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THE HUMAN PERSON AS A BEING-WITH-OTHERS IN THE AFRICAN MYTH OF CREATION: A READING IN CHINUA ACHEBE'S THINGS FALL APART AND FLORA NWAPA'S EFURU

Doguema Bakpilna
University of Kara

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ABSTRACT

The African myth of creation portrays the human person as intrinsically relational, a being-with-others. Nature is personified as a mother, the environment is revered as maternal, and the creative force emerges from the interconnectedness among all beings with mother qualified as supreme. However, in many critical works, studies are conducted only on one dimension. Either it is on the human person or the natural environment leading to imbalanced results. This is where comes the originality of this article to demonstrate the interconnections that exist between the human person and the natural environment as depicted in fiction. It lays much emphasis on the similar relationships that exist between women and nature, how they are exploited and the need to fight for their protection. This ecological worldview is vividly represented in African literature through characters depiction and how environment is personified in female form, notably in Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart and Flora Nwapa's Efuru. Through a critical reading of these texts, this article establishes a conceptual foundation for reimagining human relationships with the natural world as it finds itself in the feminine identity. The personification of the earth in Things Fall Apart as goddess, the depiction of the woman of the lake in Efuru and how characters relate to them are symbols central to the analysis. For the exploration, the article uses ecofeminism and African humanism as its theoretical framework for ecological integration rooted in African communal and ecological life. From this article, it results that the human person and the natural environment are interconnected. A peaceful interaction between them can lead to a peaceful coexistence in the African ecology as represented in literature through the myth of creation.

Keywords: Ecofeminism, Nature, Women, The Human Person, African Literature.

1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of the human person as a "being-with-others" in African ecology is deeply rooted in African philosophy and communalism. In many African traditions, personhood is not seen as an isolated existence but rather as an interconnected reality where individuals find meaning through relationships with others and their environment. Analyzing the Ife creation myth, A. I. Kanu remarks that creation has included many elements. He writes:

> In the Ife creation myth, the Supreme Being used different element in the work of creation, which include: a bag of loose earth, a gold chain, chameleon and a five-toed hen. As insignificant as any of these might look, God considered them very fundamental in his act of creation, and his use of them points to the fact that everything in nature has its place and its purpose just as the human person has his or her place and purpose. This helps the human

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> person to understand that he or she is not the only being in the world, but a being with others which goes beyond physical realities but also encompasses spiritual forces, of which sometimes, the physical realities are manifestations of their presence and power. (2021, p.123)

Just like A. I. Kanu's presentation of the Ife creation myth, African ontology often emphasizes Ubuntu, a philosophy that embodies the idea that "I am because we are." This perspective highlights the communal nature of human existence, where women and men thrive through mutual support, shared responsibilities, and collective well-being. The ecological aspect of this philosophy further integrates the human person into the natural world, recognizing that harmony with man woman and nature is essential for sustaining life and community. "This understanding of the human person as a being-with-others and not the only being in creation requires that the human person treats other beings with respect and relates with them in manner that shows understanding of the rules of negotiation." (A. I. Kanu, p.123). I this regard, it claims that men treat women with respect and human beings treat nature with respect to achieve balance and harmony.

However, in many critical works, studies are conducted only on one dimension. Either it is on the human person or the natural environment, leading to imbalanced results. This is where comes the originality of this article to demonstrate the interconnections that exist between man, woman and the natural environment as depicted in fiction. It lays much emphasis on the similar relationships that exist between women and nature, how they are exploited and the need to fight for their protection. This ecological worldview is vividly represented in African literature through characters depiction and how environment is personified in female form; notably in C. Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and F. Nwapa's *Efuru*. Through a critical reading of these texts, this article establishes a conceptual foundation for reimagining human relationships with the natural world as it finds itself in the feminine identity. The personification of the earth in *Things Fall Apart* as goddess, the depiction of the woman of the lake in *Efuru* and how characters relate to them are symbols central to the analysis. For the exploration of the corpus, the analysis uses ecofeminism and African humanism as its theoretical framework for ecological integration rooted in African communal and ecological life. Based African humanism as a theory, Masolo posits that "The African conception of the person is fundamentally relational, and this relationality extends beyond the human to include the spiritual and natural worlds." (2020, p. 7). It appears here in total disagreement that African philosophy "is centered more on man than on God or on nature" (Booth, 1890, p.6). The term ecofeminism was first coined by the French feminist F. d'Eaubonne in 1974 in her book *Feminism or Death* in order to name the connection between the patriarchal subjugation of women and the destruction of nature.

The theory admits that there is a great and close relationship between women and nature because not only do women and nature give birth, but they are also dominated and oppressed by men. Thus, they advocate that, just like men control and destroy the environment for their own benefit, they control and oppress women too. Ecofeminism advocates that women and men should try to befriend nature and also try to reduce the destruction of the environment as much as possible and create and maintain a healthy environment to repair social as well as environmental injustice. This convergence between African humanism and ecofeminism offers a robust framework for addressing not only social fragmentation but also ecological degradation.

From this article, it results that the human person and the natural environment are interconnected. A peaceful interaction between them can lead to a peaceful coexistence in the African ecology as represented in literature through the myth of creation. This is a hope to reconnect humanity with natural elements in a form of cocreators of a powerful and holistic

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universe. The article is divided into three sections. first section analysis the personification of the environment in the African myth. The second section talks of the representation of mother nature in African literature and the third section demonstrates how creation is given power in the depiction of fictitious facts in African literature. Based on the corpus under study, the following three subsections will work out the different aspects that traditional Africans put at work to identify the human person as a being with others in the African ecology. It will definitely show the interactions that exist between women and the natural environment and seek their protection for ecological balance.

2. PERSONIFICATION OF THE ENVIRONMENT IN AFRICAN MYTH OF CREATION

African literature often employs personification to give nature a voice, making the environment an active participant in storytelling rather than a passive backdrop. This technique is deeply rooted in African oral traditions, where rivers, forests, and animals are imbued with human-like qualities, reflecting the interconnectedness between people and their surroundings. Personification of the environment in African literature is then a powerful literary and cultural tool—one that transforms nature from a passive backdrop into an active, feeling presence that speaks, remembers, and even judges. The Nri myth of creation includes vegetation in a participative manner with human characteristics. It reads as follows:

> In Nri myth, vegetation which includes Yam, Cocoyam, Planatin, etc., which also constitutes a part of the environment is personified as the resurrected son and daughter of Eri the proto ancestor of the Nri people- given to mankind for their sustenance. Within this context of personification of creation, creation is presented as deserving of respect and honour.(A. I. Kanu, 2021, p.124)

As such, in many African folktales and modern narratives, elements like rivers, trees, animals, and even the wind are given human traits—they weep, rejoice, warn, or retaliate. This isn't just poetic flair; it reflects a worldview where the environment is alive and spiritually significant. For example, in traditional storytelling, a drought might be described as the land "withholding its breath," or a tree might "mourn" the loss of a child.

In his novels, C. Achebe uses the technic of personification of nature to make the point that creation has been done, but management is only in the hand of man. Nature is personified because of its high sense of productivity and change. Nature is not eternal good and harmless. When mismanaged, it has the ability of expressing anger and rejection toward the element that has caused the wrong, based on unethical environment management. The historian D. Webster clarifies:

> We are facing a global crisis today, not because of how ecosystems function but rather because of how our ethical systems function. Getting through the crisis requires understanding our impact on nature as precisely as possible, but even more, it requires understanding those ethical systems and using that understanding to reform them. Historians, along with literary scholars, anthropologists, and philosophers, cannot do the reforming, of course, but they can help with the understanding" (D. Worster, 1993, p.17).

So, the fact of understanding nature as a being that can feel pain and can even die just as human beings could enable its efficient protection. The fight for environmental degradation must be looked at as something different from human beings, it should rather be seen as such. The fictitious Umuofia people in *Things Fall Apart* live in full interaction with the earth which they name as Ani. Every year, appropriate rituals are performed to her for different purposes. It may

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be to ask for forgiveness, to seek for agricultural productivity, to seek protection or to thank the earth for giving them a good production. The narrator of *Things Fall Apart* informs the reader: "The Feast of the New Yam was approaching and Umuofia was in a festival mood. It was an occasion for giving thanks to Ani, the earth goddess and the source of all fertility. Ani played a greater part in life of the people than any other deity" (TFA, 26). Through this extract, Achebe gives power to the earth as the source of all fertility. It also gives credit to the Nri creation myth explaining "why every year, the Igbo celebrate the New Yam Festival. It is not only a celebration of the harvest but an honouring of the first son of Eri".(A. I. Kanu, 2021, p.124) The yam that is presented is not just a yam, it is like human being offered in sacrifice to the earth.

With Ani, the soil is even given a name to make its existence sound real to human beings so that what is forbidden may be socially understood. The earth goddess is said to play a greater part in the life of the people because all the wealth is generated from the earth. Whether it is agricultural products or all sort of plant, everything is generated by the fertility produced in the earth. Having all this continence of wealth becomes a moral obligation for human beings to bow down in respect of what is ordered to be done. Even in case of bad death, such as resulting from an abomination, such human corpses are not allowed to be buried in the earth. In the Igbo culture, when someone dies from a swollen stomach, it is considered as insane for the wellbeing of the earth. The narrator in *Things Fall Apart* explains: "The sickness was an abomination to the earth, and so the victim could not be buried in her bowels. He died and rotted away above the earth, and was not given the first or the second burial. Such was Unoka's fate (TFA, 13). It's the peoples' belief that burring such a corpse will infect the soil and it will naturally fail sick just like human beings. So, by falling sick, it could not be productive enough for them or it could produce what is infected by evil.

Closely analyzed in *Things Fall Apart*, it's the understanding of African indigenous tribes like Umuofia that whatever is not carrying the representation of human in a spiritual form provokes no fear. To be human and spiritual at the same time gives a certain power that goes beyond the understanding human beings. When the natural environment is personified, power is added to it in the eyes of human. Personification as visible and spirit put together result in an efficient strategy to protect the African ecology. The Igbo culture as part of the African major culture has a different understanding of what a tree, a forest or simply the environment stands for. The forest holds a special place in the Ibo society. In chapter six of *Things Fall Apart*, the narrator informs the reader of how the environment is represented in the community gatherings:

> The wrestlers were not there yet and the drummers held the field. They too sat just in front of the huge spectators, facing the elders. Behind them was the big and ancient silk-cotton tree which was sacred. Spirits of good children lived in that tree wanting to be born. On ordinary days young women who desired children came to sit under its shade (TFA, 33).

In traditional African indigenous life, the different festivals and all the manifestations that required the gathering of people were always organized in the forest or under a big tree large enough to represent the forest as a whole. This explains the obligation the Umuofia people have to keep big trees around them and even well protected forests referred to as "evil forest". Just like illustrated in the above extract, "the forest holds a special place in the Ibo society", and the whole African society by extension. The Igbo people understood it that way and accepted it as a social agent not different from them. The big and ancient silk-cotton tree is said to be sacred because it has the ability to bless women with children. This ability of making things happen makes of the silk-cotton tree powerful than a simple tree. It is true a tree never moves from its initial place to the other, but traditional Africans believed that this is the way its created and it

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even has the ability to resist against all kind of tornado and horrible things outside. Rooted on the same spot, it has the ability to see from afar and even in a distant future. This aspect will be discussed better in the section devoted to spiritual trees. What maters here is the personification of the environment.

In *Things Fall Apart*, the manifestation of nature is seen as a strength beyond human control. But the people believe in the ability of nature to act otherwise against the expectations of human beings. Elsewhere in the novel, Umuofia has suffered a terrible drought which caused a lot of trouble in the normal process of life. From the novel, the incident reads:

> For two or three moons the sun had been gathering strength till it seemed to breathe a breath of fire on the earth. All the grass had long been scorched brown, and the sands felt like live coals to the feet. Evergreen trees wore a dusty coat of brown. The birds were silenced in the forests, and the world lay panting under the live, vibrating heat. And then came the clap of thunder. It was an angry, metallic and thirsty clap, unlike the deep and liquid rumbling of the rainy season. A mighty wind arose and filled the air with dust. Palm trees swayed as the wind combed their leaves into flying crests like strange and fantastic coiffure' (TFA, 93-94).

In the extract, the sun is addressed as a human being that has decided to menace the earth by breathing fire on her. The description of "the two or three moons drought" is perceived as horrible and unsupportable for all the beings including vegetables and the earth. Earth can only procreate when she is given the seed. In her womb, she makes it sprout through rain fall. Then when nature is put into anger, calamity is expected. Sacrifices, ritual cleansing and the respect of the different totems and taboos help appease the anger on nature in the setting of *Things fall Apart*. Thanks to the spiritual consolation of the chi of nature, the rain finally falls as heavy as ever without the rain maker being able to control it as it reads as follows:

> And now the rains had really come, so heavy and persistent that even the village rain-maker no longer claimed to be able to intervene. He could not stop the rain now, just as he would not attempt to start it in the heart of the dry season, without serious danger to his own health…So nature was not interfered with in the middle of the rainy season (TFA, 24).

Here, nature is seen as a super being which acts on its own. Even the rain maker who is known to be able to provoke the rain has his power limited at a point. So, the management is personal to the understanding of nature and how it pleases it. Nobody interferes in what it decides as best. If we are to make it larger, rain fall is not only meant to satisfy the needs of human beings. It falls to feed the earth as a whole. Rain is like impregnating the earth so that she could produce vegetation for the wellbeing of all sort of beings. When humans are satisfied, the earth still needs more to be able to feed the other beings. The same logic can be understood when there is drought. Drought may mean a specific treatment that nature offers to the earth after an abnormal conduct. These independent occurrences of nature make Umuofia as a fictitious representation of traditional Africa has a strong respect towards nature and all its spiritual representations. Thanks to the mechanisms of nature, the earth can be resurrected. The narrator informs the reader of the state of Umuofia after the rain: "The earth quickly came to life and the birds in the forests fluttered around and chirped merrily. A vague scent of life and green vegetation was diffused in the air. As the rain began to fall more soberly and in smaller liquid drops, children sought for shelter, and all were happy, refreshed and thankful" (TFA, 94). Earth is understood as an active being which responds to stimulation.

To land, the personification of the natural environment in *Things Fall Apart* gives reason for characters' loyalty in respecting the ancestral ecological laws. The disrespect of the

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environment is followed by punishment as a being of authority. In the novels under study, the environment is not only personified; it is also considered as mother. The following section will shed light on the virtues of motherhood displayed by nature in the novels under study.

3. THE REPRESENTATION OF MOTHER NATURE IN THE CORPUS UNDER STUDY

Mother nature is a form of personification of the environment identified in woman. The above having been devoted at this task, this section intends to have an extended analysis of mother nature beyond personification in the novels under study. In African literature, Mother Nature is often portrayed as a sacred, nurturing, and morally conscious force; a living presence that shapes the spiritual, cultural, and ecological dimensions of human life. Mother Nature is frequently personified as a goddess, mother, or ancestral spirit, embodying fertility, wisdom, and protection. In F. Nwapa's *Efuru*, for instance, the river goddess Uhamiri represents not just water, but a powerful feminine force tied to beauty, wealth, and spiritual calling. Nature here is not passive; it chooses, blesses, and guides. In *Things Fall Apart*, the role played by women is associated with that of nature. The quality of mother is a common experience to both nature and women. When Okonkwo goes to his mother land on exile, he bears a sorrowful face, but Uchendu presents him the power of his mother land to soothe him:

> Why is Okonkwo with us today? This is not his clan. We are only his mother's kinsmen. He does not belong here. He is in exile, condemned for seven years to live in a strange land. And so he is bowed with grief. But there is just one question I would like to ask him. Can you tell me, Okonkwo, why is that one of the commonest names we give our children in Nneka, or 'Mother is Supreme'? We all know that a man is the head of the family and his wives do his bidding. A child belongs to its father and his family and not to its mother and her family. A man belongs to his fatherland and not to his motherland. And yet we say Nneka-'Mother is supreme.' Why is that?" Uchendu asks 'Why is that when a woman dies, she is taken home to be buried with her own kinsmen'? *Okonkwo shows his ignorance. Uchendu further explains* 'It's true that a child belongs to its father. But when a father beats his child, it seeks sympathy in its mother's hut. A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness, he finds refuge in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you. She is buried there. And that is why we say that mother is supreme. Is it right that you, Okonkwo, should bring to your mother a heavy face and refuse to be comforted? Be careful or you may displease the dead. Your duty is to comfort your wives and children and take them back to your fatherland after seven years. But if you allow sorrow to weigh you down and kill you, they will all die in exile' (TFA, 96-97).

The qualities as "Mother is supreme", "sympathy", refuge, belonging and motherland are associated to woman to show the ability of caring for what she has nursed herself as a mother and the pain that she experienced. It is in the same way that mother nature is caring for her beings. When humans violate spiritual or ecological balance, the land responds through droughts, floods, or silence. This is especially evident in the poetry of Niyi Osundare and Tanure Ojaide, where the earth "speaks" through metaphor and protest, warning against exploitation and injustice. The symbol of "mother nature" in *Things Fall Apart* can be understood through the role played by mother and nature. In real life, the mother is the protector of the child in every situation. She can even give her life to protect her child. "Your mother is

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there to protect you" as Uchendu consols Okonkwo is the expression of the power of mother. This quality of the mother is explained by her knowledge of how much it costs to procreate and raise up a being. The same thing is expressed through the functioning of nature.

In the presentation of the African myth of creation, every being has its own process of existence and is fed in a way beyond human understanding. Only nature has the mastery of how life is possible all over the planet. Mother is supreme in the sense of the role of supremacy found in nature. Like the earth has the ability to house everything it contains, the female person possesses similar qualities to protect humanity. In F. Nwapa's *Efuru*, the woman of the lake has the ability to control the management of the lake. She is able to be represented by certain women on earth of her choice to do her biddings. Efuru is the incarnation of that woman: "…she is so beautiful. You would think that the woman of the lake is her mother. Her mother died five years ago; she too was a very beautiful woman." Like her mother, Efuru is born to serve the woman of the lake. She has to offer sacrifices to her on special days to call upon fertility. The debia explains as follows:

> Nwashike, this is what your daughter will do every Afo day. She is to sacrifice to the ancestors. It is not much, but she will have to do it regularly. Every Afo day, she is to buy uziza, alligator pepper, and kola from the market. Uziza must be bought every Nkwo day from pregnant woman. Every Afo day before the sun goes down or when the sun is here, he pointed to the direction, 'she should put these things in a small calabash and go down to the lake; there she will leave the calabash to float away. (Efuru, 25-26)

Like Ani in *Things Fall Apart*, the woman of the lake in *Efuru* appears as the protector, the provider and the source of justice to water bodies. When her laws are respected, she comes gives much of her wealth to humanity. For being the incarnation of the woman of the lake, Efuru is valued as followed: "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 worshipers. It is a great honour. She is going to shower riches on you. But you must keep her laws". (Efuru, 191-192). Nature as a mother has a very important significance in African ecology. It's a symbol of renewal and rebirth in the ecology. Weather variation and the alternation of seasons are possible thanks to her. The productivity in plants in their different manners happen in the mechanics of nature and the wealth human beings keep amassing is provided by her. Addressing to her as mother and respecting her laws is to increase better conditions of life. The woman of the lake exists as a myth. But in action, her presence reads. Only those who are closer to her could perceive her existence and the power she has. In the novel the woman of the lake is said to be a very kind woman and her worshippers are very rich women. Her laws are very simple and her taboos are related to the protection of the river where her abode is. The regulation on fishing and water use give way to her endless wealth. As a mother, nature does not impose to humanity difficult conditions of life. In *Things Fall Apart*, what Ani clams to Umuofia is peace, justice and the respect of the earth. When this is done, her increase is liberated. If nature is personified into a female form in the novels under study, it is to express how productive it is. This brings a reflection on how powerful creation is. Still based on the corpus under study, the following section will elaborate of the power of creation to show the reason why creation is mythologically presented in African indigenous storytelling.

4. THE POWER OF CREATION

The power of creation in African ecology is deeply intertwined with nature, women, tradition, and spirituality. Across the continent, ecosystems are shaped not just by natural forces, but by human stewardship that dates back thousands of years. In the words of Callicott,

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> *The typical traditional African attitude* (italics mine) was to regard all features of the environment as inspirited. These entities possessed a consciousness, reason, and volition, no less intense and complete than human beings. The Earth itself, the sky, the winds, rocks, streams, trees, insects, birds and all other animals therefore had personalities and were thus as fully as other human beings" (Callicott,1983, p.243).

This traditional African way of living was in complete respect of the power of creation. It is important to note that the power of creation here is the spirit of the invisible universe around which mythologies are built in the vision of knowing in which way to do the ecological unknown biddings. It does not have any specific form of representation, but a complex overwhelming surrounding force. In this regard, A. I. Kanu writes:

> The study of the relationship or implications of African mythologies for the preservation and management of the eco-system is because of the place that African myths occupy in the African's effort towards understanding the organization of his or her universe and the patterns by which he or she tries to maintain the balance and the harmony of the world. (2021, p.125)

In the novels under study, the power of creation is depicted as an expression of an African ancestral contract of settlement within the natural environment. The power of creation in African novels implicit, but its presence reads and is impactful on characters daily behavior. That African spirit of creation generally expresses fear and control over human beings. This manifestation is expressed when the ancestral laws towards nature are violated. Blessings also fall when the norms are respected.

In African literature, the power of creation within ecology is often portrayed as a sacred, reciprocal relationship between humans and the natural world—one rooted in ancestral wisdom, spiritual reverence, and cultural continuity. Depicting the Igbo cultural system in *Things Fall Apart*, C. Achebe's imaginative art resorts: "Darkness held a vague terror for these people, even the bravest among them. Children were warned not to speak at night for fear of evil spirits. Dangerous animals became even more sinister and uncanny in the dark. A snake was never called by its name at night, because it would hear. It was called a sting." (TFA, 7) This extract expresses a certain fear in the manifestation of the power of creation especially at night when the whole universe is dark. In the African symbol of creation, the night belongs to the spirit of creation. It's the African understanding that the power of creation needs calm and harmony. This is surely the reason why the snake was not called by its name and the environment itself was hostile to whoever may dare to venture in it uninvited.

To speak like Garrard, "Dwelling is not a transient state; rather, it implies the long –term imbrications of humans in a landscape of memory, ancestry and death, of ritual, life and work' (Garrard, 2004,108). So, to dwell in the universe requires an understanding of the landscapes and the unseen world as being interconnected. This is where "the definition of the nature and the powers of beings in the universe by African mythologies help the African know how to relate with the environment" (A. I. Kanu, 2021, p. 125). Ancestors in that logic act as angels in fulfilling the mission of the power of creation through prophets like debias and chief priests. The spirit of creation is found through the symbol of the shrine of the Oracle or any god or goddess. In *Things Fall Apart*, the Oracle of Umuofia is presented thus:

> The Oracle was called Agbala, and people came from far and near to consult it. They came when misfortune dogged their steps or when they had dispute with their neighbours. They came to discover what the future held for them or to consult the spirit of their departed fathers.

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> They way into the shrine was a round hole and found at the side of a hill, just a little bigger than the round opening into a hen-house. Worshippers and those who came to seek knowledge from the god crawled on their belly through the hole and found themselves in a dark, endless space in the presence of Agbala. No one had ever beheld Agbala, except his priestess. But no one who had ever crawled into his awful shrine had come out without the fear of his power. His priestess stood by the sacred fire which she built in the heart of the cave and proclaimed the will of the god. The fire did not burn with a flame. Glowing logs only served to light up vaguely the dark figure of the priestess.
>
> Sometimes a man came to consult the spirit of his dead father or relative. It was said that when such a spirit appeared, the man saw it vaguely in the darkness, but never heard its voice. Some people even said that they had heard the spirits flying and flipping their wings against the roof of the cave. (TFA, 13)

The African power of creation is exposed through the presentation of Agbala and his interaction with human beings and the ancestral spirits. The shrine is the environment in which the spirit of Agbala expresses a strong fear. The fear in question is human because of the strange presence of the unseen spirits around. Not that the power of the spirit is destructive on the innocent, but just an expression of authority and immediate impact. Cooperation with the power of creation comes with a number of implications. Quoting from A. I. Kanu (2021) these implications include:

> The understanding of the universe as sacred, given that it was created by God; the understanding of the physical universe as a manifestation of spirit beings; the understanding of creation as the home of the human person, which must be preserved; the understanding of the human person as a steward and who must give an account of his stewardship; the understanding of the human person as a being-with-others. (p.125)

The human aware of his or her imperfections in the respect of these above environmental laws is bound to be fearful. Creation cannot be understood as being precious without a strong power of fear behind it to insure respect and good conduct from human beings. As a matter of this fact, despite the fear of Agbala, he has the ability to inform the people of their future or create a dialog between the person seeking knowledge and his or her departed parent. “This calls for a high level of sensitivity to the being of others” (A. I. Kanu, 2021, p.125) Ancestors being the angels of traditional African power of creation, it makes the organization of the spiritual world a local reality instead of a universal power management.

Each part of the world has its sub power of creation just like Agbala. Since realities are not the same, only a given local environment can understand the functioning of the spiritual power around area. Umuofia does not have any problems with the oracle; they do what they must do to insure a cultural and environmental unity of progress. Trying to transform the power of creation into a unique principle turns to kill the local spirit of creation by leading to emptiness in a vacuum of worship. This is to say, without the local spiritual power, African tribes become empty and powerless spaces. Unfortunately, as McKibben remarks, “we have changed the atmosphere, and thus we are changing the weather. By changing the weather, we make every spot-on earth man made and artificial. We have deprived nature of its independence, and that is fatal to its meaning. Nature’s independence is its meaning; without it there is nothing but us” (McKibben, 1990, p.54). There is something to correct in the last point of the quotation from McKibben; without nature we are nothing at all. Rending natural things artificial is what has

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led to the current African loss of balance and control. Everything is falling Apart because the African natural power of creation is transformed into an artificial reality. Creation becomes beautiful thanks to the variety of practices all over the planet. Even the nine villages in *Things Fall Apart* have their personal approach to the power of creation. If the planet has different weathers, different landscapes, different soil components, different species, different skin colors, then the power of creation is also shared to fulfil each local needs.

5. CONCLUSION

This article has demonstrated how the traditional African person has been able to personify the natural elements in order to give them the rights of protection. It has come out with the result that this method has enabled ecological sustainability and environmental harmony. As theoretical framework, it has used ecofeminism of Francoise d' Eaubonne(1974) with a collaborative connection with African humanism as supported by Masolo(2020). *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe and Efuru by Flora Nwapa have been the corpus used for textual analysis. In the discussion, three sections have been developed.

The first section has worked out the different personification strategies used by the two writers to address natural elements. It resorts that these personification strategies have been put to work by traditional Africans to values nature and her diverse creatures. It is this valorization that validated ecological balance. In the second section, the article has demonstrated how nature is considered as the mother of beings in the corpus under study. This consideration has come from the depiction of *Things Fall Apart* and *Efuru* where characters consider natural elements as being the source of procreation and fertility. It has concluded that the African nature is the mother of everything that exists and deserves absolute respect and veneration in the form of a goddess as is the case of Ani in *Things Fall Apart* and the woman of the lake in *Efuru*. The third section has focused itself on the manifestations of the power of creation as visibly rampant in the novels under study. Creation is expressed into power only when there is fair interaction among beings be it animal, vegetal or mineral. Within its functioning, creation comes with a process of cohabitation and progress. This is the reason why in *Things Fall Apart* the goddess, Ani works with human beings as well as she interacts with certain persons in the form of priests and priestesses. The section has found that in the power of creation, the divine is seen in every being which abides by the natural principles. It also found that women and nature are inseparably linked and their interactions enhances the wellbeing in the ecosystem. On that note, the article recommends that natural elements and women be recognized as as symbols of the power of creation that gives the right of life and protection to the ecosystem.

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