, that is enough, and for the fact that Uhamiri has chosen her it already makes her feel special.

2.4. Corpus Summary

The story of *Efuru* takes place in an Igbo village and follows the life of Efuru, a beautiful and successful young woman who defies traditional gender roles and expectations. The novel explores themes like gender, tradition, and modernization. Efuru is married to Adizua, but their marriage ends when he leaves her for another woman. Efuru is devastated but continues to strive for success, eventually starting her own business and becoming a respected member of the community, She then meets Gilbert, a progressive and educated man who encourages her to pursue her dreams and ambitions. However, his true character is soon revealed and their marriage ends in tragedy. Throughout the novel, Nwapa provides a complex portrayal of Nigerian society. She critiques how traditional values and customs can be oppressive, While also recognizing the importance of cultural heritage and the need to find a balance between tradition and modernization.

Overall, *Efuru* is a powerful and important work that continues to resonate with readers today. Throughout her depiction of the protagonist and the other characters in the novel, Nwapa offers a powerful critique of patriarchy while also celebrating the strength and resilience of Nigerian women.

2.5. Themes

One of the central themes in *Efuru* is the exploration of gender roles and expectations. The novel challenges the traditional norms that restrict women's aspirations and inhibits their growth. The novel also depicts the cultural practices and traditions of the Igbo people and highlights how these customs affect the daily lives of individuals, and how they can both provide a sense of identity and community while also being oppressive and limiting.

The theme of marriage is also prevalent in *Efuru*, highlighting the challenges that come with finding and maintaining a healthy relationship in a society that places restrictions on women. Nwapa's novel delves into the idea of motherhood, highlighting the societal expectations placed on women to bear children. We also find the theme of economic hardships and the constant struggle for survival in a poverty-stricken society. The novel emphasizes the value of education and knowledge in empowering women and challenging patriarchal structures.

The impact of colonialism on the Igbo people, especially concerning the erosion of their cultural values and traditions discrimination, and she reflects on how this oppression affects her sense of self and her relationships with others. The book also tackles the theme of personal growth and transformation, Efuru's journey of self-discovery and growth is at the heart of the plot. The novel portrays the power of self-realization and self-confidence in shaping a person's destiny.

Efuru also explores the role of spirituality and religion in the lives of the characters. Nwapa portrays the diverse beliefs of the Igbo people, including traditional and Christian religions, and the ways they intersect and influence one another.

Appendix B
Jade Snow Wong's *Fifth Chinese Daughter*

2.1. Author's Biography

Jade Snow Wong was a pioneering American-Chinese ceramic artist and writer, Wong was born in San Francisco, California in 1922, she was the fifth daughter of a large Chinese family and was raised with the traditional beliefs and customs of Chinese culture[iv]. Wong went to Mills College and majored in economics and sociology and graduated with a Phi Betta Kapa key in 1942[v], While Wong is known for being an author, she also won major acclaim as a ceramic artist, displaying her works at museums like the New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art[vi].

She married fellow artist "Woodrow Ong" in 1950 and had four children[vii]. In that same year, Wong published her first autobiographical volume, *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, which portrays her chronicles as a young Chinese American woman in Chinatown, California, having trouble balancing being American and Chinese and the obstacles she faced on her way to becoming a recognized author. According to Wong the reason she wrote her memoir as she referred to it in her 1989 book introduction: "I wrote to create a better understanding of the Chinese culture on the part of Americans".

The novel is written in the third person which shows the difficulty the author had in expressing herself and is in a way showing the Chinese custom of humility[viii]. Jade grew up having a very strong father figure in her life. Challenging her father's authority was out of the question in all matters which made her spend her entire life trying to please him to no avail, her father took credit for all her successes while still belittling her as a woman incapable of amounting to anything, especially with the notion that females don't carry the family's name which makes them inferior to their male counterparts in the family.

Jade's first encounter with the Western culture was at school, where she discovered different ideology when it comes to the way American parents treated their children which made her question her father's upbringing, and for the first time in her life she rebelled against her parents' way of life and beliefs and her realization of being oppressed makes her want to express herself somehow so she pours it all in her writing and artistic works bringing masterpieces to life.

After becoming known and accepted by society and honoring her family's name, her father finally acknowledged her worth. Despite all the oppression Jade Snow Wong had undergone, that still didn't weaken her will, instead, it shaped her into the independent woman she became. Wong passed away in 2006, but her works remain to this day a landmark in the American -Chinese art and literature.

"It has a very high place as part of the historical record," says Leslie Bow, a professor of English and Asian American Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who wrote the introduction to the book's 2019 Classics of Asian American Literature Edition.

3.4. Characterization

Jade Snow Wong, the protagonist of *The Fifth Chinese Daughter*, is a complex character that deals with the challenges of growing up as a Chinese-American woman in the early 20th century. Wong is portrayed as an intelligent, determined, and independent woman, with a strong sense of self and a desire to achieve her goals despite the obstacles she faces, outspoken and headstrong and often gets in trouble for it, clashing with her parents for her different mindset. Wong's character is also shaped by her upbringing, which emphasizes the importance of education and hard work. Her parents instilled in her a strong sense of responsibility towards her family and community. Jade Snow has a strong desire to break free

from the traditional roles of a Chinese woman and pursue her destiny while amounting to her family's expectations.

Wong's father is another character that plays a significant role in *Fifth Chinese Daughter*, and he is portrayed as a traditional Chinese man with high expectations for his daughter's behavior and education. Wong's father is a successful businessman who values hard work, discipline, and education above all else. He is strict with his daughter but also deeply loving and supportive, providing her with the tools and resources she needs to achieve her goals. Wong's father is also shown to be deeply connected to his cultural heritage, and he instills a sense of pride in his daughter for their Chinese identity. Despite his traditional beliefs, Wong's father is also open-minded and progressive in some ways.

Wong's mother is depicted as a traditional Chinese woman who believes in the rigid roles of women in Chinese society, and has strict expectations for her daughter's behavior and values, often correcting her mistakes severely. However, she is also shown to be deeply loving and supportive of Wong in times of distress.

Wong has older siblings and a younger sister, she addresses the eldest sisters by Oldest Sister, Second Oldest Sister, Third Older Sister (who had passed away but kept her place in the family). And also there is Fourth Older Sister, who calls her brother Oldest Brother, she was not very close to them due to their age differences and the way it was in their Chinese household of addressing the siblings formally, never calling them by their name, yet their parents and older family members addressed them differently and more casually.

Wong was more in touch with her youngest sibling, Jade Precious Stone, who looked up to her and tried to learn from her. Later in her life, as a young adult, Jade Snow had a special relationship with her little brother Prosperity, who was this sweet endearing and,

quick-witted child, loved by all, to Wong, he was her child, he loved her so, and addressed her lovingly by Honey.

Jade Snow's grandmother was a kindred soul, she cared for her children as well as her grandchildren, shared her life wisdom with them, and was there for them to depend on. Another character in *Fifth Chinese Daughter* was Jade Snow's young brother Forgiveness From Heaven, who, with his arrival made her realize that he is more welcome in the family and is favored over Wong, Making her ponder on her worth and place in this world.

One of the characters that left a mark in Jade Snow's life was Dr. Reinhardt, the president at Mills College, who believed in the potential of Jade Snow and decided to give her a chance to pursue her education, the president was smart and affectionate women who cared for the wellbeing of Wong and encouraged her to follow her dreams.

Unkle Kwok was a worker at the factory that belongs to Wong's father, an awkward, unshaven man who went to the front porch at Wong's every day to be fed, which Jade Snow found peculiar and asked for clarification, only to find out that he is an old acquaintance of her father back in China, and that he is poor and in need of help. Another character was cousin Kee, who was a close relative to the Wongs, a cheerful, humorous, and generous man, who also taught Jade Snow a great deal of things.

Overall, the character analysis of Jade Snow Wong's "Fifth Chinese Daughter" provides insight into the complexities of cultural identity, gender roles, and family dynamics in the early 20th century.

2.3. Plot Summary

Fifth Chinese Daughter is a memoir by Jade Snow Wong, detailing her experiences growing up as a Chinese American in San Francisco during the early 20th century. The book follows the story of Jade Snow, the fifth daughter of a Chinese immigrant family. She is

raised in a traditional Chinese household but is also exposed to the American culture of the time. She struggles to find her place in both worlds and her own identity.

Despite her parents insisting that she becomes a ‘proper’ Chinese daughter, Jade Snow is determined to pursue her interests and dreams. The book explains Wong’s desire to be seen as a person, besides being a female. She wasn’t allowed to speak her mind, she was expected to obey her family members without questioning their judgment.

Even when Jade Snow excelled in school, she didn’t receive any praise, on the contrary, her parents refused to pay for her college education, although they paid for her oldest brother’s expenses, for that, Jade Snow had to work in several jobs to save money to go to college. While working for Americans, she discovered the different treatment the white parents gave their children, making her question her parents' judgments for the first time. While Wong struggled to earn her parents' respect, she was also discouraged by the racism and stereotyping in the white world yet, she refuses to give up.

In the final chapters, Jade Snow finally earned her parents' respect and made a name for herself, and started a business of handmade pottery in Chinatown, she reflected on her life as a Chinese American woman and the challenges she faced along the way.

3.5. Corpus Summary

Fifth Chinese Daughter by Jade Snow Wong is a captivating memoir that tells the story of a young Chinese –American girl growing up in San Francisco’s Chinatown during the 1930s and 1940s. The book provides a detailed account of Wong’s childhood, adolescence, and early adulthood, covering topics such as her family life, education, and experiences as a Chinese-American woman in a predominantly white society.

In her memoir, Wong sheds light on the American experience, and the struggles that Chinese-Americans faced in a society that was not always accepting of their culture. One of

the key themes that Wong explores in this memoir is the struggle of Chinese-American women in a patriarchal society. Wong was expected to fulfill traditional gender roles in her family. However, she was also determined to get an education and pursue a career. Wong's father initially opposed her ambitions, but he eventually supported her dreams. Through her experiences, Wong highlights the challenges that Chinese-American women faced in trying to balance their cultural traditions with their desire for independence and self-fulfilment.

Wong's writing style is straightforward and engaging, and she provides vivid descriptions of her childhood memories. The descriptions of the customs and traditions of her community are fascinating. *Fifth Chinese Daughter* delves into the life of a Chinese-American woman who manages to find her voice and carve a place for herself in society.

2.5. Themes

The author struggles with the complexities of growing up as a Chinese-American, and she reflects on how her cultural identity shapes her experiences and relationships. The book also examines the traditional roles of women in Chinese culture, as well as the challenges faced by women to break free from these expectations. She describes her close-knit family and the dynamics that exist between her parents, siblings, and extended family members. She places great value on education, which she sees as a means of freeing herself from the limitations imposed by her gender and cultural background. Wong confronts the discrimination that she and other Chinese Americans face in their everyday lives, and she reflects on how this oppression affects her sense of self and her relationships with others.

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