

Women and Motherhood in Buchi Emecheta's Second Class Citizen

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ABSTRACT

Literature witnesses the growth of many issues like the impact of colonization, exchanges of ideas on Post-Colonial Studies, Post-Colonial history, Cultural effects of colonized society, groups for marginalized people and contemporary problems with post-colonial views. The Post-Colonial Critique accepts creative studies on Womanhood and Femininity in different contexts. This paper focuses on Femininity and womanhood in the novel “Second Class Citizen” written by Buchi Emecheta and how the female protagonist overcame her desires. Most of Emecheta’s works deal with the depiction of the African woman. The main characters of her novels show about her portrayal as a woman and a mother in Nigerian society. Emecheta defines that femininity and womanhood are the only way to expose them as a women and their sexuality.

Keywords: Post - Colonial Studies, Femininity and Motherhood, African Women.

I. INTRODUCTION

The female protagonist’s characterization in this novel presents the perfect views on feminism and her struggle on the issues related to the feminism. She secures a prominent place among the women writers in Africa in the universe. Emecheta is presented as the African womanhood from the point of a woman. She portrays her female characters in a great way of which not accepting the fate, they struggle to get themselves against a variety of obstacles, there by challenging the attitude of African towards women. The character Adah, was heralded towards the dawn of emancipation.

The novel portrays Adah as a girl who is young, who is stucked at home with her mother, who doesn't give preference to her. Adah's brother is away at the school, when all day her father is away working. Adah sneaks away from her mother in one day as she wants to go to school. She runs to the school. She was not able to pay the money for the common entrance examination, in which she knew that only can bring her moving towards the goal. She buried two shillings given by her cousin to her to buy a steak of pound. She assures that she will be punished for the consequences made by her, but she is determined to educate her. She met the teacher before few times and she wishes that she would sit on his class. When she arrives inside the class, she disrupts the class by bursting inside the room. The students inside the starring at her, but the teacher smiles at her and the teacher suggested her to sit with the rest of the mates.

Adam's dream is study in United Kingdom and to see the greatness. That she is sure. Her trouble began when she realized what her dream was. She is not allowed to go to the school, she was a girl and her family was not ready to spend the money for her. But she is a girl who has own mind and so she goes to school, which makes her mother in trouble. Hers another problem arrives when her father dies and she was made live with her mother's brother. Money that spent on her mother's education by her family, can be retained only when she is married off, and so she was left inside the school.

The intention to preserve her society, leads Adah on her journey in life. It is the force driving her to never give up her dreams. She avoids the marriage until she realizes that her marriage will be the only way to continue her dreams. Then she uses the marriage in the sense of getting the good job and takes care of her husband and her children. She saves money to make her dream to go to United Kingdom. The plan that she made to move with her husband and both of them will continue their education and they would become the prominent figures in society. Adah is wishing to make her dream true.

"So she found herself alone once more, forced into a situation dictated by society in which, as an individual, she had little choice. She would rather that she and her husband, who she was beginning to love, moved to new surroundings, a new country and among new people. So she said special prayers to God, asking Him to make Pa, agree to their going to the land of her dreams, the United Kingdom! Just like her Pa, she still said the name United Kingdom in a whisper, even when talking to God about it, but now she felt it was coming nearer to her. She was beginning to believe she would go to England"(p. 27).

The news Adah gets the information from her husband that she can't go to England, but her husband would go to England to make him better by studying and improving himself. Her husband insisted that Adah would stay at home and she will continue to support her family. Her father-in-law doesn't wish both of them to move to London and so he denied both of them. After hearing this Adah filled in anger, and then she made up a plan.

"Be as cunning as a serpent but as harmless as a dove,' she quoted to herself." (p. 28).

Adah, she uses her smarts to get what she wants. She sends Francis off to England to study and in the meantime she works and sends him money. Adah does not stop here, she holds her hopes high. On receiving letter from her husband that he will be at England for at least four or five years, she decides to take a step and persuades her in-laws that she needs to be in England with her better half. She also says that Francis wants her there, which he mentioned to her in his letter. She then books first class tickets on a ship to England for herself and her two

children. The real struggle commences for Adah when she arrives in England, as she was welcomed by rainy, cold and cloudy skies.

A foreshadowing comes for her, she is shocked by her grayness but she will never give up her dream. She has arrived to United Kingdom and she goes in a first class citizen to Nigeria, which is her native to a Second Class Citizen in England. The major struggles of Adah is that is being a black women in a dominating white society, learning about the women's right movement in seventies and in which birth control is available to her. She struggles to pursue her dream to become a writer and having four children and a lazy husband, the time to write. This book analyses many problems and movements and how they are all interconnected and related to one another and also to woman.

The reader can understand the underlying hope in Adah during difficult circumstances and her rise as a woman. Even midst adverse situations, she remains strong for her children. She never gave up her dream. Even though the first piece of her work is burnt by her abusive husband, she toils to find her way. Emechata addresses the change of attitude towards female and the changes should be stated by women itself. She believes that a woman can contribute to a greater extent for the meaningful growth of the society just as men can do. The author portrays the woman who questions the dependent act of men and struggles to free herself so as to live her own.

In this novel, Adah the protagonist of the novel, successfully fights against customs and traditions, which deny her an opportunity for growth of a woman. Adah, shows the dawn of African woman from the restrictive norms of conduct imposed on women in a dominating society.

II. WORKS CITED:

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