

Motherhood in the Novel Second Class Citizen by Buchi Emecheta

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Abstract – Despite the many discussions and exchanges of ideas on post-colonial studies, research on contemporary issues with colonialism, colonial history, science and economics, cultural influences of colonial society, institutionalism for marginalised peoples, and post-colonial perspectives develops. Post-colonial criticism welcomes the creative investigation of femininity and motherhood in various contexts. At this point, in the novel “Second Class Citizen” by Buchi Emecheta I would like to focus on motherhood and how she has overcome her desires. Most of her works deal with the image of African women. The main characters of her novels show what a woman and mother are in Nigerian society. Emecheta looks at how sex and the ability to bear children are the only way to define motherhood.

Keywords: Motherhood, Post-Colonial and African Women.

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INTRODUCTION

Buchi Emecheta was born in 1944 in Yaba near Lagos. She spent her childhood in an orphanage and educated at Missionary School. She was married at the age of 16 to a student at the age of 11. After their marriage she gave birth to five children in 6 years. In her first novel “In the Ditch”, she depicts her life after leaving her husband and lived on her own with children. She worked in the library of British Museum. The novel's protagonist, Adah, is forced to live in a residential estate. Her dignity is hurt here because of the charity she was forced to accept.

Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* is about Adah and her survival, not only about herself but also about her dreams and growing up as a woman, moving from the upper class position in her native Nigeria to the poorest of the predominantly white European society. She struggles with motherhood and as a wife nurtures her entire family in addition to being her own independent person. Part of her struggle is to be black in the face of racial issues and English racism. The novel focuses on women's determination, identity crisis and self-esteem struggle. Adah's character is portrayed differently in her “*Second Class Citizen*” her thirst for western education was ignored in her first novel. In this novel, Adah is determined to get what she wants.

The novel focuses primarily on the hatred of gender discrimination found in the culture of its people. Adah is also surrounded by gender discrimination, which is the foundation of her marriage. Her husband,

Francis, who treats her as like property. Adah is forced to feed the family and is responsible for the children. Meanwhile, Francis goes to school, studies and constantly passes exams. Adah is in constant battle to defend her femininity, and when she finally leaves Francis she feels a strong sense of relief. After leaving Francis, Adah has had moments of loneliness and despair but in the end she comes out victorious because of her willpower. The novel highlights the struggle of women to get their education and to survive in European white society while adapting to different religious beliefs on her own people.

The main character of *Second Class Citizen* is a woman named Adah, who was born in Nigeria and belonged to the Ibo tribe. Adah is a young woman and begins to dream of when she was eight years old to travel to the United Kingdom. The novel takes place seven to eight years after World War II and as part of the colonial education system; the best students can travel to Europe for study. Because Nigeria was a British colony, the United Kingdom becomes the land that where Adah often hears about as a child and also the place from which people in her town have come from. She hears her father speak about the United Kingdom one day, “The Iboza women who lived in Lagos were preparing for the arrival of the town's first lawyer from the United Kingdom. When Adah's father pronounced it, the title “United Kingdom” was as heavy as the word for bombs. It was so profound and mysterious that Adah's father always sounded like he was talking about the Holy of Holies. Going to the United Kingdom should

definitely like paying God a visit. The United Kingdom, then, must be like heaven."

The story begins with Adah, trapped at home with her overlooked mother who does not pay much attention to her. Adah's brother stayed away from school all day while his father was away. Adah decides she wants to go to school and one day she goes away from her mother and goes to school.

For example, she knew that when Adah could not get money for her general admission test, she could be one step ahead of her goal; she buried two shillings given by her cousin to buy a pound of steak. She knows she will be punished for this but the consequences will be ruined because she is determined to get an education. She has met the teacher a few times before and she hopes he will let her sit in his classroom. When she arrives she breaks into a room and disrupts the entire classroom. The children all stare at her but the teacher smiles at her and let her sit in the rest of the class. Adah's dream is to go to the United Kingdom to study and see the greatness she is sure to have. Her troubles begin from the first moment she realizes what her dream is. First she is not allowed to go to school because she is a girl and the family does not want to spend money to go to her. She is the girl of her mind and she goes to school anyway, which can get her mother in trouble.

Her next problems are when her father dies and her mother is sent to live with her brother. Any money her family went to her brother's education, and the only reason to keep her in school, was that her uncle would be able to get more money for her then they finally married her. This desire to persevere and survive in her society takes Adah on her journey through life. it is also the driving force behind her desire to never give up on her dreams. She avoids marriage again and again until she realizes that marriage is her only way to move forward with her dreams.

She uses her marriage in the sense that she gets a good marriage and takes care of her husband and children and saves money for her family to move to the United Kingdom. The plan is that she will go with her husband and both will continue their education and become prominent figures in society. Adah is hoping her dream come true.

Adah receives news from her husband that she does not go to England, but her husband goes to England to study for himself, but Adah stays home and supports the family. The husband's father does not approve of women going to England and therefore they are not allowed to go there. At first Adah is full of rage, but she controls her anger and she comes up with a plan. Once again she uses her smarts to get what she wants. She sends Francis to England for study and in the meantime she works and sends him money.

Adah does not give up here, she keeps her promise, and a few months later when her husband writes that she will be in England for at least four or five years, she decides it is time to relocate her and she convinces her mother-in-law that she is in England with her husband and that Francis wants her there. He does, in his latter. She soon reserves herself and her two children with first class tickets to England and she arrives in England as Adah's real fight begins, greeted by the cold, rainy and cloudy skies. Predictable of all that is to come to her, she is shocked by the gray matter but she never gives up on her dream. Adah has arrived in the United Kingdom and here she is a Second Class Citizen in England from her native Nigeria first class citizen.

Some of the highlights of Adah's struggle were the black woman in a predominantly white society, learning about the women's rights movement in the seventies, and the fact that she had birth control, and her struggle to follow her goal of becoming a writer and finally writing between four children and lazy abusive husband. This book is about many different issues and motions and how they all relate and relate to one another and even a woman.

Conclusion: Another scenario arises as the reader begins to find hope for Adah, and as the book progresses she wonders how much more a woman can endure and still be strong not only for herself but for her children. She never gives up on his or her dreams, not even when her first book is burned by her husband. Emecheta advocates a change of attitude towards women and believes that this change must be initiated by women. and believe that women can contribute as meaningfully to the development of society as men do. The author portrays a woman who questions this dependent function of men and struggles to free herself to have her own will.

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