

## BLACKNESS AND WOMANHOOD IN EMECHETA'S SECOND CLASS CITIZEN: THE ORDEAL

**B.Mythili<sup>1</sup>, Dr.P. Parthiban<sup>2</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>Ph.D. Research Scholar in English, Chikkaiah Naicker Arts and Science College, Erode

<sup>2</sup>Asst. Professor, Department of English, Chikkaiah Naicker Arts and Science College, Erode

### **Abstract**

Emecheta's books examine the various definitions of motherhood and womanhood as they are understood by the women who serve as her main characters in Nigerian society. The biological control of women, wherein sexuality and the capacity for procreation are the only criteria used to define womanhood, and the economic control of women under the colonially imposed capitalism system are concerns that she is equally, honestly, concerned with.

Keywords: Womanhood, Racial discrimination.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The novel *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta is semi-autobiographical. Her work was recognised with many prizes, including the British Empire in 2005, after it was extensively published in 1974. A woman named Adah and her marriage to Francis are the subjects of this book, which is set in Lagos, Nigeria, during World War II. Despite the fact that Adah's life first seems idyllic, things quickly take a turn for the worst when it becomes apparent that Francis was a physical and emotional abuser. Some of the apparent flaws in the book would be better understood if read as a personal development novel, *Second Class Citizen*.

Through the description of Adah's battle in the book, the readers are introduced to Emecheta's childhood marriage and her own struggle for basic survival. Adah rebels against her husband's oppression and files for divorce at the conclusion of the book *Second Class Citizen*. The main character of *Second Class Citizen*, Adah, is shown as a bright, aspirational young lady who must overcome great obstacles in order to pursue an education. Buchi Emecheta explains how African women succeed by means of contemporary Nigerian society and offers justifications for why they ought to be treated similarly. The narrative was a

fantastic illustration of how males have treated women and why they should never mistreat women.

Emecheta aims to illustrate how pervasive gender bias is in a patriarchal society in her book *Second Class Citizen*. Adah, the protagonist of the book, challenges her fate by rebelling against the harsh rules and traditions. Lloyd W. Brown comments on Adah, stating that "Emecheta's heroine is more concerned with issues like breaking the bonds of poverty and achieving middle class status than highlighting gender bias in a highly patriarchal society."

There is a widespread belief in traditional African society that women are treated inferiorly due to their sexuality, and that Africans living in England are treated inferiorly due to their skin tone. In Africa, sex is viewed as a second-class citizen, and in England, it is based on the subject's skin tone. She is hence a victim of both racial and sexual oppression.

According to Katherine Frank, Adah's anatomy plays a much bigger role in her second-class status than her skin tone does. Emecheta protests the male-oriented culture in this book to show her discontent with it. Adah, the book's main character, has battled colonial, racial, and sexual persecution since she was a young child. She is from a tribal culture that values men over women and considers women to be inferior, dependent, and subordinate.

Adah was portrayed in these instances as the culmination of various processes from colonial discourse. Through her biographical novel, Emecheta shed light on the experience of black immigrants in Britain. Emecheta responds to western civilization by using their language and literary style, which combines oral literary elements of African civilisation.

The issue of racial discrimination and how Emecheta utilises it to shape her protagonist in her work have been covered in this study. That was when the main character transitioned from a position of dominance and subordination to one of self-awareness, gaining the ability to make her own decisions, refuse to submit to any type of oppression, and establish their separate. Analysis reveals that Adah is aware of the fact that Francis wanted his failure to be her failure as well, therefore she was not successful in her marriage and was not happy. With her kids, she ends her marriage. She begins her life with the prospect of a bright future.

The African woman never makes herself an adversary nor organises an attack against her male dominance. Finally, a closer examination of Emecheta's primary characters yields a convincing result that each of her fictitious characters fits a particular profile.

The main characters in Emecheta are highly self-aware or self-evaluative. The main characters of Emecheta are depicted in the form of staging life via various negative consequences and stereotypes in order to have a successful outcome. Major female characters can aid the artist in presenting images of African women and their substance.

Sadly, the author portrays the helpless African woman as having her life defined by the males in her community. Buchi Emecheta exploited the distinctive qualities of style as a tradition as a result. We may infer from analysis and research that language use played a significant role in the novel's structure and theme. The work reads easily because of the straightforward language. Emecheta uses colloquial, proverbial, and symbolic language in *Second Class Citizen*. Her infectious style of humour helped the reader unwind and enjoy the book.

## CONCLUSION

However, the main motto of Emecheta was accomplished by making a wonderful attempt in portraying such a bold and fascinating woman who is almost the resemblance of her own-self in the form of Adah. She has exhibited the courage of black women to survive boldly among the suppressing world in all means. The issue of gender bias, racial discrimination, inequality in and out of families excellently exhibited through the plot. Adah was pictured in a way that the same culture which made a lot of women suppress has also made a set of women who were ready to survive with boldness in any sort of situation as they have underwent a lot of struggles that pays the result of their optimistic life.

## Workcited:

1. Barthelemy, Anthony. "Western Time, African Lives: Time in the Novels of Buchi Emecheta", *Callaloo*, vol. 40, 1989, pp. 559-574.
2. Yakubu, Anthonia Mohammad. "The Valuation of Women's Work in Nigeria Literature" *Women in the Academy*, 2004, pp. 71-83.