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**Patriarchy, Gender Discrimination and Resistance in**  
**Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and**  
***Kehinde* (1994)**

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The Master Domiciliation Labor

*This work is lovingly dedicated to my mother and father, whose affection, love, and prayers make me able to get such success and honor.*

*To my sisters and brothers for supporting and encouraging me,  
To my dearest husband for constantly being by my side, and all my sweet  
family from west coast to east coast.*

***Hanane***

*This work is lovingly dedicated to my Mom and Dad, whose affection, love, encouragement  
and prayers make me able to get such success and honor,*

*To my late Grand-father for being my first teacher,*

*To all my sweet family, from west coast to east coast.*

**Lydia**

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## Abstract

*As one of the most figures of the Nigerian Literature, Buchi Emecheta displays a vivid portrayal of the bitter realities of certain patriarchal practices in the African culture, which not only thwarted Black women but also hampered them from having a position in the society. This study selected two of her novels, **Second Class Citizen** (1974) and **Kehinde** (1994). It discusses issues of patriarchy, gender discrimination and Resistance in both novels. This thesis is based on Alice Walker's Womanism, developed in her collection of essays **In Search Of Our Mothers Garden: Womanist Prose** (1983). In this analysis we have tried to show that despite the fact that the two works are twenty years apart, the author is still discusses the same issues that come from her cultural and personal experiences. The author has portrayed the oppression practiced towards women. She has depicted how women are dominated by men in patriarchal societies. Emecheta has also described how these women rebel and seek for independence through the process of education. This study concludes that Emecheta succeeds in using resistant and powerful female character, aiming at identifying the suffering of women as she underlines a strong autobiographical quality of writing her novels. As well as, women as a subject of oppression are always seeking for freedom.*

**Keywords:** Patriarchy, Gender Discrimination, Igbo Culture, Education, Womanism, Nigeria. Resistance.

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## General Introduction

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The sphere to which she belongs is everywhere enclosed, limited, dominated by the male universe, high as she may raise herself, far as she may venture, there will always be a ceiling over her head, walls that will block her way.<sup>1</sup>

Women have, for a long time experienced a non-negligible variety of abuse and have always been viewed as different from men. They were expected to know and perform their ascribed role in society wherein they were to be seen but rarely heard. Women have been living in the shadow of men with almost no rights, no voice and no respectable position. They were subjected to all forms of oppression and marginalization under the male authority, and were mainly perceived as a 'weaker' sex. However, the situation of Black women is much more complicated; African women have not only been marginalized and oppressed under the hand of tradition, culture and norms, but they have also been subjected to various forms of gender-based discrimination and physical violence. To a great extent, they had no place to complain about the unfair treatment imposed on them.

By the 1960s, most African countries gained their independence from the White colonizers. Nonetheless, the African literature was dominated by male writers like Soyinka, Chinwa Achebe who silenced women and relegated them to a low status; as object of male dominance.

Therefore, the emergence of the African woman writer was important in re-representing and re-visioning women's journey towards autonomy and self-determination.<sup>2</sup> In other words, many prominent female writers emerged to put end to women suffering, among these writers whose works attempt at transforming the presence of the African women Literature is Buchi Emecheta.

Being born in a patriarchal environment of the Igbo community, Emecheta makes a clear contribution to the socio-cultural issues that prevail in the contemporary African society. Indeed, her presentations focus on the African Black women's lives and their struggle to overcome multiple forms of oppression within the patriarchal society. As, she declares the

inclusiveness of her narrative perspectives in an interview with Inny Marie Tioye:

The main themes of my novels are African society and family: the historical, social and political life in Africa as seen by a woman through events. I always try to show that the African male is oppressed and he too oppresses the African woman...I have not committed myself to the cause of African women only, I write about Africa as a whole<sup>3</sup>

As a Nigerian writer who immigrates to Britain, Emecheta has to endure the double burden of male dominance and gender bias. Therefore, she tries to reflect her personal experiences through her novels, in this concern, *Second Class Citizen* (1974) draws her own battling in a marriage and struggling with five pregnancies in a society that still treats women as property, and *Kehinde* (1994) a fictional novel that depicts the plight of a woman living in a polygamous environment. These are among the works that deals with the issues of their communities as well as highlight the autobiographical aspects of her writings.

### **a.Review of the Literature**

Buchi Emecheta's novels are examples of an African writer, who explores audacious and challenging issues both before and after colonialism. Her works are like mirror that reflect the Igbo culture, their customs, traditions, the rules and systems. Indeed, *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and *Kehinde* (1994) Emecheta's two books have attracted critics' attention and received interesting criticism, on various topics ranging from 'racism' to 'feminism'.

Omar Sougou is one of the many critics who have written about Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*. In his book "*Writing across Culture: Gender Politics and Difference in the Fiction of Buchi Emecheta*" (2002), he argues that:

By virtue of the nature of her writings, Emecheta might not entirely come within the 'canon' of African writing, as it were, but her work is not separable from the body of literature produced by African writers in terms of content and areas of interest. Emecheta's work is at the same time inscribed in the general frame of feminist discourse.<sup>4</sup>

The critic claims that the concept of 'female oppression' outweighs the racial question, because the story centered on Adah's own domestic preoccupation, and her own conception of Blackness and racism is not made prominent. Sougou, then in analyzing *Second Class*



*Citizen*, sees that the novel is a predominantly 'feminist' protest.<sup>5</sup>

Another critic of Emecheta's novel is Florence Orabueze. In her article entitled "***The Feminist Crusade against Violation of Women's Fundamental Human Rights: Miriama Ba's So Long A Letter and Buchi Emecheta's Second Class Citizen***", Orabueze considers the latter as a literary work which is imbued with various preoccupations. She observes issues affecting women, and examines the issue of motherhood, denial of women's right to formal education, and male child preference. Florence considers these issues and concludes that in the novel, Emecheta shows how "[...] a woman can gain her freedom and pull down the walls erected by society to cage her [...]"<sup>6</sup>. The critic highlights how *Second Class Citizen* depicts the experience of African women through Adah and she lets the world know about women's conditions in Africa in England as well.

In his book's chapter entitled "***Second Class Citizen: The Point of Departure for Understanding Buchi Emecheta's Major Fiction***" (1996), Abioseh Michal Porter, an African professor of English at Drexel University, gives a special attention to the male character, and comments on Emecheta's exaggeration in depicting Francis as the representative of the African men. Abioseh's comment is based on the Lloyd Brown's critiques on Emecheta's works in his book "***Women Writers in Black Africa***". In this regard, Lloyd Brown argues that "Emecheta's criticisms of African men are often marred by generalizations that are too shrill and transparently overstated to be altogether convincing"<sup>7</sup>. In addition, Porter criticizes the style of this literary work. He believes that even though it is clear that Adah's husband is her chief opponent, he must refer to a basic weakness in Emecheta's writing style on which he argues that:

This Emecheta novel loses some of its strength because of the way it is inadequately structured. Emecheta demonstrates a pitfall common among writers of the bildungsroman by blatantly intruding to pour what looks like personal venom in the text. Because the narrator is nearly always prepared only to explain ways in which Francis brings disappointment to Adah, we are never made to see most of the other characters in full perspective. Some characters that play very important roles (such as Bill and Mr. Okpara) are not developed as they otherwise

should have been.<sup>8</sup>

Porter discusses two points; the first point is that, the structures of the book. According to him, Emecheta is giving prominence only to the heroine and neglecting other characters' development makes it inadequately structured. This laid the book to lose some of its strength. The second point is that the novel can and should be seen as a powerful example of 'bildungsroman' in Africa. Thus, this novel does not match Emecheta's later, more sophisticated and more overtly feminist works.<sup>9</sup>

Like *Second Class Citizen*, *Kehinde* has received a considerable amount of criticism when it was published. In an article entitled '*Gender Performativity*' in *Buchi Emecheta's Kehinde* (2017), Velma Mohan a research Scholar at the University of Kerala, India provides some critics on the novel. She argues that the 'ideological' apparatus is the responsible of the construction of the traditional feminine norms, behavior and practice in their life "female" gender as a construct enforced upon the bodies of women, this concept of female is built upon the biological shape of women without regarding their doing and abilities. The critic argues that through *Kehinde* Emecheta cautions her readers against accepting gender identity as an essence. She propagates the message that pre-determined feminine roles as wives and mothers are the effect of "institutions, practices, [and] discourses" in the patriarchal culture.<sup>10</sup> In doing so, she implores women to redefine their identity as being strong, independent and successful individuals.

From this context, the study argues that Buchi Emecheta's *Kehinde* is a performative critic. It analyses the novel in the light of Judith Butler's gender performativity that purports the idea that an identity is performative- not a being but a doing.<sup>11</sup> Mohan thinks that women should reject the traditional definition of gender in which "male" signifies protective, competitive and aggressive while "female" means weak, irrational, emotional and docile. Yet the difference between male and female should lie in their doing and acts.

Shalini Nadaswaran is another critic who has dealt with Buchi Emecheta's works. In

her article entitled “*The Legacy of Buchi Emecheta in Nigerian Women’s fiction*”(2012),she claims that the development and the progression of African women happen with the breaking out of conventions that restrict them from achieving and claiming their individuality. In this regard, she says:

Buchi Emecheta’s *Kehinde* (1994) reflects the complete transformation of the Igbo female character from the confined role as ‘wife’ and ‘mother’ to understanding and perceiving herself as ‘woman’. This transformation towards individual subjectivity is developed through the rejection of patriarchal conventional expectations of women.<sup>12</sup>

In another critic written by MatthewJ.Christensen, professor in the English Department at the university of Texas entitled “*Emecheta Buchi Kehinde*”, he states that Emecheta, through Kehinde, calls for the contradicting and denying of the standard view toward the Igbo woman or the African woman in general. The critic adds that *Kehinde* acknowledges the contradiction and the possibilities of living successfully as a woman and a Black African.<sup>13</sup>

Kehinde traces the development of its protagonist's construction of a subjective self, which simultaneously recognizes its female and African identities. As in her earlier works, Emecheta forges an African feminism which carefully denaturalizes Igbo gender relations, exposes the contradictions of romanticized mother, wife and womanhood, and suggests a progressive model for African gender relations.<sup>14</sup>

Shalini believes that *Kehinde* reveal Nigerian female character who challenges the prescribed understandings of the roles as woman, wife and mother. Kehinde is womanist representation of Nigerian woman who achieve her agency, subjectivity and determination through redefining her role.

From what has been aforementioned, the majority of these literary works are important and worthy to the understanding of Emecheta’s works in particular *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and *Kehinde* (1994). Yet, they remain limited in perspectives in which they have been studied. Therefore, they limit the aspects that Emecheta depicts such as how patriarchy and gender discrimination have shaped the live of the female characters in these two novels.

## **b. Issues and Working Hypotheses**

It appears from the Review of the Literature that Emecheta's novels have received a great deal of criticism. It is apparent that most of her previous criticism is from the feminist point of view. The theoretical basis of *Womanism* developed in Alice Walker "*In Search of Our Mother's Garden: Womanist Prose* (1983) might be appropriate to sustain our study.

This piece of research is based on the assumption that; despite these two works share the same setting, have been written in different periods of time and they are twenty years apart however, Emecheta still discusses the same issues including traditional beliefs and male oppression where, she emphasizes about the radical rejection of patriarchy. Indeed, the two novels have portrayed the oppression practiced towards African women. So, our purpose is to depict how these women are dominated by men and patriarchal societies. In addition, Adah and Kehinde represent the authors' own experiences and ordeals as African women through their journey in Britain. Therefore, this study aims to show how these experiences of patriarchal oppression have significant role in shaping the characters emancipation and liberation as well as how these women rebel, resist and seek for independence.

## **c. Methodological Outline**

At the methodological level, the dissertation will follow the IMRAD method, we have started with the introduction in which we gave a general overview about the topic, site the purpose of the study, then followed with the review of some works written on Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and *Kehinde* (1994).

The second section is related to methods and materials through which we explain Alice Walker's theory of "Womanism" *In Search of Our Mother's Garden: womaniste prose* (1983).

Then, we will first come to provide some characteristics of the Igbo society, biography of the author, and brief summaries of the novels cited above. Ultimately, in the result section, we are going to stress our findings. Finally, the discussion section will constitutes two chapters;

the first chapter will deal with patriarchy and women's oppression in *Second Class Citizen* and *Kehinde*, it will demonstrate multiple forms of male domination and gender discrimination, the second chapter is an attempt to demonstrate the strategies that the female characters develop to resist patriarchy.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Rose, M Leema, "Dalit Feminism in the Selected Stories of Bama." Online International Interdisciplinary Research Journal. Vol.08. Special Issue. (2018), 1.

<sup>2</sup> Shalini, Nadaswaran "Out of the Silence: Igbo Women Writers and Contemporary Nigeria." *Unpublished PhD dissertation. University of New South Wales, Australia* (2013), 1.

<sup>3</sup> Magda, Ahmed Naim Haroun, "Buchi Emecheta's The Slave Girl: An Afrocentric Discourse." English Department, Ain Shams University. Vol.x No.I December 2016.

<sup>4</sup> Omar, Sougou. *Writing across cultures: Gender politics and difference in the fiction of Buchi Emecheta*. Vol. 51. Rodopi (2002), 27.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Florence, Orabueze. "The Feminist Crusade Against Violation of Women's Fundamental Human Rights: Mariama Ba's So Long A Letter and Buchi Emecheta's Second Class Citizen." *Women in the Academy: Festschrift for Prof. Helen Chukwuma* (2004)

<sup>7</sup> Abioseh Michael, Porter. "Second Class Citizen: The Point of Departure for Understanding Buchi Emecheta's Major Fiction." *International Fiction Review* (1988), 128.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid, 129.

<sup>10</sup> Velma, Mohan. "Gender Performativity in Buchi Emecheta's Kehinde."5.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid, 6.

<sup>12</sup> Shalini, Nadaswaran. "The Legacy of Buchi Emecheta in Nigerian Women's Christensen, Fiction." *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* 2.2 (2012),17<sup>13</sup> Matthew J. "Emecheta, Buchi. Kehinde." *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 22.3(1994), 79.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid, 77

## **I.Methods and Materials:**

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### **1. Methods:**

This section aims to highlight the theoretical basis of our work. In fact, to achieve our purpose in discussing the issues treated in our research, we will rely on Alice Walker's Womanism theory as expounded in her 1983 essay "*In Search of Our Mother's Garden: Womanist Prose.*"

In her collection of essays, *In Search of Our Mother's Garden: Womanist Prose* (1983). The Afro- American writer Alice Walker presents the experiences of the women of color particularly those of the rural south (America) as totally victimized in the country, she is aware of the need for a new movement which would be different from Feminism and which would offer women of color a space to formulate their preoccupations. Therefore, Walker conceptualizes a new feminist theory: Womanism. So, "Womanism is a reasoning that praises African roots, the beliefs of African life, while giving a clear presentation of the African women liberation. Its ultimate aim is Black solidarity where each African individual has some form of power."<sup>15</sup>

In fact, the feminist ideal focuses on oppression based on sexism. But this movement was mainly a white-middle class movement and ignored oppression that was based only on racism and classism. It was at this point that womanists expressed a more complex and more intense kind of oppression than white women. Ogunyemi, in an article: "Womanism: indicates dynamics of the contemporary Black Female Novel in English," gives Alice Walker definition of womanism:<sup>16</sup>

Black womanism is a philosophy that celebrates black roots and the ideals of black live, while giving a balanced presentation of black womanhood. It concerns itself as much with the black sexual power tussle as with the world power structure that subjugates blacks. Its ideal is for black unity...<sup>17</sup>

Alice Walker exhibits a variety of interpretations for the concept "Womanism". First, she claims that "Womanism" is derived from "*womanish*",<sup>18</sup> which is associated with being

responsible and serious opposite of “*girlish*”<sup>19</sup> the meaning of “*frivolous, irresponsible, not serious*”<sup>20</sup>. It is mainly used in the black folk expression “*you acting womanish*” in other words “*you trying to be grown*”<sup>21</sup>. These two folk expressions imply an interrelated meaning of “*outrageous, audacious, courageous or willful behavior*”<sup>22</sup> to indicate a mature and grown attitude. According to Alice Walker, a “Womanist”, also refers to:

Woman who loves other women, sexually and/or non-sexually. Appreciate and prefers woman’s culture, woman’s emotional flexibility (value tears as natural counterbalance of laughter), and woman’s strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or non-sexually. Committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female<sup>23</sup>

In addition, Alice Walker introduces the concept of ‘Womanism’ to refer to the various relationships that occur between women. The womanists love other women spontaneously by appreciating those features that make them female including culture, emotion and strength. Then she comes to enumerate the womanist’s loves. “*Loves music, loves dance, loves the moon. Loves the spirits. Loves love and food and roundness. Loves struggle. Loves folk. Loves herself*”<sup>24</sup>. Finally, Walker concludes that “*a womanist is to feminist as purple to lavender.*”<sup>25</sup>

In fact, Alice Walker has presented the concept of ‘Womanism’ to refer to Black feminists, those who are capable, courageous and independent. It is used to illustrate that Black women’s struggle is in contradiction to the white feminism. She also highlights women’s sufferance from the subjectivities performed by male oppression. Black women are doubly marginalized; they suffer from both sexual and racial oppression.

Thus, ‘Womanism’ brings new dimensions that differ from the western; it aims to denounce the social inequality, race, male and gender oppression as well as Womanism tends to protect women from being victims of male submission, and from all forms of sexism and violence. Therefore, ‘Womanism’ is a Black feminist theory that is designed to empower Black women.

## 2. Materials

### 2.1. Characteristics of the Igbo culture

African countries are well known for the richness and diversity of their culture which led the white colonizers to develop an interest for Africa's natural resources. The latter resulted in their invasion, controlling and taking over the land as well as the establishment of multiple colonies. Nigeria is amongst these African countries that received most colonizers. In fact, it is considered to be the 'giant' of Africa endowed with tremendous cultural heritage sourced from its multicultural communities. It is also the most populous Black nation and multi-ethnic lingual country in Africa with over 250 ethnic groups.<sup>26</sup> It is quite interesting to discover the nature of human cultures; each culture is distinct and represented by its unique historical evolution. Indeed, culture is the backbone of the society that embodies different traditions, beliefs, languages, religion and institutions that bind people and communities together. The Ibo people of southern Nigeria provide a good example of the tribal diversities of their culture, myth and superstition. According to Ohadike, a foremost Nigerian scholar in his essay "**Igbo Culture and History**":

The Igbo (or Ibo) people form one of the largest ethnic groups in Africa, with about 15 million living in Nigeria and another million living outside, their farming communities are broadly situated between the Niger River in the west and the heeast stretching from delta swamp land in the southern coast through tropical rain forest to open grassland to the north.<sup>27</sup> The White missionaries had not only dominated and changed the lives of men, women and children who immensely witnessed the atrocities of the colonial rule but also many traditions and values of the Nigerian culture were overturned and dismantled by the British rule, who enthroned their western culture and education. Thus, the Ibo people had to face many changes and accustom themselves to the new foreign system.

Nonetheless, Nigeria had produced a range of prolific writers who have had a genuine interest in demonstrating all the bad sides of colonialism. One such writer is Chinwa Achebe who is considered as the father of Modern African Literature. His novels have contributed immensely to the development of the Nigerian Literature which has flourished since the publication of his most successful novel *Things Fall Apart* (1958). It is worth mentioning that Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* is considered as a reaction to the insinuation of the



Europeans who said that Africans did not have a culture, religion or political structure before colonialism. Besides, it was a response to the distorted representations of Africans painted by the European writers who depicted them as being savage, uncivilized and uneducated people. On that account, he cleverly shattered all the stereotypical portraits of native Africans, and has displayed the authentic Igbo community and culture.<sup>28</sup>

The Igbo world-view is fundamentally 'theocentric', always attached to their belief in supernatural beings<sup>29</sup>. Chukwu is the one whom the Igbo regard as the Supreme Being or 'the God creator'. The zenith of the spiritual world is Chukwu, who is the creator of all things. Chukwu is neither 'male' nor 'female'. They are too great a force to behold and are, therefore assisted by a pantheon of more accessible lesser Gods and Goddesses (Amadiora and Ani) who are autonomous, yet independent.<sup>30</sup> 'Ala' on the other hand, represents the physical world. She is visualized as a nursing mother; she is the progenitor of the Ibo people. Arguably, she is the source of fertility, Ibo people pray to her for children and prosperity. The Ibo base their moral customs and legal code on Ala's attributes.<sup>31</sup> Rivers are also thought to be the source of life and are given great respect between the Ibo. For instance, the Goddess of the river Oboshi holds a special place in their community.

The Igbo world view is based on the visible and invisible forces, the ancestors for instance occupy a prominent place in the Igbo religion and culture as well. In this regard, the Ibo people believe in the theory of reincarnation, meaning they believe that their deceased ancestors come back to temporal life, "The Igbo construction of the world is that reincarnation after death and the need to join the living lineage, make the world of man and the world of the dead a single universe providing an alternating abode for man."<sup>32</sup>

Therefore, reincarnation could be seen as a bridge between the living and the dead. Finally, it is worth noting that every Ibo had a 'Chi', "it is similar to the Christian concept of a guardian angel."<sup>33</sup> In fact, it is an individual personal God, and the 'Chi' of an ancestor may inhabit the body of a descendant and follow him or her throughout life. In short, the Ibo people of Nigeria

have a culture that values the dignity of the human person; a dignity that implies a new humanism, where man is defined before all else by his/her responsibility to his/her brothers/sisters.<sup>34</sup> This brief interpretation of Igbo religion and history leads us into the culture of people since religion cannot be detached from the culture which it expresses.

## **2.2. Buchi Emecheta's Biography**

It is quite essential to provide a brief background of the personal history and life of Buchi Emecheta as an individual and writer in order to understand her writings and works. Florence Onye Buchi Emecheta was born in 1944 in Lagos, Nigeria to Ibo parents. Orphaned as a young child and raised by relatives, she attributes her desire to write to her aunt who was a storyteller. Though schooling for girls was discouraged, Emecheta managed to get an education at a missionary school in Nigeria. Bound by customs she left school at the age of sixteen to marry a man to whom she had been engaged since she was eleven years old. After that, she moved to Britain in 1960, where she worked as a librarian. In 1970, she joined the University of London where she got a high degree in Sociology.<sup>35</sup>

Emecheta's first novel *In the Ditch* was published in 1972. *Second Class Citizen* (1974) provides a fictionalized portrait of a young poor Nigerian woman struggling to raise her children in London. She began to write about the role of women in the Nigerian society in *The Bride Price* (1976). *The Slave Girl* (1977) has won the *New Statesman Jock Campbell Award*, and her masterpiece *The Joys of Motherhood* (1979) was an account of gender inequality and sexual differences in the Igbo patriarchal society. Emecheta is also the author of several novels for children, including *Here Now to Play* (1980) and *The Moonlight Bride* (1980). She published a volume of autobiography *Head Above Water* in 1986.<sup>36</sup> Emecheta's literary production is larger than this, she has also been selected as one of the Best Young British Writers. As an outstanding contemporary Nigerian woman writer in Africa along with other committed women writers like Flora Nwapa, Mariama Ba and Ama Ata Aidoo, her writings reflect the pain that she experienced and endured at different phases of her life which were given shape in

the form of novels. In an interview with Oladipo Ogundele, Emecheta said broadly that she writes about Africa for the world: “I write my books for the world to read.”<sup>37</sup> Additionally, she challenges the societal practices which are hostile toward women and offered a presentation of the degrading condition of Black women particularly Nigerian women. Her novels do not only challenge the hegemony of male writers but also the representation of African women in Literature. Moreover, her books depict a variety of social and political issues of her society such as marriage, motherhood, women’s education and their resistance to oppression. While committed to the liberation of women, she did not label herself as a feminist. Indeed, Emecheta states, “I work toward the liberation of women, but I’m not a feminist, I’m just a woman.”<sup>38</sup> Finally, she implies that education is the key to recognition and to women’s advancement, self-achievement and self-fulfillment. Buchi Emecheta passed away in London January 2017. Synopsis of *Second Class Citizen* (1974)

### **2.3. Synopsis of Second Class Citizen**

*Second Class Citizen* (1974) is a novel written by Buchi Emecheta that traces the journey of its protagonist from childhood in Igbo society, in Nigeria and to adulthood in England. The novel displays the gender problems in African society. Adah is the elder child of the family; her parents do not want her because of her gender. Although she is not allowed to practice her rights even to receive education. The protagonist challenges the norms and develops a dream to live in the United Kingdom. She ultimately marries Francis Obi as a teenager, after she becomes pregnant with their second child, he moves to London and she follows soon after.

In London, Adah grapples with discrimination based on her race and gender, both from Francis and the white society itself. She finds that pursuing her dreams in England is much harder contrary to what she expects her life become worse. Francis becomes an increasingly lazy man who becomes more and more abusive and dismissive to Adah. However, she has to struggle to survive and get a better life for society and against the dominance of her husband. At the end, Adah decides to leave Francis and succeed to free herself from her husband, and free her mind from the social restrictions.

## 2.4. Synopsis of *Kehinde* (1994)

*Kehinde* is a novel written by Buchi Emecheta in 1994. It centers on an educated, independent and responsible Nigerian Ibo woman named Kehinde Okolo who holds a good job in a bank in London and earns more money than her husband Albert. They have been living in England for almost eighteen years with a blessed family, Joshua her fourteen years old son and Bimpse her eleven years old daughter. London represents the land where Kehinde enjoys more freedom and where her voice could be heard. Though, she remains the perfect obedient wife to her husband and nurturing mother to her children. However, Albert is unable to accept Kehinde's freedom and is resentful towards her autonomous individuality.

While Kehinde is about to receive a promotion, she accidentally becomes pregnant.

Unfortunately she has to abort due to Albert's insistence and subsequently decides to have her tubes tied. Albert longs to return to Nigeria where he could practice his authority and manhood as a Nigerian man in an African society, unlike in England where women rule in this country. However, the concept of home for Kehinde is very different. She knows that back in Nigeria to her husband's family, she would be regarded as a lesser person and back to her old submissive role.

Despite Albert's return to Nigeria with his children, Kehinde remains in London for about two years in order to sell the house. After spending half of her life in London, Kehinde Okolo finds herself in Lagos guided by her 'Chi' of her dead sister Taiwo.

Her husband subsequently rediscovers the patriarchal privileges of Igbo life denied to him in London, he takes another wife and fathers of two children with her. Unable to adjust with the reality of her life and relationship with Albert in Lagos, Kehinde takes what appears to her Nigerian friends and family to be a radical departure by returning to London to pursue an education and an independent life away from the patriarchal life.

## Endnotes

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid. 36

<sup>18</sup> Alice, Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Garden: Womanist Prose* (1983). San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, P.xi.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Alice, Walker, *In Search of Our Mother's Garden: Womanist Prose* (1983). San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, P.xi.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. P. xi

<sup>23</sup> Ibid P. xi

<sup>24</sup> Ibid P. xii

<sup>25</sup> Ibid P. xii

<sup>26</sup> Igbo Cultural Orientation. "Technology Integration Division," (2012). 1

<sup>27</sup> Ohadike, Don C. "Igbo culture and history." *Things Fall Apart* (1996): 236-57. 1.

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<sup>30</sup> Achebe, Nwando. "Balancing Male and Female Principles: Teaching about Gender in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*." *Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies* 29.1 (2002), 128.

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- <sup>35</sup> Priya Ragav, Writing Her/Self: "A Critical Study of Buchi Emecheta's Novels," (Department of English North Eastern Hill University Shillong) (2008), 1.
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- <sup>37</sup> Mfuné Mwanjakwa, "Ambivalence: Buchi Emecheta's rugged towards female self-actualization in Head Above Water," (Journal of Humanities, 2006),20.
- <sup>38</sup> Philip Megwali, "Just an Igbo Woman," (The voice, 1996)

## II. Results

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In dealing with Patriarchy, Gender discrimination and resistance in Buchi Emecheta's novels *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and *Kehinde* (1994), it is noticeable that the author is a radical 'feminist' in that she prefers her female characters to cut with the ties of male hegemony, and to call attention to the different challenges Black women face. Indeed, Emecheta has positively portrayed her female characters aiming at helping women leave the marginalization that their patriarchal society imposes on them.

With the examination of the novels cited above, the second major findings concerns the author's life, if we look closer to her personal life and experiences, we will notice that Emecheta has encountered sexist oppression. Therefore, both novels carry autobiographical features of the author which are derived from her personal and traumatic experiences in both social and cultural spaces defined by patriarchy. In fact, Adah and Kehinde are the fictionalized characters of her own, the experiences that Emecheta had in her childhood in Lagos, Nigeria and her years spent in London as a young woman, fashioned her as a voice for other women.

In addition, the last interesting findings we have reached include the fact that Emecheta's novels depict two female characters that choose different ways to liberate themselves. In one hand, education and work is the key to women empowerment and the autonomy of women, thereby becoming economically independent, it gives women and raises their self-esteem and confidence. On the other hand, Adah and Kehinde break the rules by choosing divorce as a mean of liberation in order to escape from their oppressive husbands and life. Thus, by using the characters of young females, Buchi Emecheta demonstrates how the traumatic experiences do not hamper them but rather teach them to grow into matured and selfless women.

## II. Discussion

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In patriarchal societies such as the Igbo one, Ibo women are under the sway of numerous scourges that range from marginalization, Gender Discrimination, alienation and oppression by men. *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and *Kehinde* (1994) are among those novels that reflect the above-mentioned issues. The opening chapter traces around a Gender Discrimination while the second one investigates the issue of patriarchy. The third chapter aims at discussing the ways into which Emecheta proves that education is the major remedy of women's oppression.

### **1. Chapter one: Patriarchy and Women's Oppression in *Second Class Citizen* and *Kehinde***

In her different literary texts Buchi Emecheta deals with issues like gender, sexism, racism, African culture and many other important topics. However, the novelist greatly deals with topics which concern women in general and with the prejudice of the Black women's rights in particular. In this regard *Second Class Citizen* and *Kehinde* are mainly considered as undeniable evidence which discuss and explain the way Black women are discriminated by the cultural and the traditional bias to men. In addition to gender discrimination, Emecheta sheds light on the issue of racism that Black people encounter and how these Black women suffer from a double-subjugation.

#### **1.1 Adah as a discriminated woman in *Second Class Citizen*:**

Buchi Emecheta celebrates the ideas of womanism and the Black women life, she shows within her novel *Second Class Citizen* various forms of gender discrimination and oppression. Thus, in the first and the second chapters she describes the story of Adah's life in Nigeria within gender discrimination that she faces from the Igbo society, her family and from her husband. Accordingly, from the first pages the author does not abstain herself from denouncing the harsh side of her culture where traditional customs impose the roles to men and women according to their gender. She exposes clearly the suffering of women in such



society which practice gender discrimination. Adah is told to be born in an African family in which the new born girls are not welcomed and not considered as members who need appreciation.<sup>39</sup> The narrator introduced Adah by saying:

She was a girl who had arrived when everyone was expecting and predicting a boy. So, since she was such a disappointment to her parent, to her immediate family, to her tribe, nobody thought of recording her birth she was so insignificant.<sup>40</sup>

It is said that the concept of gender is developed to contest the naturalization of sexual difference in multiple arenas of struggle.<sup>41</sup> therefore, the quote demonstrates the superiority of boys over girls in the Igbo society where girls are a disappointment. In reality, the marginalization of the heroine is not limited in one area of life. For instance Adah's parents do not allow her to get educated, for them she would continue her school for year or two to learn to write her name, then she will learn how to sew.<sup>42</sup> Adah was subaltern and silenced by her compressional family which limits her choices, violate her liberty and suppresses her identity.

Moreover, even after the marriage of Adah, she was also badly treated. In fact, her family in law believe in the marginalization and oppression against the female gender as a norm, more than that they intensify and reinforce male authority. She is assigned to specific roles which fit Francis's benefits like being a wife, a mother and a forced provider of money to her family.

the other two were paid their fees for secondary schools. These two, Cecilia and Angelina, were Francis's sisters. These four girls did all the work in the house. All Adah had to do was to go to the American library, work till two-thirty, come home and be waited on hand and foot, and in the evening be made love to. She did not disappoint her parents-in-law on that score. For, apart from the fact that she earned enough money to keep them all going, she was very prolific which, among the Ibos, is still the greatest asset a woman can have. A woman would be forgiven everything as long as she produced children.<sup>43</sup>

As seen in the passage above the protagonist sacrificed her time and her money to her family in law, she takes the burden the responsibly of feeding herself and her children, to pay the rent and help in paying the school of some of Francis' sisters. Yet things do not change in London, she is still the woman who must be the servant of her husband. As it is said in the following

passage:

[...] that his ideas about women were still the same. To him, a women was a second class human, to be slept with at any time, even during the day, and if she refused, to have sense beaten into her until she gave in; to be ordered out of bed after he had done with her; to make sure she washed his clothes and got his meals ready at the right time. There was no need to have an intelligent with his wife[...]<sup>44</sup>

The quote above clearly illustrates women's inferiority and how they are treated and discriminated. Francis gives to himself the position of power to control his wife and exercise various stereotyping and discriminatory behaviors upon her. Thus, due to her gender as being women, he diminishes Adah and reduces her value and abilities. This fact is well demonstrated when Francis tells Adah to look for a low job which is going to fit her to complete perfectly her duties as housekeeper, he does not care of her high degree of education. Because he thinks that women are brainless, useless unable to achieve other goals in their life except bearing children and serving men's desire he said: you keep forgetting that you are a women 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."<sup>45</sup>

From what is said above, Buchi Emecheta claims that even though immigrate to another country, men remain in perpetuating the African social contract that encourages male 'phallocentric' ideologies, which makes women submissive and worthless. Aside from exploring gender discrimination, *Second Class Citizen* also protest against another kind of discrimination whis is based on the racial root and the color of the skin.

Race and racism are problematized in Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* in order to raise the awareness of the Africans, and at the same time to address the White about the consequence of social division of the English society to two racial classes. In addition, she demonstrates the extent to which the exclusion of Blacks by the White causes them great damage and makes their life hard especially for women. The life of the protagonist Adah is harder since she faces a dual marginalization, at first by her husband and the Black society, secondly by the western society.<sup>46</sup>

Emecheta writes a chapter in her book titled '**Sorry No Colored**' to highlight the idea of being considered as a second class citizen and as inferior due to the ideological organization of the English society in which roles are defined according to the status and the color of one's skin. For instance, Adah and her husband find difficulties having accommodations in England because of their blackness. Although they were highly educated they were still marginalized and rejected, they are undesirable members within the White society.<sup>47</sup> Indeed, the writer in *Second Class Citizen* undoubtedly sustains that blacks suffer and are badly treated by the western world namely England the county of equality and liberty, like it is revealed in the novel in Francis words

The most frightful part of the whole business of post office jobs during Christmas was the English dogs. Those people, the English, they did worship their dogs! Adah gave a nod. Was that not the reason why they had a saying in their own language that you should love them and love their dogs? They love dogs, the English do. Yes, they love their dogs, Francis continued, so much so that they would rather the dogs butcher a black man, than let the black man kill the dog.<sup>48</sup>

## **1.2. Kehinde as a discriminated woman in Kehinde**

While *Second class citizen* depicts the life of Adah who moved with her husband from Nigeria to London to fulfil her dreams, the novel *Kehinde* is about the story of a woman named Kehinde who returned with her family from London to Nigeria to enjoy their life among their relatives in the Igbo society. However, the two books share similarities in terms of themes of oppression and gender discrimination, in addition to racism against the two protagonist Adah and Kehinde.

The novel opens with protagonist's husband Albert receiving a letter from his sisters asking him to return home. Through Albert the male character, Emecheta illuminates in the sense that men despite the fact that they live in foreign country they remain eager to find their ancestral way of life. Kehinde's husband wants to prove his masculinity and his manhood there.<sup>49</sup> In spite of long stay in the atmosphere of gender equality in London he is unable to hold the beliefs that obliges him to share the same status with his wife. In this conversation

with his friend, Albert shows his refusal to adopt those western behaviors toward his wife and shows his real attitude towards women when he has said:

I know what you mean, but that type of life is not possible here, in country where woman is Queen and where it's beginning to look if we're soon to have a women prime minister.<sup>50</sup>

We may say that even if Kehinde is an educated, working and with a high ranked position in the society, her husband Albert still practice the sexist attitude toward her and reduce her value just because of her gender. Emecheta gives a realistic portrayal of male 'chauvinism' and criticizes the discriminatory thoughts about women. This was illustrated when Albert speaks about his wife kehinde he says that she is only a woman more than that a Black Igbo woman[...].<sup>51</sup> she is supposed to do all the work, to be silent and is not worthy to discuss with her husband the familial concerns even her personal matter. Emecheta deplores this fact and presents it through Albert's obliging kehinde to get an abortion:

what does your wife say to that? Our women can be difficult when it comes to Things like that [...] I haven't even told her yet. But she will do what I say.<sup>52</sup>

In every detail of the novel Buchi Emecheta declares the suffering of women under men's ignorance and selfishness, their attitude pushes women to consider themselves as a sin and shame of the society. The idea of gender discrimination that is instilled in Albert's mind pushes Kehinde to consider herself a prostitute. In kehinde, the novel, the writer also proclaims about the reasons behind Albert's sense of superiority and kehinde's inferiority, she states that they are resulting from traditional and cultural customs. The male character is tied to the traditions that give him the authority and to justify the discrimination practiced against his wife. Albert says that in the Igbo culture having a male child is pride and honor who will bring so much luck to family,<sup>53</sup> whereas having a girl born is seen as bad luck, just like Kehinde who her birth is accused to be a child who brought bad luck.<sup>54</sup>

As we have said from the beginning, racial discrimination is an inevitable issue in the

novels of Emecheta Buchi. The heroine undergo racism and other forms of discrimination because of her racial root. She displays in the novel of *Kehinde* the White's misconception of Africa and Africans. Again like in *Second Class Citizen* she deprecates the bad image that the White have constructed about Africans as savage and uncivilized. This fact is illustrated in the following quote:

but while the others could talk about their dreams Albert felt shy. (...) Albert knew that their images of African chiefs were gathered from old Tarzan films and Sander of the River, and trying to give his colleague an up-to-date picture of Nigeria would be west of time.<sup>55</sup>

Lloyd Brown state that Africans are second class in Europe. Blacks are second class in a white society, and emerging third world countries still retain second-class status in spite of intellectual and economic borrowings from the first-class West.<sup>56</sup> In England, Black people are excluded and discriminated because they consider them a threat to their superiority.

Thus, kehinde's class status is not depending on the abilities and education, in the White community one's position is given according to their racial origins. The protagonist realizes the dilemmas that African people encounter in the foreign countries. Besides it strongly highlights the different kinds of struggles women must fight she trauma her grandmothers have undergo because of racism, she has to eat the humble porridge of the poor black women in London. She experienced racism in the hotel where she worked to supplement her income as the Sheikh ordered her: "take your clothes off! I want to see what a naked black woman looks like."<sup>57</sup> From the sheikh's words, Emecheta laments women's position and adds that women are trapped by their gender and race.

Colored Women are mostly known to be victims of suppression, dependence, violence and lack of access to education. They are considered as vulnerable human beings to men's dominance and authority. This second chapter captures the issue of patriarchy; it aims at showing the patriarchal altitudes in both the Igbo society and the western one will present the concept of patriarchy from different definitions and examines the issue of patriarchy in both novels and its impacts on the female characters.

## 2.3 Francis as the patriarch

Literature has constantly served as one of the major instruments in mirroring reality and society. It remains a consistent tool in the representation and interpretation of numerous fields. For a long time, the African literature has been considered as a patriarchal world. Nwell claims that the African literature “had worn a masculine mask, operating to the disadvantage of women by rendering them invisible or homogenous, or voiceless.”<sup>58</sup>

The oppression of women and the patriarchal practices are depicted in both Buchi Emecheta’s novels *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and *Kehinde* (1994). Within the two male protagonists Albert and Francis, Emecheta portrays the misogynous beliefs of the Nigerian society. It might be argued that these women are “colonized” both within the British society as well as in the Igbo culture.

At first, Emecheta’s novel *Second Class Citizen* traces the life of a Black Ibo woman named Adah Obi who struggles the overbearing patriarchy in both her native culture as well as in the western society while she is performing her role as a wife and mother of a five children. In this novel, Emecheta tackles the weight that lie heavy on women’s back. Having Witnessed the ‘trivialization’ of women in the Igboland, she captures the issue of marriage as a major topic. The heroine is caught between two prevailing forces of tradition and patriarchy. Among the Igbo, tradition and patriarchy are complementary which embody the empowerment of males over females, which are best seen in Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen*. The issue of marriage reveals the right patriarchal system of the Ibo people. At the beginning of the novel, Adah’s mother believes that Adah’s place should be at home that is why it is better to spend her bride price money on her brother’s education since boys bring glory not like girls. In fact, she was not allowed to attend school only because she was a girl, being born of a lesser sex, everything went in favor of her young brother “boy”. Therefore, she has to struggle right from the beginning of her life. After the sudden demise of her father, the family starts running out of money and in order to save her brother’s studies the family

attempts to find a husband for Adah. The author illustrates:

Time went by quickly, and when she reached the age of eleven, people started asking her when she was going to leave school. This was an urgent question because the fund for boy's education was running low: Ma was not happy with her new husband and it was considered time that Adah started making a financial contribution to her family. This terrified Adah.<sup>59</sup>

The writer has also shown that women are under the psychological clutches of patriarchal ideology. Man always holds a powerful position and has certain superiority over woman where he controls her physically and mentally. However, Adah's husband does not have a full grasp of his power; he does not rule his family efficiently. For instance, his father handles most of the crucial decisions and nobody was interested for her own sake. She became a responsible girl at a premature age. After her marriage with Francis she starts working for the Americans however, her husband disagreed with it and asked his father:

Do you think our marriage will last if I allow Adah to go and work for the Americans? Her pay will be three times my own. My colleagues at work will laugh at me. What do you think I should do?<sup>60</sup>

This instance mirrors the superiority and selfishness of Francis over Adah. She is obliged to live under her husband's rule against her wishes, his attitude designates a typical in a male-dominated society when men's needs always come first. In fact, Francis does not want Adah to work simply because her earnings will be more than his. In other words, Francis is afraid of losing his power and status due to his wife's education.

Consequently, Adah has financed Francis's studies in the United Kingdom and was hopeful that she too would visit the United Kingdom, the dream of her life. However, Adah was startled to know that the father of the house (pa) did not consent to her proposal and she had to remain at home and continue with her job and assists the family financially. Thus, Adah's happiness was disrupted by the news Francis brought to her. He says:

Father does not approve of women going to the UK. But you see, you will pay for me, and look after yourself, and within three years I'll be back. Father said, you're earning more than most people who have been to England, why lose your good job just to go and see London? They say it is just like Lagos.<sup>61</sup>

Once again the powerful grip of patriarchal practices over women are illustrated through Francis and his father, they both represent an obstacle for Adah's life and whose mentality

have been shaped by male dominated Igbo cultural practices and tradition. It elucidates the hegemonic relationship between men and women. In other words, African women should always dedicate their life to their husbands and have to do everything in order to make them comfortable and satisfied. Adah has to sacrifice her wish of going to the UK since, “It is allowed for African males to come to get civilized in England, but that privilege has not been extended to females yet.”<sup>62</sup>

Across patriarchy, women are typically exposed to different degrees and forms of violence. After joining Francis in England, Adah Obi has to face new challenges. Throughout the novel, Buchi Emecheta shows vigorously a set of descriptions that display the different forms of violence in the African community. The heroine remains caught in patriarchy as Francis proves to be an abusive and oppressive husband. Once in England, Francis repeated failure in his exams takes a toll on his relationship with Adah.

Therefore, it has contributed to the instability of their husband and wife relationship which consequently resulted in violence, mistreatment and enslavement. Francis treats her as a property as he controlled everything related to her even her salary. Adah undergoes a harsh domestic violence, namely verbal and physical; Francis did not only belittle her, deny her to work, and had extramarital affairs but he also disallows Adah for using birth control. To Francis:

a woman was a second class human, to be slept with any time...if she refused to have sense beaten into her until she gave in to be ordered out of bed after he had done with her; to make sure she washed his clothes and got his meals ready at the time.<sup>63</sup>

Emecheta identifies her protagonist as a mother, woman and wife who resisted to the various challenges women can face when subjected to culturally based definitions of motherhood. Throughout the novel, the author wants to expose the burden of motherhood in the Nigerian society as they are seen as ‘reproductive machines’. The more women produce children, male children in particular the more respect they receive from the family and tribe. Vusanummi affirms that, “the more children, the better, but the gender of the



children has effect on how the wife is valued!”<sup>64</sup> In line with this thought, writings such as Emecheta’s *the Joys of Motherhood* and Flora Nwapa’s *Efuru* have unmasked the truthful realities and experiences of motherhood coupled with pain and suffering. Adah who is a mother of three children at the age of twenty-one, she decides to challenge the idea of women’s role of production and takes the decision not to give birth to children. The author states:

Adah did not care which way she achieved this, but she was having no more children two boys and a girl were enough for any mother in law, if her mother in law wanted another one, she could get her son another wife.<sup>65</sup>

Once Francis discovered her intention, he immediately accused her of prostitution as he claimed that she could take other men behind his back. The novel is full of abusive and violent scenes, Francis cruelty and brutality were shown when he severely beats his wife and humiliates her in front of their neighbors. The writer comments:

Francis called all the other tenants to come and see and hear about this great issue-how the innocent Adah who came to London only a year previously had become so clever . Adah was happy when Pa Nobel came, because at least it made Francis stop hitting her. She was dizzy with pain and her head throbbed. Her mouth was bleeding .<sup>66</sup>

As Albert is the fictionalized character of her husband, Adah has been a victim of domestic violence. She has been raped many times by the pervert Francis; as he even forces his pregnant wife to have sex with him. She illustrates:

Francis was pressed with desire for her...In this particular occasion, Francis was like an enraged bull... “Why must you talk about it just now at three o’clock in the morning? why, you wicked witch? Is it too much for a man to want his wife? He thundered, shaking Adah brutally by the shoulders. She whimpered in pain.<sup>67</sup>

Francis treats his own wife harshly and made her silent, and subjected to his authority. It is namely shown when he humiliates her and burns her manuscript. As Adah decided to write ‘*The Bride Price*’ and wanted to show her creative work to Francis, however she is disappointed by his reaction saying:

you keep forgetting that you are a woman and you are black. The white man can barely tolerate us men, to say nothing of brainless female like you who could think of nothing except how to breast-feed her baby.<sup>68</sup>

This had an effect on Adah, ‘she was hurt badly’. In his view, women are believed to be beaten and violated at anytime, the only job they can do is to be a good mother only. After this incident, life with Francis became ‘purgatorial’ and unbearable.

At the final analysis, Adah decided to end her marriage with Francis, however he reminds her with the laws in the Igbo society by saying:

In our country, among our people, there is nothing like divorce or separation. Once a man’s wife, always a man’s wife until you die. You cannot escape. You are bound to him<sup>69</sup>.

Emecheta sheds the lights not only on Adah’s struggle but also a struggle of every woman in a male dominated society. It also captures attention that Black women were downcast in their marriage and relationship with Men. Indeed, “This divine institution roughly oppressed and segregated women from the real world.”<sup>70</sup> In Igbo cultural beliefs, men are allowed manipulating their wives and feel proud beating them. As he had no respect for his mother. He said: “My father knocked my mother about until I was old enough to throw stones at him. My mother never left my father.”<sup>71</sup>

This oppressive act is something that is typically adopted by Igbo tradition. Francis is proud because his father used to beat his mother and she never thought of leaving him since there is no divorce in his culture, because in the “typical Igbo psychology; men never do wrong, only the woman; they have to beg for forgiveness, they are bought, paid for and must remain like that, silent obedient slaves.”<sup>72</sup>

## **2.4. Albert as the patriarch**

Similarly, in the novel *Kehinde*, Emecheta also portrays the Igbo culture as being a patriarchal one that accepts the marginalization of Black women. Marie Umeh asserts, “According to Emecheta, Igbo society embodies the principles of male dominance and female subordination.”<sup>73</sup> In fact, Emecheta’s male protagonist Albert epitomizes the African men’s dominance and oppression of women with their maintenance of their patriarchal roots. As a Nigerian man living in London, he seems to be unable to cope with the western lifestyle,

which obliges him to share the same social status with his wife. Having been influenced by the Nigerian sexist rules, Albert feels that Kehinde threatens his manhood. When Albert receives letters from his sisters; eager to go back to his homeland Nigeria where “the heir must always be buried in his father’s compound.”<sup>74</sup> He not only followed his sisters’ request and ignores his wife protestation but also leaves England. During his final party in London, he nostalgically says to his colleague Prahbu:

But I want to go back to the way of life my father had, a life of comparative ease for men, where men were men and women were women, and one was respected as somebody. Here, I am nobody, just a storekeeper. I’m fed up with just listening to my wife and indulging her. The only alternative is to go to the pub, but going to stand among all those drunken whites is no solution. No, to be at home is better. There I can have my drink on the verandah, and people will pay attention to me, including my wife.<sup>75</sup>

Within this statement, Albert directly affirms the superiority of the male over female and that he is still deeply influenced and rooted by his ancestral misogynistic rules. What is astounding is the fact that he misses and yearns again for his patriarchal environment where he can assert his male dominance of being a ‘Man’ and claim his birth rights.

Additionally, the patriarch Albert tends to play his Igbo patriarchal role as the head of the family in London in several situations. When his wife informs him about her pregnancy, he insisted and forces Kehinde to get rid of the baby who is consequently ‘flushed away’. Despite abortion being forbidden in Nigeria, he justifies himself saying: “I know abortion is wrong but we are in a strange land, where you do things contrary to your culture.”<sup>76</sup> This justifies the adherence of the African misogynous practices when he informs his Pakistani colleague,

I haven’t even told her yet, but she will do what I say after a lot of tantrums. Stupid country where you need your wife’s money to make ends meet.<sup>77</sup>

Being selfish and confident about his superior patriarchal status, he tends to have the last word and pushes Kehinde into a submissive position by downgrading her. Therefore, Emecheta displays the manipulation of Albert over Kehinde’s life who is only expected to be an obedient caretaker of her husband and the mother of his children, as well as the one who accepts her husband’s underestimation and mistreatment without any complaint.

As it has been already mentioned, in Emecheta's *Kehinde*, family and African religious beliefs are the basis of sexist oppression. Indeed, Emecheta exposes how male practices aggrieved women. After two years of loneliness, Kehinde decided to go back to Nigeria under her sister's (Taiwo) advice when she urges her to question Albert's silence. She points out:

Why do Albert's letters say nothing? What is he hiding?... Do you think your Alby can live alone all this time?... Why don't you go to Nigeria and find out what is happening, before it's too late? Have you forgotten that in Nigeria it's considered mainly for men to be unfaithful? Even if he didn't want women they would come to him.<sup>78</sup>

Alice Walker emphasizes the importance of the presence of a strong women's community for the empowerment and the emancipation of the black women through creating a community of sisters.<sup>79</sup> This instance indicates the feminine strength and guidance. In fact, Kehinde draws her strength from her dead sister Taiwo who is her Chi. In fact, she was a strong element for helping Kehinde to discover Albert's secrecy as well as to develop her identity as an autonomous woman.

Once in Nigeria, she experiences many shocks; she first learns that they will be with all her family, Albert and Kehinde will have separate bedrooms and "the beautiful sophisticated, young pregnant woman with a baby."<sup>80</sup> The patriarch Albert has chosen once again to behave according to the patriarchal norms of his culture. He accepts polygamy as a typical way of living, and in order to justify his second marriage to Kehinde he says:

I know you're angry. But look back Kehinde. My father had two wives, yours had three, so what sin did I commit that is too abominable?<sup>81</sup>

Hence, by getting married with another woman, he follows his traditional path of his ancestors and upholds the habitual virtues of his family, "within twenty-four months he had fathered a son and had another on the way."<sup>82</sup> In fact, his marriage gives him more confidence and power at the expense of Kehinde who "slipped effortlessly back into her old submissive role."<sup>83</sup>

Albert's second wife Rike represents an image of the typical liberated and authoritative Black women. Being an educated woman allows her to assume a rightful place in the Igbo

patriarchal society. Kehinde then started to describe her rival with what she has and what she lacks. She argues:

Yes, Moriammo he has another wife. She is a lecture. She had a PhD. She has a maid. She has a Peugeot. She has a son twelve months old. And I am sure the one she's carrying will be another son. You know my husband –our husband- cannot sit down and read a book to save his life, but now he is married to a young woman with a doctorate degree in literature!<sup>84</sup>

In England, Kehinde was full of herself, but in Nigeria, Kehinde realizes that she has no place in her family anymore, and then she starts complaining to her friend Moriammo in a letter saying:

Moriammo, Albert has humiliated me, and the worst is that I have to depend on him financially. He gave me the first housekeeping money in over eighteen years of marriage, and I had to take it. When I refuse to kneel to take it, his sisters levied a fine of one cock...It's a man's world here.<sup>85</sup>

Kehinde's letter unveiled the cultural biases of the Igbo society and revealed the plights faced by women who are oppressed and dependent in polygamous marriages. African women still do not see the light of the day under the control of their society, and they still bear the subordination and servitude through many forms such as traditions, stereotypes and religion. In other words, it is worth noting that African men are supposed to be obeyed and respected by their wives, whereas African women are in the lowest position of their society.

## **2.5 Joshua as the patriarch**

The novel has once again illustrated the hegemony of male characters, it appears that Albert is not the only one to embrace the patriarchal African roots, even Kehinde's son appears to be influenced by the Nigerian Igbo practices. In reality, the African community has a negative influence on their male children particularly when it comes to imposing themselves on women. When Joshua returned to London, he noticed the typical transformation of his mother; she was no longer "the ideal Ibuza village mother."<sup>86</sup> Growing up as a Nigerian teenager man in a patriarchal set up, Joshua was under the assumption that it was the responsibility of men to look after the inferior women, the author states:

he was flexing his adolescent muscles[...]he felt he had the answer to the world's problem, having been to Africa, where young men were made to

feel they owned heaven and earth.<sup>87</sup>

Joshua's inheritance of patriarchy is made apparent and reveals his selfish needs and interests to exert authority and power from an early age. The writer argues:

he had hoped his mother would retire gracefully, giving him to run the house. The grant and the money collected from the house rent would have made his life comfortable as a student.<sup>88</sup>

In this context, female are still regarded as minors under the authority of males, as he even tries to prod Kehinde on her duty as a mother by tearing the house away from her under Albert's advice when he says:

We men must stick together, and look after our women. The house in London is yours. Make sure it goes under your name. Your mother loves you very much and would be happy to see you make your claim. Get in some tenants and send me money monthly.<sup>89</sup>

From all what is said above, we can conclude that patriarchy is the basis of sexist oppression where women are entrapped. Buchi Emecheta has cleverly shown through her main protagonists how the Nigerian culture is oppressive to women. Until now, many societies still rob women's rights and freedom, as a result, women have to struggle to be respected, heard and recognized. The process of liberating themselves from the male dominance and the cultural beliefs, is not as simple, however they were more resistant to it.

## Endnotes

<sup>39</sup>Ayyıldız, Nilay Erdem. "The Ordeal of Blackness and Womanhood in Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*." *Çankırı Karatekin Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 8.1 (2017), 138.

<sup>40</sup>Buchi, Emecheta. *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). 1

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<sup>42</sup>Buchi, Emecheta. *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). 3

<sup>43</sup>Ibid. 27. 28.

<sup>44</sup>Buchi, Emecheta. *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). 161.162

<sup>45</sup>Ibid. 164.

<sup>46</sup>Rajeeva, Thampuratty. "Migration, Racism and Cultural Identity in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* and Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*." *Journal of the Gujarat Research Society* 21.10 (2019), 536 .

<sup>47</sup>Coulibaly Aboubacar, Sidiki, and Aboubacrine, Maiga Abida. "Racial and Gender Implications in African Female Literature: an Afrocentric Feminist Reading of Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*." *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences* 3.6: 266-239. Accessed on 28 10-february-2021 <https://media.neliti.com>. 969

<sup>48</sup>Buchi, Emecheta. *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller 1974). 134.

<sup>49</sup>Sheyamala, M, and Sudha, Rani "Kehinde A Black Woman's Liberation from Racial Discrimination and Hegemony. 11.8 (2019), Accessed on 15-February-2021 <http://infokara.com>.306

<sup>50</sup>Buchi, Emecheta. *Kehinde* (Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1994).35.

<sup>51</sup>Ibid,15

<sup>52</sup>Ibid,17

<sup>53</sup>Ibid,86.

<sup>54</sup>Ibid,18.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid,16.

<sup>56</sup> Anonym: Chapter V THE NEW WOMAN OF AFRICA IN GWENDOLEN AND KEHINDE.200.201

<sup>57</sup> Buchi, Emecheta Kehinde ( Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1994).126

- <sup>58</sup> Stephanie Nwell, *The Politics of (m) Othering: Womanhood, Identity and Resistance in African Literature* (Routledge, 1996).
- <sup>59</sup> Buchi Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). 18.
- <sup>60</sup> Buchi Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). 24.
- <sup>61</sup> Buchi Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). 24.
- <sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, 34.
- <sup>63</sup> Buchi Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). 161.
- <sup>64</sup> Mari, Vusanummi. "Women's Position in the Igbo society according the Joy of Motherhood by Buchi Emecheta". Diss. U of Tampere, 2007. Web.
- <sup>65</sup> Buchi Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). 135.
- <sup>66</sup> Buchi Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). 143.
- <sup>67</sup> *Ibid*, 85.
- <sup>68</sup> *Ibid*, 164.
- <sup>69</sup> Buchi Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974). 168.
- <sup>70</sup> Okyere Darko, Daniel, and Uriah S. Tettah. "The Significance of the theme of Marriage to Character Development in the Novels of Buchi Emecheta." University of Cape Coast: Departement of English (2015). 57.
- <sup>71</sup> *Ibid*, 168.
- <sup>72</sup> *Ibid*, 152.
- <sup>73</sup> GÜNDÜZ, Ela İpek. "Kehinde: Floundering between Two Opposite Worlds." *Cankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 11.1: 65-74.
- <sup>74</sup> Buchi Emecheta, *Kehinde* (Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1994). 34.
- <sup>75</sup> *Ibid*, 35.
- <sup>76</sup> *Ibid*, 15.
- <sup>77</sup> *Ibid*, 15.
- <sup>78</sup> *Ibid*, 43.



<sup>79</sup> Barbara Christian, *Black Feminist Criticism*(New York: Pergamon Press).181.

<sup>80</sup> Buchi Emecheta, *Kehinde* (Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1994). 66.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*,86.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid*, 86

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*,66.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid*, 94

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid*, 89

<sup>86</sup> Buchi Emecheta, *Kehinde* (Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1994).94.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid*, 138.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid*, 137.

<sup>89</sup>*Ibid*, 140.

## **2. Chapter Two: Education and Women's Resistance**

Emecheta Buchi with other African female writers like Ama Ata Aidoo, Flora Nwapa and Assia Djebar through their writings criticize and deconstruct the ideas that are built on women's role in the patriarchal African society, where women are viewed to be wives, mothers and house cleaner who work to satisfy men. Thus, the two novels under study namely *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and *Kehinde* (1994) are samples that depict the difficult journey that women had to go through to become independent. Emecheta breaks the silence imposed on them for a long time by the 'sexist' and 'racist' society by showing how the subalternity and oppression of the African women could be alleviated and terminated.

### **2.1. Adah and Kehinde the Educated Women:**

As a result of patriarchy, society and men are blind towards women and put barriers in their way. Girls and women are excluded members within the social structures. *Second class Citizen* and *Kehinde* are set in Post Independent Nigeria. The country had known numerous changes, which touched different areas of the society. However, these new transformations remained against women's liberation. Consequently, Buchi Emecheta urged to develop strategies to resist oppression. She believes that education is a weapon that enable women to overcome the social and traditional restrictions that prevent them from their rights. For this reason, Emecheta's protagonists of her aforementioned books Adah and Kehinde are oriented to education as a key for their freedom and liberation from social and male's oppression.

In *Second Class Citizen*, Each stage of the protagonist Adah's life corresponds to a form of the constraints that she had to undergo. She knew that, she is marginalized and nobody is interested on her sake. Hence, it would be the incentive that drives her to obtain a high level of education to succeed in her life. Consequently, to overcome the injustice is subjected to, Adah will maneuver to find solutions to go school.

The little girl counters her parents to fulfill her dreams. She is not going to give up and to

listen to those voices which silences and stop her because she knew that by education women could face the bigotry of predominately male patriarchy. With her eagerness toward education she managed to enter school:

Then the thought suddenly struck her, yes, she would go to school [...]. She would go to the Methodist School round to corner. It was cheaper [...] yes, she would go there.[...] Thus, Adah went to school, she ran as fast she could before anyone could stop her. In determination she walked down the center looking for the teacher who is going to teach her.<sup>90</sup>

Accordingly, Black women can be that ambitious independent one and these can be done by getting educated. Consequently, in *Second Class Citizen* the protagonist Adah assumed the severe punishment that her cousin gives her to pay her entrance examination.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, when she announced her teenager hood she pledged herself in sad marriage to secure her pursue to education.<sup>92</sup> Adah's struggle and stubbornness reflect the extent of her ambition, she wants to be different, not to be subordinated to anybody like her mother and the other Ibo women. That is why her fight has no limit she has to pursue her schooling or to die.<sup>93</sup>

Emecheta takes education as the ultimate tool to change women's social status.<sup>93</sup> In Adah's situation, one can say that she has made good use of her education. She succeeded to be hired at the American consulate with good a salary and most importantly she resorts to writings to express herself. It is best illustrated in the previous passage:

He keeps pressing Adah to get a job in shirt factory Adah refused working in a factory was the last thing she would do. After all, she had several "O" and "A" levels and she had part of the British library Association professional certificate.<sup>94</sup>

Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* encourages African women to fight nail and tooth to reach their dreams. Through the main character indicate the importance of education in one's life in particular Black African women in order to fight the cultural practice and traditional faiths that interfere in shaping the individuals's destiny.

Librarianship was to her simply a stepping stone to bring her nearer to the books which she dreamt she was going to write in the future, when she was forty. But in England, she had been made to start almost twenty years before her time. Her books might not be published until she was forty, but her story had been completed. She could not go back now. She had known the feeling she had when she finished the story, she had tasted the fulfilment of seeing others read her work, and had felt an

inner glow that was indescribable when other people said how much they had enjoyed reading it.<sup>95</sup>

Through education, the writer gives her heroine the power to defeat the sacredness of the patriarchy which does not take into account women as full members of the society. Education renders women visible in the darkness of men's hegemony.

Similarly, Buchi Emecheta's book *kehinde* follows the same discursive patterns as *Second Class Citizen* in where she makes reference to the significance of education as a liberating force in women's life. She alludes to it through Albert's disappointment and being displeased with the fact that women have been educated. He says: "The trouble starts when women get educated, and now it's too late to change back again."<sup>96</sup> From this quotation we understand that as long as African men believe that women's destiny is subordination and obedience under their hand. As result, they are the first to be against and oppose women's education, as they think that with women's power their manhood will be questioned.<sup>97</sup>

Education is the reason getting rid of dependency for men. In Kehinde's case, the high degree of education that she has let her to success in professional life and gains a good status when she reaches England at first time. More than that, by education Emecheta's heroine improves her confidence, personality and strengthened her believes to deal with different challenges that she encounters in her life. For this, in *Kehinde* Emecheta claims that education is an opportunity to rival men's authority and a crucial step to enable African women to take control over their lives to participate as equal in the patriarchal society.<sup>98</sup>

## 2.2. Adah and kehinde the new African Women

*Second Class Citizen* and *Kehinde* are sample of women empowerment. She makes her heroines Adah Obi and Kehinde Okolo strong and determined they stand up for their rights. Despite the fact that they were raised in an environment that had given them a very low opinion on their gender, where women had the way to sapping herself confidence.<sup>99</sup> However, the tow protagonist Adah and Kehinde were aware of such situation and resisted.

Emecheta sheds light to the commitment of Adah and her determination which is stemmed from her desire to be educated. Then she emphasizes about the female character transition, since a certain moment Adah woke up from her 'slumber' and became aware of her real situation and she knew that she must change and challenge these conditions under which she lives. Adah complains:

She would never, never in her life get married to any man, rich or poor, to whom she would have to serve his food on bended knee: she would not consent to live a husband whom she would have to treat as a master and refer to as "sir" even behind his back, she knew that all Ibo women did this, but she wasn't going to!<sup>100</sup>

Divorce was also a strategy that Adah uses to stop Francis's humiliation and to assert herself as new African women again. She is different from the other women in her community. She rejected from her youthful the male prejudice. Effectively, she challenged her husband and decided to shift from a lifeless wife to an autonomous person in order to regain her happiness. Thus, she broke up with her husband and asked for divorce.

She told herself that she could not live with such a man [...] now everybody knew that the man she was working for and supporting was not only fool, but was too much of a fool to know that he was acting foolishly."<sup>101</sup>

Through getting divorce, Adah wants to make her happiness her hands, to rely on herself, to recover from her woes and to have the self-confidence to overcome obstacles that prevent her identity.

As we have said already stated that the female character was considered as the second class, doubly discriminated because of her gender and origins. However, Adah was able to fully acknowledge her dignity and identity within the white society. Indeed, she is aware of her real position in the society as intellectual woman as a result, she denied this description and fought to obtain a respectable work in a library side by side with the whites. She learned to accept to be a woman and to be proud of her origins whether in black society or in the white one, as is illustrated in the excerpt:

She was different. Her children were going to be different. They were all going to be black, they were going to enjoy being black, be proud being black, a black of different breed."<sup>102</sup>

Emecheta refuses the stereotypical assumptions associated with the issue of race and she questions white's superiority and maintains that Black people should not underestimate themselves, since they are not different from white, whatever the white can do the black can do also. They may even do it better in terms of human capacities intelligence, feelings, and creativity.<sup>103</sup>

Likewise, *Kehinde* depicts the ways women are expected to be submissive, and taught to reverence male position in the society. The protagonist Kehinde experienced subjugation even by other women who have a role in forcing her to obey her husband's supremacy, when she arrived to Nigeria with her sister Ifeyinwa and her sisters in law. However, Kehinde complains and refuses to obey to such social roles that imposes on her how to behave, then, she said to her sister "Educate me, please, have I not just got married to Albert and you are now going to tell me what marriage is all about."<sup>104</sup>

Kehinde is a vivid example of a woman with self-definition and self-expression, is the new woman who demonstrate the necessary courage to face the social instructions. From the beginning, the protagonist is represented clever and defeated the traditional rules in different situation. Emecheta buchi shows her brightness by making Kehinde the new woman and at the same time, she demonstrates her pride in her origins. Kehinde strongly believes in the African family, also is more faithful to Igbo tradition whereas she does not accept to lose her independence and privileges that she has constructed for herself.

In fact, Buchi Emecheta uses birth control and abortion to advocate woman's agency and individuality and she calls for Black women's emancipation on their own term. She suggests that, they should not beg for any sympathy from the traditional and patriarchal society around them.<sup>105</sup> Kehinde resorts to birth control not because she does not love children, she was a good mother who sacrificed for her son and daughter. However, she knew very well that men are selfish are and only motivated by their sexual desire; they do not care about women's happiness or health. In a conversation with her husband about children, she says:

I'm sorry we have to do this, when get home to Nigeria, you can have as many babies as you like, I promise' Kehinde flared up instantly. 'what do you mean, have as many babies as I like? Have you forgotten that they are tying my tubes as well? I meant what I said last night. If I abort this child, I want my tubes tied I can no longer rely on you to take the proper precautions. And I don't want to go through this again, ever.'<sup>106</sup>

In this quotation, the author advocates women's right to control their body. By this act of breaking taboo, again is an evidence that presents the new African woman who want to have full control of her body and get free from man's subjugation. Additionally, the subalternity and humiliation that she lived in Nigeria made her more determinate. Then she rebels and decides to leave Nigeria and return to England even without the support of nonperson. She stands on her feet to liberate herself from the hegemonic society. Kehinde pronounced her right to lead her life like she wants, and claimed in the following conversation with her son that she is worthy of personal freedom. She says: "claiming my rights does not make me less of mother, not of less a woman. If anything it makes me more human."<sup>107</sup>

Kehinde's son failed to make his mother heed to his patriarchal order. He was surprised by his mother's transformation she was no longer the mother who is supposed to sacrifice for their children. Kehinde characterized as being daring, determined, and dauntless. She accomplished her identity she claimed her womanhood and a human who needs to love and to be loved.

African women had to emancipate themselves from gender discrimination, patriarchal societies as well as racial segregation. Kehinde had to face combat racism by the Arabic sheikh in the hotel where she worked to supplement her income. Kehinde upheld her sovereign status and identity and ignored him and walked away to assert her dignity, then she worked hard to achieve a good work and obtain a degree in sociology.

Consequently, Buchi Emecheta uses Adah and Kehinde as fictional image of her life and as a device to depict her own experience, and to document the experiences of modern African women within a male dominated-world. She sets her female protagonists within

restrictive conditions in order to demonstrate the extent to which they are powerful, clever and most importantly new African women who build their life project. With the rebellious spirit, they challenged the taboos of the African traditions and male centered patriarchy. Her writings are like the voice of hope and the means for women's empowerment, Through the two novels *Second Class Citizen* and *Kehinde* she denounces the aspects that restricts Black African women' development and bring out their hidden feelings. Therefore, she insists that Black women are worthy with or without men.

## Endnotes

<sup>90</sup> Buchi, Emecheta. *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974).9

<sup>91</sup>Ibid, 19

<sup>92</sup>Ibid,23.24.

<sup>93</sup>Buchi, Emecheta. *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974).21

<sup>94</sup>Buchi, Emecheta. *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974).40

<sup>95</sup>Ibid,131.

<sup>96</sup>Buchi, Emecheta. *Kehinde* (Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1994).36

<sup>97</sup>Ela İpek,GÜNDÜZ. "Kehinde: Floundering between Two Opposite Worlds." *Cankaya University Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences* 11.1: 69

<sup>98</sup>Linda, Anyalebechi. "The issue of gender inequality in Nigeria." *Journal of Policy and Development Studies* 289.3519 (2016). 65

<sup>99</sup> Buchi, Emecheta. *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974).11

<sup>100</sup>Emecheta, Buchi. *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974).19

<sup>101</sup>Buchi, Emecheta. *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1974).155

<sup>102</sup>Ibid, 138.

<sup>103</sup>Sidiki, Coulibaly Aboubacar, and Maiga Abida Aboubacrine. "Racial and Gender Implications in African Female Literature: an Afrocentric Feminist Reading of Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*." *International Journal of English Literature and*



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<sup>104</sup> Buchi, Emecheta. Kehinde (Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1994). 70

<sup>105</sup> Mansour, Gueye. *Women in African Women's Writings: A Study of Novels by Buchi Emecheta and Tsitsi Dangarembga*. Diss. Faculté des Lettres et Sciences Humaines de l'Université Cheikh Anta DIOP de Dakar, (2017). 345

<sup>106</sup> Buchi, Emecheta. Kehinde (Oxford: Heinemann Publishers, 1994). 22

<sup>107</sup> Ibid, 141.

#### IV. General Conclusion:

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Our study has examined women's issue of male domination, gender discrimination and resistance in *Second Class Citizen* (1974) and *Kehinde* (1994). It has allowed us to clearly depict the suffering of women under the dominance of men and their struggle towards independence. Our main purpose in this dissertation is to demonstrate Emecheta's main goal for writing her novels, she use her autobiographical voice to discern the African stereotypical traditions that oppress African women.

The first chapter can summarize that the two novels of contemporary Black writer Buchi Emecheta have portrayed the impact of multi-faced oppression and prejudice that have been practiced against Black women during Nigerian male dominating society. Through the two heroines, Emecheta attempts to expose the affliction and misery of colored women. Indeed, the female character like Adah and Kehinde find themselves in stereotyped gender roles that impose certain responsibilities and duties upon them. The protagonists gradually realize that they are caught between the boundaries of social structures and patriarchy made up of fathers, husbands and sons, which are in opposition to their desire to live fulfilled lives. Accordingly, the tow protagonists are the representative of the Nigerian women in general and they fictionalize the personal life of Buchi Emecheta in particular.

In the second chapter using some aspects of Alice Walker's Womanism, we demonstrated that Emecheta has provided several means of rebellion and liberation of her protagonists against the patriarchal society. The novels charts Adah and kehinde's struggle to overcome all the restriction placed upon them as wives, mothers and black persons. Therefore, the principal weapon at their disposal is to get a high education, specifically obtaining an education that suits their qualifications and ambitions, rather than their gender and racial status. It is evident that Emecheta successfully created a black culture and black female characters who are independent and who are able to shift from subjugation to resistance and empowerment. Adah and Kehinde learned how to stand against patriarchy, they break the

traditions and asked for divorce they believe that their dignity more worthy than anything else is.

To conclude, our research does not cover all the issues that can be tackled in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* and Kehinde. We believe this topic is still an interesting subject that needs further investigation.

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