

Womanhood, Patriarchy, and Hegemonic Deconstruction in Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen*

Godfrey Ngozi Ogbonna, PhD

&

Gabriel Oche Ukah, PhD

&

Innocent Chima Ogoke

Abstract

*The African woman is viewed and treated as second class citizen not because she is less a rational thinking being but for the fact that she identifies as a woman. It has been aided over centuries by patriarchal social construct that privileges the male over the female. However, African feminism as a literary theory questions the rationale behind the relegation of womanhood to a secondclass status on one hand and disapproves the legitimacy of patriarchal social construct on the other hand. This paper, therefore, relies on African feminism as its theoretical framework to critically examine hegemonic deconstruction in Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen*. The paper examines the feminist temper through a critical investigation of the social construct that gives it impetus. The relationship between male and female characters in the novel and how it informs the African woman's conformity and subsequent revolt are also considered. The paper submits that patriarchal assumption of "Alpha male" is an illusion put in place to subjugate, oppress, and exploit the African woman socially, sexually, culturally, politically, and*

economically. The paper upholds the view that where social construct is unfavourable to the non-conformist African woman, she navigates and rises in revolt.

Keywords: *feminism, womanhood, patriarchy, hegemonic deconstruction, revolt.*

Introduction

The African woman who is liberated academically and holds a professional job still maintains some socio-cultural philosophies like the uneducated African woman. She combines her family and official roles effectively. The working-class African wife is in no way affected by her child-rearing role in the family. Despite the emancipation agenda and its resultant changes which have occurred in the life of the African woman since the colonial era, however, social responses to her additional roles have not improved to any significant level. Rather, the personality image of the working-class African woman has occasionally been diminished. The unacceptable reaction against the socioeconomic advancement of the African woman which has occasioned her experiences of discrimination and subjugation in recent time is traceable to patriarchal orientation of the male towards her. Due to the patriarchal orientation, the African man sees her as constituting a threat to his superior position. The character of Francis Obi embodies this orientation (Emecheta 169). The education of the girl-child, therefore, has been met with hostility. Those who are opportuned to have access to western education are discouraged to aspire for higher education. The girlchild's

education most often ends at the basic level “as long as she can write her name and count” (Emecheta 3). Elsewhere, Nawal El Saadawi in her novel, *Woman at Point Zero*, paints the picture thus:

All women are victims of deception. Men impose deception on women and punish them for being deceived, force them down to the lowest level and punish them for falling so low, bind them in marriage and then chastise them with menial service for life, or insults, or blows (183).

The implication of the discriminatory reaction to the full exploration of the African woman’s potentials is a society steeped in moral laxity. Preference to educate the boy-child and neglect the girl-child informs the popular saying that if you educate a man, you simply educate an individual, but if you educate a woman, you educate a family. The argument is that the best approach to pin a people down is to educate the man and neglect the woman. What this postulation implies is that an educated woman is more socially open-minded and the negligence of her in the mainstream of socio-economic decisions-making spells doom. On the other hand, an empowered woman looks inward and makes significant contributions to the development of her family and society. It is exemplified in the character of Adah Obi in *Second-Class Citizen*.

In her seminal work which portrays the African woman’s oppression and resistance, Chioma Opara posits that African female writers, such as Flora Nwapa, Grace Ogot, Buchi Emecheta, Zaynab Alkali, Akachi Adimora Ezeigbo, Amma Darko, Efua Sutherland and Ama Ata Aidoo successfully made

the major themes of their works about religious and cultural practices that are injurious to the image and status of the African woman. These practices have been systematically weaponized against the African woman.

African Prose Fiction and the Representation of Womanhood

A close assessment of African feminist theories reveals that what binds them together is the assumption that available in various African cultures are structures and systems that allow the subjugation of women. These anti-women social structures are viewed as that which must be challenged in order to bring about emancipation of womanhood in African socio-cultural, religious, economic, and political milieu. The theories mostly evaluate the African woman within the African context of wifehood, motherhood, womanhood, sexuality, and sisterhood in a literary text. They ideologically investigate the roles of the African woman in these important institutions and the influence of patriarchy in the discharge of the roles. African feminism also examines how the African woman navigates social stereotype and revolts against subjugating social construct. On the other hand, African feminism launches an attack on the legitimacy of patriarchy by ridiculing the notion of Alpha male hegemony. Therefore, African feminism calls for a renegotiation within the African context for the place of the African woman in regards to equal opportunities with her male counterpart in terms of social, political and economic advancement as well as respect for the humanity of the African woman. The paper, therefore, deploys the tenets of African feminism as a theoretical framework to critically

examine womanhood, patriarchy, and hegemonic deconstruction in Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen*.

Arguably, the authentic image of the African woman in prose fiction has not been well represented by most male writers. There is a perception of African womanhood in prose fiction by male writers which does not unearth the personality and inner reality of the African woman. Although, some male writers create female protagonists whose characters and mannerisms are treated with precision and authenticity of detail, the roles of these female characters are often made marginal to the plot of the narratives. An ideal female character created by a male writer in prose fiction, often functions within the framework of her traditional roles as wife and mother. Her ability to earn love and respect is dependent on her adaptability to these traditional roles put in place by patriarchal social values. For instance, Madume in Elechi Amadi's *The Concubine* is demoralised by his wife's inability to bear him a male heir. But Okonkwo in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* slaughters a goat for one of his wives who bore him three sons in a row.

However, the African female writer seeks to project a more pluralistic representation of the complexities of the experiences of the African woman. As Uko (2006) observes, the African woman writer establishes a new female character that is free to love and express love and surmount all sexist portrayals. Uko further states that the female character being created may be placed on the fringes, the borders, the margins, but her strength and resilience keep her in charge of her environment. It portends that the African female writer responds to the literary tradition and insists upon

correcting the imbalance in the portrayal of the African woman's image.

The African female writer goes beyond conventional realities to investigate, unearth and represent extraordinary female experiences. What the female writer does is to narrate about being a woman on one hand and descriptively portray reality from a woman's perspective on the other hand (Ogundipe-Leslie 5-14). It is, therefore, in response to the stereotypical portrayal of the urban African woman as prostitute, often seen in the literary works of Cyprian Ekwensi. In most of his city prose fictions, like *Jagua Nana*, Ekwensi projects the urban African woman as having moral laxity. But Adichie, a notable African feminist writer, deconstructs the myth of moral laxity amongst urban African women in African prose fiction through the character of Ifemelu in *Americanah*. Ifemelu refuses to accept the tag of a loose woman but maintains her sexual liberty and takes control of her sexual relationship.

However, in the prose fiction of an African female writer, the female characters take the centre stage. Their actions and inactions are essential to the movement of the plot. Here, much importance is laid on the feminine point of view. The narratives often depart from monolithic stereotypes and explore realistically the personality of the African woman and how she navigates her social realities. Therefore, it is evident that the African female writer assumes consciously or unconsciously the position of responding to the image of the African woman created by male writers in a highly concerned manner and portrays her vision holistically. It is the mission on image remaking that Lionnet (1997) refers to when she submits that female writers are usually

conscious of their responsibility as creators of images that both engage “in the dominant representations of their culture and simultaneously undermine and subvert those images by offering a revision of familiar scripts” (Lionnet 205). Buchi Emecheta through her representation of the complex realities of the African woman in *Second-Class Citizen* is not found wanting in this regard. Emecheta has creatively, through the lens of African feminism, project how the African woman navigates her experiences and revolt against unfavourable social construct to assert her voice and humanity. This assertion is proven by this paper in its textual analysis of the literary text.

Womanhood, Patriarchy, and Hegemonic Deconstruction The leitmotif of *Second-Class Citizen* is feminist temper. The leitmotif forms the main thematic thrust of the literary text by its revolutionary vision and mission to emancipate womanhood from the strangling hold of patriarchal hegemony. The text narrates the experiences and social realities of the protagonist, Adah Ofili, from childhood through adulthood. It also brings to bear the social realities of other female characters in the text, especially the character of Ma. Adah, the protagonist, is introduced in the text as a girl of about eight years old but she is “...not even quite sure that she was exactly eight...” (Emecheta 1). Adah’s exact age is not recorded because she is born a girl. The text reveals that at the time Adah is born, her parents and relatives are expecting a boychild. Therefore, her coming is perceived as a disappointment and no one cares to record her date of birth. The scenario, however, highlights the preoccupation of patriarchal societies with a male child to the extent that a female child is considered

insignificant. Adah being the reincarnate of Pa's mother does not enjoy an elevated status in the family. Pa "...did not want a girl for his first child" (Emecheta 8). The social realities in which Adah finds herself gives impetus to her desire to surmount all forms of stereotypes and assert her voice and humanity.

Ma's attitude towards Adah's education is as a result of patriarchal orientation in which she has been enmeshed. She is a product of patriarchal social construct. One will assume that being a woman who had similar experience as a girl-child Ma will be delighted to see her daughter in school. But Ma is acting within the ambience of her social exposure. It is this myopic social exposure, therefore, that Adah strives to emancipate herself from at age eight when she decides to go to school without her parents' permission. Her orientation about the place of womanhood in the society is in contrast to Ma's. Adah sees herself as having equal right with Boy which is contrary to the assumption of patriarchal social construct. Therefore, she is labelled a stubborn girl. The label is meant to make her cower but Adah stands her ground and finally settles in school officially. Adah at her tender age exhibits feminist temper. Her non-conformist temperament blossomed after the death of Pa.

Adah's ideal of marital contract is violated when Ma is inherited by Pa's brother. She considers Ma's second marriage as betrayal to Pa. Adah's thoughtful rejection of her mother's second marriage is a revolt against patriarchal objectification of womanhood. In the marriage, Ma is to accord her new husband same respect she accorded her late husband. It is never considered if she loves the man or not. As long as culture prescribes that Ma be inherited by her late husband's brother, her feelings and

opinion become insignificant. The subjugating social construct does not find a pleasant place within Adah of which "...sometimes she dreamt of marrying early, to a rich man who would allow Ma and Boy to come and stay with her" (Emecheta 14). In spite of this humane dream of hers, Adah admits that she will "... never in her life get married to any man, rich or poor, to whom she would have to serve his food on bended knee..." (Emecheta 14). Adah has seen the Ibo women in her neighbourhood do this and it nauseates her. Her conceptualisation of an ideal marriage is one which the husband and the wife have mutual respect for each other and none is lords over the other. It is this ideal that informs her insistence to "... not consent to live with a husband whom she would have to treat as a master and refer to as 'Sir' even behind his back" (Emecheta 14). Adah's feminist ideology, however, does not suggest that a woman should disrespect her husband. On the other hand, she should not let her husband lord it over her. Marriage should be a union based on mutual love and respect.

The educational ambition of Adah is threatened by Pa's unexpected death. Like most orphan girls of her time, she is "...to live with her mother's brother as a servant" (Emecheta 12). The family's decision to use the hundred pounds left behind by Pa solely for Boy's education amplifies the insignificant place of a girl-child's education in a patriarchal society. It is portrayed in the text that "nobody was interested in her for her own sake, only in the money she would fetch and the housework she could do..." (Emecheta 13). It is the attitude of patriarchy towards the girlchild that account for why "...somebody pointed out that the longer she stayed in school, the bigger the dowry her future husband would pay for her..." (Emecheta 12). Adah's rejection of all her suitors at

age eleven, however, is a revolt against patriarchal social construct which subjugates and objectifies a woman. The older men who seek to marry her did not appeal to her even though “...only they could afford high ‘bride-price’ Ma was asking” (Emecheta 14).

However, the fear of not having to school again after primary education worries Adah. She loses weight and becomes skinnier. Her brother, Boy, is assured of a secondary education because he is a male child. He is “...cut out for a bright future, with a grammar school education” (Emecheta 12). Adah, however, did not let the stereotyping of her gender to jeopardise her chances for a bright future like Boy. Her resolve to go through secondary education against her social realities derives its impetus from her inner conviction “...that her dream was just suffering a tiny dent, just a small one, nothing deep enough to destroy the basic structure” (Emecheta 14). The conviction about her dream of secondary education assumes “...an image in her mind...,” (Emecheta 14) when the headmaster of her school announces “...the list of available secondary schools which the children could apply for” (Emecheta 15).

Adah is compelled by her desire for secondary education, as she is convinced that none of her relatives including Ma is ready to sponsor her, to bury the two shillings given to her by Cousin Vincent for meat. She lies that the money is missing and is punished. Adah uses the money for her entrance examination. She dreams of winning a scholarship but tells no one because it is “...too big an ambition for a girl like her to express” (Emecheta 18). Adah’s determination to rise above her social placement portrays the extent to which the non-conformist African woman

navigates her social realities of subjugation, objectification and exploitation.

The feminist temper of the text juxtaposes the intelligent quotient of a girl-child with her male counterpart. Adah “...not only passed the entrance examination. But she got a scholarship with full board” (Emecheta 18). On the contrary, “...Cousin Vincent failed his Cambridge School Certificate examination...” (Emecheta 17). This shows that the assumption of a male having high intelligent quotient than a female is an illusion put in place to promote patriarchal hegemony. Adah’s academic success deconstructs all forms of stereotypes about the education of a girlchild. Her winning a scholarship is an evidence that the brain of a girl-child is not inferior as patriarchy presumes. Therefore, a girlchild is capable of attaining academic success at any level of education if she is given same opportunity as her male counterpart.

However, Adah’s dream “...to go to Ibadan University to read Classics and... teach at the end of it all...” (Emecheta 18) is hampered by the reality that she has no roof over her head after secondary school. Cousin Vincent’s house is never an option due to her past experiences. The social construct put in place by patriarchy always finds a way to limit the vision of a woman and ties her social importance and self-esteem to being under the roof of a man. It is a devastating reality for Adah after her secondary education at Methodist Girl’s School that “...teenagers were not allowed to live by themselves, and if the teenager happened to be a girl as well, living alone would be asking for trouble” (Emecheta 19).

Adah finds herself in a situation where she has no other option but to get married. The decision to get married as a teenager is to have roof over her head. This is a testament of the negligence of the wellbeing of the girl-child in a patriarchal society. None of Adah's relatives is interested in her dreams but engrossed with plans to receive high bride price on her head. The attitude of Adah's relatives portrays the objectification of women. The text reveals that the girl-child is not educated on the basis of her personal development but for the high bride price which her education will fetch. Therefore, the feminist temper of the text criticises the patriarchal rationale for a girl-child's education and admonishes the society to deconstruct the assumption that the education of a girl-child amounts to nothing aside the high bride price it will fetch. The feminist deconstruction of patriarchal hegemony is achieved, however, through the bread-winner role which Adah assumes both in her family and her matrimonial home.

The revolutionary vision of feminism to liberate women and deconstruct the myth of objectification reaches its peak in Adah's decision to marry Francis. Adah congratulates herself feeling proud that she has married the man of her choice. Her joy is that Francis is "...not an old baldy, neither was he a 'made man'..." (Emecheta 19). Adah feels that both Francis and her being under age will afford her the opportunity to "... go on studying at her own pace" (Emecheta 19). The marriage, however, is a revolt against female objectification and Adah feels a great satisfaction to have defied being objectified and placed for sale "...from the fact that Francis was too poor to pay five hundred pounds brideprice Ma and the other family members were asking..."

(Emecheta 19). The expensive bride-price placed on her head is because she is trained up to secondary education “...even though none of them had contributed to her education” (Emecheta 19). Adah’s deviance angers her relatives and none bothers to attend her wedding.

Patriarchal hegemony plays out in the marriage through the character of Francis. He feels threatened by Adah’s socioeconomic attainment. Adah has been appointed “...to work as a librarian in the American Consulate Library...” (Emecheta 20). Her socio-economic status defies patriarchal predetermined place for a woman. As a wife, Adah is to earn higher income than her husband. Francis’ worry emanates from the patriarchal notion that a woman begins to disrespect her husband when she begins to earn higher income. But Adah’s wifely attitude towards Francis and his family deconstructs this notion. The way patriarchal social construct sees a woman who has made socio-economic advancement and the motive in which she is received is portrayed vividly through the conversation between Francis and his Pa when the former seeks advice from the latter:

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? You are a fool of a man, you are. Where will she take the money to? Her people? Her people, who did not even come to congratulate her on the arrival of baby Titi? Her relatives who did not care whether she lived or died? The money is for you, can’t you see? Let her go and work for a million Americans and bring the money here,

into this house. It is your luck. You made a good choice in marriage, son (Emecheta 20).

The text, however, portrays that in spite of the socio-economic contributions of the African woman in her matrimonial home, her opinion on family decision making is insignificant in a patriarchal social construct. Adah finds this silencing of her voice in the family decision making ridiculous, especially when the issue being discussed involves finance. What baffles her is that "...she would have to pay for the plan in most cases but the decision would have been made behind her back" (Emecheta 22). It is the reason she insists on her dream of travelling to United Kingdom in spite of the luxurious middle-class life she lives in Lagos. All she wants is a fresh breath without the influence of her parents-in-law and other relations because she wishes to "...know her husband very well..." (Emecheta 22). Adah does not always want to bow to every decision made for Francis and her by their elders. She needs to take charge of her matrimonial home and United Kingdom is the place to achieve such freedom.

Adah's dream of a better and peaceful life in United Kingdom is almost shattered by patriarchal social construct because she is a woman if not for her resilience and determination to navigate her challenges. While Adah plans to relocate to United Kingdom with Francis and their children, Francis tries to discourage her:

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 (Emecheta 23).

The non-conformist African woman is exemplified in the character of Adah. In spite of the persuasions of patriarchal orientation to make her “...destroy the basic structure” (Emecheta 14) of her dream of being to United Kingdom, Adah convinces her in-laws to let her travel. It is a dream come true for her. It is a feat most women of her age could not attain. Adah’s sense of fulfilment spurs her heart to sing to her dead father, “Pa, I’m in the United Kingdom...” (Emecheta 31). While it is socially acceptable in the world of the text for a male to travel for greener pastures, the female is confined to remain at home without exploring her potentials in other climes. The patriarchal hegemony is what Adah has succeeded in deconstructing through her relocation to the United Kingdom. She is an epitome of that African woman who feels strongly that patriarchal social construct should never limit her aspirations and dim her dreams. Adah’s relocation to the United Kingdom is a feminist statement that the vision of the African woman is not limited to her immediate environment as patriarchy suggests but that she is a thinking being, full of potentials and capable of exploration. The dreams of the African woman are not only tied to marriage and child rearing which patriarchal hegemony has often made it to seem but to explore her humanity and strive for personal, socioeconomic and political development.

The domestic violence Adah experiences under the roof of Francis, who is an epitome of patriarchal hegemony and a ridicule of the notion of Alpha male, portrays how patriarchy uses violence to subjugate the liberated African woman and unleashes all forms

of oppressive measures to silence her voice. Francis compares Adah to his mother as a measure to silence her assertive voice. He admits that “my father knocked my mother about...my mother never left my father” (Emecheta 173). But Adah refuses to be persuaded to conform to domestic violence by asserting that “...I am not your mother. I am me and I am different from her” (Emecheta 173). The text through the voice of Adah ridicules the notion of Alpha male which Francis represents when she asks “...Can you, Francis show me some vest or anything these children can lay their hands upon you can claim to have brought for them?” (Emecheta 173). Francis’ inability to work and take care of his family suggests that society’s dependence on the boychild as a source of economic breakthrough is an illusion. Projecting Adah as the bread-winner of the family, the text advocates that a training given to a girl-child is training given to the society to which she belongs. It is affirmed through the totality of Francis’ character. He is not only a disappointment to his immediate family but to the society at large. Francis unlike Adah, whom no one cares to invest in, turns out to be a bad investment. In reaction to Francis’ resolve to limit the scope of her ambition and aspirations in life because she is a woman, Adah decides to seek for a divorce. She cannot bear his excesses anymore because “it was plain to her that Francis could never tolerate an intelligent woman” (Emecheta 169). One of the aspirations of Adah in life, however, is to become a writer when she is forty. Therefore, no matter what may arise from her decision, “she must go forward” (Emecheta 170) to fulfil her potentials against all stumbling blocks marriage and Francis put in her ways.

Conclusion

It is evident that Buchi Emecheta's *Second-Class Citizen* is not only a feminist text that portrays the harsh realities of the African woman but also one which advocates that where the social structure is unfavourable to the aspirations of the African woman, revolt should be her last resort. Having employed African feminism as its theoretical framework to analyse the literary text, the paper submits that the African woman is not redundant as patriarchy seems to project. The image of the African woman as seen in the novel is that of determination, focus, and resilience. She defies all forms of gender stereotypes to explore her potentials and fulfil her dreams beyond the boundary roles of wifedom and motherhood. This paper also submits that men can bring the best out of women if they support the woman. A woman is an asset to her family rather than a mere wife and mother. The character of Ada is a true case of the capacity of women to uplift their families.

Works Cited

Acholonu, Rose. "Feminism, New Realism and Womanhood in the African Novel." Seyifa Koroye and Noel C. A. (eds). *Women in the Academy: A Festschrift for Helen Chukwuma*. Port Harcourt: Pearle. 2004: 54-65. Print.

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann. 1958. Print.

Acholonu, Catherine. *Motherism: The Afrocentric Alternative of Feminism*. Enugu: Afa Publications. 1995. Print.

Adebayo, Aduke. "Feminism and its Implications for the Nigerian Society." Chioma Opara (ed). *Beyond the Marginal Land: Gender Perspective in African Writing*. Port Harcourt: Thompson and Thompson. 1999: 24-32. Print.

Adeola, James. *In their Own Voice: African Women Writers Speak*. London: Heinemann Educational Books. 1990. Print.

Adichie, C. N. *Americanah*. London: 4th Estate Publishing. 2013. Print.

Adimora-Ezeigbo, A. *Snail-Sense Feminism: Building on an Indigenous Model*. Lagos: Wealthsmith Books. 2015.

Aliyu-Ibrohim, F. R. "Deconstructing the Myth of Voicelessness in Julie Okoh's *Edewede*." Akpuda, A. A. (ed). *Paradigms in Modern Nigerian Drama*. Owerri: Chimbest Global & Amitex Graphics Services. 2017. Print.

Amadi, Elechi. *The Concubine*. London: Heinemann. 1966. Print.

Chesaina, Ciarunji. "Gender Dimensions in East African Women's Creative Literature." Ojukwu, F. C. (ed). *Critical Issues in African Literature: Twenty-First Century and Beyond*. Port Harcourt: University of Port Harcourt Press. 2013. Print.

- Chukwukere, G. C. *Gender Voices & Choices: Redefining Women in Contemporary African Fiction*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishing Co. Ltd. 1995. Print.
- D'almeida, I. *Francophone African Women: Destroying the Emptiness of Silence*. Florida: University Press. 1994.
- El Saadawi, Nawal. *Woman at Point Zero*. London: Zed Books, 1983.
- Ekwensi, Cyprian. *Jagua Nana*. London: Heinemann. 1975. Print.
- Emecheta, Buchi. *Second-Class Citizen*. London: Allison and Busby Ltd. 1975. Print.
- Friedan, Betty. *The Feminine Mystique*. Middlesex England: Penguin Books Ltd. 1963.
- Kolawole, M. E. M. *Womanism and African Consciousness*. Trenton, NJ: African World Press. 1997. Print.
- Lionnet, Françoise. "Geographies of Pain: Captive Bodies and Violent Acts in the Fiction of Gayl Jones, Bessie Head, and Myriam Warner-Vieyra." Nnaemeka Obioma (ed). *The Politics of (M)othering: Womanhood, Identity, and Resistance in African Literature*. New York: Routledge. 1997: 205-227.
- Mill, J. S. *The Subjection of Women*. London: Everyman's Library. 1982.

Nnaemeka, Obioma. "Feminism, Rebellious Women and Critical Boundaries: Rereading Flora Nwapa and her Compatriots." *Research in African Literatures*, 26 .2 (1994): 80-113.

_____. *Sisterhood, Feminisms and Power*. Trenton, NJ: African World Press. 1998.

_____. "Nego-feminism: Theorizing, Practicing and Pruning Africa's Way." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 29. 2 (2003): 357-385. Print.

Ogundipe-Leslie, M. *Re-creating Ourselves: African Women and Critical Transformations*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press. 1994. Print.

_____. "The Female Writer and Her Commitment." in *African Literature Today* 15. (1987): 5-14. Print.

Ogunyemi, C. O. "Womanism: the Dynamics of the Contemporary Black Female Novel in English." in *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society*. 11. (1985/1986): 63-80.

_____. *African Wo/man Palava*. Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press. 1996. Print.

Opara, Chioma Carol. "Women Writing Women: Re-Defining the Identity of African Women in African Literary

Texts." *International Journal of Literature and Arts*, vol. 3, no. 5, 2015, pp. 135-141.

Uko, I. I. "Transcending the Margins: New Direction in Women's Writing: in *African Literature Today*, 25. (2006): 82-93.
Walker, Alice. *In search of our mother's gardens*. Harcourt. 1983.

Godfrey Ngozi Ogbonna, PhD is an Associate Professor in the department of English Language and Literature, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri

Gabriel Oche Ukah, PhD is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of English Language and Literature, Alvan Ikoku Federal University of Education, Owerri.
gabriel.ukah@alvanikoku.edu.ng

Innocent Chima Ogoke is a Postgraduate Student in the Department of English, University of Ibadan. chimaogoke11@gmail.com