



A STUDY OF FEMINIST CONSCIOUSNESS IN BUCHI EMECHETA'S *SECOND CLASS CITIZEN*

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ABSTRACT

Feminism is a range of socio-political movements and ideologies that aim to define and establish the political, economic, personal and social equality of the sexes. This research work dwells on feminist consciousness. The major concern is to examine and critically analyze the study of feminist consciousness in Africa, how it can put an end to sexism, sexist exploitation and oppression and to achieve full gender equality in law and in practice. The main purpose of this study is to examine feminist consciousness in Second Class Citizen by the African dramatist Buchi Emecheta. The feminist consciousness peculiar to Buchi Emecheta in Second Class Citizen were ascertained based on textual analysis of the data. The primary source for this work is the text Buchi Emecheta in Second Class Citizen. The secondary sources include journals, internet materials, library works by other African writers. The MLA method was used for documentation. Feminism has affected women in African both positively and negatively and this is what this work aims to highlight.

Introduction

Feminism is a range of socio-political movements and ideologies that aims at defining and establishing the political, economic, personal and social equality of the sexes. Feminism incorporates the position that societies prioritize the male point of view, and that women are treated unjustly within those societies. Feminists are those who dare to break the conspiracy of silence about the oppressive, unequal man-woman relationship and who want to change it. Speaking up about this system of male dominance, giving it certain names like 'sexism' or 'patriarchy', has not reduced the ambivalence mentioned above but rather intensified and broadened it.

In the beginning of the movement, the hostile or contemporary reactions from large sections of the male population, particularly those who had some influence on public opinion, like journalists and media people, only reinforced the feelings of sisterhood among the feminist who became increasingly convinced that feminist separatism was the only way to create some space for women within overall structures of male dominated society. The more the feminist movement spread, the more clearly it demarcated its areas as all women areas where men were out of bound, the more were the negative or openly hostile reactions to this movement. Feminism became a bad word for many men and women. African traditional society goes hand in hand with Islam to spell out the district position of women. It is an established fact that women's inferior status thrives more in Africa traditional society that is inhabited by male and female individuals, but men have due upper hand in controlling the affairs of society. Women are not allowed to be vocal as well as expressive as regard to public counseling, since their position is secondary and filial; their opinion is not sought in matters concerning the society. This is why men take the advantage of the superior air bestowed on them by tradition to manipulate and lord it over women.

By doing so, African traditional society becomes a male dominated one which is bent on frustrating women from the realization of themselves as an entity. In

this society therefore, women's roles are clearly mapped out as tradition requires. They are seen as merely hatchers and incubators of children, attending to the latter and their husbands and performing all other domestic chores. According to Barthelemy, tradition stipulates that a woman's full glory and joys are solely in motherhood and wifehood and that she lives life through the reflected glory after children and husband not through the glory of her existential self (559).

Men have certain annual tasks such as clearing the bush or making yam mounds, women do the planting, weeding and harvesting, all year round and more tedious jobs. Since women are not entitled to ownership of land in almost all the African traditional society, they spend many hours each day hewing wood and drawing water for their household. In conjunction with this clarion call for women's liberation, for feminist challenge, the female writer Buchi Emechata, in her novel *Second Class Citizen* expostulate on the haranguing experience of this female protagonist, Adah Ofili. Adah represents the educated and highly sophisticated women who pull their resources together with the illiterate ones, in the onerous fight and struggle for freedom from the yokes and pangs that Islam and African Traditional Society stipulation. They now start to question and challenge men's air of superiority in all spheres of human life. Women aspire for equality with men, but the latter see this as totally being utopist.

So, this forms the crux of the matter that the cause of the feminist challenge, they seem to be proclaiming that the days of their tutelage and servitude under their tyrant masters, the men are over. This female protagonist is alerting other women to rise up at once and assert their rightful place in the society. To them, they seem to be saying that this is our chance to rectify our dwindling glory and image. So in the chapters of the novel *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta, there is focal points and illustrations of this wave of female perspective. In this novel, we shall examine in details the claims of the woman, her arguments and techniques in presenting these challenges.

Women in Islamic community suffer from a deeply rooted suspicion that they are morally unreliable, that there is something demonic, even unclean about them. During their menstruation, they cannot participate in prayer. They are expected to be virgins on marriage days, and customs has it on many parts of Muslim world that this must be proven on the wedding night to the assembled guests by showing a blood stained sheet. Women are portrayed by Islam as being profane and expects her women adherents to be humble, submissive, non-radicals, amenable to discipline and of course, prone to intimidation by males. In some of the Islamic countries like Somalia and Senegal, a male child is given a 'she-camel', a representative of the female, tied to his navel when he is born. Man is almost deified. He is the unquestionable overlord; who wishes are laws and must be obeyed.

Another offshoot of Islam is its aiding and abetting of discrimination between the sexes. There have been contradictory responses to the new women's movement right from its beginning and the end of the sixties. The women who came together in this movement in the USA and in Europe began to call themselves feminists and to set up all women's groups in which they, for the first time, after the petering out of the old women's movement in the twenties began to talk about the problem without a name. Each of us had listened, time and again in private conversation, to one of our sisters telling us how badly they had been treated by fathers, husbands, boyfriends. But this was always considered the private bad luck of this or that woman. The early consciousness-raising groups, the speaking out sessions, the all-women's meetings, the first spectacular actions of women who began to separate themselves from the mixed groups and organizations were all occasions where women could discover that their apparently unique personal problems was the problem of all women, has indeed a social and politicians problems. It further stipulates that women's identity come through their relationship with men; she is sister, daughter, wife and mother; she is maybe sex object or helpmate, but always her identity is dependent upon some male in her life, women without a significant male relationship deviate completely from the Islamic norm. Women achieve their highest fulfillment as wives and mothers. No matter what outside job or

career she may undertake, a women is first a wife and mother. With the family, the man remains the prime breadwinner, assuming major responsibility for the family. It can now be said that the women writers have indeed arrived and taken their rightful position in African literature. There is another generation of writers who are offshoots of the first set of writers: Buchi Emechata, Ifeoma Okoye, Maritama Ba, Tess Onwueme, ZaynabAkali and Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo. The women at last have a voice and in projecting it and recording their say, they have affected the much needed wholeness of African literature.

It is important to note what motivated these women writers, they had peculiar style and approach in writing, and they had a different stand on national issues and traditional norms. The history of feminism is recent. There is no political antecedent as widespread, as the Seneca Falls convention devoted solely to the rights of women. The Egba women's march on the Alake of Egba land led by Mrs. Ransome Kuti was political and national, this move forced the Alake into exile, in 1929, the Aba Women's Riot which spread to Aba and environs was to protest the taxation of their men folk.

These political marches and protest which cost twenty nine women their lives were completely national in objective. It follows that the beginning of female consciousness in organizational terms were the formation of the National Council of Women Societies in 1958. This is a voluntary organization with a national spread and got support which articulated women's concerns. Feminism is made of sterner stuff, women are encouraged to be arbiters of their destiny, and they decided to work hard towards their own emancipation from the shackles of intimidation and tradition of subjugation and negative values. African women have, therefore, changed from being the traditional woman who stays at home, while the man goes to work to the modern woman who is assertive and determined and can also be independent and struggle for her won well being.

Statement of Problem

Image is an impression that one has about somebody, an organization or a product gives to the public, a mental picture of someone or something

like in an imaginative way. The struggle to rejuvenate the wounded dignity of women as second class citizen that have been dominated in the old still prevails over the years. Women have started to fight against discrimination and inequality and a number of writers have attempted to iron out this ideology from different perspective and this had lead to this research work. Every human being has a right to freedom. If this freedom is however denied, there is every tendency for one to revolt. And if one revolts, one takes a strong or violent action against one's offenders. In *Second Class Citizen*, women ceaselessly struggle to achieve the much desired freedom from the clutches of tradition. Even though many scholars have studied different texts on feminism, there is need to narrow the study down to have a critical look an autobiographical approach of this Feminist Consciousness in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*.

Objective of the Study

The objective of this research work is to examine the issue of feminist consciousness in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* as portrayed by this African dramatist. It aims also to educate and inform the society on the effect feminism has in Africa.

Significance of Study

This research work on the "Study of Feminist Consciousness" in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* will be of great importance to many. It will show and teach women still living in the past that they can really stand up and contribute to make the world a better place. With the analysis of book used in this research, women will realize that they can really overcome everything and face the problems not minding what people are saying to achieve their aim in the society. This research work is restricted to the "Study of Feminist Consciousness" in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*. This restriction is due to the need for a detailed examination of the subject within the available time and financial constraint. However, references were made to other texts by African writers. Other relevant works that are related to the topic of this research were reviewed.

Feminist s Conciousness

This chapter looks at other texts that agree to the

topic under study. These texts give more insights on how women are presented by writers when the writers left our country. This study is looking at feminist consciousness in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*. The notion of feminist conscious seeks to reveal how women, both individually and collectively, sought to questions and challenge their rights, roles and status in pre-modern society pre-dating the emergence of the term 'feminism'.

Feminist consciousness allows historians, literary critics, and others to fully understand proto-feminism, uncovering both trends and individual responses to the medieval and earl modern status quo. Feminist consciousness can be traced in numerous sources from personal accounts to records, thus, enriching our understanding of the history of gender relations, the construction of gender identity and consciousness and the emergence of a self-awareness and recognizable feminist movement in the modern era.

Feminist consciousness emerged as a recognizable and distinct process. Feminist are more likely to use a feminist vocabulary of motives to introduce the general theme of sexism or specific feminist themes, such as job discrimination. The stories of the two groups differed significantly in their degree of observable feminism. Women are portrayed by feminist as struggling for autonomy in life situations but are not perceived as having control over their lives in traditional and ambiguous settings. Feminists do not appear to be ideologically oriented, and while the feminist consciousness is distinctive, it is not monolithic or undimensional. Feminists interject feminism into their interpretation of everyday life and perceive situation differently from non-feminists leading to the conclusion, that their subjective experience is different from that of their feminists.

Biography of Buchi Emecheta

Nigeria writer, Buchi Emecheta was born to Igbo parents in Lagos, on 21st July, 1944. She moved to Britain in 1960, where she worked as a librarian, and became student of London University in 1970, reading sociology. She worked as a community worker in Camden, North London between 1976 and 1978. Much of her fiction has focused on sexual politics and racial prejudice, and is based on her own experience as both a single parent and a

black woman living in Britain. Her first novel, the semi-autobiographical in the ditch, was published in 1972. It first appeared in a series of articles published in the New Statesman Magazine and together with its sequel.

Second class citizen (1974) provides a fictionalized portrait of a poor young Nigerian woman struggling to bring up her children in London. She began to write about the role of women in Nigerian society in the *Bride Price* (1976); the *Slave Girl* (1977), winner of the new Statesman Jock Campbell Award, the *Joys of Motherhood* (1979), an account of women's experiences bringing up children in the face of changing values in traditional Igbo society. Buchi Emecheta is one of Nigeria's most well-known writers. She managed to raise her five children on her own, go to the university, eventually achieving a Ph.D, from the University of London, and she wrote over a 20 novels, plays and short stories. She was honoured with the order of the British Empire in 2005.

Emecheta was born on July 21 1944 in Lagos Nigeria. Her parents are Igbos who left the Igbo town of Ibuza (Igbuzo in Igbo) located in what is now called Delta State. She moved to London, England to join her husband in 1969.

Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*

Adah, the character based on Buchi Emecheta, is smart and determined to study despite the fact that there is not much means, or will to have her educated particularly after her father death. Adah eventually marries Francis and together they move to London, England in the early sixties.

Life is hard. Not only is there racism which makes it difficult to find accommodation, but Francis himself becomes Adah's greatest obstacle. Adah is the primary breadwinner for the young and growing family with her job as a librarian. Francis becomes physically abusive towards Adah and cheats on her. Although Francis is definitely portrayed to be obnoxious bully, it is clear that Adah doesn't entirely hate him. She understands why he ended up this way " Francis was not a bad man, just a man who could no longer cope with this over demanding society he found himself in" (110) This is sadly probably true for many immigrant

men, or any man who does not have the ability to cope with failure, and the setbacks and challenges of life. But why men often need to feel powerful over someone in order to feel better about them? Where does this need from?

Reviewed Works in Feminism

Flora Nwapa brings women from the backroom to the centre stage, pushing them from being a mere house object, to the determinant human beings with a mind, intellect and a voice, to do things, without somebody breathing down her neck every now and then.

Efuru represents the determined woman, as she is assertive and choosing her goals, when she tells Adizua her husband when she married him, and he suggests to her to come over to the farm with him but she refused saying " if you like go to the farm, I am not cut out for the farm work, I am going to trade"(10)

She becomes successful in the business, that she involves her husband. She is seen as enterprising young women, and very rich. Although she is semi-literate, she still proves to people that women can make it with full education or little education in life. In *One is Enough*, we see Amaka as a successful business woman. Even before her marriage to Obiora, she has a car, a plot of land, even when her marriage breaks up, she still strides on into success without blinking an eyelid and being encouraged by her mother.

That was just the beginning of her economic independence. After her marriage break up, she finds her way to Lagos; she reflects on the miserable years she spent in Onitsha as a wife, she realizes that she had not known how hurt she was, until her eyes were opened in Lagos (120). When she becomes a mother of twin boys for the priest, Fr. McIaid, he decided to leave priesthood to marry her, she refused saying;

I don't want to be a wife anymore, a mistress yes, with a lover, yes of course, but not a wife. There is something in that word that does not suit me. As a wife, I am never free, I am in prison, unable to advance in body and soul. Something gets hold of me as a wife and destroys me (127).

In rejecting marriage, Amaka made a deliberate choice for independence and freedom. She has found, as she purposed, when she left Obiora fulfillment, pleasure, even happiness in being a single woman.

In Mariama Ba's *So Long a letter*, Aissatou's husband Mawdo, takes a second wife, she does what Ramatoulaye knows she ought to have done "You had the surprising courage to take life into your own hands, you rented a house and set up home there" (32)

Here we see that Aissatou storms the walls that confined her. Having "rented a house" and "setting up a home there", for both herself and her children. In this case, she proceeds to find a means of becoming economically independent and though warned that "Rois cannot succeed without their father" (31), to raise her sons successfully. Contrary to all predictions, she (Aissatou) returns to college, upgrades her qualifications, at which it eventually leads her to appointment at a Senegalese Embassy. This from her salary, Aissatou is able to help Ramatoulaye, her very good friend who is supposed to provide for herself. She replaced with brand new car, Moduo Ramatoulaye's husband has deprived Ramatoulaye of by handing it over to his second wife Binetou.

Mariama Ba's novel deals on the fact that women are not tools that men life and drop as they wish. Women have a mind, body and feelings of their own that deserves an opportunity to reach out to the outside world.

Ngugi Wa Thiongo, indicates a desire to correct or revise earlier images of women.

Devil on the Cross is a novel about the early years of someone's life, in this case, it is written by a male author. It tells the story of Wariinga's development as she passes from childhood into adulthood, and knows her identity and role in the world. At the Devil's feast, she is challenged by the devil, but she defended her reaction by appealing to conventional notions of her gender "I am a woman, I am weak. There is nothing I could do" (191).

As a result of her enlightenment at the feast, she undergoes a transformation:

Today, Warringa has decided that she will never again allow herself to be a mere flower, whose purpose is to decorate the doors and

windows, thrown on rubbish heap, the moment the splendor of body withers. The Warringa of today, has decided to plunge into the middle of the arena of life's struggle, in order to discover her real strength and to realize her true humanity (216).

It is therefore not surprising that when, in the later part of the novel, Warringa discovers her real strength and realizes her true humanity, she almost literally developed male characteristics. "Warringa, heroine of the soil, has said goodbye to being a secretary" (218), and has been qualified as an engineer and motor mechanic. Not even contemplating the organisation of stenographic, trade union, she enthusiastically takes up a male-defined profession and becomes active in promoting the cause of male workers "Warringa is aggressive-even violent. A master of martial arts, she assaults her opponents with so many Judo kicks and karate chops (221).

Warringa reminds the rich old man just before she shoots him that, she has taken over the role he used to perform when they played the game of "the hunter and the hunted" (253). In this version, they played as lovers, the game reached its climax when the rich old man fired his pistol into the sky, to announce his conquest. With a gun in her possession, she is suitably equipped to participate in the struggle for more equitable social system with men.

Chinua Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah* seeks to restore women in African society, dealing with version and perceptions of the past. It deals in different ways with the question of restoration of women in post-colonial visions of Africa's past, present and future. The novel presents strong central female character who serves as a source of passion and inspirations. Achebe seeks inappropriate achievement with the female literacy tradition. Beatrice is the central character in *Anthills of the Savannah*. She is a writer who through her criticism of Ikem's political thinking leads him (Ikem), to extend the terms and range of his analysis of Kangan political structures, and to reconsider the position he has taken up in his writings where it is believe that "giving women today the same role which traditional society gave them of intervening only when everything else has

failed” (91) is not the ideal. Ikem thanked Beatrice for the advice rendered and acknowledge his indebtedness for the insight, he (Ikem) explains, making it evident that it is his female characters he is reviewing he just realized “that a novelist must listen to his characters who after all created, top wear the show and point the writer where it pinches” (97). Beatrice makes him to see reasons why we should follow his characters, that he cannot decide what to say about somebody without knowing the person very well, so that he can say something good about him/her.

After the death of his three friends, Chris, Sam and Ikem, power continues to rampage through the Kangan world of public affairs, till we go to a social sphere, while Beatrice in her new role as a priestess of Idemili assumes power. She is seen presiding over a naming ceremony of Elewa’s baby, Ikem’s Lover, a traditional male role of naming a child. Beatrice gives the baby girl a boy’s name Amaechina, may the path never close (meaning of the name), (222). It is the woman that appeases an embittered history. Beatrice is a writer in the novel who helps to inspire, support and celebrate great men when she made Ikem and Chris see reasons why they have to do certain things for the good of everyone. Beatrice presides over an assembly which signals the possibility of a new social orders coming into being. With this novel, women’s subordinate position is redressed in the name given to heroine – Nwanyibuie which means “woman is something”, an assertion that women are forced to be reckoned with. The heroine, Beatrice Nwanyibuie, is a liberated and powerful woman, leading one to sunrise that symbolizes an awakening to the important of woman being. This book is written with an awareness of this need for a new, more consisted, and realistic vision of women in Africa.

In *Women are Different*, Dora Agnes and Kosa, are seen as successful women in their business, the bedrock of their success is their wealth, economic power and resilience. Dora is a resourceful woman and wife, who has become so rich that she earn more than her husband but her wealth led Chris to abandon her for German woman. Agnes and Rosa are seen as well to do and accomplished women, they were not discouraged by the treatments they got from men.

In this case of Agnes, she is made to marry a man old enough to be her father, victim of child marriage. Rosa is jilted by Mark, after using her to achieve various things.

The women had various encounters with their husbands and lovers, but through it all, they all emerged as individuals in their own rights by making it in life, which makes their husbands come back to them.

Chimamanda Adichie is a story teller of her generation, her ideas are well spoke of or written with so much conviction for the cause she strongly believes in. Chimamanda talks of the misconception of feminism;

that word feminist is so heavy
with baggage; you hate bras, you
hate African culture, you think
women should always be in
charge, you don’t wear make-up,
you don’t shave, you are always angry,
you don’t have sense of humour, you
don’t use deodorant (11).

In *Purple Hibiscus*, she shed light on the issue that has been the doctrine of our society. This novel is straight to the point, and does not categorically state all the details on the subject, but it does the needful. Adichie weaves a story of her journey as feminist, even before she knew what the word meant. Writing about different experiences that has led to this moment, and the need for change in the mindset, she makes a compelling arguments on way we should all be feminists and doing so, one novel at a time.’

Femi Ojo-Ade (1983: 158) in African literature today views feminisms as: an accidental phenomenon that is gradually creeping into forbidden land of Africa. Therefore, most of the African female writers preferred to be referred to as womanist instead of feminists, because of the way feminism is believed to have ruined many homes then. Today, the feminist theory and in movement advocate a pattern of lifestyle activities and mode of living.

Approaching Buchi Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen*, it comforts the scholar critic with a daunting task, despite the apparent simplicity of the author’s style, and the straight forward nature of her themes “Omar Sougou asserts almost apologetically that,

this novel “is admittedly not exciting in terms of stylistic achievements, though it raises a fundamental question which presumably redeems the book” (511).

Ponter informs us that, this is a novel of personal development, or at least Porter attempts to make that case, and to the extent to which this may be so, it is not surprising that most of what we read is a reflection of what goes on inside the mind of the protagonist. On the very first page, we learn that Adah was a good girl who had arrived when everyone was expecting a boy. So since she was such a disappointment to her parents, her immediate, her tribe, nobody thought of recording her birth. She was so insignificant.

Indeed, women are willing and ready to work, to help uplift the nation to an unprecedented height of our dreams; to co-operate with the male folk and grow complementary alongside with them, if only several barriers of culture, traditions, beliefs, customs, which give excessive and often time unnecessary superiority and importance to talk, would be uprooted and abolished. Only then could our women claim equal chances and hand in hand, we shall all toll and sweat to war as a common goal, the goal of leading our society, our country, continent, to the zenith of our dreams. According to Maduka;

The African female author/intellectual has doggedly fought against the dehumanizing treatment meted to her by men in various African societies and in doing so, she fervently struggles to Africanize the term ‘feminism’ as generally used in the west by the marginalized western female author/intellectual, engaged in a similar fight in the west. She identifies gender specifying issues and recognize women’s position internationally, as one of the second class status and seek to connect with that (273).

Buchi Emecheta in her defense of her womenfolk highlights on several area that have continued to work against the well being, growth, freedom, freedom and rights to life and aspirations of the

women which is still a great impediment to our collective growth and much desired height of achievement in a nation, continent, and people with common view, outlook and perception to life. She expresses that:

Working and achieving to great height is nothing new to the women of Africa, but there are still many obstacles in her way. Her family still prefers to educate the boy, while she stays at home to do the important jobs called ‘women duties’. When the male dominated media, it does not give exposure to black women simply because she is a beautiful entertainer, there by undermining our brain power, and when we ourselves have the confidence to value our contribution to the world (557).

Research Methodology

Research methodology for this study was both analytical and descriptive. The primary source and the main information of this work are from Buchi Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen*. The researcher made use of direct lifting of data from the text. Textual and descriptive analyses were used to analysis the data. The secondary sources were gotten from internet materials, library and works from other writers that are related to the topic of this research.

Theoretical Framework

Feminism is a collection of movements which struggles for women’s rights. Focusing on gender as a basis of women’s sexual oppression, feminist scholarship attempts to establish equal rights for women politically, economically, socially, personally, etc. second class citizen highlights Buchi Emecheta’s critical view towards colonialism and racism affecting of third world women’s lives. Besides that, Emecheta goes further to display African women’s visibility and marginalization which were out of sight for a long time, in terms of some aspects of western feminist discourse. Her creative discourse, in this regard, cost further light upon the issue of gender oppression in African feminist study. Hence, the study attempts to examine the way in which Emecheta’s furthers western feminist ideology. In *Second Class Citizen*, women ceaselessly struggle

to achieve the much desired freedom from the clutches of tradition.

Women's studies, gender studies, feminist studies with the theme of the subordination of women, is marked by diverse and overlapping intellectual traditions and movements. There is a non-western perspective of this diversity. The terms are used interchangeably as in the historical development from the earlier focus on women's studies and more recent shift to gender studies in the West as well as in Third World women's studies, these disciplines have a close relationship with feminism and the women's movement and have gained from each other. Feminism is a social theory and movement primarily motivated by the experiences of women in society. It gives the women a sense of belonging, of self as worthy, effectual and contributing beings. As a theoretical and ideological framework, it directly opposes sexism by supporting gender equality.

Many feminist writers see feminism as a reaction to such stereotype of woman, whereby women are seen as helpless, dependent, and voiceless in society. Therefore, the core of this paper is to explore feminism and the plight of feminine gender as regards the issue of self-assertion. Feminism is referred to as feminism that has the belief that women should have economic, political and social equality with men. Feminism is also referred to as a movement that works to gain such equality which movement is sometimes called the women's movement, or women's liberation. Women need to arise to stop what they do not want, and in particular, to oppose whatever seeks to deny or deprive them of their rights.

Feminism is a social theory and movement primarily motivated by the experiences of women in the society. It gives the woman a sense of belonging, of self as worthy, effectual and contributing human beings. As a theoretical and ideological framework, it directly opposes sexism by supporting gender equality. Many feminist writers are seen as helpless, dependent, and voiceless in the society. Therefore, feminism which is the theoretical framework of this study, explores the plight of feminine gender as regards to the issue of self-assertion.

Feminism is the belief in the principle that women should have the same rights and opportunities as men. It values personal growth and individual fulfillment in African society, the role of each citizen is to perpetuate the status quo to assure continuity of this clan, to work within tradition.

In feminism, the feminist rebels against such traditionalism because she introduces a theory of personhood where the individual exists as an independent entity rather than her kinship relations. In a situation also where she has responsibility to realize for happiness. She accepts her role where she has indefinable values rather than fit into stereotyped tradition. Abel and Abel stress that one of the objectives of feminism is "to kindle a seed bed that would bring a pass, the space that would serve as a springboard for subversive thought, the precursory movement of a transformation of social cultural structures" (282). In 1980, many feminists increasingly moved into institutions like political parties, trade union, association, employing organizations, taking their struggles with them, seeking involvement and equality commission. It is basically on women inequality and oppression by men folk in the African society. Wally asserts that:

It is practically on the freedom from the man's oppression. There is a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. There is an apparent persistence of men's domination of each other and call it a set of social relations which enable them to control women. Patriarchy has a particular sway over feminist relations (20).

In this text, *Second Class Citizen*, Buchi Emecheta displays what African women go through in modern Nigerian society and provides explanations of why they ought to be treated equally.

The movement towards equality in organizations however is a product of the three stands within feminist, liberal, socialist and radical feminism. Women today must face the issue of their own authority. Women's watch word should be that we live in a time when traditional models for women no longer hold its respect. In the respect of trying to find personality and authority as women, there must be a look into one's experiences of the unconsciousness, as well as, what one knows consciously, and out of these depths one must beget actions, engender persuasive force, and nourish counsel, conceive and

develop distinct feminine perspectives from which to view reality. A woman needs to be securely and consciously anchored in her own feminine being.

Paradoxically, this means that to receive her own masculine side or nature. Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical, fictional, or philosophical discourse. It examines women and men's social roles, experiences, interests, chores, and feminist politics in a variety of fields, such as anthropology and sociology, communication, media studies, psycho-analysis, political theory, home economics, literature education, and philosophy. Feminist theory often focuses on analyzing gender inequality. Themes often explored in feminist theory include discrimination, objectification (especially sexual objectification) and oppression, patriarchy, stereotyping art history, contemporary art and aesthetics.

Feminist theory is a major branch within Sociology that shifts its assumptions, analytic lens, and tropical focus away from the male viewpoint and experience towards that of women. In doing so, feminist theories shine a light on social problems, trends, and issues that are otherwise overlooked, or misidentified by the historically dominant male perspective within social theory. Feminist theories are interested in the social attitudes and values, that support rape and they derive their evidence from macro-level observations of legal and social systems.

However, a problem with feminist theories is that the theory do not account for the fact that some offenders are oblivious to the harm they have caused their victim, and may not actually consciously use rape to intimidate females. Feminism is manifested worldwide, and is represented by various institutions committed to activities on behalf of women's rights and interests. Feminist perspectives offer various, sometimes competing "Social constructionist", explanations, for the pervasiveness of relationships of dominations and subordinations between men and women, and for a range of understanding about the changes required to redress exploitative and oppressive relationships.

Liberal Feminism: Main source of gender inequality is the process of socialization (learning process) by which we acquire the knowledge, skill, and motivations required to participate in social life. The circumstances that shaped women's lives

were the laws and prejudices shared by men and women that excluded them from the public sphere, and from the right to earn their own living on an equal footing with men. Women struggled for the right to higher education, entrance, into the professions, the right to own properties, and hold public offices, for suffrage, the right that came to symbolize full citizenship. The solution: Education remove individual ignorance, therefore, these laws and the prejudices that underwrote them would gradually be replaced by extending equality of opportunity to women.

Social Feminism: Oppressive relations between the sexes are not simply derivative of class. The interconnections between sex oppression and class exploitation have to be addressed. A focused on the labour done by women in the household is called domestic labour. It helps to sustain the capitals system. Both capitalists and individual men benefit from the unpaid and personal service of women in the home. Some socialist feminists analyzed the interconnections between the public sphere of capitalist and state relations done at fraction of the cost, the appearance of the distinction between private and public, sustains the unequal relations between men and women throughout the society.

The solution: Overcome the private and public split family wage, denial of education, no social support for the care of the child.

Radical Feminism: Gender inequality is rooted in the material conditions of men and women. The biological family is an inherently unequal power distribution. Like Marxism which contends with monogamy, was the first form of the family to be based not on natural conditions, but on economic conditions; the exclusive aims of monogamous marriage, were to make the man supreme in the family and to propagate, as the future heirs to his wealth, children indisputably his own. The sole purpose of monogamous marriage is to subjugate the female sex to the male. They collate men's power over women in their ability to develop the institutions, they continuing control. Western societies are a form of patriarchy – rule of men; men are the main beneficiaries of these societies. In a world of unequal power relations between men and women, compulsory heterosexuality ensures not only women's sexual dependence upon men but also

their economic, social, and psychological dependence. The solution: The elimination of men and the traditional family from women's lives. Compulsory heterosexuality is the key way women are subordinated and enslaved in this society. Women should build their own institutions from health clinics and women's shelters to small business, art galleries etc.

Supplemental: The third wave feminism use media as a tool of resistance. Riot girls use forms of media to disseminate and circulate knowledge pertaining to justice for women taking place within and underground culture. Black feminism has argued that black women are positioned with, in structures of power in fundamentally different ways than white woman.

Textual and Descriptive Analysis

In this novel, there is the concept of second class citizen which mainly applies to females living in Nigeria society, that is how the females are denigrated and less reckoned with in the society. Firstly, we see how Adah's birth and arrival turned to be a disappointment to her parents and relatives who had predicted her to be a boy, then we see how she had no record because, she is a girl child, that she was not even sure of her age:

She was not even sure she was eight years old, because, you see, she was a girl. She was a girl who arrived when everyone was expecting and predicting a boy. So, since she was such a disappointment to her parents, to her immediate family, to her tribe, nobody thought of recording her birth (7).

What this means is that the birth of a female as reflected in the text under study does not elicit excitement as the birth of a male child even though she is a human being. To them, a female child is subhuman and should not be welcome into a family with joy. A female child, according to the text, is denied equal opportunities in life. A male child is open to social educational and economic opportunities in the society. Every African society is expected to give preference to

the male while the female is domesticated. This can be seen in the life of the protagonist Adah and her father's family. Adah is not encouraged to go to school like her brother. As a girl that she is, much attention is not placed on her education. She is not sent to school. Her younger brother, Boy, begin education before her. In fact, her mother only wants her to go to school for only a year, so that she can be able to read and write. To the Igbo society of Ibusa, education was a priority though with some reservations to the female:

School-the Ibos never played with that! They were realizing fast that one's savior from poverty and disease was education. Every Ibo family saw to it that their children attend school. Boys were usually given preference, though. Even though Adah was about eight, there were discussions about whether it would be wise to send her to school (9).

In the text, the concept of second class citizen is broad. In England, the concept of *Second Class Citizen*, goes beyond sex or gender. It has to do more with race or where the individual comes from. Africans who travelled to England has this colonial mentality. They tried to hide and ridicule their race but this Adah says no. Hear her:

She was different. Her children were going to be different, they were going to be black, they were going to enjoy being black, be proud of being black, a black of different breed. That's what they were going to be. Had she not now learned to listen to the songs of the birds? (154).

Francis, Adah's husband, is one person the concept sticks to as a cloth. He is too racing conscious. His choice of accommodation Adah says is too poor:

Francis had told her in his letter that he had accommodation for them in London. He did not warn Adah what it was like. The shock of it all nearly drove her crazy. The house was grey with green windows. She could not tell where the house began and where it ended, because it was joined to other houses in the street (40).

Africans seems to accept inequality as a way of life. This was shown in the life of Francis and his neighbours who have accepted their lot in England but this Adah rejects by moving forward to write a book. Francis seems to have inequality as a fact of life. He reminds his wife of her second class citizen status:

Well I know you will not like it, but this is the best I can do. You see, accommodation is very short in London, especially for black people with children. Everybody is coming to London. The West Indians, the Pakistanis, and even the Indians, so that African students are usually grouped together with them (41).

When Adah consistently rejects the status quo and goes ahead to write a book, the manuscript which Francis burnt and later put an end to the marriage, Francis says, “you keep forgetting that you are a woman and that you are black. The white man can barely tolerate us men, to say nothing of brainless females like you who could think of nothing except how to breast-feed her baby” (184). To his comment Adah refutes by saying “That may be so, cried Adah but people have read it. And they say it is good. Just read it, I want your own opinion. Don’t you know what it means to us if the future I could write a book?” (184). Francis who is so blinded by his inferior mentality replies “Francis laughed. What else was he going to hear next? A woman’s writer in his own house, in a white man’s country?” (184).

Francis moves on to reflect this:

You must know, my dear young lady, that in Lagos, you may be a million publicity officers for the American, you may be earning a million pounds a day, you may be living an elite, but the day you land in England, you are second class citizen (42-43).

The need for the projection of feminism in Africa has informed the development of modern Africa literature which serves to enlighten, educate and portray the experience of Africans under the rule. A critical look at Buchi Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen* gives an insight into some aspects of feminism in Africa. In this text, Adah is highly aware of the roles, gender and education have played in her life. In Nigeria, parents often tend to

send boys to school and girls towards marriage. The main reason for this is because patriarchal culture typically stigmatizes female sexuality as inferior that is, unclean, intended only for fertility and procreation. In most recent times, there have been positive shifts in attitudes, legally and socially, however patriarchy still lives on, in unequal wages between males and females that stop equal access to opportunities, failure to talk about women’s achievement. Emecheta utilizes Adah’s sex life to highlight this cultural attitude towards female value. Adah doesn’t indicate she doesn’t enjoy any aspect of sex; sex is depicted as being oppressive, weight her down because she is constantly getting pregnant. Francis uses sex and pregnancy to torture and oppress her “but how could she protest to a man who was past reasoning? The whole process was an attack, as savage as that of any animal” (43). Here is Francis’s comment to show that he knows what he was doing:

When she told him she was expecting another child, the laughter that greeted this announcement was like a mad monkey’s in the zoo. It was so animal-like, so inhuman, so mirthless, and yet so brutal. Adah was sure she was five months before she told him (174).

This is also evident, for example, when Francis speaks to her about bible, and the virtuous duties of a woman, and he gets excited “man is superior, he emphasizes that in the bible, woman is made from man. When Francis goes out of the room to find another religious book, Adah leaves to see her doctor (98). Francis’ sexuality is weaponries against her, as she has no right to refuse the sexual advances of her husband “soon it was midnight, and the row which Adah had dreaded flared up” (160).

The text *Second Class Citizen*, deals principally with the life experience of Nigerian women who are subordinated in an indigenous society, deeply influenced by the Western values introduced by British colonists, and those that have relocated to England, often suffer the emotional effects of being suddenly immersed into an alien country. Their lives are further complicated by the power that Nigerian men following traditional beliefs, still have over them:

Adah could not stop thinking about

her discovery that the whites were just as fallible as everyone else. There were bad whites and good whites, just as there were good and bad black. Why, then did they claim to be superior? (53).

Adah, struggles in Nigeria to get education and later suffers abuse in England by her Nigerian husband. Whether at home or in the imperial metropolis, Adah experiences both sexism and racism in a world of Africa and Western traditions but she was determined to rise above this thanks to her determination, and her strong desire to be independent, was able to integrate the English society by obtaining a first class job as a librarian at North Hinchey Library “she got the job. Only God Almighty knew what happened to the doctor...if we had not gotten that job her marriage would have broken up”(46).

The text captures a phase in relationship between Britain and one of its African colonies of which Nigeria is one and what happened to those who failed there. The novel is insightful in discussing the experiences of immigrants who arrived in Britain in the 1960's shortly after Nigeria's independence. These men, who left their wives and children behind in Nigeria, dreamt of becoming successful and wealthy, and retiring to important leadership roles in their home country. Some of the men succeeded and returned to their country, speaking in an “educated” English, that their fellow Nigerian heard as mere nonsense. Many of them, who failed, however, became “second class”. In the text, the work of a young writer, Adah, is simply episodic in structure and its ending is disconcertingly abrupt. This shows in the end how her manuscript was burnt and how her own married life ended abruptly. In the text, the author's ideological focus is on female assertion, the projection of a powerful compelling voice. Her interest revolves around women's unique confrontation with male superiority, female subjectivity and socially endorsed norms that restrict her progress:

Adah recoiled like a frightened snake, but again, like a snake, she was gathering all her inner energy ready to attack this frightened little man. What did he mean? Adah asked with a voice that had a tinge of brutal sharpness in it. She felt like digging

her teeth into those eyes that were popping out like a dead fish's (169).

Adah also felt fully fulfilled by her achievement “did she not feel totally fulfilled when she had completed the manuscript just as it were another baby she had had?” (166). The heroine Adah, struggles to conquer the predicament of poverty, unhappiness and molestation and brutality in the hands of her husband:

Adah was happy when Pa Noble came, because at least it made Francis to stop hitting her. She was dizzy with pain and her head throbbed. Her mouth was bleeding. And once or twice during the proceedings she was tempted to run and call the police. Where will she go after that? She has no friends and she has no relations in London (160-161).

She had gambled with marriage, just like most people, but she had gambled unluckily and had lost. She highlights more on the ruthlessness of the traditional system in which women exist only to give pleasure to the man, bear children, keep the house and eventually receives punches while the men are there to relax and take the best of life “Hunger drove Francis to work as clerical officer in the post office. Adah's hope rose. This might save the marriage after all”. (162).

Even when things are not going well in marriage women are meant to understand that the fault is their own. In Adah's psyche, she goes to the extent of blaming herself for the marriage's failure, and still hoping to please Francis. It is easy to fault Adah for being weak in terms of not sloughing off Francis earlier but Emecheta suggests there is much more at the play.

This text portrays the picture of women who are discontented and are social misfits, the slaves and the pathetic mothers who give all to their families but reap no rewards:

Adah had always been the head of the family financially. She was given the custody of the children. But how much could Francis afford? Francis said they had never been married. He then asked Adah if she could produce the marriage certificate. Adah could not. She could not even produce her passport and the children's birth certificate Francis had burnt them all. To him, Adah and the kids ceased to

exist (191).

However, the thematic message of Buchi Emecheta is that the females, even in the face of an oppressive system of deep-rooted norms, practices and belief in female subordination must strive always and assert her. In *Second Class Citizen*, Emecheta develops the issue of self assertion and personal development. The story analyses fully the problem that assaulted the heroine, Adah, as she struggles to adapt to her socio-cultural environment. The handicap of being born a female is fatal, just being for a female child. This point is clearly developed in the character of the heroine, whose birth was so insignificant because they were expecting them first avoid issues be a boy. The author writes that:

She was aware that nobody was interested in her since Pa died. Even if she had failed, she would have accepted it as one of the hurdles of life. But she did not fail. She not only passes the entrance examination. But she got scholarship with full board (24).

The work examines the important relationship between victimhood and depression. See what Adah asserts:

At home in Nigeria all a mother had to do for a baby was wash and freed him and if he was fidgety strap him onto her back and carry on with her work while that baby slept. But in England she had to wash pulse and pulse of nappies, wheel the child round for sunshine during the day attend to his feds as regularly as if one were serving a master talk to the child, even if he was only a day old oh yes in England looking after babies was in itself a full time job (12)

The thematic analysis of the text is through a narrow critical recommendation of the depression, major character suffers with her status as a victim of a depressing patriarchal system. In the text, this narrative theory was adopted because the author narrated her personal experiences. This study critically reveals that among this issues that women suffer in the hands of men are gender

discrimination, rejection and depression resulting from imbalance responsibility. Adah has to bear the burden of studies, child bearing and rearing, family chores, working and carrying the financial stress of the family. Francis on the other hand has to sit back at home and study for his examination:

One day, weeks, when Adah, Francis and their two young children had settled in at the Nobles, Adah felt unwilling to go to work. She felt uncomfortable and unusually heavy. She could have stayed longer in bed, but, she had to be in the library by nine-thirty. Sad, and feeling very sorry for herself, as she usually did on such days, she dragged herself up, envying her husband who was still having a good snore (105).

In the text, the tendency for the females to align themselves to the roles and accept the emotional torture in marriage is reflects in the life of Adah:

Why she and she alone always felt she was letting those she loved down if she was stayed away from work even for the sake of having a baby. The funniest thing was her husband's: he was to have an easy life the life of a matured student studying at his own pace (117).

The theme of marriage without love also shows the marriage between Francis and Adah that is not working on genuine love. Even while married with Francis, her husband and his family have no love for her except being interested in the money she brings into the family. Francis's father, Pa, says:

You are a fool of a man, you are a fool. Where will she take the money to? Her people who did not even come to congratulate her on the arrival of baby Titi? ...The money is for you, can't you see? Let her go and work for a million Americans and bring their money here, into this house. It is your luck (26).

When Adah mentioned her dream of travelling to United Kingdom to Francis, this is what he says:

He would go first, and Adah would send him twenty pounds every month. She was to save her fare and that of the children. She was to feed herself and the children whilst they were still in Lagos and pay the rent and help in paying the school fees of Francic' seven sisters (27).

Although the marriage starts on a wrong footing, Francis and Adah were both underage and the couple even forget to bring a ring to their wedding which is a foreshadow of the problems and confusion in their marriage. She was unhappy on her wedding day and even days after the event:

The wedding itself was a hilarious affair. Francis and Adah were both underage, the only witness, Francis's mother, had to sign with her thumb. The whole affair started off on the wrong foot. They had forgotten to buy a ring and the skinny man with a black bow tie refused to marry them... They were married the following day. It was the saddest day in Adah's life.(25-26).

In this text the author portrays what African women go through in Modern Nigerian Society and provides explanation of why they ought to be treated equally. In the story it provides to us a great example of how men have treated women and how men should never mistreat women in any sort of way. The novel *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta presents several important themes including miscopying immigration, racial prejudice and female strength. There is a difference between England and Nigeria. As in England, both men and women are sexually liberated. While in Nigeria, only men are allowed to have several sexual partners before after they are married.

In conclusion textual analysis shows struggle between the two genders, women who strew toward independence and self respect and men who struggle not to lose opportunity and superiority and a feeling of control. While there are obvious cultural differences between the two societies described many of the same gender issues can be recognize in the novel.

This shows in *Second Class Citizen*, the role feminism played in Adah's societal ordeals marked by cultural conflict of conservative Nigeria and colonial values a society that is structurally categorized and presumed to be influenced by colonization. Adah's experience is marked by the residue of the colonial structure and what can be termed neo-colonialism also class and gender structures are not left out in the post-colonial era. The character firstly Francis, is said to be the representation of the colonial entity he reproduces the colonial structures with himself in

the centre in the form of his marriage to Adah and his domination over Adah can be described as then colonial process. Thus Emecheta elegantly mirrors the colonization of Nigeria by the British in the colonization of Adah by Francis.

The text provides us with great examples of how men should never mistreat women in any sort of way. In the text, gender and sexuality was represented in the novel. it shows how there should not be a gender that is more important than the other and how everyone should be treated equally whether it be a female or male.

Adah was brought up with the belief that she was the only woman belief that who would always be below and inferior to the male gender she was disadvantaged to go to school but she revolted even as a girl and went to school trying anything that she could. She was taught to only be a good woman and wife of her own. All she was allowed to know was the attributes and qualities of a woman in a house. Her struggle still continued after her father had passed away and she was taken to her uncle's house to live with him. When she married she had barely any education whatsoever she had to work towards her dream of travelling abroad. Even when everything always had to be against her she attained her purpose with perception and not by force she showed everyone that she could do better than her family including her husband:

Adah did not mind in the least being saddled with all these responsibilities even though her pride price had not been paid. It never occurred to her new high salary. She would go towards making her young family into a family of Ibo elite(27).

Woman should be seen as responsible individuals who are capable working together with men in building a solid foundation to create a secured family with one another. In *Second Class Citizen*, the author extensively explored the role of contemporary African women concerning their right in the society. They want equal rights as men ethnically occupationally publicity and educationally. Women usually search for equal right and participation on social activities just as men. Women do not want to suffer through discrimination and segregation.

In *Second Class Citizen*, the writer portrays the condition of women in African Society and rebelled anything that subjugates or relegates women to the

background. In the character of Adah,. It is pointing out to the world that women should no longer be seen as decorative accessories, objects to be moved about whose role ends up in the washing and child bearing but as major contribution to the nations development;

You keep forgetting that you are a woman and that you are black. The white men can barely tolerate us men to say nothing of brainless females like you who could think of nothing except how to breastfeed her baby (167)

Summary

Feminism is a range of socio-political movement and ideologies that aim to define and establish the political, economic, personal and social equality of the sexes. Feminism incorporates the position that society prioritize the male point of view, and that women are treated unjustly in these societies. Feminist consciousness, then, refers to women's critical awareness of their femininity in its physically sexual sense. A second form, feminist consciousness, is developed and defined as women reflect on, their experience and on the asymmetries of power and opportunity that they have.

Although, *Second Class Citizen* is a literary text by Buchi Emecheta, written with time and setting, it deals with feminism and how it had affected the African society at large. Feminist consciousness is the most noticeable subject in the novel. The text shows how Adah is highly aware of the roles; gender and education have played in her life.

Emecheta's novel reveals the effects of racism and poverty on Britain black community in general, and on black women in particular. Emecheta utilizes Adah's sex life to highlight this cultural attitude towards female value. Adah doesn't indicate she enjoys any aspect of sex; sex is depicted as oppressive, weighing her down because she is constantly pregnant. A close consideration of Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* shows her ability to portray the issue of feminism in Africa especially in the aspect of religion, societal beliefs and economy. In the story, *Second Class Citizen*, Buchi Emecheta displays what Africa women go through in modern Nigerian society and provides explanations of why

they ought to be treated equally.

In the novel, it provides to us a great example of how men have treated women and how man should never mistreat in any sort of way. In the story, *Second Class Citizen*, gender and sexuality was represented in the novel, it shows how there should not be a gender that is more important than the other, and how everyone should be treated equally whether it be a female or male.

Adah was brought up with the belief that she was only a woman, who would always be below and inferior to the male gender. She was disadvantaged to go to school, but she revolted even as a girl and went to school trying anything that she could.

Conclusion

In the story, *Second Class Citizen*, the author Emecheta extensively explores the role of contemporary African women concerning their right in society. They want equal rights as men ethically, occupationally, publicly, and educationally.

Women usually search for equal rights, and participation on societal activities just as men. Women do not want to suffer through indiscriminate and segregation.

From chapter one to four, the researcher has tried to x-ray feminism. The researcher stated the ways how feminism was exerted in some areas, and how it has affected the Africans. Analysis of the text which explored the issue of feminism were done with the hope that it enlightens and educates both African and non-African on the topic of feminism and its effects on African Society.

Pre-existing beliefs about what feminism means can make it in classroom practice or research challenging. An understanding that feminism is about reducing oppression for everyone and sharing that idea can reduce this challenge in the modern world.

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