

DIFFERENT CONSCIOUSNESS CREATED BY SOME NIGERIAN FEMALE WRITERS TO COMBAT GENDER DISCRIMINATION: AN OVERVIEW OF NWAPA, EMECHETA AND OKOYE

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Abstract

A sense of sanity prevailed in the pre-colonial Nigerian society as there were no conflicts over what roles that women played in the society along that of their male counterparts. The coming of the white man to the country changed the whole situation as the western education, religion and culture were absorbed by Nigerians and this affected their new outlook to life. The idea of freedom of women enshrined in such movement as feminism contradicted most of the earlier beliefs held by the traditional African societies of which Nigeria is part. Feminism in Nigerian context assumes a different face from what is obtainable in Europe and other Western countries. The cultural differences existing in Nigeria make it difficult, if not impossible for men and women to share equal rights and also be treated as equals in the social, political and economic spheres. No wonder a different term, 'womanism' is given to both African and Black-American women writing and that of their counterparts that engage in discourses on gender issues. This study is an overview of different consciousness created by some female Nigerian writers to combat and possibly discredit the traditional images created of them. It focuses on the writers' use of the novel as a means of women narrative discourses. Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta and Ifeoma Okoye have distinguished themselves as strong voices that discussed issues that bother on women and added new dimensions to these problems. The result is that the novel genre has projected women in different new faces of strong and successful characters, contrary to the negative traditional image and perception earlier built of them.

Introduction

Various definitions of 'feminism' indicate that the term stands for the ideas and movements that have sought and still seek to challenge and possibly change the roles that were considered as belonging to women in traditional societies, this radical view connotes the belief in the social, economic, and political equality of both male and female sexes. Although there is a general notion that the movement largely originated from Europe, feminism is said to have manifested worldwide and is represented by various institutions committed to activity on behalf of [women's rights](#) and interests. According to *Encyclopedia Britannica*

Throughout most of Western history, **women** were confined to the domestic sphere, while public life was reserved for men. In medieval Europe, women were denied the right to own property, to study, or to participate in public life. At the end of the 19th century in France, they were still compelled to cover their heads in public, and, in parts of Germany, a husband still had the right to sell his wife. Even as late as the early 20th century, women in the United States, as in Europe, could neither vote nor hold elective office. Women were prevented from conducting business without a male representative, be it father, brother, husband, legal agent, or even son. Married women could not exercise control over their own children without the permission of their husbands. Moreover, women had little or no access to education and were barred from most professions. In some parts of the world, such restrictions on women continue today. (Ultimate Reference)

History

Different scholars have traced various sources as the origin of the feminist movement. Biblically, the wife of Ahab, Jezebel is known to have exhibited a dominant trait that make scholars believe that she did not only champion this movement, but is studied theologically today as the spirit behind women's consciousness of their rights, rebellion and love of power, especially when intended to be exercised over men. Other women in the Bible include Deborah, Athaliah and Delilah. In the 3rd century BC, it was reported that Roman women filled the **Capitoline Hill** and blocked every entrance to the Forum when consul **Marcus Porcius Cato** resisted attempts to repeal laws limiting women's use of expensive goods. "If they are victorious now, what will they not attempt?" Cato cried. "As soon as they begin to be your equals, they will have become your superiors." (See Ultimate Reference)

Encyclopedia Britannica goes further to state that "for most of recorded history, only isolated voices spoke out against the inferior status of women, presaging the arguments to come. In late 14th- and early 15th-century France, the first feminist philosopher, **Christine de Pisan**, challenged prevailing attitudes toward women with a bold call for female education. Her mantle was taken up later in the century by Laura Cereta, a 15th-century Venetian woman who published *Epistolae familiares* (1488; "Personal Letters"; Eng. trans. *Collected Letters of a Renaissance Feminist*), a volume of letters dealing with a panoply of women's

complaints, from denial of education and marital oppression to the frivolity of women's attire." (Ultimate Reference)

The defense of women had become a literary subgenre by the end of the 16th century, when *Il merito delle donne* (1600; *The Worth of Women*), a feminist broadside by another Venetian author, Moderata Fonte, was published posthumously. Defenders of the status quo painted women as superficial and inherently immoral, while the emerging feminists produced long lists of women of courage and accomplishment and proclaimed that women would be the intellectual equals of men if they were given equal access to education.

Feminism in Nigeria

Feminism in Nigeria assumed a different face from what is obtainable in Europe and other Western countries. The cultural differences existing in Nigeria make it difficult, if not impossible, for men and women to share equal rights and also be treated as equal in the social, political and economic spheres. Before the advent of colonialism, Nigerian women were subservient, humble and good supporters of their husbands. Culture abhorred them from some social functions, religious rites and other traditional practices. It is obvious, for instance, that no Nigerian culture accepts a woman marrying a man, neither does the Igbo culture allow women to break cola nut before men or join masquerade cults. Some cultures are not dynamic and are intolerant of change. Due to the Nigerian cultural background, it is a taboo for women to do those things which culture forbids them to do. No wonder a different term, 'womanism' is given to both African and Black - American women and their counterparts all over the world in the field of literary expression. Pulitzer price winning author, Alice Walker, coined the word 'womanism' in her book, *In Search of Our Mother's Garden: Womanist Prose*. The term which stands for black feminism was used by Walker to describe the perspective and experiences of African and Black - American women and others who share the African descent.

While the feminist movement focuses on oppression based on sexism, womanism focuses on the black woman's experience of what the white men refer to as 'worse oppression' in the form of racism, sexism and classism. Ideally, womanism connotes a more orderly and polite term where women, especially blacks, are comfortable with their culture. Supportive of the male supremacy, a typical womanist is not ashamed of her gender role as a woman. She is

appreciative of the fact that her role in creation as a mother and female specie is very important. To the womanist, men should be men and exhibit their roles while they (women) complement them. Their writings suggest however, that they should not be unnecessarily marginalized or maltreated like animals. If men should go to school, then women should equally be allowed to go to school. Women should however, dress in their traditional attires that distinguish them as such, while men should dress in their own. Unfortunately, what is obtainable in Nigeria today is a situation where the western culture has seriously filtered into the Nigerian scene.

Education for most new generation Nigerian women means freedom to do what they want. It can be freedom to sexually exploit gullible men, oppress weak men, the unemployed, sexually perverse and fortune seekers. Other women who are not well educated use different mechanisms which they anchor on the concepts of fighting for human rights, fighting against gender inequality and religious extremism. The consequences of these actions, in the long run, are that sentiments and propaganda are whipped up by such women to subdue men. In most cases, women hide under the umbrella that men have so long oppressed them and that it is now their turn to pay back. They use this strategy to procure employment, rule over men in their matrimonial homes, and engage in free sex with men of their choice as well as get involved with other issues that help them achieve many other goals. This situation is creating a serious problem, especially in situations where some mature women easily engage in immoral sexual relationships with willing men. In some cases, there are situations where pregnancies occur which these single ladies proudly own up and then they give birth to children that have no fathers. Feminism seems to offer a liberty to women to do what they feel like doing without any moral restraint. These are observed in the selected texts for this study. The question is did Western education, religion and culture really bring the negative views of women against men? If that is the case, all that feminism is pointing to in the Nigerian culture is anarchy and rebellion. Womanism seems to be a more primitive form of feminism as it supports some aspects of traditional culture and religion.

Feminism and the Novel

Essentially, the traditional images of women focused on their domestic and sexual roles, the part that the individual women play in the society notwithstanding. The adverse effect of this fact in limiting women's notions of themselves is quite obvious. The foregoing gave birth to the awareness of women's movements in making conscious efforts to combat the cultural stereotypes experienced by them. New, alternative images were created by

women to comfort and possibly discredit the traditional images created of them, aiming to expand women's consciousness of themselves instead of narrowing it down to what the culture says or imposes on them. It is in this context that the novel became useful as an effective tool of creating awareness alongside other mass communication media. Most writers henceforth, used the novel form to wage war against the negative impressions created about women. Women writers have not totally accepted the psychological and social conditions imposed on them by their biological and socio-cultural factors but have used the novel to spell out new culture and behaviours for their fellows. Mojola in Otokunefor and Nwodo states that "despite the common characters identified, the female characters are not homogenous in their attitude to life" (21). She listed out the three main categories of these female characters discernible as:

1. **The purely traditional illiterate women** whose attitudes are informed by traditional culture and religion. These women abhor all forms of anti social behaviours like prostitution, single parenthood, adultery and patronage of gigolos.
2. **The intermediate category** which consists of educated women who were adolescents in their forties and fifties like the protagonists of Nwapa's *Women are Different*, Agnes, Dora and Rose, whose European names are a direct result of the impact of Western education and religion on the society. Influenced by the Christian moral values passed to them by their missionary teachers rather than their native Igbo culture, they frown at the corruption, immorality and extreme materialism of the seventies but **they engage in legally unsanctioned sexual relationships**. The portrayal of this side of their life underscores a social phenomenon: the biological need for sexual satisfaction of relatively young women who are separated or divorced from their husbands, or those like Rose who are professionally recognized and materially comfortable, but who are single.
3. **Women devoid of moral values**. These women epitomize some of the ills of a corrupt society, the Nigerian society, full of avarice, selfishness, corruption and self-degradation for financial gratification. (Mojola: 21-22)

Feminism has taken root and a serious shape in most European countries where literacy has existed for more than twenty centuries. Those societies have passed through various phases of development and cultural transformations. In Nigeria, literacy started fully from the point of the colonial contact of Nigerians with the English in the nineteenth century. Although the northern parts of the country

had encountered Islamic education and civilization as early as the thirteenth century, Nigeria became a protectorate of Britain and later a republic during the English colonial era. This cultural transformation process has continued for a few centuries with new ideologies, cultures and movements permeating the pattern of life of Nigerian citizens. Literature, unlike the other disciplines, has served as a bedrock through which people easily expressed their feelings. No wonder women find this medium an easier means of letting out their burdens. It serves as therapy as well as a medium of education and communication. The situation of things in Nigeria and in most of the serious novel genres that have developed have always had culture conflict as their major theme. Due to the cultural differences between Nigerians and their Western allies, the issue of feminism seems to have been more misconstrued than other issues of culture differences. Feminism as a concept on gender issues is therefore allied to the literary theme or story of culture differences. Due to its foreign nature to most Nigerians, the concept creates not only conflicts but openly indicates a serious problem of alienation between men and women, women and their fellow women, men versus their inner self and women versus their inner self.

The Nigerian Feminist Novelists

Flora Nwapa was the first Nigerian feminist novelist with the publication of her novel *Efuru* in 1966. Unlike the earlier image presented of the Igbo women as weak, passive and subordinate characters in the polity, *Efuru* is presented in Nwapa's novel as a strong and successful woman in her Igbo village of Oguta. Outside her youth and beauty, *Efuru* always seems to have bad luck with men as her husbands missed or disappeared in mysterious circumstances. Her popularity was such that the whole village knew *Efuru* as a "remarkable woman who did not only come from a distinguished family, but was distinguished herself" (Nwapa: 1). *Efuru* did not wait to be given to a man in marriage like the other Igbo women of her time but just eloped with her lover Adizua. This behaviour is queer and revolutionary as the Igbo culture where Nwapa comes from abhors women of easy virtue. In this context, it appears that *Efuru* is independent though the name "*Efuru*" in Igbo Language connotes loss (e.g. *efurum* meaning I am lost) and in the context of this novel, there is the loss of moral values, of culture and of self. Her husband's sudden disappearance after the couple have their first baby, with the rumours of his marriage to another woman does not restrict *Efuru* from equally engaging in another blissful marriage with another man, Eneberi, after the death of her baby born with the former lover, Adizua. *Efuru* never accepts defeat, even when the second husband disappears again and her father dies without any in-law's assistance in his burial.

Lonely, childless and single, Efuru puts her confidence in the ability of the goddess of the lake Utuoso to cover her and receive her worship. She however, becomes critical of this worship when she recalls that this goddess has no children and cannot even bring back those she (Efuru) has lost. A critical analysis of Efuru's boldness in marrying another husband when her first husband abandons her shows her measuring shoulders with her male counterparts. This shows that she is a rebellious woman or simply put, possessed by the water spirit, Utuoso. A woman in the traditional Igbo society will remain unmarried if her husband abandons her. She can only remarry when her bride price is returned to her father or foster parents. In the case of Efuru, it is not recorded that her bride prize is paid before she enters into marriage, so she is not married *ab initio* but is just co-habiting with different men. This act is a taboo in Igbo culture.

In the business world, Efuru, unlike her counterparts Nnuego in Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, is a very successful business woman. She is not only successful, but maintains her dignity in her village society where she finds herself. Efuru helps the sick and the poor. Her roles in the different marriage contracts entered into satisfy the expectations of female Nigerian writers. Chukwuma states that "the men because of their limited education secure only menial jobs as washer men, cooks, stewards, labourers and grass-cutters. The full effect of such jobs is to rid the men of their manhood, their inner strength and assertiveness (9). It is such weak men and failures in life that appeal to characters like Efuru. Men who she can use to vent her anger on the culture and society which places a superior role on her. The equivalent of this behaviour can be found in Miss Havisham in Charles John Hoffman Dickens novel *Great Expectations* who derives pleasure in hurting the feelings of young Pip because of her being jilted by Mr. Compeyson at the point of their wedding, exactly at noon time of their wedding day. From this perspective, it is obvious that feminism in the Nigerian context is a psychosomatic problem where some women with negative temperaments seem to carry out serious aggression against men through the medium of writing, for the offence which men do not know of nor contribute anything to. Since there is freedom of expression in human nature, such writings can be accepted especially as it satisfies the need and curiosities of most men and women who welcome change which is the only constancy in human society.

In her married life, Efuru asserts her rights as a woman, her love for the two husbands notwithstanding. Although she can only give birth to one child, Efuru is willing to bring in a second wife into her home to have more children for her

husbands. This custom is well accepted in her Igbo society but can equally be attributed to be punishment from the gods who gave her the beauty and wealth but shut her womb. In the traditional Igbo parlance, Efurū can be categorized under the group of women referred to as *Eze nwanyi*. This class of women, who are by tradition supernatural and mystical, is believed to have spirit husbands in the water kingdom. These spirit husbands are believed to give them wealth and have sex with them at odd hours, as well as with their spirit wives in the spirit world. No wonder they cannot exclusively be married in the physical world to one man. Efurū however keeps her dignity and leaves her husbands to go their ways when they abandon her, showing her strength to be independent and also take some care of herself. Efurū is successful, happy, and free from her oppressive and abusive first husband, Adizua, and from her equally disappointing second husband, Gilbert. Apart from her independence, Efurū clearly accepts her Igbo culture's traditional practices such as circumcision and polygamy, traditional beliefs and attitude towards married women and childlessness, thereby supporting the concept of womanism. Chukwuma in Opata and Ohaegbu states that:

Feminist writing in Africa has no such activist(sic) antecedents as it had in the western world where the women liberation movement fought for women's suffrage seen in marches, protests and women's rights political conventions. Nor does African feminism have a well articulated and written charter as "The Declaration of Sentiments" of the Seneca Falls Convention of July 19, 1848 in New York. (104)

Outside Nwapa's *Efurū*, some critics have tried to identify some loopholes in the definition of the audience and major theme of the writer. Mojola is of the view that "all the novels of Nwapa, except *Never Again* (which is the fictional version of the Nigerian Civil War portrayed from a 'Biafran' woman's viewpoint) have a similar plot pattern. This pattern has to do with the narration of life history of a central fictitious character (20). Her second novel, *Idu* published in 1970, like the former is not left out of this criticism. In an article, 'Who does Flora Nwapa write for?', Emenyonu, while citing a recent reviewer of Nwapa's *Idu*, re-states that "considering her performances in both *Efurū* and *Idu* one cannot help wondering what motivates Miss Nwapa beyond the elementary wish of everyone to be a writer" (28). *Idu*, like Nwapa's previous novel, exposes the culture and living manners of the Igbo society, especially "the fishing and farming residents of Oguta, who find occupation and pleasure in the Oguta lake, and to whom the 'fantasies' of the woman of the lake, are a reality" (Emenyonu: 29). The novel

projected the theme of barrenness in marriage which is a thing that very much bothers the Igbo society from which the author came. The problem of barrenness stigmatizes an Igbo woman as the people fear that the cause can be from her weak moral life before her marriage or a curse from God. Unlike Emecheta's heroine Nnuego in *The Joys of Motherhood* and John Munonye's Obi who portrayed the same theme, Idu is a courageous woman, highly successful in her business venture as a trader and is equally committed to her husband, not minding that she has no child after several years of marriage. Although the baby, Ijoma comes much later on a very extra ordinary day of an eclipse of the sun, no other issue comes afterwards. Her husband's later mysterious death after four years of the first child birth and the coming of a second girl child creates a disturbing milieu for Idu. The woman Idu, unlike Efuru, resolves to die along with her husband Adiewere. In her words; she feels cheated by her husband's death:

Weep for what? She asked, 'Weep for Adiewere? That is not what we agreed on. He has cheated me. We did not agree this would happen' We did not think of it. Why do you want me to weep?
I am going with him. Leave me alone. I am going with him
(210).

This action is eventually carried out. In the Igbo world view, this action can be interpreted as faithfulness and love for the late husband. Although the woman neither commits suicide nor falls sick before her death, her action of eating a nice meal one afternoon before lying down and dying the same afternoon is a mark of loyalty as well as the Nigerian concept of the supreme sacrifice. To the Igbo, this is a mark of deep love. As the pioneer female Nigerian writer, Nwapa is able to project a picture of original Igbo tradition where the woman who is loyal to her husband ceases to exist as soon as the husband dies. Today's Nigerian woman, in the views of feminist writers, will throw her feathers up and celebrate her luck and freedom from the deceased husband and apply the right to engage as many men as she loves in sexual relationships. This new culture is as a result of the new moral value introduced into the Nigerian scene by the English culture.

Another Nigerian female writer, Buchi Emecheta is also distinguished for her contributions to feminism and the novel in Nigeria. Born in Lagos in 1944 to Ibusa parents, Buchi got married at the age of sixteen to one Sylvester Onwordi after completing her career in Methodist Girls High School, Yaba. She was betrothed to her husband at the age of eleven and after their marriage, they gave birth to two children before her husband went to study in London where she

later joined him in 1962. Her ambition to study Library was shattered after giving birth to two other children in quick succession and she was being forced to give up her job as a Librarian and take care of the children. She engaged in writing while taking care of these children but she was not encouraged by her husband who refused to read her first manuscript entitled *The Bride Price* but burnt it instead. Buchi abandoned her marriage to Francis and absconded with her four children in anger, carrying her fifth pregnancy with her. She later began to write and has published thirteen novels and other works dealing on women's issues. She got her Honours degree in Sociology and Master of Philosophy in Social Education. Her PhD was finally completed in 1991.

Buchi's biography is necessary in understanding the works written by her as they are largely autobiographical. They reflect her unhappy marriage that ended in a divorce and her financial and emotional struggles as a single mother raising her five children. Her works are also more of expose on her anger and frustration at the patriarchal system and the abuse of women's rights in the society. Buchi Emecheta's views and approach to feminism equally qualify her as a feminist.

Second Class Citizen was published in 1975 as Buchi's first fully accomplished novel. It was set in post-colonial Nigeria and London, two settings of one colony. Adah the central character in the novel is the physical image of the author. Adah's birth to Ibuza parents residing in Lagos is disappointing as the people really expected a baby boy. This is a major problem in the Nigerian culture which the Nigerian female writers are fighting against. For obvious reasons, the Nigerian culture makes it expedient that a boy in the family continues the family lineage and name. Women married to other men automatically belong to another family. This is why Adah's father pays more attention to Boy, an action which breeds acrimony in the novel. Adah naturally feels that as a biological child in the family, the father should have shown equal love to her and her brother by sending her also to school. This expectation is right. A man should show equal sign of love to all his children. Nobody should feel marginalized in the family, the female child should be well accepted in the family at her tender years and then be psychologically prepared to face her calling as a woman who should get married and build her home. Even after marriage, she should still be accepted in the family with her full rights accorded her just as the male child. The new societal changes have made it possible for both male and female children, whether married or unmarried, to leave their parental home and rent or build their own homes while they remain visitors to their parents. The Igbo custom

does not however, permit a woman to partake in land sharing in her father's home town as her own heritage is in the husband's place. To prove the culture which places the subordinate role on a woman wrong, Adah has to work and sponsor the husband's trip abroad. She takes all the responsibilities at home and later joins the husband abroad. Her successes in England and winning of the court case against the husband are as a result of the different culture in which Adah finds herself.

The plot of the story reveals Adah's disappearance with her father's broken slate to Mr. Cole's class at Methodist school and the subsequent punishment of the mother over this incidence. The rest of the story follows this line of women marginalization and oppression which is very usual in the Igbo society from where the author originates. The only difference is that Adah stands against the odds and claims her rights, a fact which is made possible by the London environment in which the characters found themselves. It is this same conflict that Buchi Emecheta projects in her second novel, *The Joys of Motherhood* published in 1979. The conflicts faced by both Nnu Ego and Adah in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Second Class Citizen* respectively can be analysed under the different aspects of sexual, reproductive, domestic and productive roles. The fast changing nature of the Nigerian society and its dire consequence on women are clearly depicted in *The Joys of Motherhood* when Nnu Ego realizes that the introduction of education makes it necessary for children to take a longer time to grow up:

Still how was she to know that by the time her children grew up the values of her country, her people and her tribe would have changed so drastically, to the extent where a woman with many children could face a lonely old age, and maybe a miserable death all alone, just like a barren woman? (219)

In the traditional Igbo society, parents expected their children to send financial and material rewards to them, especially their teenage married daughters but in the post-independent Nigeria, it takes a long period of time for a child to complete his studies in schools, get married, procure employment, bear children, build a home, buy a car, pay his tax, tithe in the church, meet up with other societal demands, before taking care of their parents, whether old or young.

In *Behind the Clouds*, Ifeoma Okoye sets out to redeem the humiliating images of women in the African setting. Okoye makes an effort in presenting the Nigerian women as dignified and humane individuals capable of personal integrity and

economic independence. This novel is a modern approach to critical issues of women rights and biological abilities. It was conceived in paradox and ended in paradox as the author stipulates the following moral challenge:

It is not right to blame all cases of infertility and childlessness on the wife, and drown her in drugs and subject her to all kinds of psychological tortures, without also testing the man to ascertain his potency. (118)

Behind the Clouds tells a story of the wrong culture of blaming the woman of impotency whenever there is the case of childlessness in marriage. It projects the picture of Ije, the good natured wife, married to an architect, Dozie who Nnolim describes as “the loving and hard-working, successful architect” (31). Ije is regarded as a barren woman. Based on this, the husband spends so much money in curing Ije amidst serious anxiety from all quarters. In this circumstance, the man Dozie starts to flirt with another lady, Virginia and is confident that he has impregnated the girl when she eventually gets pregnant in the course of her friendship with him. He later realizes through the lampoons of Virginia that the pregnancy is not as a result of his sexual relationship with this flirt. This situation compels Dozie to travel abroad for a test of his potency. Realizing that he is the cause of barrenness in his home, he apologizes to his wife to forgive him for all the pains of medical treatment, tests and mental torture that she was subjected to. This leads to more exposures of issues in the novel, issues like the families where characters like the mother-in-law intensify the stress between husband and wife whenever there is the problem of barrenness in any marriage. The entire society is criticized as the false prophet and faith healer, Apostle Joseph, takes advantage of Beatrice, another woman with another marital problem of conception in the novel. The medical doctor is not also left out as he does not examine Ije’s husband for infertility at the time he is examining the woman for infertility.

The novel, *Behind the Clouds*, is an indictment and a serious challenge to the society in their attitude to childless women in the Nigerian cultures as this attitude might not be caused only by the women but also by men. It is obvious that a man contributes to the pregnancy of a woman but the Igbo society sees the failure of any pregnancy as that which comes from the woman. There is also the problem of sex of each baby delivered by an Igbo woman. A woman is expected to give birth not only to children but also males so as to guarantee her stay in a matrimonial home. She should not only procreate male but also work hard to provide for the family. Where she fails in these roles, the entire society abandons

her but if she succeeds, she will attract the attention of her children, spouse and all others.

Conclusion

A study of some feminist novels in Nigeria has shown that the new feminist novel deviates from the old forms of creating pictures of women that lived private lives. It focuses more on crediting women with more forms of experience than their personal or sexual entanglements. From the development of feminist world-view, women, many of whom are middle-class, work. What feminism has done in the Nigerian novel is to debunk the claim that women are only mere vessels of home keeping and sexual gratification. It explains that like their male counterparts, women work. When they do not work outside their homes, they devise other means of relating to the external world. Such means could be in writing, communication and even in business relationships as the modern world, with its globalization, has generated various means of livelihood and sustenance. The authors selected for this study show their grasp of the vast differences that really existed between the accepted cultural images of women and what women actually pass through in the modern world. Their abilities to develop their plot on this contradiction really distinguish them as feminist novelists in Nigeria.

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