

THE PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF AN IGBO ANDROGYNY: EFURU'S QUEST FOR HER HIGHER SELF IN *EFURU*, FLORA NWAPA'S EPONYMOUS NOVEL

ADA UZOAMAKA AZODO
Indiana University Northwest

Abstract

*Efuru's*¹ *Psycho-Spiritual Journey* in Flora Nwapa's eponymous novel, *Efuru*, retraces Maureen Murdock's *The Heroine's Journey*, a gendered modification of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey*,² which is a cyclical and archetypal mapping of the idea of life as a continuous search for self-identity and purpose espoused in his *Theory of the Monomyth*. At journey's end, the hero or heroine returns home renewed, wiser and integrated for self and service to the community. Employing the combined critical methodologies of the imaginary, semiotics, and reader-response—Roland Barthes' ideas of the readerly and writerly texts—this study seeks to derive extra meaning from the metanarrative beyond the pre-established, stable meaning of the text. From this angle of vision, all of Flora Nwapa's heroine's trials and tribulations are signposts of her reemergence, healing and wholesomeness, and are not by any means misfortunes. At her apotheosis, like Uhamiri, the Goddess of the Lake, her mirror image, ally, spiritual guide, and male-identified mentor of the spirit world, triumphant *Efuru* metamorphoses into a moral warrior against endemic and paralyzing patriarchy, becoming a role model of courage, endurance, and female empowerment.

Key Words: journey, sacrifice, guide, spirituality, hero, heroine, model, patriarchy

INTRODUCTION

That is why it is so necessary to redefine *hero* and *heroine* in our lives today. The heroic quest is not about power over, about conquest and domination; it is a quest to bring balance into our lives through the marriage of both feminine and masculine aspects of our nature. The modern-day heroine has to confront her fear about reclaiming her feminine nature; her personal power, her ability to feel, heal, create, change social structures, and shape her future. She brings us wisdom about the interconnectedness of all species; she teaches us how to live together in this global vessel and helps us to reclaim the feminine in our lives. We yearn for her. —Maureen Murdock, *The Heroine's Journey*.³

Literature is always relevant, whether written 10, 50 or 500 years ago. Perhaps the most fascinating thing about studying literature (...) is learning just how little have changed, regardless of when or where they lived. That revelation, in turn, gives us a renewed appreciation for our common humanity, not only across cultures but across time. — Rob Jenkins, "The forgotten Value of a Literature Course," *Chronicle of Higher Education*.⁴

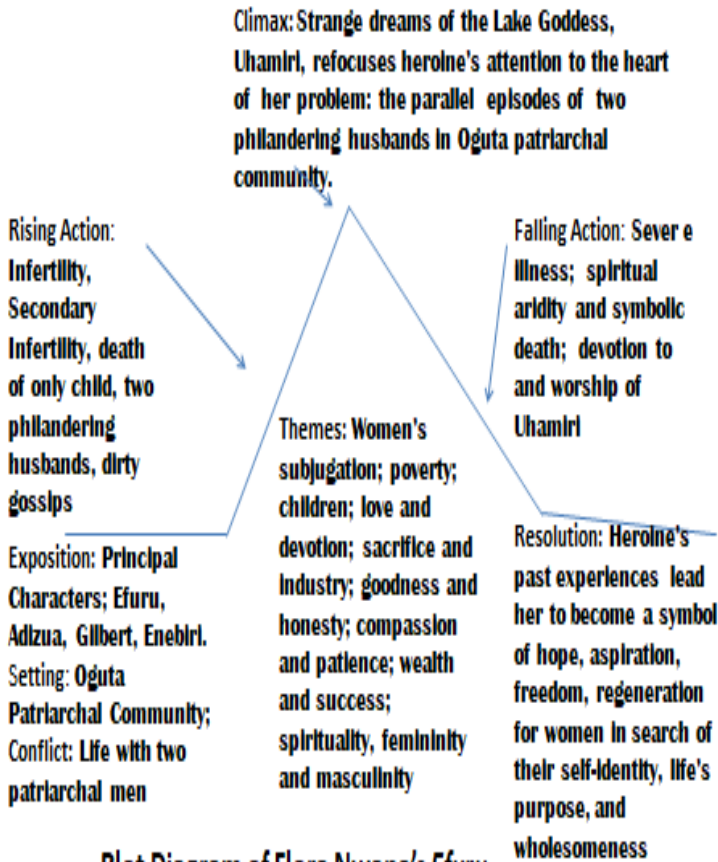
Life is a continuous search for one's self-identity and one's purpose on earth. Employing the journey metaphor, this study will follow a heroine's quest for her higher self in her patriarchal community.⁵ The quest motif will illuminate the concepts of God and Goddess, the world and self, and knowledge and wisdom; these are the same ideas that are very much intricately intertwined with human existence in societies. Anthropologist cum mythologist Joseph Campbell⁶ first came up with the journey metaphor in his Theory of the Monomyth, seeing life as a mythic and heroic journey of the individual in quest of wholeness. In Campbell's footsteps, psychotherapist Maureen Murdock⁷ came up with her own gendered mapping, *The Heroine's Journey*, taking the heroic cycle out of the mythic realm and putting it into the lives of women she has actually met and tried to understand and help with treatment in her office. These two textual authorities, *The Hero's Journey* and *The Heroine's Journey*, constitute the theoretical framework for this study on the Psycho-Spiritual Journey of *Efuru*,⁸ the heroine who embarks on a personal quest for healing and wholeness, through seeking to integrate her female principles that she all but lost shunning femininity, emulating masculinity, and living a hero's life in her patriarchal society. *Efuru's* quest succeeds and she returns home to her Oguta community, from which she fled at the beginning, as an integrated and mature male daughter with balanced feminine and masculine sides to her personality.

PLOT SUMMARY OF *EFURU*

A simple reading of the novel, *Efuru*, from Exposition, Rising Action, Climax, Falling Action, to Plot Resolution, tells the story of a motherless, young, beautiful and hardworking Igbo girl, who grows up exclusively in the care of her father after the death of her mother when was only two years old. Deprived of the nurturing and guidance of her mother, *Efuru*

the protagonist of this novel fails in relationships with men and marriage and life generally.⁹

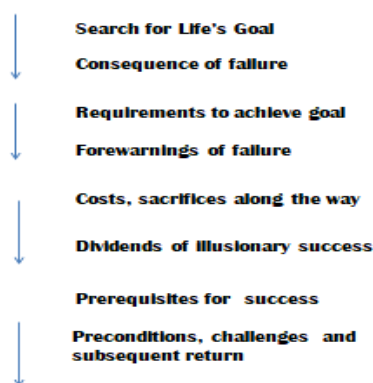
Yet, added to the foregoing manner of reading are seven other possible ways of reading Efuru's story: as a folktale of the young Igbo girl who chooses her own husbands contrary to tradition and fails; as a feminist and critical text on masculinity and femininity and how one woman effectively thrives in a traditional patriarchal setting; as a counterpoint to Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, a novel that carries masculinity too far; as a novel about traditional Igbo women promoting generational continuity; as a novel about a first-generation Nigerian woman writer's ambivalence before phallogocentric male novels that fail to field strong women, for the heroine of this first novel pales in comparison to the secondary characters that appear stronger; as a *bildungsroman*, for the heroine learns over



time to listen to herself, blossoms, and gains power to fulfill herself despite failure at wifehood and motherhood; as a Quest novel subgenre in which the heroine regenerates as a man-woman, an androgyny¹⁰ with well-balanced feminine and masculine aspects to her personality.

A writerly reading¹¹ of the novel as a Quest allows other meanings to emerge; the resultant oblique reading takes the reader through the heroine's treasure hunt for something invaluable that she is missing, something that resembles the Magic Elixir of life or the Golden Fleece of the grail. Hard knocks on the road to success and personal autonomy in her patriarchal and male-defined community, force this 'daughter of her father' to reconsider her choices. She determines to tap into her masculine inner mode, in order to circumvent the helplessness and disadvantages of dependence of the feminine beings in her community. She becomes wiser and experienced about the intricacies and complexities of gendered division of labor and structuring of masculine and feminine roles in her community, thanks to her intuition and creativity and divine intervention. At the end of her journey, which embodies her psychological development and her search for healing and wholesomeness, as is typical with heroines in a *bildungsroman*, she returns to her father's house well-balanced to assume her newly found self-identity and life's purpose as a male daughter.

Generally, the quest plot sometimes overlaps in details, and includes the following eight cardinal steps: story goal, consequence, requirements, forewarnings/forebodings, costs, dividends, prerequisites, and preconditions.



The 8 Cardinal Steps of the Heroine's Quest for Wholesomeness

The **story goal** is the heroine's determination to be strong both within her inner being and outwardly, like her father and mentor, so as to gain prestige, respect and esteem that the Oguta patriarchal community reserves for men but denies women. Hence, her innate fear is how to escape being swallowed up by this patriarchal community. It is an obsession, unknown to her clearly at this beginning, which propels her forward in the direction of her fate, destiny and life's purpose. With a noble, respectable, valiant, big-farmer father and ally, Nwashike Ogene, Efuru values achievement and responsibility for her life, and does not want to be dependent on anyone as her mother was.¹² She learns to press on, despite failures and normal anxieties about life. An only child of her mother and a girl-child at that in a patriarchal community that thrives on boy-child preference, Efuru sets out to eliminate the absent and diminished mother and identify with her ego-dominated father. Her overwhelming urge is to overcome the crippling qualities of femininity, but rather to identify with strength and authority in masculinity that mirrors self-esteem, respect, ability, and responsibility as the driving force of one's being. This image is reminiscent of Athena, the daughter of Metis and Zeus, who springs out fully grown from the head of her father, brandishing a gold armor and sharp spear after her father absorbed her mother into himself. Much like an 'Athena woman,' then, Efuru, this 'father's daughter,' believes her mother was 'swallowed up,' not by death, but by her patriarchal community and possibly her husband's male ego. She appreciates masculine and patriarchal values, but devalues and discards her mother's maternal values and deprecates her mother. Efuru's mother—unnamed in the novel—is only known through Efuru's recollection of her story that her father shared with her.

Efuru fears the **consequence of failure** should she not succeed in her quest, for there is the possibility of reenacting her mother's destiny and becoming just one of the women of this male-dominated community, women without distinction, women without respect from men and women alike, women who daily face oppression and subjugation to secondary existence by the men through the customs and mores in place. It is on this fear that the primary dramatic tension of the novel hinges. The best scenario for Efuru would be to overcome the onset of infertility that is in its second year since her marriage to her first husband Adizua Ukachukwu. In their patriarchal community, a baby girl would not be a consolation, for right from birth a baby girl suffers discrimination, is condemned to disregard from all and sundry, and would die from heartache, as was the fate

of Efuru's mother, who might have died from pangs and pains of regret from an unfulfilled existence. Therefore, a baby boy would be preferable.

Nonetheless, there are **requirements** for Efuru to fulfill, some of them quite dangerous, in order to achieve her goal of fleeing from femininity. First of all, in her intransigence to choose her own husbands, Efuru elopes with her first husband, Adizua Ukachukwu, rather than follow tradition and allow her father and the fraternal league of the extended family of Umunna to be part of it. It is noteworthy that even her mother-in-law, Amede, thinks that her son is not worthy of her, for she has such a high regard for her new daughter-in-law. Yet, in Efuru's wish to identify with and be rescued by the masculine, she marries down; she marries Adizua Ukachukwu in a union that at best is a hypogamy, after helping *him* to pay *her* dowry. Such a masculine gesture makes things worse for Efuru; she loses the regard and respect of the young man. When she decides to go through excision during her puberty rite of passage, and this only to please her father and doting mother-in-law, like a master would, she gives instructions that her father not be notified, and this also contrary to tradition. Then, where many women would take three to six months off from work after childbirth, she feasts for a month only and returns to her trading business that is falling apart, because her lazy husband Adizua is not managing it well in her absence.

Despite all of Efuru's masculine attempts to succeed, there are **forewarnings, forebodings** that she may indeed fail in her quest. When Efuru goes back with her husband and baby to thank the community *dibia* for his intervention in arresting her infertility, the *dibia* foresees another problem looming. But, before the *dibia* could stop the new danger, he suddenly dies in his sleep. The consequence is that Ogonim, Efuru's only child, dies. Thereafter the quest climbs to another height with costs in self-pride and loss of self-confidence for Efuru, complicating the story goal.

Efuru's persistence in her quest multiplies her **costs**, which include sacrifices and pains to achieve her goal. Little by little, she is stripped of her worldly possessions, respect, security and money. Is Efuru haunted by an idealized memory of the 'swallowed' mother and a different life she could have lived as 'her mother's daughter,' had her mother lived long enough to see her successfully through as a wife and mother? Is Efuru haunted by life with her father that ended abruptly, when she fled from home at the beginning of her search for self-identity and her life's purpose? Is her problem rather the psychological torture, due to the death of her daughter, Ogonim, her only child? And the parallel episode of two renegade husbands, Adizua Ukachukwu and Gilbert Enebiri, is bother-

some and surmount all her other misfortunes. And the community women pile dirty gossips about her and her new husband that resemble the painful stings of hornet bees. To the common folk in her community, Efuru's stoicism before such hostility is novel and incomprehensible.

Nonetheless, Providence pays Efuru in good **dividends**, as is usual with those who make effort to take their destiny into their hands. Efuru's popularity and renown soar among her people, thanks to her empathy and compassion in helping the sick, the needy, and the downtrodden of the community. She is rewarded with the status of community mother, although it is an illusionary success. On a personal level, she gains more experiences about life and living. She again experiences romantic love and remarries, this second time to Gilbert Enebiri, a relatively educated young man, an old classmate, and a rich trader, raising her hopes and prospects of having children with a man capable of taking care of their progeny, a man who treats her well and with respect as an equal. However, it is all illusion as it was with her first marriage before.

A series of **prerequisites**, crucial to the requirements of attaining her life's goal, challenge her. Metaphorically, Efuru is alone in the darkness fighting obstacles, fiends, ogres and dragons as she winds her way towards the center of the labyrinth. First, she suffers secondary infertility, which is debilitating, for if she is not equipped outwardly as a man, she should at least be able to get pregnant and bear a child like a woman. Second, she is abandoned by husband Gilbert Enebiri, making it impossible for her to become pregnant should she decide to remain faithful to him. Third, Gilbert marries a rival co-wife, Nkoyeni, without asking for her input as the senior wife, according to customary expectation. Fourth, news spreads of Gilbert's imprisonment in Onicha, reportedly for theft, the worst crime of which an Igbo man could be accused, because it shows him up as a lazy man that pilfers from other men's hard labor. Fifth, Gilbert refuses to come home and mourn with her the death of her father, Nwashike Ogene. And, sixth, there are rumors that Gilbert has a young son outside of marriage and is keeping it a secret from her, although everybody else knows about it. These travails at this point in Efuru's life are serious obstructions and stumbling blocks on her pathway to psycho-spiritual wholesomeness. The aforementioned parallel episode of Gilbert Enebiri and Adizua Ukachukwu is an eloquent novelistic strategy that has not escaped the writerly reader's observation.¹³ Finding herself at the crossroads and at her wits ends, Efuru does not know which way to turn. Her endurance, clarity, ambition, sense of self-worth, and self-confidence

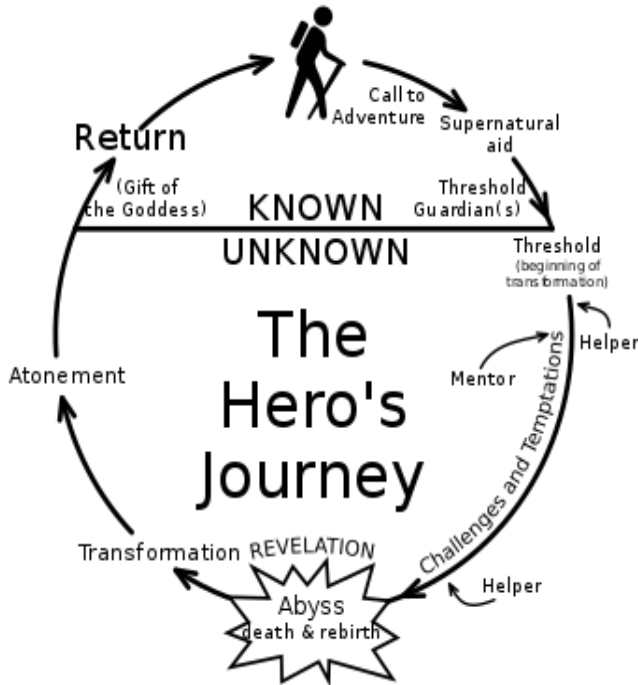
vanish, and rearing their ugly heads are feelings of paralysis, self-doubt, and inadequacy.

To mitigate these prerequisites requires some **preconditions** of the heroine. As her happiness again sours, and expectation dampens her hope of reaching her goal, she fights like a wounded lioness or tigress. After Gilbert accuses her of infidelity and to remind herself of her humanity, like Psyche, wife of Eros, she at once learns to discriminate, focus on one task at a time, set order, boundaries, and limits, curb generosity, sacrifice and compassion, and experience disappointment. She seizes elemental power; her intriguing and mysterious illness allows her to *die* in her old ways, in order to achieve *rebirth*. Through the cooperation of her inner male self, she is about to find her autonomy as a healed and strengthened being. She abandons the spell of Gilbert's romantic love and has courage to demythologize Gilbert as a demi-god that can provide for their family. Instead, she takes back responsibility for her own life and works hard to be rid of marriage entanglements with Gilbert in her march forward towards becoming a human goddess. First, to retaliate for Gilbert's disgrace of her she marries her maid Ogea to him, and to give competition to Nkoyeni who is proving recalcitrant. This singular but double-barreled gesture turns Efuru into a female husband, giving her the added value of freeing herself from the yokes of wifehood and motherhood. As the novel plot gallops now to an interesting resolution, Gilbert accuses Efuru of infidelity, a crime only second to murder as the worst that a woman could commit or be accused of in Igboland. Then, Efuru decides to leave her husband Gilbert Enebiri and return home to her father's house. Not even the interventions of her bosom friend and counselor Ajanupu or the entreaties of her long-term friend, admirer and mentor Dr. Uzaru could constrain her to change her decision to end her second marriage.

With her return as a male daughter, Efuru's life's story has come full circle. She has integrated her masculine and feminine aspects, becoming a veritable androgyny with balanced masculine and feminine principles.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In Joseph Campbell's archetypal hero cycle map, *The Hero's Journey*, the hero departs in quest for self, God and the world, that is, wisdom and knowledge.



Joseph Campbell's Archetypal Map of the Hero's Cycle¹⁴

Through the seventeen stages of the journey, from the ordinary world through the spiritual world and back to the ordinary world, the mythical hero searches for the Golden Fleece or the Magic Elixir. Joseph Campbell was the first to opine that most narratives about mythical heroes, such as a Gilgamesh, follow this mythic pattern of Call to Adventure, Symbolic Death, Rebirth, and Return to the community.

When the hero answers his call, he delves into unknown realms, crossing the threshold of the known ordinary world into the unknown realms of spirits in the spiritual world. There, he meets with supernatural guides and mentors, who help him in his quest while on his journey, by confronting obstacles, adversaries, fiends and guardians of the threshold that try to obstruct his progress. A period of darkness ensues, when the hero descends into the Belly of the Whale, as Jonah did in the Sea of Galilee. There, the hero undergoes a series of trials and tribulations that test his resolve and skills, before he is able to find the elixir, the boon that he seeks. Then, he meets a mysterious being or spiritual guide, usually in the form of a god or goddess. He enters into a sacred matrimonial alliance, and fi-

nally returns to the threshold with the trophy to spread civilization, development and other benefits of his travel among his people.

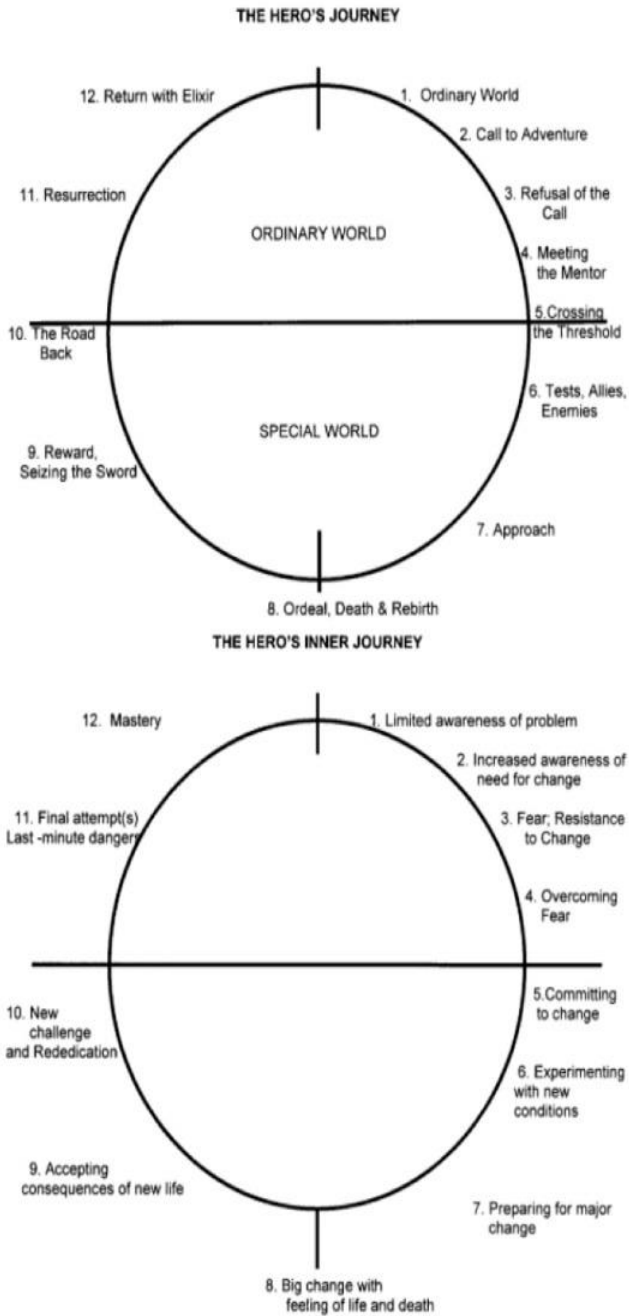
In 1981, Campbell responded to a charge of gender discrimination by feminists with this rebuttal:

Women don't need to make the journey. In the whole mythological tradition the woman is *there*. All she has to do is to realize that she's the place that people are trying to get to. When a woman realizes what her wonderful character is, she's not going to get messed up with the notion of being pseudo-male.¹⁵

Maureen Murdock, however, thought differently. In *The Hero's Journey* by Joseph Campbell, she insists, the inner and outer hero cycles¹⁶ are constructed for men and males and has not much in it that speaks to the real life experiences and issues of real women and females that she knows. She argues that the archetypal outer journey of Campbell's hero, particularly, does not address the archetypal journeys of troubled women, women whose quest is significantly inwards, women whose reality involves real-issues, such as the healing of the wounding of the feminine in a grossly patriarchal culture that diminishes women and their efforts, seeing them perpetually as weak, dependent, inconsequential, and immoral.

In *The Heroine's Journey*, she proposes a cyclical map of the archetypal heroine's journey, from her own personal experiences and as a professional psychotherapist that has come across several Western women in search of their self-identity in contemporary times. Hence, Murdock's heroine's experience reestablishes women's agency that is missing from Campbell's mythical study. The heroine does not start with a Call to Adventure, like a hero, but rather with a Separation from the Feminine and its values. The heroine seeks to gain recognition and success in her patriarchal culture on her own terms. Unfortunately, she garners illusion of success, followed by experiences of spiritual aridity or death. Finally, turning inward, she is able to reclaim the spirit and power of the sacred feminine. In the final stages of her journey, the heroine acknowledges the duality of her union and power for the benefit of her community.¹⁷

The heroine is motivated interchangeably by her mind and her heart throughout the stages of the journey. In the first part, she wants to detach from her parent's family and move on as an adult, in order to attain self-identity in the outer world. But, that is just when she inwardly experiences a lack of completeness. At a great sacrifice to her soul, she achieves all that she set out to do, but she must continue on with her journey or all shall be lost in the outer darkness.

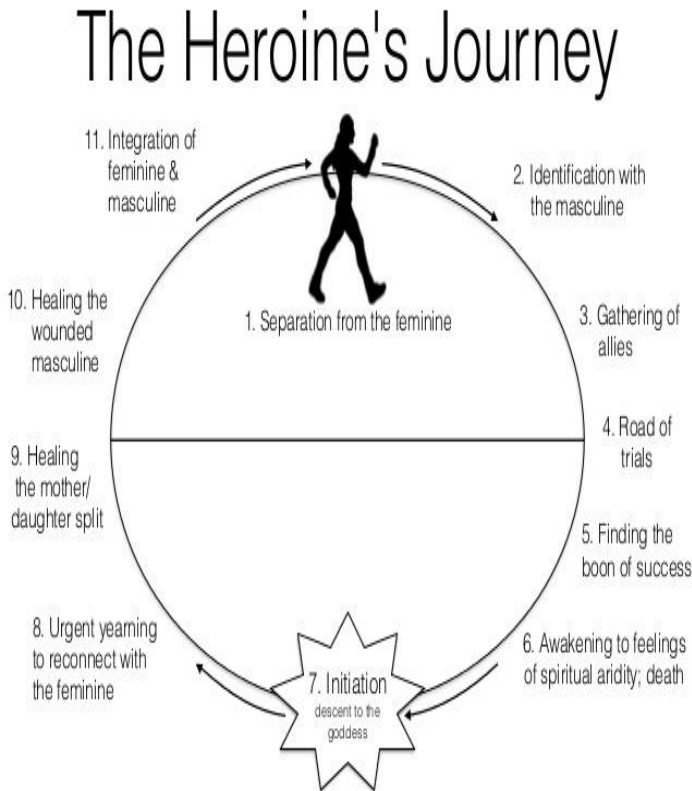


Joseph Campbell’s Theory of Monomyth and the Hero Cycles¹⁸

In the second part, however, despite successes in achieving her goals, she may still be lacking in a new sense of creativity. At this point, the heroine's quest to heal the deep wounding of her feminine nature, on personal, cultural, and spiritual levels, turns mythic. She undertakes her psychological cum spiritual journey to become whole and integrate all parts of her nature in the community. She does this at once consciously and unconsciously, and in voluntary isolation.

EFURU'S QUEST FOR HER HIGHER SELF

It is from the foregoing perspectives that we construct the heroine's Psycho-Spiritual Journey in *Efuru*.



Maureen Murdock's mapping of the Archetypal Heroine's Cycle¹⁹

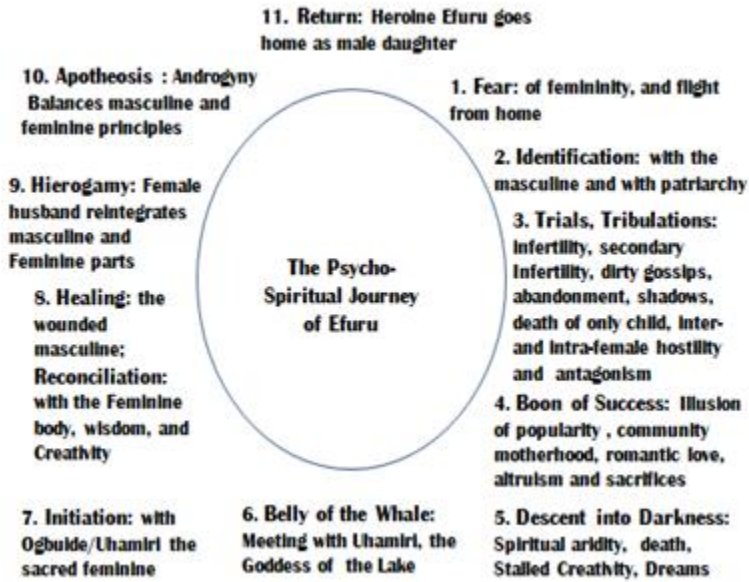
First, it is noteworthy that Efuru starts and ends her quest in her community, without leaving Oguta or shunning her culture. Second, a non-hater of men that understands there are good and bad men, Efuru distinguishes between styles of masculinity exhibited by different men she meets along the way. Some men are helpful, whereas others are unkind, even evil.²⁰ Ada Uzoamaka Azodo has opined in an earlier study on language and masculinity in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, which premier novel was the motivation for Flora Nwapa's own first novel, *Efuru*, that even when men are good, bad or evil, they may not be so to the same degree as others²¹

Recall that foreshadowing Efuru's life, right from the beginning, is the fear that she might end up like her mother and the dread of the consequences to her if she does. Somewhat inadvertently, therefore, she determines to do things differently by herself, namely, emulate the masculine and the heroic and distinguish herself. Then she elopes to take her life into her own hands. Upon experiencing infertility and frustrating anxiety in the first two years of marriage, she laments:

My mother had only me (...). My father told me so and also that she found it difficult to become pregnant. Am I going to be like my mother? But if I am going to be like her, then I too will have a daughter like her. But what if that is denied me? What if that also is denied me? What will I do? Oh, what will I do?²²

HEROINE EFURU'S PSYCHO-SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

Efuru undertakes a psycho-spiritual journey in eleven stages in search of her self-identity and life's purpose.



First Stage: Flight from Home: Efuru rejects the feminine that her mother symbolizes, which holds that to be human and not be secondary and inferior to males and men a woman must be wife, mother, and fit any of other feminine nurturing roles. On the contrary, in her mind Efuru aligns with the idealized image of her father as savior, provider, problem-solver and dominant masculine figure in her life and the larger Oguta community. Subsequently, on that fateful day before the cock's crow, at the instigation or suggestion of her lover, Adizua Ukachukwu,²³ she packs her belongings and elopes with him. She may not have known at the time that her intrinsic motive in moving in and cohabiting with Adizua was to find a different (read masculine) identity for herself in the patriarchal culture of her Oguta community.

Second Stage: Identification with the Masculine: But, identify with masculinity Efuru does, not with her inner masculine personality that she already has, but with the outer masculine and patriarchal community, the driving force of power and domination. In a similar way as her patriarchal community, she seeks control over herself and the others that are bandying about dirty gossips about her perceived infertility. To shame her detractors, fiends and enemies, Efuru goes to see the dibia with the staunch belief that "God cannot deny me the joy of motherhood,"²⁴ and that God cannot condone in all his righteousness and infinite mercy her communi-

ty's inhuman and radical desire for perfection on earth. After all, it was death that snatched away her mother early in her childhood, depriving her of relevant nurturing and lessons about life, the world and God, pieces of knowledge and wisdom that she could have gained from her mother. She bemoans the absence of the gods and the ancestors who allowed such a calamity to happen to her:

She called on the god to bear witness. She raised her hands and asked the gods and her ancestors where and when she offended them that they should allow her only child to be snatched by death.²⁵

In other words, the gods, goddesses and ancestors, in essence, mirror diverse ways of being in existence. Efuru counts among her allies her father, the dibia and her mother-in-law's sister and her bosom friend and counselor, Ajanupu. Working against her psychological growth and spiritual progress are her antagonists, the two renegade husbands, Adizua Ukachukwu and Gilbert Enebiri, who in turn treat her disrespectfully and disgracefully. In some way, Efuru believes she is a victim and that her community is right in treating her the way they do, due to some fault of hers. Nonetheless, at the same time within her she continues to fight back. She will not be a martyr, she says, like her mother-in-law, Amede, who was utterly maltreated by her own philandering husband, Adizua's father, and was later abandoned for another woman.²⁶ She goes about, twice only, to look for Adizua and not finding him leaves the home she built with him and returns to her father's house. Efuru would later also leave Gilbert Enebiri, when he accuses her of adultery. Efuru's fixation appears to be to prove to herself that she is much higher morally than everyone else deems her to be. She would just not don that coat of one-size-fits-all designed for women and females in her community. But, what tasks are available to help Efuru develop her ego?

Third Stage: The Road of Trials and Tribulations: On the road of trials and tribulations, Efuru undergoes tests that will begin her ego transformation. She does not know it, but she gives and gives to everyone in need, sacrificing herself and her material acquisitions and wealth. Her popularity soars high. As community mother, she takes care of her mother-in-law when she is ill,²⁷ ministers to the needy, the poor, men and women alike, sends some to the hospital and pays the bills, as she does for the old lady, Nona for her septic wound,²⁸ and for prostate surgery for Nwosu, her maid Ogea's father. She also gives Nwosu money capital to purchase

yams for the planting season. She forgives his bad debts and continues to lend to him, and to others, without recompense.²⁹ Efuru is most probably getting a high in happiness with her empathic and compassionate deeds, for in spite of herself she continues to do these simple things for her greater happiness. But, quite unexpectedly it is her maid, Ogea, fearing for her, who draws her attention to the bad consequences of overdoing good: "If you continue giving people money in this way, they will take advantage of your generosity and worry you all the more."³⁰ Inwardly, though, Efuru suffers from her ordeals and disgrace, for her husbands do not support her emotionally nor do they with their physical presence in her hours of need, such as when her daughter dies and later at the death of her father. Both men are nowhere to be found, making Efuru a laughing stock in her community, especially among her fellow women.

Efuru also suffers inter- and intra-female hostility. The bitter and jealous tongue of the village gossip, Omirima, among others, wags on:

Seeing them together is not the important thing (...). The important thing is that nothing has happened since the happy marriage. We are not going to eat the happy marriage. Marriage must be fruitful. Of what use is it if it is not fruitful. Of what use is it if your husband licks your body, worships you and buys everything in the market for you and you are not productive.³¹

Omirima objects to, even blames, Amede, Efuru's mother-in-law's stance in allowing the couple to go about town in public together:

Why must they go to these places together? It is your fault for allowing them to be together always. Are they companions? Don't they know that a man and a woman should not be seen together often whether they are married or not? Amede, you must see to this. You behave as if you are not the one any more. What has come over you?³²

Clearly, women perpetrate male dominance and patriarchy in the community, by colluding with men in putting fellow women down. This collusion of her own kind in her oppression is most agonizing to Efuru, who comes to the realization that motherhood, any kind of motherhood, and sacrifices are not enough to give her self-fulfillment, and that all along her achievements have been based on pleasing the internalized masculine or father-image within her unconscious mind. As she awakens to her decep-

tion and betrayal by the father and masculinity, she regains her creative self and accepts her limits.

Fourth Stage: Boon of Success: Efuru reemerges from the tunnel of tribulations with a boon in the form of enlightenment about what life is really all about and her proper place in it. This is the ultimate goal of her quest. This boon is illusory, nonetheless, because Efuru resists the temptation to be free from her masculine entrapments and return to feminine virtues. As Murdock puts it about women resisting their awakening:

Finding the inner boon of success requires the sacrifice of false notions of the heroic. When a woman can find the courage to be limited and to realize that she is enough exactly the way she is, then she discovers one of the true treasures of the heroic journey. This woman can detach herself from the whims of the ego and touch into the deeper forces that are the source of her life. She can say, "I am not all things and I am enough." She becomes real, open, vulnerable, and receptive to a true spiritual awakening.³³

Efuru would not give up any of her charitable works of mercy, though, still feeling victorious, confident and happy as she does. She acknowledges she is a victim of cognitive empathy when she responds to Ogea's advice to control the degree to which she pushes her compassion, when she states: "I know it well, but what can one do? It is difficult to deny these people anything."³⁴ Rather than scale back, she adds the education of the young to her good deeds, by inviting the community storyteller on moonlight nights to entertain and teach the children she gathers in her home front. She welcomes the rival wife Nkoyeni with open arms, so that their common husband Gilbert Enebiri can perpetuate his immortality. When Nkoyeni is delivered of her baby, she helps to nurture and raise it. When Nkoyeni loses self-control over the imprisonment of Gilbert in Onicha for theft, as well as the return for a visit of his illegitimate son, Efuru marries her maid Ogea to Gilbert to give her a competition and to 'tame the shrew' in her into the bargain. With these measures, and relishing her new status as community mother and female husband, Efuru is at the end of her creativity. Her achievements take their toll on her health and emotional wellness. She experiences an inexplicable emptiness. The next best thing for her is *being* herself, not *doing* something. But, she cannot see it, because the uncertain future is not revealed to her. Still, a *regressus ad uterum* is not an option, this retreat that Jean Markale has defined as "a return to true

paradise in the real or imaginary protection of an ever-damp and nourishing maternal womb."³⁵

Fifth Stage: Descent into Darkness: Perhaps, Efuru is ready and willing to undergo a metamorphosis that will separate her old self from her new self. She is lucid enough and able to express her feelings of emptiness, otherwise she could suffer a nervous condition or depression. Despite her numerous achievements, she feels she has achieved nothing worthwhile and continues to believe she only just struggles to play male roles. She has a feeling of being in the dark about her past, present and future, but is not yet clear as to what changes she needs to make to take her life back into her own hands and move forward to a healthy and more fulfilling life. So far, the masculine and heroic path is unsatisfying to her feminine part, prompting her to wonder the usefulness of the successes she has garnered. Nor Hall put this way the feeling of deception and betrayal common to modern achieving women, when they have reached the 'mountain top,' as Martin Luther King, Jr. would say, and yet are not satisfied:

There is a void felt these days by women and men --- who suspect that their feminine nature, like Persephone, has gone to hell. Wherever there is such a void, such a gap or wound agape, healing must be sought in the blood of the wound itself. It is another of the old alchemical truths that "no solution should be made except in its own blood." So the female void cannot be cured by conjunction with the male, but rather by an internal conjunction, by an integration of its own parts, by a remembering or a putting together of the mother-daughter body.³⁶

Sacrifices, for these reasons, are no longer effective weapons against Efuru's feelings of emptiness, spiritual aridity or death, for she did not reckon that her pursuit of masculine values would entail giving up her body and soul. Nonetheless, she is aware that she no longer wants to deal with masculine values or play by patriarchal rules, but is still lost as to which way to go. Hence, just what she needs to resurrect is her descent into a period of darkness in which she listens and quits *doing*, but *being* as she searches for her whole self.

A reader uninitiated into the world of the imaginary³⁷ may see this period of stasis as depression, but it is really a period of pause that is necessary before the rebirth of a wholesome individual. It is at this point in Efuru's journey that strange dreams invade her being at night,³⁸ as she

seeks to heal the split with her mother and the feminine and recover that relationship in the larger context of the Oguta community. According to Murdock, "This period is often filled with dreams of dismemberment and death, of shadow sisters and intruders, of journeys across deserts and rivers, of ancient goddess symbols and sacred animals."³⁹ Murdock continues:

When a woman has made the descent and severed her identity as a spiritual daughter of the patriarchy, there is an urgent yearning to reconnect with the feminine, whether that be the Goddess, the Mother, or her little girl within. There is a desire to develop those parts of herself that have gone underground while on the heroic quest: her body, her emotions, her spirit, her creative wisdom. It may be that a woman's relationship to the undeveloped parts of her own father gives her clue to her true feminine nature.⁴⁰

Efuru is about to gain items that will be useful for her in the future as she embraces the Goddess of the Lake, Uhamiri, to learn about female beauty, power and so get a hold on her body and the experiences she has gained. Uhamiri is the Great Mother, a beautiful and rich woman, who lives at the bottom of Lake Oguta. In her dreams, Uhamiri takes her down to her abode and shows her all her riches and wealth. The beautiful woman is not married, yet she is happy and living a fulfilling life. Her father, Nwashike Ogene, explains the strange dreams to her, adding that it is the Goddess of the Lake Uhamiri that is inviting her to become one of her numerous female devotees and worshippers, adding that her own mother (Efuru's mother) had such dreams too. The *dibia* confirms the dreams as supernatural signs of good news and self-awakening:

You are a great woman. 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. But you must keep her laws. Look round this town, nearly all the storey buildings you find are built by women who one time or another have been worshippers of Uhamiri. Many of them had dreams similar to yours, many of them came to me and asked me what to do. I helped them. Some of them remember me, some don't remember me at all.⁴¹

Unwittingly by this dream interpretation, and unknown to himself at the time, Nwashike Ogene has transformed into a new and creative masculine figure that will lead Efuru to the Goddess of the Lake. He is no longer the patriarchal masculine voice of the beginning. Inwardly, Efuru is afraid to take the next steps of her journey, clinging instead to the charted pathway, although that will not be for a long time. Refusing to make progress, psychologically and spiritually, however, are not options for Efuru, for something more powerful than herself has taken over her being and is propelling her forward. Like a spiritually-obsessed person, she is urged to march on along her life journey's pathway. Murdock explains this intricate female power vis-à-vis female wholesomeness:

Whether we think of the Goddess as a personified Being or as energy that occurs within and between women, the image of the Goddess is an acknowledgement of female power, not dependent on men or derived from the patriarchal vision of women The Goddess reflects back to us what has been missing in our culture, positive images of our power, our bodies, our wills, our mothers. To look at the Goddess is to remember ourselves, to imagine ourselves whole.⁴²

Marian Woodman adds in her book, *In Leaving My Father's House*:

It takes a strong ego to hold the darkness, hold the tension, waiting for we know not what. But, if we can hold long enough, a tiny light is conceived in the dark unconscious, and if we can wait and hold, in its own time it will be born in its full radiance. The ego then has to be loving enough to receive the gift and nourish it with the best food that new life may eventually transform the whole personality.⁴³

Sixth Stage: Descent into the Belly of the Whale: This meeting with the Goddess is the ultimate adventure for the neophyte. As we have seen above, Efuru descends in a dream to the Goddess, Uhamiri, at the bottom of the lake. Efuru is now at the center point of her adventure, where her initiation begins, and where she must confront her masculine side head on and decide once and for all whether she wants to live out her life as a hero or a heroine. She meets Uhamiri, who, although a woman is a de facto man-woman. Efuru must lay to rest in this abyss of confrontation the erroneous notion that life and power are synonymous with masculinity and father image, what Joseph Campbell has defined as 'atonement.'⁴⁴

Efuru's spiritual progress appears to reach its dizzying heights as snakes and tortoises, messengers of Uhamiri, populate her dreams. On dream symbolism in general, Murdock states:

We produce symbols unconsciously and spontaneously in the form of dreams. Many women and men today are dreaming about the Goddess; she is a projection of the feminine principle that needs restoration in our culture. She takes many forms, often embodied in the rich symbols of a person's heritage.⁴⁵

Efuru descends into darkness, because she is afraid, confused, alienated, disillusioned, isolated and in despair. She feels unfocused, undirected, dismembered and without a structure by which to go. Her loss of identity as daughter, spouse, mother, community role player as mother, and loss of direction plague her for weeks on end. How to reclaim her discarded aspects, the parts that split off when she separated from the feminine at the beginning, is her problem now. These were feminine values she devalued, repressed and ignored as she strove forward in search of success and wholesomeness in her patriarchal community as a masculine being that was loaning out money, doing business, paying bills and consulting with dibias, spirits of living-dead ancestors, gods and goddesses, divorcing one husband and marrying off another husband to another woman, and ceasing thereby to be a de facto wife.⁴⁶

Seventh Stage: Initiation with the Sacred Feminine: Efuru is now poised to make use of wisdom gained in her journey quest. As her struggles are rewarded with more and more encounters with Uhamiri in her dreams, and she experiences rebirth into a new personality and new awareness of herself, rebirth which only comes after the removal of the cold hands of death, Efuru is now becoming logical, not merely intuitive. She realizes that since she became an Uhamiri worshipper she has not seen babies at her house: "She cannot give me children," she says, "because she has not got children herself."⁴⁷ Before now, Efuru was unaware that her heroic quest had degenerated into an obsession to be a mother, in order to heal her mother-complex. James Hillman and Marie-Louise von Franz explain how the basic content of mother-complex affects intimately and permanently women's perceptions of themselves:

One faces the mother as fate, ever again and anew. Not only the contents of feelings, but the function itself takes patterns from the reac-

tions and values which come to life in mother-child relationship. The way we feel about our bodily life, our physical self-regard and confidence, the subjective tone with which we take in or go out into the world, the basic fears and guilts, how we enter into love and behave in closeness and nearness, our psychological temperature of coldness and warmth, how we feel when we are ill, our manners, taste, and style of eating and living, habitual structures of relating, patterns of gesture and tone of voice, all bear the marks of mother.⁴⁸

Observe that Efuru's quest at the beginning was her fear of turning out like her mother. It was a reaction to her mother's fate, a disillusionment and frustration with femininity. Perhaps, her mother, the mother of a mere baby girl, was neglected by family for inability to provide her husband with a son to assure his immortality. Perhaps she died of depression and heartache for being perceived as a failure in her community. It did not matter that her husband loved her very much and preferred her to all his seven wives put together that he inherited from his own father.⁴⁹ In dreams, Efuru searches for her absent mother.

At last, her spirit mother Uhamiri hears her crying and comes to the rescue. To better understand her ambivalence, Efuru chooses to advance and seeks to reclaim connection to the sacred feminine, by dropping her false and pseudo-false identities, old illusions and fear of losing her quest. She confronts her shadows, her own dark sides and the repressed urge to deny her mother and femininity, but rather please her father by being masculine. Noteworthy is that Efuru's yearning to reconnect with Uhamiri and heal the mother-daughter split of the beginning is not yearning to rejoin her dead mother nor Ogonim her dead baby girl nor her mother-in-law from whom she voluntarily separated when she gave up Adizua. On the contrary, the yearning is a grief at the separation from feminine values. Hence, she has the urge to reconnect her body to creativity; recover the losses she has experienced, due to pursuit of masculine values in the patriarchal domain. Implicitly, she vows to reconnect to intuition and wisdom, meaning, listen to and seek guidance from signs in the supernatural world, as well as from plants and animals and inanimate things in nature.

Uhamiri demonstrates by her life's example that the feminine does not have to exclude the masculine. As Murdock states, "For a woman to be whole, she must reclaim the dark mother in herself."⁵⁰ Very subtly, Flora Nwapa's authorial strategy turns on their heads the usual Igbo folktales that irrevocably portray women as cruel, manipulative, mean, repugnant,

greedy, and jealous, fit only to be killed. In the folktale curated by Efuru and given by Eneke the storyteller, the story is “about the woman whose daughter disobeyed her and as a result was married to a spirit.”⁵¹ One can say that by projection, by burning alive the male spirit (no longer is it a female spirit that is killed)⁵² that took the woman’s daughter away in an unwanted matrimony, Efuru reclaims her mother by ‘killing’ the father. “Serves him right,” the children say in their rejoicing, “to think that he could marry such a beautiful girl.”⁵³ The voices of the innocent children are the voices of the gods and goddesses, ancestors and spirits, and animate and inanimate creatures of the earth.

Eighth Stage: Stripping/Reconciliation with the Feminine: Efuru makes a firm and irrevocable decision to return home to her beginning at her father’s house and once there engage in mundane tasks of a feminine nature that she left behind. At her return as a male daughter, patrilineal wives, her father’s widows, and others in the community would defer to her. Hence, through mindful or unmindful suffering, stripping herself of her earthly belongings and successes—money, friends, amorous relationships and family—Efuru reconciles with Uhamiri, the symbol of the sacred feminine, and obeys her rules and taboos as the dibia instructed. Every day, she dreams of the Goddess of the Lake, the one that does not implore her to *do* anything else but *be* herself. She realizes that women who worship Uhamiri succeed in life. Nonetheless, Murdock warns all and sundry to be ware of women on the road to recovery:

Beware family and friends that want her to go back to the way she was like before. She now realizes the extent to which she has sacrificed herself in pleasing others, and she is not willing to do things the old way. She ruthlessly cuts away people and situations that do not support who she has become.⁵⁴

Efuru is convinced that her redemption will come through persistence in this latest chosen pathway that now appeals to her as the right pathway to her destiny, self-identity, life’s purpose, and wholesomeness.

Ninth Stage: Healing the Wounded Masculine: Finally, at peace, Efuru achieves a balance between the masculine and the feminine as a male daughter who is comfortable in her body with her masculine and feminine parts. She takes back her negative projections on all the men in her life, including family, friends and acquaintances. She works towards healing the wounded masculine and reincorporating it into her life. She comes to the definitive realization that nothing is wrong with men and

that they are not to blame. On the contrary, everything is wrong with patriarchy, especially her community's style of masculinity that hurts both men and women. In healing these somewhat unrelated or wounded aspects of her masculine nature, Efuru identifies parts of herself that have ignored feelings of herself and her health. These were the parts that refused to accept her limits, parts of her that always urged her on and on without allowing her to seek rest or redress. Her mysterious illness at this stage is a rude awakening to how much she has abused herself without knowing it, thanks to her blind ambition to always be on top of everything, to achieve it all in a masculine-dominated and patriarchal community.

Nonetheless, Efuru gains new awareness of her ability to become a female husband, thanks to the masculine aspects of her nature. With this new awareness, she realizes her potential ability to gain greater masculine authority as a male daughter, for that status shall positively impact the community from which she split at the dawn of her search for her higher self. If there is any crisis at all, it is how to reconcile who she was with who she has become, that is, how to reincorporate the masculine, without allowing it to dominate her life, given that she now understands how much the masculine impulses have helped her to understand her inner needs that led to her loss of self-identity and purpose in the first place. Efuru realizes that granted that the masculine was a significant and important part of her psycho-spiritual journey, yet it was not the essential or true goal of her being. She then resolves to channel her masculine impulses into positive goals. She decides to go back home to her father's house. In her father's absence, now that he is dead, she will assume the role of male daughter, which in Igbo tradition requires the woman so named to take care of the homestead and not allow the family name to fall or disappear. As male daughter, Efuru can have children by men with whom she chooses to have sexual relationships, but she does not need to marry any of them. All the children she may have shall belong to her father posthumously, as the head of the household, and such children shall bear the family name.⁵⁵

Tenth Stage: Reintegration of the Masculine and the Feminine: The final stage of the journey is hierogamy, a veritable convergence of the Earth and the Sky. Efuru integrates her masculine and feminine impulses together into a union of opposites that blends her masculine and feminine parts. Efuru has overcome her temerity and is no longer afraid to be feminine in her community, when the occasion calls for it. As she accepts herself for who she is, all the problems of her divided psyche are resolved.

Yet, she hopes that all her inner sufferings will take her to a new level of existence, which equates to a different style of female consciousness that also admits masculine consciousness as she seeks to make her voice heard in the community. The union of the masculine and feminine opposites requires Efuru to recognize her wounds, accept them, and let go. It calls for artful balance and patience, given that human nature embodies masculine and feminine chromosomes. All the experiences and successes garnered during her quest and the skills learned and cultivated along the way are important in forming her new self-identity. After all, gender is socially constructed and keeps evolving and changing all the days of one's life. Indeed, in Campbell's parlance, the hero has become a Master of Two Worlds.⁵⁶

Eleventh Stage: Apotheosis: At her Apotheosis, first, Efuru becomes a spiritual warrior for Uhamiri; she strives to bring to the Goddess for healing women in the community suffering from oppression, subordination, discrimination and lack of self-esteem and self-regard, her ultimate quest goal being to bring people together, not for her personal, individual gain. Second, she realizes the need to extend her integrated body to the larger collective for a new beginning,⁵⁷ a stage of "the sacred marriage of the feminine and the masculine—when a woman, like water spirit, can value and be responsive to and truly serve others' needs, as well as her own needs," according to Murdock.⁵⁸ Furthermore, continues Murdock, this awareness of independence is important for human beings in their daily relationships and to preserve balance on earth, in life and in health.⁵⁹ P. G. Zolbrod sees this interdependence and balance as the virtue of solidarity in *Dine bahane: The Navaho Creation Story*:

Remember, as different as we are, you and I, we are of one spirit. As dissimilar as we are, you and I, we are of equal worth. As unlike as you and I are, there must always be solidarity between the two of us. Unlike each other as you and I are, there can be no harmony between us.⁶⁰

At the end of her journey Efuru makes a **return** home, ready for a more fulfilling life for herself and to impart the new knowledge gained to all around her. Efuru now knows the value of the masculine and the feminine in the strongest ways possible in Oguta community. She sees as faulty, arbitrary, and destructive the gender duality that holds sway, which makes male out as superior and female out as inferior. She realizes that the community does not need to be destroyed, in order to find one's

higher self. Gender roles are only acceptable as divisions of labor that promote peace and harmony in the community, not as instruments of oppression and subjugation. Complementarity of male and female genders needs to be acknowledged, and also the fact that there are more than a few genders must be entertained. When Efuru's psycho-spiritual journey is seen as a specimen of rite of passage, it is clear that for individual and community development people must grow and mature. It should not be taken for granted that growth is automatic or that a sense of responsibility as community-oriented adult is a given. Both qualities need hard work, sacrifices and compassion. These are the ultimate moral lessons of the heroine Efuru's psycho-spiritual journey in Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*.

CONCLUSION

This study has employed the methodologies of the imaginary, semiotics and reader's response theory to unearth hidden meanings in the metanarrative of Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*. It has employed as theoretical framework *The Heroine's Journey*⁶¹ by Maureen Murdock, a gendered-adaptation of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey*,⁶² to follow a modern Igbo woman's psychological cum spiritual journey towards wholesomeness. That this study has been able to adapt the said theories to the study of an Igbo novel says a lot about the similarity of the human condition on earth, but especially of the female condition cross-culturally. It also gives tremendous credit to the ingenuity of Flora Nwapa, the novelist who no doubt had no inkling to what heights critics like us could take her work in this twenty-first century reading, analysis, and interpretation. It is difficult to imagine that she might have had knowledge of hero and heroine cycles, let alone gear her literary exegesis towards those ends. As she once replied, when she was confronted about being a feminist, she insisted that she was not a feminist, but rather was a mere sociologist who recounted stories about women she knew. In *Efuru*, Flora Nwapa has put across a thesis that the masculine and feminine have great values in the community and that patriarchy needs to be dismantled to salvage female personal needs for self-fulfillment and to quicken development in the community. She has done this, through efficient use of archetypal characters, including protagonists, antagonists, contagonists, guardians, allies, goddesses, gods, ancestors and spirits, among others.



*Mammy Water: Master of Two Worlds, the Animal Kingdom
and the Spirit World*

And, this last point brings us back to the points we made at the beginning, about the value and roles of literature in society. Efuru's Psycho-Spiritual Journey, our constructed mapping of Efuru's story, has focused on the struggle within the heroine's soul for her higher self and the truth about life and being in the contemporary world. Like Efuru, many women are changing their perceptions of masculinity and femininity. Men are coming along too, are slower evidently, but also embracing the changing notions. Clearly, the world is changing in perceptions of gender and racial equality. Efuru is the new and modern-era feminine that descends into her dark side to unearth noble lessons for humanity, not for approval, honor or accolades, but rather to relish her femininity fully and without abandoning her masculine nature. That Efuru is able to work out her life's purpose inside and within the collective existence of men and women of her Oguta environment states at once that the individual does not have to abandon her culture to find her self-identity, purpose and meaning in life, that the community remains stronger than the individual, and that struggle and devotion to moral and spiritual goodness is symbolic of healthful life and being. Noteworthy is the heroine's return to the community of the beginning with the knowledge and wisdom that one does not have to fit into any rigid mold, masculine or feminine, to have a fulfilled and successful life and be useful in one's environment. She blames nobody for anything. She willingly goes through sufferings on personal and human levels as a goddess would, rather than look for a scapegoat. As an acknowledged astute business woman, the added lesson of Efuru's quest is that women should carve a career path for themselves to help them find their self-identity. Skills learned during the heroic quest should help a woman to carve out for herself an independent life from her parents, husband and other significant people in her life. Furthermore, feminine values are significant and just as important and useful in society as the currently dominant masculine values. How a woman feels about herself and perceives things that are feminine has a lot to do with how she is treated by people and things in the outer world of her community.

The ultimate value of this study, then, is that Efuru's life example as agent and catalyst for transformation will change the hierarchical pyramids in Oguta culture to a cyclical form in which the political, religious and economic communal structures are geared towards gender equality in the true sense of community, structures in which all members, irrespective of their gender, embark together on a life's journey from an equal per-

spective, and all feel accountable for one another.⁶³ Murdock states in reference to life's cycles that the heroine: "(She) gains the wisdom of the cycles of change, accepting the dark, instinctive side which helps us find meaning in suffering and death as well as the light, joyous side which affirms our strength, courage, and life."⁶⁴ And, on the interconnectedness of human beings, Murdock again states:

Our task is to heal the internal split that tells us to override the feelings, intuition, and dream images that inform us of the truth of life. We must have the courage to live with paradox, the strength to hold the tension of not knowing the answers, and the willingness to listen to our wisdom and the wisdom of the planet, which begs for change.⁶⁵

NOTES

¹ According to Ejine Olga Nzeribe and Ebere Nzeribe, the full name of Efuru, Flora Nwapa's protagonist in the novel *Efuru* is 'Nwanefuru,' meaning, 'A child that everyone loves.' Compare the name that Flora Nwapa gave to the heroine of her first and largely autobiographical novel, *Efuru*, to 'Ken Bugul,' a name that in Wolof means 'A child that nobody wants/likes/loves,' the name that Mariétou Mbaye Biléoma (pen name, Ken Bugul) gave to the protagonist of her first and clearly autobiographical novel, *The Abandoned Baobab: The Autobiography of a Senegalese Woman*, and you begin to see how African women writers have used the naming of their heroines to capture the intriguing psychological and spiritual journeys of many a troubled woman fighting endemic patriarchy in their environments.

In the case of Ken Bugul, from the point of our literary analysis and interpretation with *The Heroine Cycle*, it could be said that the heroine fled from home out of fear of masculinity, after her mother ended her matrimony with her father early in her childhood, returned to her place of birth, leaving her abandoned. Endless wanderings in Europe as prostitute, striptease artist, bisexual, engagement in multiple abortions and other marked her as arid in spirituality and morality, until her return to Senegal, love, marriage first to a marabout and later with an obstetrician, then childbirth, and writing helped her reintegrate her masculine and feminine sides and she again became whole and salvaged.

Source: <http://dangerouswomenproject.org/2016/04/21/flora-nwapa/> Accessed 03/24/2019.

² *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work*. The Collected Works of Joseph Campbell. Introduction by Phil Cousineau, Ed., Foreword by Stuart L. Brown. Novato, CA: New World Library (Joseph Campbell, (2003) [1990].

³ Maureen Murdock, *The Heroine's Journey: Woman's Quest for Wholeness* (Shambhala Publication, 1990, 129).

⁴ Source: <https://community.chronicle.com/news/1896-the-forgotten-value-of-a-literature-course> Accessed 06/16/2020.

⁵ Critics Ejine Olga Nzeribe and Ebere have resolved that due to female marginalization endowed women resort to all sorts of subterfuges to fulfill themselves and live a fulfilling life. They become opportunistic, courageous, wily, cunning, rebellious, brave, opinionated, masculine, enterprising, devious, ambitious, 'dangerous,' etc.

See Ejine Olga Nzeribe and Ebere Okereke's answer to their own question: "To Nigerians, who would be considered a dangerous woman?" They believe it is first and foremost Flora Nwapa (b.1931 d.1993), Pioneering Nigerian administrator, academic and author," and then women like the characters in her novels, who could be construed (by men) by dint of their enormous accomplishments as 'dangerous.' Accessed 21st April 2019 <http://dangerouswomenproject.org/2016/04/21/flora-nwapa/>

⁶ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, 2008 (1972; 1949) https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hero%27s_journey Accessed 04/19/2019.

⁷ Maureen Murdock, 1990. See also *The Heroine's Journey Workbook* (Shambhala Publications, March 31, 1998).

⁸ Literature, in general, has the value of being a mirror of society along with past and present happenings in it, with the added role of preserving and expanding human knowledge and expressing creatively and innovatively a multiplicity of human experiences about the and living and nonliving creatures in the environment. In Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, we have opportunity to glimpse the complexity of human experiences through the saga of the heroine, Efuru.

⁹ Awa, Sam (2008). "Summary and Analysis of *Efuru* by Flora Nwapa" Retrieved July 15, 2015. <http://www.salvationpress.net/summaries-and-analyses/prose/Efuru>

¹⁰ An Androgyny is gender fluid and does not fit in cleanly into the typical masculine and gender roles of the community. It is a term in transgender topics that could align with gender queer, non-gendered or genderless. However, *Efuru* is a psychological androgyny, neither behavioral (social and personal anomalies in gender) nor physiological (physical traits, such as intersex), because her issues deal with matters of gender identity.

¹¹ In "Understanding Texts," (*S/Z, Seuil: Paris, 1970*), Roland Barthes contrasts the **Readerly text** with the **Writerly text**. Whereas the passive reader merely absorbs the predetermined meaning of a text and does not require the reader to produce her/his own meanings, the writer on the contrary is active and in control of discovering concealed meaning from the text as a producer. The metanarratives or stable meaning of the Readerly text is replaced by a multiplicity of meanings derived from a conscientious disregard of the text's narrative structure. Barthes believes that the writerly text is ideal for modern mythological culture where the lines between the real and the artificial are blurred, adding that the ideal text blurs the distinction between the reader and the writer and the **Author** is obsolete and has been replaced by the **Scriptor**, who in a given text is able to combine pre-existing texts in different ways. He states: "... the networks are many and interact, without any one of them being able to surpass the rest; this text is a galaxy of signifiers, not a structure of signifieds; it has no beginning; it is reversible; we gain access to it by several entrances, none of which can be authoritatively declared to be the main one; the codes it mobilizes extend as far as the eye can reach, they are indeterminable . . . ; the systems of meaning can take over

this absolutely plural text, but their number is never closed, based as it is on the infinity of language" (S/Z, 5).

¹² Among her travails and tribulations are: her mother's early death; her humiliation by her two philandering, cheating, lying, disrespectful and abandoning husbands; her infertility, secondary infertility, and death of her only child; female hostility endured from women of her community and attendant dirty gossip; costly sacrifices in self-pride and loss of self-confidence with illusory recompense, and finally the death of her father, ally and mentor.

¹³ Roland Barthes, "Understanding Texts," (S/Z, Seuil: Paris, 1970).

¹⁴ Joseph Campbell's archetypal map of the Hero's Cycle (Accessed 05/30/2019): <https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&id=5B10F4A1BF67C67410DCAD8DCDD8A59F6ACE3F3E&thid=OIP.r2uDI0HdxNPp7X7-Uzf9LwHaHy&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwes1energymasterkey.files.wordpress.com%2F2014%2F02%2Fherosjourney.gif&exph=800&expw=761&q=joseph+campbell%27s+archetypal+map+of+the+hero%27s+cycle&selectedindex=0&qpv=joseph+campbell%27s+archetypal+map+of+the+hero%27s+cycle&ajaxhist=0&vt=0>

¹⁵ Murdock 1990, 2

¹⁶ Campbell's archetypal map of the Hero's Cycle diagram

¹⁷ Murdock 1990, 2

¹⁸ Joseph Campbell's Theory of The Monomyth and the Hero Cycles. Accessed 06/17/2019. <https://runningfather.files.wordpress.com/2013/03/herosjourney.jpg>

¹⁹ Maureen Murdock's archetypal map of the Heroine's Journey Accessed 05/30/2019:

<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&id=E79CF21DD4893B8D32EAB631B98C38333C60B047&thid=OIP.z8NpVvR9zFHkCedUMIwQVwHaFj&mediaurl=https%3A%2F%2Fimage.slidesharecdn.com%2Fherosjourney20150112-150113091335-conversion-gate01%2F95%2Fsummary-of-the-heros-journey-16-638.jpg%3Fcb%3D1427726934&exph=479&expw=638&q=maureen+murdock%27s+mapping+of+the+archetypal+heroine%27s+cycle&selectedindex=0&ajaxhist=0&vt=0>

²⁰ *The Science of Good & Evil* (TIME Magazine, Special Edition, April-July, 2019).

²¹ Ada Uzoamaka Azodo. "Masculinity and Language in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*," Ed. Ernest N. Emenyonu (*Emerging Perspectives on Chinua Achebe: Omenka the Master Artist: Critical Perspectives on Achebe's Fiction*, (Africa World Press, 2004), 49-64.

See also. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart and Related Readings* (Evanston: McDougal Littell 2002 (1997).

²² Flora Nwapa, *Efurú*. (Ibadan: Heinemann Educational Books, 1989; Chicago: Waveland Press, (2013), 24.

²³ Nwapa 2013, 8-9.

²⁴ Nwapa 2013, 24.

²⁵ Nwapa 2013, 70.

²⁶ Nwapa 2013, 58-61.

²⁷ Nwapa 2013, 155-158.

²⁸ Nwapa 2013, 170-171.

²⁹ Nwapa 2013, 168-170.

³⁰ Nwapa 2013, 172.

³¹ Nwapa 2013, 137.

³² Nwapa 2013, 139.

³³ Murdock 1990, 69

³⁴ Nwapa 2013, 172

³⁵ Jean Markale, *Women of the Celts* (Rochester, VT.: Inner Traditions International, 1986), 100.

³⁶ Nor Hall, *The Moon and the Virgin* (New York: Harper and Row, 1980).

³⁷ Ada Uzoamaka Azodo. *L'imaginaire dans les romans de Camara Laye*. New York, Berne: Peter Lang, 1993.

³⁸ Dreaming is understood to be the link between one's conscious persona and the unconscious that comes up at night when one sleeps. Dreams process intense emotions and an abundance of information and experiences of the day time that the conscious being refuses to process or finds traumatic. Recurring dreams can be linked to anxiety that has not been addressed. Efuru's dreams are of the predictive kind, because in the future will be her upcoming adherence to Uhamiri to regain her emotional and spiritual stability. Her mother also had the same dreams, meaning that she also was traumatized in their patriarchal community. On dreaming, www.californiapsychics.com Accessed 03/31/2019

³⁹ Murdock, 1990, 8.

⁴⁰ Murdock, 1990, 111.

⁴¹ Nwapa 2013, 153.

⁴² Murdock, 1990, 27-28.

See also Kathie Carlson, *In Her Image: The Unhealed Daughter's Search for Her Mother*, 77.

⁴³ Marian Woodman, *In Leaving My Father's House* (1991), 115.

⁴⁴ Joseph Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1949, 35). "Atonement consists in no more than the abandonment of that self-generated double monster—the dragon thought to be God (superego) and the dragon thought to be Sin (repressed id). But this requires an abandonment of the attachment to ego itself, and that is what is difficult. One must have a faith that the father is merciful, and then a reliance on that mercy. Therewith, the center of belief is transferred outside of the bedeviling god's tight scaly ring, and the dreadful ogres dissolve. It is in this ordeal that the hero may derive hope and assurance from the helpful female figure, by whose magic (pollen charms or power of intercession) he is protected through all the frightening experiences of the father's ego-shattering initiation. For if it is impossible to trust the terrifying father-face, then one's faith must be centered elsewhere (Spider Woman, Blessed Mother); and with that reliance for support, one endures the crisis—only to find, in the end, that the father and mother reflect each other, and are in essence the same. The problem of the hero going to meet the father is to open his soul beyond terror to such a degree that he will be ripe to understand how the sickening and insane tragedies of this vast and ruthless cosmos are completely validated in the majesty of Being. The hero transcends life with its peculiar blind spot and for a moment rises to a glimpse of the source. He beholds the face of the father, understands—and the two are atoned."

⁴⁵ Murdock, 1990, 118.

⁴⁶ Ifi Amadiume, *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*. Choice Magazine Outstanding Academic Book 1988-89. "Chapter 5, "The

Ideology of Gender," In: , *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society* (London and New Jersey, Zed Books Publishing, 1995 (1987), 89-98.

⁴⁷ Nwapa 2013, 165.

⁴⁸ James Hillman and Marie-Louise von Franz, *Jung's Typology: The Inferior Function and the Feeling Function* (Dallas, Spring Publications, 1971), 113-114.

⁴⁹ Nwapa 2013, 149-150.

⁵⁰ Murdock 1990, 105.

⁵¹ Nwapa 2013, 106.

See the entire folktale of The Disobedient Daughter, In: *Efuru*, (Chicago: Waveland Press, 2013), 106-111.

⁵² "The reality of our time in history requires that we reverse the patterns of the fairytales—we must go back, restore and heal these female constellations in order to renew and integrate the suppressed masculine element." Madonna Kolbenschlag, *Kiss the Sleeping Beauty Goodbye*, (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979).

⁵³ Nwapa 2013, 110.

⁵⁴ Murdock 1990, 109.

⁵⁵ Egodi Uchendu, "Woman-Woman Marriage in Igboland. "In: *Gender and Sexuality in African Literature and Film*, Eds. Ada Uzoamaka Azodo and Maureen Ngozi Eke, (Trenton, N.J: Africa World Press, 2007), 141-154.

⁵⁶ Joseph Campbell, 1940: "The hero is the champion of things becoming, not of things become, because he is. "Before Abraham was, I AM." He does not mistake apparent changelessness in time for the permanence of Being, nor is he fearful of the next moment (or of the 'other thing'), as destroying the permanent with its change. 'Nothing retains its own form; but Nature, the greater renewer, ever makes up forms from forms. Be sure that nothing perishes in the whole universe; it does but vary and renew its form.' Thus the next moment is permitted to come to pass."

⁵⁷ <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/jME9fIgQMAA/hqdefault.jpg> Accessed 03/24/2019.

⁵⁸ Murdock 1990, 11.

⁵⁹ Murdock 1990, 11.

⁶⁰ P. G. Zolbrod, *Dine bahane: The Navaho Creation Story* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1984), 275.

⁶¹ Maureen Murdock, "The Heroine's Journey." In: *The Encyclopedia of Psychology and Religion*. Ed. David A Leeming, 2016.

⁶² *The Hero's Journey: Joseph Campbell on His Life and Work*. The Collected Works of Joseph Campbell. Introduction by Phil Cousineau, Ed., Foreword by Stuart L. Brown. Novato, CA: New World Library (Joseph Campbell, 2003) [1990].

⁶³ Murdock 1990, 180-181. "A circle has no beginning and no end (...). When one sits in a circle with others, everyone is equal and linked. No one person is in power, the power is shared, and there is no place for egocentrism. Because everyone is interrelated and derives meaning only through the relationship of the circle, each person's vision is transformed as the circle takes form. Magic occurs in circles. A circle is a hug of giving and receiving; it teaches us about unconditional love."

⁶⁴ Murdock 1990, 109.

⁶⁵ Murdock 1990, 31.

Ada Uzoamaka AZODO, Ph.D., researches and teaches in the Humanities, College of Arts and Sciences, Indiana University Northwest, Gary, Indiana, U.S.A.