



The Voice of Subjected Women: Patriarchal and Gender biased in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*

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Abstract: This study looks at Francis as a father figure in *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta and how his acts affect the main character, Adah. By looking at Francis's actions and thoughts, the study hopes to learn more about gender inequality and how hard patriarchal systems can be. It turns out that Francis is a representation of male power because he limits Adah's freedom and supports gender stereotypes by being mean to both men and women and treating them differently. This research shows how Francis's authority affected Adah's goals, self-perception, emotional health, and options. This shows how far-reaching Francis's effect was. This article's goal is to look at the people in *Second-Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta. Further it deals with about, gender identity, and other problems that people face every day. Women are free and equal to men when they are born, but society has too many rules that make them feel like "the other" and less important than men.

Key Words: Patriarchal , Gender biased, Discrimination , Colonialism, Racism

Introduction

'Florence OnyeBuchi Emecheta' was the first women story writer in Africa. She was born on July 21 in the year 1944 in Lagos Nigeria and she passed away on January 25, 2017 in London, England. Her stories focused on the themes like gender, race, identity and the struggles faced by women especially the lives of African women. Her writings are mostly about her own life and the problems she faced in England. "Buchi Emecheta was a writer from one of the colonized African nations, Nigeria, and her novels mainly focus on the conflicts between modernity and tradition as well as the problematic and uneven position of women in colonist and African societies"(Abubakar 1534)

Second Class Citizen is one of her best known book, which was published in 1974. The book is all about Adah, who was managing to live in a white European society carrying her dreams with challenges. She faced many problems as a mother, wife and also as a woman who took care of her whole family as a single woman. Being black and having low self esteem was also affecting her life. Adah thought that her marriage can be the better life but it was not. Her husband Francis treated her like a property as she was in charge of kids and fed the whole family. When she left her husband she started her life newly with relief and peace. She was strong and had willpower and worked hard which helped her to win in the end. Adah's parents want her to educate "Adah's parents think about her continuation of education in this way: "A year or two would do, as long as she can write her name and count. Then she will learn how to sew" (Emecheta 3). So, this story is all about a woman who



fought for her independent life and personal fulfilment, who struggled with poverty, domestic violence, and social standards between men and women.

Male-Dominated Society

The novel clearly shows how Francis represents male power and how badly it affects Adah. The research argues that men like Francis use their position in society to control women and make them feel small. This is very unfair. Adah is a strong and intelligent woman, but her husband limits her freedom and treats her without respect. The researcher believes women should be free to follow their dreams and live with dignity.

This story made me realize how much women suffer because of patriarchal systems, and how important it is for both men and women to be treated equally. It also made me respect Adah for not giving up and standing up for herself. “One might think on this evidence that Africans treated their children badly. But to Adah’s people and to Adah herself, this was not so at all; it was the custom” (Emecheta 19).

The Existence of a Paternal Decree

The novel is about Adah's journey through a world that doesn't trust women and doesn't let them be free. One of the key ideas of the book is that men and women are not the same. Emecheta illustrates that male habits and norms constrain the options and aspirations of women. Adah’s marriage and motherly duties are more important than her own goals because of cultural norms. These rules are really tight, and it's evident that they make it impossible for her to receive an education and attain her goals.

As the African society is a patriarchal one, men are privileged while women are oppressed. It means to say that African society practices gender discrimination and prescribe traditional roles to men and women according to their gender. And it is the womankind who suffers in this sexism. (Bedana and Sangeeta, 33).

The topic of what it's like to be a foreigner is also explored in *Second Class Citizen*. Adah's decision to leave Nigeria for the UK reveals that she wants a better life and more opportunities than she has in Nigeria. Another issue that makes it hard for her is that she has to deal with problems in a different country because she is an immigrant. It's hard to become adjusted to a new culture, and people who are new to it sometimes suffer hostility. Emecheta illustrates how much people desire to be a part of something.

In the middle of the 20th century, Nigeria had a mix of traditional views about males and the effects of colonialism. “Adah has very little expectation from her husband concerning love, fidelity, companionship. As the patriarchal culture promises, Adah does not have the right to make a decision in the family matters even though she earns much more money than her husband”(Haner 151). The way men were treated in *Second Class Citizen* and the rules of society were formed by economic, political, and social influences. To comprehend how hard it was for women in Nigeria to fight for freedom and equality at that time, you need to know about the history and culture of the country.

Gender Biased

“Emecheta's writings, the most of which are based on her personal experiences, address the numerous and intersecting identities that comprise African women.”(Saritha 76).In *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta, gender bias is clearly shown through the character of Francis and the way he treats Adah. Francis is a controlling husband who always makes decisions for both of them without asking for Adah’s opinion. “Francis by saying that all marriages are “a gamble” (Emecheta, 8) He expects her to forgive him and continue being a good wife. This shows the double standards in society — where men can make mistakes and still be accepted, but women are expected to be perfect. .



Buchi Emecheta's book *Second Class Citizen* shows that Francis is a domineering jerk who wants men and women to have different amounts of power. "Francis, the protagonist in the novel *Second Class Citizen* is the representation of a character entrenched in patriarchal values" (Jeevan 4972). In such way "That is why Francis' parents like Adah: "A woman would be forgiven everything as long as she produce children" (P. 28).

Francis cheats on Adah, yet he wants her to stay faithful to him. Francis doesn't care if Adah is scared that he is cheating on her. This makes the power difference even worse and makes it tougher for Adah to meet her own emotional needs. Lastly, his behavior and thoughts reinforce gender roles and stereotypes, which keeps women in a system of oppression that is predicated on men.

Emecheta portrays her central character as courageous, determined and capable of struggling against all hard conditions. By means of the main characters Adah and Francis in the novel, Emecheta also presents colonised immigrants' loss of self-respect and experiences of being homeless in Britain (Ayyildiz, 139)

Adah's experiences and personal progress have been harmed by sexism since he is dismissive, has two sets of rules, and supports gender standards. In Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*, the way men treat women has a big effect on a girl named Adah's life. These are the most crucial aspects that indicate how Adah's life was impacted by patriarchy: Francis denied her dream to become a writer "Therefore, he tries to kill her spirit of becoming a writer by burning her first manuscript of "Bride Price", a short story that she has tried to write amidst her heavy duty towards family, work and under high racism. This becomes "the last straw" for Adah (Emecheta, 147). Sexism restricts Adah in housewife roles, which inhibits her from growing as a person and in her social life. People don't give her many opportunities to do things.

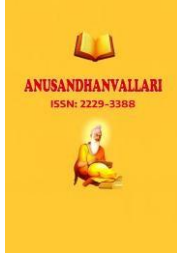
In works such as "*Second-Class Citizen*," "*The Bride Price*," and "*The Joys of Motherhood*," Emecheta explores the unique struggles faced by her female characters as they navigate the intersections of race and gender. These novels depict the ways in which African women encounter various forms of discrimination and prejudice, and the resilience they display in overcoming these barriers (Vidhya, 11)

Conclusion

Second Class Citizen is also a good book to read if you want to reflect about society. It makes people desire to challenge and tear down patriarchal institutions in their personal lives and in society as a whole. People can feel horrible when they don't have power, which is why it's crucial to fight for women's rights and justice. It is evident what needs to be done after reading the book's take on sexism and power. Society needs to reform so that women have the freedom to make their own decisions and have their rights respected. It makes people think about how hard it is for men and women to get along and work to make the world a better place.

Work Citations

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