

Patriarchy and Oppression: A study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*

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Abstract

Africa is predominately a patriarchal society engineered by her traditional culture. This article examines the portrayal of patriarchal roles in African society as depicted in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*. Through a comparative analysis of these seminal works of African literature, the article explores how patriarchy manifests and is challenged within the cultural and historical contexts of Nigeria. Drawing upon the deconstruction of gender theory and womanism theory, the study elucidates the complex dynamics of gender, power, and resistance in African communities, shedding light on the enduring legacy of patriarchy and its implications for women's lives.

Keywords: Patriarchy, Oppression, Subjugation.

Introduction

The oppression of women is fostered in Africa and globally through patriarchy, which is one of the cultural tools in society. According to Udemba and Ojukwu (2023), "In Africa, women are regarded as the weaker sex and are looked upon as people who cannot stand on their own unless they are entrusted to men". Patriarchy has long been a defining feature of African society, shaping social norms, familial relationships, and gender dynamics. In the patriarchal society of Africa, men are regarded as natural leaders who are superior and they are believed to have been born to rule over women, the women are considered weaker vessels and according to the society, they are just the extension of men. Also, globally, males disproportionately dominate leadership roles and exert power in diverse forms of social systems and institutions. Patriarchy is characterized by the marginalization of women and other gender minorities. This manifests across various aspects of life including family, education and workplace. In terms of family dynamics, patriarchy manifests through the expectation of men as primary breadwinners and women as caregivers. This can limit opportunities in the workforce and perpetrate gender-based stereotypes. In *Things Fall Apart* and *Second Class Citizen*, Chinua Achebe and Buchi Emecheta offer vivid portrayals of the patriarchal structures that govern the lives of their characters. Through the lens of these novels, this article explores the multifaceted manifestations of patriarchy in African culture and how individuals navigate and resist its constraints. Therefore, this study aims to buttress the issues of gender inequality as a visible effect of patriarchy, the roles of women and how they are being subjugated in the African society. While other research has been carried out on the notion of patriarchy this research delves in to give out extra information about the subjugation and oppression meted out the women by the patriarchal structure of African societies and also promotes the need for gender equality.

Conceptual Framework

Patriarchy

Patriarchy, in the words of Michael Solis, "is a form of mental, social, spiritual, economic, and political organisation of societal structuring produced by the gradual institutionalisation of sex-based political relations created, maintained, and reinforced by different institutions linked closely together to achieve consensus on the lesser value of women and their roles." This institution interacts with other systems of exclusion, oppression, and dominance based on actual or perceived differences between people, strengthening the structures that support men's dominance over women as well as creating states that only respond to the needs and interests of a small number of powerful men (207). Also, the socio-biological view which was influenced by the evolutionary ideas of Charles Darwin proposes that male dominance is a natural feature of human life. This view often refers back to a time when all humans were hunter-gatherers. Then, the physically stronger men would work together and hunt animals for food as women were "weaker" and the ones who bore children, would tend to the home and gather resources such as fruits, seeds, nuts and firewood.

Subjugation

Michael Foucault argued that subjugation is not simply a matter of physical force but also of cultural domination (27). Patriarchal societies impose their values and way of life on women, erasing and devastating their cultures and experiences. Schneiderman maintained that subjugation is seen when women and children who do the daily work bear the burden of environmental degradation as a result of heavier workload, inferior nutrition or direct pollution and thus, predominantly suffer from health problems (128). Judith Butler buttresses that subjugation is explained through the concept of gender binary. The gender binary is a system of social classification that divides people into two distinct categories male and female. This system is embedded in our language, our laws, and our cultural institution it privileges masculinity and subordinates feminism. Feminist scholar Audre Lorde argued that subjugation is not simply a matter of gender equality, but also of racism, classism and heterosexism (65).

Oppression

Iris Marion Young's framework identifies five interconnected forms of oppression which are exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism, and violence (39). Young's work emphasizes the systemic nature of oppression and the need to address multiple dimensions simultaneously. He views oppression as when people reduce the potential for other people to be fully human. In other words, David view oppression as when one group has more access to power than another group and when that power and privilege are used to maintain the status quo (i.e. domination of one group over another). Thus, oppression is both a state and process with the state of oppression being an unequal group access to power and privilege, and the process of oppression being how inequality between groups is maintained (3). Gonick states that "oppression entails a state of asymmetric power relations characterized by domination, subordination and resistance where the dominating persons or groups exercise their power by restricting access to material resources and implanting in the subordinated persons or groups, fear or self-depreciating views about themselves. Oppression then is a series of asymmetric power relations between individuals, genders, classes, communities, nations and states. (129-130)

Theoretical Framework

Deconstruction of Gender Theory:

Deconstruction of gender is a theoretical framework that examines and challenges the traditional binary understanding of gender (Elam 45). It argues that gender is not a natural or innate category, but rather a social construct that is created and maintained through language, culture, and institutions. Deconstructionists argue that gender is not fixed or stable, but rather fluid and performative. This means that gender is not something that we are born with, but rather something that we do. We perform our gender through our actions, our appearance, and our interactions with others. Deconstruction of gender has important implications for our understanding of identity, sexuality, and social relations (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 19). It challenges the idea that there are only two genders, male and female, and that these genders are naturally different. It also challenges the idea that there is a "correct" way to perform one's gender. Deconstruction of gender can be a liberating concept, as it allows us to be more flexible and creative in our gender expressions. It can also help us to challenge gender stereotypes and to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

Theory of Womanism

Womanism, originating from the insightful words of African American author Alice Walker in her 1983 book *In Search of Our Mother's Garden*, Womanist Prose, is a term denoting a movement within feminism, primarily championed by Black feminists. Walker coined the term womanism in the short story *Coming Apart* in 1979. Her initial use of the term evolved to envelop a spectrum of issues and perspectives facing black women and others. Walker defines womanism as embracing the courage, audacity, and self-assured demeanour of Black women, alongside their love for other women, themselves, and all of humanity (112). Since its inception by Walker, womanism has expanded to

encompass various domains, giving rise to concepts like African womanism and womanist theology or spirituality.

Masculinity in *Things Fall Apart*

Things Fall Apart by Achebe is an honest depiction of the nativity and gender tendencies that plague traditional Igbo culture. This may be explained by looking at Okonkwo's life, which is centred around the conflicting forces of belief and fear. Okonkwo was driven by Unoka to work hard to avoid failing since he suffered from a severe and pathological fear of failing, underachieving, and doing poorly. He also feared becoming like his father. Okonkwo's identity is inextricably linked to his standing as Umuofia's most formidable man. He is not viewed as ordinary or feeble. In particular, his conception of masculinity shapes who he is. He views masculinity as synonymous with strength, physical prowess and the ability to provide for one's family. He is proud of his physical strength and his ability to defeat enemies in battle. This notable strength of his is evident as thus:

“Okonkwo was well known throughout the nine villages and even beyond. His fame rested on solid personal achievements. As a young man of eighteen, he had brought honour to his village by throwing Amalinze, the cat.” (3)

Okonkwo believes that men ought to be successful or die in the process of trying. That a man who did not strive to achieve or sought pleasure in meaningless things such as music ought not to be valued or regarded, Okonkwo feared not living up to the standard of men, for instance;

“At the meeting to discuss the next ancestral feast osugo a man without titles contradicts Okonkwo who in turn insults Osugo by declaring this meeting is for men when others side with osugo Okonkwo apologizes” (21) .

This shows the extreme idea of masculinity that a man is supposed to prove to himself. Also when his son displayed signs of laziness he feared that he would turn like his father “I will not have a son who cannot hold up his head in the gathering of the clan, I will not sooner strangle him with my own hands (11).

Secondly, that there was a belief that had be ingrained into the very fabric of his existence that masculine gender was inherently superior and more powerful than its female counterpart this belief is also held by most members of the Igbo community. The prevailing notion of male superiority originated from the perception that men exhibited dominant traits such as, anger, violence and strength. Instance, “Okonkwo beats his wife Ojiugo who forgot to serve his dinner not minding it was their weak of peace” (26)

Okonkwo is determined to be the epitome of manliness; thus, he hides his weaknesses and behaves recklessly to hide them. The poisonous elements of conventional masculinity are further shown by Okonkwo's treatment of Ikemefuna, a little child who was sent to the community as part of a peace agreement. Although Okonkwo gives off an air of power at first, his final part in Ikemefuna's sad destiny highlights the negative effects of inflexible gender norms. Okonkwo pulled out his machet and dispatched him. He feared being regarded as feeble (49). Ezeudu warns him not to participate in Ikemefuna's killing, but he still wanted to demonstrate that he was a man and not a coward.

Effects of Patriarchal system against Women in *Things Fall Apart*

Women like Okonkwo's daughter Ezimma, showed intelligence and curiosity but their educational opportunities are constrained. Ezimma's potential remained largely untapped due to the social norms that prioritizes educating the boys, also, women are primarily responsible for farming in household chores. They contribute significantly to the community's economy through their labour, yet their works is undervalued. They lack control over resources, such as, Yam harvest which holds symbolic and economic importance. Also, Okonkwo has multiple wives and their interactions reveal power imbalances, for instance, when Okonkwo beats his wife during the Week of peace, it emphasizes how women are being subjected to male dominance and societal norms accepts such actions.

Women are excluded from decision-making process in the village. The Igbo societies governing body, *Egwugwu* is comprised, solely of men and women have no direct influence in communal matters or dispute resolution. Also, the bride price system exemplifies the co modification of women when Okonkwo pays bride price for his wives; it underscores the perception of women as property. This practice contributes to the notion that women values are determined by her marital and reproductive status.

Patriarchy in *Second Class Citizen*

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 male over female, 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 a 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. As seen in the novel, 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" (59)

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?" (50)

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". (61)

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.” (62). 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 controls everything related to her even her salary. Adah undergoes harsh domestic violence, namely verbal and physical; Francis not only belittles her, denies her to work, and has extramarital affairs but he also disallows Adah from using birth control,

“To Francis, a woman was a second class human, to sleep 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”. (63)

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 affects how the wife is valued Adah who is a mother of three children at the age of twenty-one, decides to challenge the idea of women’s role of production and takes the decision not to give birth to children”. Instances, “Adah did not care which way she achieved this, but she was having no more children two boys and girls were enough for any mother-in-law, if her mother-in-law wanted another one, she could get her son another wife”.(63)

Once Francis discovers her intention, he immediately accuses her of prostitution as he claims that she could take other men behind his back. The novel is full of abusive and violent scenes, Francis's cruelty and brutality are shown when he severely beats his wife and humiliates her in front of their neighbours,

“Francis called all the other tenants to come and see and hear about this great issue of 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”. (66)

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”. (67)

Francis treats his wife harshly makes her silent, and is subjected to his authority. It is namely shown when he humiliates her and burns her manuscript. Adah decided to write ‘The Bride Price’ and wanted to show her creative work to Francis, however, she was 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”. This affected Adah, ‘she was hurt badly’. In his view, women are believed to be beaten and violated at

any time, 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 decides to end her marriage with Francis, however, he reminds her of 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 dies. You cannot escape, you are bound to him". (69)

Emecheta sheds light not only on Adah's struggle but also on the struggle of every woman in a male-dominated society. It also captures the 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." (70). In Igbo cultural beliefs, men are allowed to manipulate their wives and feel proud to beat 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". (71). 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 living with 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". (72)

The Psychological Effects of Patriarchy on *Second Class Citizens*

In *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta, Francis, Adah's husband, plays a significant role in shaping her experiences and impacting her life. Here are some key aspects of Francis's actions that affect Adah: Abuse and Control, Francis is portrayed as an abusive and controlling husband. His physical and emotional mistreatment of Adah reflects the power dynamics within their marriage, contributing to Adah's sense of powerlessness and inferiority. Francis engages in extramarital affairs, betraying Adah's trust and further undermining the foundation of their relationship. The infidelity exacerbates Adah's emotional turmoil and contributes to the deterioration of their marriage. Francis is unsupportive of Adah's desire for education and career advancement. His lack of encouragement reinforces traditional gender roles and contributes to Adah's struggle for autonomy and self-realization.

Francis places significant pressure on Adah to conform to societal expectations of motherhood. This adds to Adah's burdens, making her feel inadequate and trapped in her roles as a wife and mother. In *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta, Adah's experience within a patriarchal society has profound psychological effects on her. The constant subjugation and marginalization she faces contribute to feelings of inferiority and powerlessness. Adah's struggle to navigate a world dominated by patriarchal norms takes a toll on her self-esteem and sense of identity. Being treated as a second-class citizen due to her gender, Adah may internalize societal expectations and develop a belief in her own inadequacy. The lack of agency and autonomy in her life might lead to feelings of frustration and despair. Adah's psychological state is likely influenced by the oppressive gender roles that limit her opportunities and reinforce the societal hierarchy.

Overall, Francis's actions contribute to the challenges and hardships Adah faces throughout the novel, highlighting the impact of patriarchal norms and an oppressive marriage on a woman's life. Adah had to fight against her husband, Francis' ideals of what a Nigerian wife should be like. When Adah wrote her first manuscript she didn't come home to a supportive husband but a husband who burned her manuscript, Emecheta states: "You keep forgetting that you are a woman and that you are black. The white man can barely tolerate us, men, to say nothing of brainless females like you who could think of nothing except how to breastfeed her baby" (Emecheta, 167). Adah was in constant turmoil with her husband despite her being the breadwinner of the family. Francis is trying to control Adah and have her continue to live under his shadow. This society believes that the role of a wife is to simply to be a caretaker, Adah challenges that belief that women are only good for bearing children and taking care of their husbands by not only taking care of the household but holding down the family financially.

Francis was starting to merge into the stereotypes of his time that colored people couldn't prosper in life because he told Adah that she couldn't succeed because of her race. Francis is also very sexist because he thinks men are superior to women no matter how valuable the woman might be to the household. Francis wanted to suppress Adah's dreams as a writer so she doesn't gain too much freedom from him and used the excuse of "what would my family think" against her. Francis displays more insecurities than Adah because he doesn't have much going for him. Adah didn't conform to social norms used to knock her down such as her race, gender, and marital status when Francis would try and control her.

In England, Adah was expected to raise her children how other Nigerian families had to, but she refused. When arriving in England, Adah was told that most foreigners have two mothers, a foster mother, and a biological mother. The foster family would be a white family whom the child would live with and the child would be able to obtain the luxuries a white family in England would usually get, such as education and good housing. Adah took this to offence and felt like they were trying to tell her that if she kept her children her children would be bound to fail in England. It was common knowledge that people of England thought Nigerians weren't expected to give their children a good home and have a fair educational background while living in England. Nigerians aren't able to give their children a successful life in England because the opportunities are limited for them so most foreigners will give their children up for adoption so that they can have those opportunities. Adah refused and wanted to give her children a great life

Resilience Against Oppression in *Things Fall Apart*

In *Things Fall Apart*, women overcoming oppression are limited but there are a few subtle moments where female characters exhibit resilience. Okonkwo's daughter, Ezimma stands out for her intelligence and insight, although she faces limitations, her ability to navigate complex situations provides counsel to her father. Chielo, the priestess of Oracle commands respected authority in her role and allows her to move freely and assert herself in ways not typical for women in the society, this showcases how women can find alternative avenues for influence with traditional structure.

Nwoye's subversion of gender expectations challenges the normal traditional gender norms by embracing qualities considered more feminine. Although not a woman, his deviation from his father's expectations reflects a subtle form of resistance against rigid gender norms. Lastly, Ekwefi also exhibits remarkable resilience, despite facing the challenges of losing many children; she remains determined and defies societal expectations. Her persistence, especially in the context of motherhood can be seen as a quiet form of resilience.

Gender inequality 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 through Adah as a discriminated woman in *Second Class Citizen*, "Adah is born in an African family in which the new born girls are not welcomed and not considered as members who need appreciation" (39)

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". It is said that the concept of gender is developed to contest the naturalization of sexual difference in multiple arenas of struggle". (40-41)

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, and then she will learn how to sew”. (42).

Adah was inferior and silenced by her compression 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 believes 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 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, still the greatest asset a woman can have is."A woman would be forgiven everything as long as she produced children". (43)

As seen in the passage above the protagonist scarified her time and her money to her family-in-law, she takes the burden the responsibility 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 woman is 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” (40)

The quote above clearly illustrates women’s inferiority and how they are treated and discriminated. Francis gives himself the position of power to control his wife and exercise various stereotyping and discriminatory attitudes towards her. Thus, due to her gender as a woman, he neglects Adah and looks down on her values 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 a housekeeper, he does not care about her high degree in education. because he thinks that women are brainless, useless unable to achieve other goals in their lives except bearing children and serving men's desires he said:

“You keep forgetting that you are a woman and that you are black, the white man can barely tolerate us men, to say nothing of brainless females like you who could think of nothing except how to breastfeed her baby” (45)

From what is said above, Buchi Emecheta claims that even though they immigrate to another country, men remain in perpetuating the African social contract that encourages male “phallogocentric” ideologies, which makes women submissive and worthless. The life of the protagonist Adah is harder since she faces a dual marginalization, at first by her husband and the Black society, and secondly by the western society.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* provides a nuanced portrayal of patriarchal roles within the Igbo community of Nigeria. The protagonist, Okonkwo, embodies the traditional ideals of masculinity, valuing strength, dominance, and control. As the head of his household, Okonkwo wields authority over his wives and children, enforcing strict gender roles and expectations. Through Okonkwo's character, Achebe illustrates the rigid hierarchies and oppressive norms that underpin patriarchal society, while also highlighting the consequences of conformity and resistance. In contrast, Buchi Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen* offers a feminist critique of patriarchy within the context of colonial Nigeria. The protagonist, Adah, confronts the limitations imposed by patriarchal norms as she strives for independence and self-determination. Despite facing numerous obstacles and setbacks, Adah exhibits resilience and agency in challenging the patriarchal structures that seek to confine her to a subordinate

role. Emecheta's portrayal of Adah's struggles underscores the intersectionality of gender, race, and class in shaping women's experiences within patriarchal societies.

Both *Things Fall Apart* and *Second Class Citizen* illuminate the intersectional nature of patriarchy, highlighting how gender intersects with other axes of identity such as race, class, and colonialism. In "*Things Fall Apart*," the legacy of colonialism exacerbates existing power imbalances, further entrenching patriarchal structures and undermining traditional forms of authority. Similarly, in "*Second Class Citizen*," Adah's experiences as a Nigerian immigrant in Britain compound the challenges she faces as a woman within patriarchal Nigerian society.

Conclusion

In conclusion, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* offer powerful insights into the complexities of patriarchy in African society. Through their compelling narratives and rich characterizations, Achebe and Emecheta illuminate the ways in which patriarchy shapes individual lives and societal structures. By examining the intersections of gender, race, and colonialism, these novels provide a nuanced understanding of the enduring legacy of patriarchy and the ongoing struggle for gender equality in African communities. Ultimately, *Things Fall Apart* and *Second Class Citizen* stand as enduring literary works that challenge readers to confront and interrogate the patriarchal norms that continue to shape the lives of women in Africa and beyond.

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