

Ideology and Disabling of Patriarchy in Emecheta's Joys of Motherhood and Second-Class Citizen

Philip Mwangi Muhia^{1*}, Albert Mugambi Rutere¹, Stephen Muthoka Mutie²

¹Department of Literary and Communication Studies, Laikipia University, Kenya

²Department of Literature, Linguistics, and Foreign Languages, Kenyatta University, Kenya.

* Corresponding Author

Abstract

The voice of feminists in subverting patriarchy is critical in understanding women's expedition for social justice. The knowledge constitutes the philosophy of human intellect as the African woman hankers for dignity through emancipation. This paper examines Emecheta's concerns in her two literary texts, *'The Joys of Motherhood and Second-Class Citizen'*. Emecheta is one of Africa's literary elites who drummed support for disabling patriarchal domineering on women. The texts highlight ideology and subversive practices that can help answer the question of how a woman can transcend patriarchal injustices. The study is located within feminist and deconstruction theories, emphasising Emecheta as a writer who produces knowledge about African women. The selected texts, therefore, are important tools in understanding African women, which is critical for the development of the society. The textual analysis method was used to help understand the women writer's view on the emancipation of the African woman as seen in *'Joys of Motherhood and Second-Class Citizen.'* The paper argues that Emecheta ideology and disabling patriarchal practices are worthwhile lessons for postcolonial African women in their expeditions for social justice.

Keywords: African feminism, African writers' ideology, patriarchy, patriarchy philosophy, social-cultural contexts

Introduction

This paper highlights the considerable potential literary texts of Emecheta hold in the emancipation of women. The paper encapsulates fundamental ideas that have the potential for women's emancipation since they originate in the Ibo cultural structure. Thus, a close reading reveals their ideological kinship mode of discourse. According to Hall (1986), ideology refers to social, political, and cultural ideas whose being is obtained from affiliation to class interests, in their struggle, in the society's social structure. By virtue of this ideological orientation, this paper analyses the two selected texts to use Emecheta as a social thinker who has the potential to contribute to 'the socio-cultural process'. This process refers to the dynamics in terms of human progression, which has the potential to govern and determine the direction of the society (Rabie, 2013).

Hull and Hull (2001) note that feminism primarily focuses on women. Therefore, it is a literary and social ideology that has been studied in literature in an attempt to emancipate women. Its value is in its indefatigable role in a country's development. This single-mindedness focus on women's issues has been in the 20th century and is not misplaced because of the need for women's liberation (Makokha, 2015). Despite all the efforts made to disable forces that limit women, they are yet to be fully liberated. This is because patriarchy keeps on metamorphosing. African women writers thus concern themselves with the roles assigned to explore the means by which the African woman has been denied power and rights. Feminism

as an ideology has its roots far back in the distant past, and feminists have been in constant pursuit of freeing women from various shackles, sourcing ways in which women can exploit their unique potential for their own benefits. While feminists come in a variety of shades, their singular objective is to stand against and subvert patriarchy in society (Ndege & Makokha, 2019). The social change is possible by creating a level playing ground for both men and women.

To effect change, authors create characters who address unique issues intended to shape the society they come from. A literary text. Therefore, it is culturally a valued text that often reflects human life. It exposes the ideological and sociological values of the author's society, thus giving it a cultural meaning. The texts may take several forms: they can be poetry, novels, plays, songs, and even performed art. Therefore, a literary text, regardless of genre, includes many useful lessons and is a dependable source of information about people's lives and values (Purwaningsih & Gulo, 2021). When the readers interact with the text, they gain cultural information because the texts feature characters and touch on issues from various socio-cultural backgrounds.

The socio-cultural background reflects how the traditions of a society at a certain time happened. The characters and issues addressed when analysed reflect an author's attitude, thoughts, manners, and behaviour. The ideology is captured in the language characters use because it is the day-to-day language, thus reflecting human life reality (Mutmainnah & Pattu, 2022). Therefore, analysis of the text helps the researcher, thus reflecting human life reality. African society is patriarchal in nature and has stereotyped women as second-class people. The second-class people are expected to obey decisions made by those who are in authority, particularly husbands, and work in the shadows of men (Barker, 2004). This makes women appear as weak citizens whose social status is always construed through the social status of their husbands and fathers.

Ezeigbo (2010) says Emecheta's texts are concerned with patriarchal evils and conventions that hold women down. Her strong conviction to emancipate women justifies her attacks on these evils. Failure to expose the evils will continue to compromise the African woman's emancipation efforts. For example, Nnu Ego's failure in both her Igbo village and in Lagos is a double sword sensationalising patriarchy at play. Unless social-political oppression is addressed, other factors may be hard to unearth. Ezeigbo observes that obviously, Emecheta plants the double sword on purpose. She uses characters such as Nnu Ego to be examined alongside other factors that make it hard for them to make wise decisions that can be used as a vehicle for self-emancipation.

Dubek (2001) portrays the negative aspects of the traditional Igbo culture on women. She suggests that the principle of denying the woman personal happiness is by alienating her from independence. When a woman who is denied independence is left with no option but to be dependent on men, she is definitely being controlled to the whims of the master (Holmes, 2007). Dubek also posits marriage as one of the patriarchal institutions that rob women of happiness. She observes that in *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego's marriage ultimately oppresses her. It never granted her independence, happiness, the friendship of her in-laws, or friendship with her in-laws or other women. It places her in precarious expectations that marriage was to make her fit with her fellow community since her mother did not fit. However, the same marriage makes her a victim.

The Joys of Motherhood is a novel in which Emecheta attempts to expose the marginalisation of women (Balavatbhai, 2020). It leads to untold agony and suffering at the hands of a patriarchal society. The story exposes how Nnu Ego, a traditional Igbo woman, suffers because society has indoctrinated her to believe a woman's happiness can only be realised in motherhood. As a result of not being able to meet society's expectations, she is scorned by her in-laws. At this juncture,

feminists intervene to help eliminate social forces that instigate oppression, discrimination, and exploitation (Pasque & Wimmer, 2011). This paper draws attention to Emecheta's pattern of thoughts, values, and behaviours in the selected texts.

Oppression Patriarchal Practices

For us to appreciate feminists in their continued efforts to create an egalitarian society, the oppression of women characterized by poverty is a hindrance to the progression of society. Women face new challenges as society transitions from traditional to modern society. The term poverty has varying definitions according to how it is viewed. Encyclopaedia Encarta defines it as a condition where one lacks sufficient resources or income, the extreme form leading to a lack of basic human needs to sustain a useful life. The un-useful life is characterised by inadequate nutritious food, housing, health services, clothing, and clean water. However, every human needs to have a useful life. The view of the definition will be used in this paper because of its meaning to unpack Emecheta's ideology as a liberator of women. Therefore, the two texts apprehend the society for daintily forgetting the women in the society. The analysis exposes varying oppression of women by patriarchal institutions. Emecheta exposes the tribulations a woman goes through, characterised by a polygamous husband, racism, motherhood, and economic hardships occasioned by a moneyed economy, among others.

Joys of Motherhood examines traditional practices that necessitate the abandonment of women. Nnu Ego is born by Ona, who dies during birth. She spends her early years in her rural home and her second marriage in the capital of Nigeria, Lagos. In the two settings, Emecheta points to traditions as the main factor at play in the oppression of women within both tribal and colonised Nigeria. When she visits Lagos, Cordelia explains the power dynamics that money colonialism has imposed on the traditional African support networks women enjoy, which differ from the traditional economy. Husbands have, therefore, been reduced to slaves for the white man's way of life. *'You want a husband who has time to ask you if you wish to eat rice, or drink corn pap with honey. Forget it... Their manhood has been taken away from them. The shame of it is that they don't know. All they see is the money, the shining white man's money. They are all slaves, including us.'* (Emecheta, 1979, p. 51). Emecheta highlights how colonialism has effectively negatively affected the traditional support system women used to ride on. According to Emecheta, it was the husband's duty to care for the family by providing care and food. However, with the coming of the white man, the social structures are broken. In a family setup, women are left with no option but to fit in their husbands' shoes.

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta shows how patriarchal figures view a woman. The author tells the story of Nokwocha Agbadi, who sexually advances young Ona. Using his physical masculinity, he forces the young unsuspecting girl to himself. The young girl tries to free herself, but Agbadi is too strong for her. He had become himself and held her mouth to ensure she said nothing. *'He did not let her mouth free for a long time. She struggled fiercely like a trapped animal, but Agbadi was becoming himself again'* (Emecheta, 1979, p.20). Emecheta exposes how women get oppressed by culture, which more often turns women into objects to be used by men. Women get used up as sexual objects without necessarily their mutual consent.

Further, Emecheta spots the abandonment of women partly stemming from the new working conditions. African women's husbands who double up as workers of colonialists are depicted as slaves of their masters, and they have been deprived of 'manhood' for their families. They work all day, seven days a week, and are off on Sundays only to attend church, which is half a day in a week. In postcolonial African countries, the colonialists have continually used institutions such as marriages and the church to subdue the African society. Emecheta notes that the effects are adverse on the African woman. Nnaife reveals to Nnu Ego that for Dr. Meer

to acknowledge a marriage, it has to be performed in a church; otherwise, it risks being considered a forbidden union. 'Well, if you are pregnant...and believe me, I hope to God you are...there is still one problem. What will they say in the church? We have not been married there' (Emecheta, 1979, p. 51). The influence has psychological effects on Nnu Ego. Even when she becomes pregnant, Nnaife shies off towards the pregnancy since they did not wed in church. This really did not go well with Nnu Ego. She had not come all the way to Lagos for Nnaife's money; she was not from a poor background. All she needed from Nnaife was love and fulfilment of being called a mother. However, all this seemed elusive because of Dr. Meer.

Nnaife's behaviour dismays Emecheta, and he becomes hesitant towards Africans who believe that for them to survive, they have to endure the slavery of the white man. First, the conditions are unfavourable, and the pay is too little. Emecheta contrasts the lives of Nnaife and Igbonoba. 'Outside the door stood a woman from Ibuza, Igbonoba's wife. ...in short, she had everything any woman could want. And look at her, Nnu Ego thought angrily, look at the expensive shoes she is wearing, look at that head-tie and even a gold chain. Whatever she paid for would feed me and the children for a month. (Emecheta, 1979, p. 164). The different lives point to the devastating lives that colonialism has on families. Unlike those who work for the whites, business people are able to meet their day-to-day needs and even take their children, both boys and girls, to school.

In *Second Class Citizen*, when Adah leaves her home country, Nigeria, she is full of hope that England is the place. Since childhood, she discovered some people being referred to as Nigerians who have been to the United Kingdom. This made her develop a desire to escape the unforgiving life in her home country. Nigeria did not give her women equal opportunities like England did to her women and thus made her imagine, in England, women as free as men. Women had opportunities to work and earn money, thus freeing themselves from the shackles of poverty.

Adah's preoccupation with financial stability is evident when she assures her mother-in-law that she will frequently send her money on her request. Further, as she hands over the old necklaces to her Ma, she takes her into an imagination of coming back to Africa with posh cars to the envy of many. She had several necklaces for her little girl and herself. She gave them all to her mother-in-law. 'You take them; in England, we shan't need them. And when I come back, I shan't be wearing gold anymore. Diamonds maybe' (Emecheta, 1974, p. 83). This shows that Adah's journey is full of hope for material gain. She feels economically confined in Nigeria, and staying at home may not do something meaningful for her and her family.

However, the hopes for contributing to her people's success at home seem to die upon arrival in England. She finds that England is not like Nigeria. She complains of the cold-poor-welcome in England. A country she had dreamt of failed to give her the comfort that she had in her natal home. A country she wanted to visit right from the time she discovered that some people being referred to as Nigerians who had been to the United Kingdom did not match the comfort in her imagined world. This disappointed her when she faced challenges in her economic dream in the United Kingdom; she was always disturbed and lost in her thoughts. According to her, there were no two ways for her financial growth. England had to give her the opportunity to emancipate herself. This is the journey she set way long in her childhood days when she defiantly enrolled in a school.

In *Second Class Citizen*, Adah also faces problems like most other girls. Girls' education is never a priority. This is seen when Pa died. She is orphaned, and her family is forced to go live with their extended family. This posed a new challenge to Adah because though she was in school, her future in school was now on balance. Due to the fact that there were not enough resources, she had to stop schooling so that the hundred pounds would be used to pay for Boy's education. '...but somebody pointed out that the longer she stayed at school, the bigger dowry

her future husband would pay'. This shows that though women may be lucky to be in school, the stay did not benefit her because one of the members reasoned that the more she stayed in school, the more bride price she would attract.

Second Class Citizen exposes Francis as a character embodying patriarchal power dynamics. He is revealing his patriarchal traits exerting authority and control over Adah. He takes control of her wife and does not regard her in making decisions touching their lives. For example, when looking for a place to live, he just bombarded Adah with the new, 'I have already found a place for us to stay'. This trait of disregarding Adah in such an activity that touches on both their lives shows she is insignificant as a person marking gender inequality. This behaviour has constantly run into their relationship, limiting Adah's ambitions. He fails to support her even on what Adah terms important in shaping her life, for example, education. Under Francis, Adah is expected to take a subordinate role in their marriage. She is to follow what Francis says since his actions are gender norms. Such practices deem her hopes of studying and furthering her career. All this happens to Adah because of Francis' patriarchal mindset, which reinforces his traditional notion that a woman's primary duty is to act subordinate to a husband.

The colonial society continued to ensure that the Africans were submissive and docile as they continued to impose stringent measures to confine them. Nnaife, as a man, finds himself on the opposite side of a conflict with his traditions. In the wake of revolving traditions, he faces struggles that slowly dissolve him out of his family structure. This makes Nnu Ego call Nnaife's masculinity into question on arrival in their early days of marriage. Though he is full of pride as any other Ibo man, working as a launderer in the Meers household, he rubs Nnu Ego the wrong way since it is a role no Ibo man would have filled in previous generations. Nnaife is forced to compromise his role as an Ibo man because in Lagos, he needs money in a world where capitalism reigns. The little pay he gets from his job makes him passive and ineffective. He lacks ambition and as times change, Nnaife increasingly becomes ineffective in his role as a father figure to his daughters. In the end, he simply emerges as an emasculated figure, unmasked as a poor provider and a drunk. Poverty makes his traditional male identity grow weaker as an alcoholic and an aloof father. He fails to educate his daughters despite women having a knack for education. '...I am beginning to think that educated women may have a future. I saw many young women teaching in schools. It would be really something for a woman to be able to earn some money monthly like a man', Nnu Ego said, looking into the distance (Emecheta, 1979, p. 168).

As Nnaife resolves, women become stronger and more experienced. Adaku's revolutionary mind does not stop there; she also wants to change how a woman is seen in society. She, therefore, chooses to educate her daughters to end the vicious cycle where women's standards are reduced to amassing bride prices and competing on who has the highest number of male children. To ensure the dream for her daughters is realised, she enrolls them in private lessons while they are still young. She also makes a drastic step of leaving let free her marriage. All this is to ensure her daughters are free and should get an education, which Nnaife treated as a luxury if she were to remain in her marriage with Nnaife.

Due to the effects of oppressive colonial rule, opportunities for postcolonial African women are severely constrained. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Nnu Ego represents women during colonial rule, and she experiences the consequences of British colonialism in her home country, Nigeria. Her early life is marked by subsistence farming which leads to food sustainability. Her second part of women's struggle lies in the advent of postcolonial error when her journey takes her to Lagos, where she strives to work and supplement her husband's family income. As a market woman, she has to cope with exploitative conditions, including long hours and scanty pay, mirroring modern economic struggles women face. Through Nnu Ego,

Emecheta depicts a woman's challenges in postcolonial Nigeria, emphasising the inequalities embedded within the social and economic systems that disadvantage women. Indeed, this is evident when the narrator says, 'In Lagos, a wife would not have time. She had to work. She provided food to add on her husband's meagre housekeeping money, money for clothes, for any kind of comforts, in some cases for the children's school fees, was on her shoulders' (Emecheta, 1979, p. 54). Nnu Ego's struggle to find economic stability reflects the impact of modernity, particularly women being the bearer of the brunt of economic hardships. The postcolonial era brings about some changes in economic dynamics, offering both opportunities and challenges for women. Therefore, women have to fight for opportunities since the post-colonial times demand a transitioned African woman.

Women Disabling Patriarchy

Although set in England, *Second Class Citizen* shows the persistence of patriarchy coupled with racial discrimination. However, the novel celebrates Adah's determination and resilience as she breaks the bonds of patriarchy to seek self-emancipation. This book is guessed to be the author's autobiography. The novel paints the tools women need to triumph in a patriarchal society.

Once in the United Kingdom, Adah and Francis are hit by the reality of being discriminated against, even by other Africans, for having darker skin. Francis is not able to hold back and ends up in oblivion. Unlike her husband, Adah does not bow and steps up to make a living for the household by working at a library. Unfortunately, Francis becomes violent towards Adah, and she has to quit the relationship. Francis' behaviour exposes the double oppression of African women in Europe on the basis of gender and on the basis of race. As all these happened, she remained resolute; 'Even his beatings and slapping did not move her anymore. She did not know where she got her courage from, but she was beginning to hit back, even biting him when need be' (Emecheta, 1974, p. 159). According to Emecheta, Adah is an ideal woman who has faced oppression occasioned by the evils of patriarchy both in Nigeria and in the United Kingdom. Emecheta portrays her as a brave woman who, anytime she is faced with tyranny, does not succumb or let it change her goals. She has mastered ways of disabling it by facing it head-on, and finally, she becomes the heroine.

Apart from facing the oppressor head-on, Adah's persistence for education was the other secret card she was holding. Emecheta highlights the value of education in the novel as a tool for her liberation. A woman with an education is given the power to operate at the same level as educated men and, sometimes, operates above those without education. This is what Adah wanted: to be educated so that she would earn a good living, thus being above most men in her community. She wanted to leave Nigeria for England, a country she perceived as a land of opportunities. This was only possible if she got the prerequisite for travel. Apart from her education she wanted a husband who was also educated and desired to leave Nigeria. Leaving Nigeria would help her run away from oppressive patriarchal practices that did not regard women in employment opportunities.

Instead of remaining silent when confronted by injustices, Emecheta encourages speaking out and sometimes confronting the perpetrators of the injustices. In *The Joys of Motherhood*, when Adaku lost her husband, she moved to Nnaife's house, who inherited her for a woman who could not be trusted to live without a man. Nevertheless, after moving to Lagos, Adaku's life did not change for anything good. Even food for her family was not enough. Nnaife was not providing enough food and money for the family. The turmoil was too much for the two wives, and when peace did not prevail, Nnu Ego and Adaku decided to confront their husband. 'The food money you give us is too small. Nwakuor and the other men give their wives double the amount you give us. When we go to the market, we must keep wandering from stall to stall in

search of bargains because we can never afford anything’, Adaku said breathlessly (Emecheta, 1979, p. 135). The problem escalates when Nnaife decides to become violent, and Nnu Ego can hear from the door the blows her co-wife got. She banged on the door to stop him, but Nnaife did not open it. Later, it came to the realisation of the two women that women were prisoners, imprisoned by love for their children, imprisoned in their role as wives. A woman was not even expected to demand more money for her family. If this happened it was considered below the expected standard. At least they had communicated what was ailing them.

Patriarchy is so entrenched in the minds of women like Nnu Ego, making them believe that a woman should be docile. However, Emecheta dissolves the over-dependence of women on their husbands by creating absence. The absence of the male figure in the family leaves the two women in the glare of the vagaries of poverty. The difference is seen in the way each handles Nnaife’s absence. Adaku’s revolutionary mind does not allow her to perish. During this period, she uses the small amount she gets from her husband’s dividends and what she gets from her sales in the market to expand her entrepreneurial skills. By investing in a booth, Adaku can eventually be financially independent. On the contrary, Nnu Ego is the opposite of her co-wife. Instead of investing in the booth like Adaku, her conservative mind forces her to remain in her firewood business to get more time with her children. Emecheta criticises Nnu Ego’s conventional mindset. In a conversation with her husband, Emecheta exposes the gender-based responsibility that has enslaved Nnu Ego: Nnu Ego says, ‘I can’t afford another outfit, because I am nursing him, so you can’t go anywhere to sell anything,’ (Emecheta, 1979, p. 80).

In African customs, some women are made to believe the fundamental role of any woman is to bear children, look after their husband, wash their clothes, and till the land. Later, the elder wife returns to the village while Adaku remains in her business. At the rural home, she gets reprimanded for leaving the younger Adaku in charge of the family, a position the senior wife holds. However, upon returning, she finds that things have changed. Adaku is no longer the dependent young woman she once was. Bitterness rises for Nnu Ego, and she starts accusing her of using her share of Nnaife’s money in her business; ‘I can see you have been busy making money... Look at all your wares; look at your stalls. I’m sure Nnaife’s money went into building your trade (Emecheta, 1979, p. 160)’. Emecheta disables Adaku’s dependence on Nnaife and Nnu Ego for food by highlighting the importance of women engaging in business to help deal with predicaments occasioned by the society they come from.

The same disease has affected Francis in England. Emecheta believes that financial stability is important in African women journey for emancipation. In *Second Class Citizen*, when Adah arrives in England and sees Francis’ house, she is shocked. Adah was angered by Francis since the house he lived in was not fit to hold the pride of an African woman with her children. This was not the type of life she imagined. Hit by the reality of being in England, they had to chart a new relationship where both were to work, and Francis would, at the same time, continue with his studies so that they could afford a dignified life. Adah was left to work alone; her little earnings were not enough for her emancipation. This would take her back to what she was running away from in Nigeria. It makes her miss the comfort she had in Africa. ‘Oh, I (Adah) wish I had not come. I wish I had been warned (Emecheta, 1974, p. 100). Through Adah, Emecheta challenges those who leave Nigeria for Western countries, thinking it is better than home.

Western countries like England are a haven of challenges. Moreover, it poses a challenge to families that migrate to faraway countries. Unlike in Nigeria, where husbands have houses for each wife, it is hard to provide one in England. Due to England’s financial challenges, Adah learns of Francis’ reservations about their marriage. This reservation is a clear demonstration that he had failed in their marriage, yet it is the basic unit and a source of pride since it defines

an African woman. In the traditional African setup, a man should be able to provide a comfortable house for his family, and Francis fails Adah as a true African woman.

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Emecheta emphasises the importance of women's solidarity and collective action in the struggle for economic emancipation. Nnu Ego finds strength and support in her relationships with other women. By coming together and supporting each other, they challenge patriarchal norms and get a voice, 'The monthly meetings on the island with her fellow Ibuza wives did Nnu Ego a great deal of good. The other women taught her how to start her own business so that she would not have only one outfit to wear' (Emecheta, 1979, p. 128). Through the narrator, Emecheta highlights ways in which women unite in women groups, thus helping to emancipate themselves. Nnu Ego is taught how to start her own business to meet her financial needs and not live with only one outfit to wear. Through the small cooperative, Nnu Ego borrowed five shillings, and the women advised her to buy tins of cigarettes and packets of matches. A tin of cigarettes cost two shillings, and she then sold the cigarettes singly for a penny each; as there were thirty-six in each tin, she made a profit of a shilling on a tin. The same thing applied to boxes of matches. She would buy a carton of twelve boxes for one shilling and sixpence and then sell each box for two pence, making a profit of sixpence on each carton. She was so thrilled that as the other more experienced women had foretold, she had no time to be lonely or worry about her husband's humiliating job or bite her fingers about her coming child.

Since patriarchy is monstrous, Emecheta laments the interventions government institutions make in helping deal with the oppression of women. Adah's struggles in Britain make her seek state-guaranteed contraception to prevent a fourth pregnancy. This is because the nature of her job would mean to lose it if she gets pregnant. This is not the route she is ready to take since it would destabilise her financial needs by risking her job. Her doctor provides a requisition form that involves her husband's signature (Emecheta, 1974, p. 142). Adah finds that even in Britain, men still enjoyed the privilege of underwriting contraceptive policy. Consequently, men and the policy undermine Adah's right of bodily self-determination to emancipate her family by providing for it and as well as supporting Francis, her indolent accountancy student. Britain, as in Nigeria, further subordinates Adah, whereas now the gambit is all that stands between her and poverty. But in the United Kingdom, she is able to run away from Francis by procuring divorce through a battle in court.

Further, Emecheta shows how women can openly defy oppressive patriarchal practices to emancipate themselves. Girls are traded to attract bride wealth; part of it is used to educate her male siblings. To enable her to attract a huge bride wealth, they are traded to older men. However, Adah, unlike many other girls, is able to alienate her older suitors for Francis. She does not want to get to situations where her husband would act as a master to her. '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 with 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!' (Emecheta, 1974, p. 19.) Adah knew that the Igbo society did not regard women. They were to remain subjects of their husbands, so young girls were married to older husbands. The age and resources would make the woman submit to the husband for food and any other form of protection.

Conclusion

Emecheta uses Adaku and Adah's journey to empowerment as proof of the resolve and resiliency of women towards disabling patriarchal oppression. Their transformation serves as powerful stories of growth and an appeal to resist the oppressive forces of patriarchy. Examination of Emecheta's selected texts reveals Emecheta's compelling case for women's

agency and the importance of standing up against patriarchal oppression. The paper highlights the value of a woman's voice and autonomy. By criticising societal conventions and standards, women are able to transcend subordinate roles and limited opportunities. By disabling patriarchy, we create a system that empowers women socially, politically, and economically. Marriage, being a formal union between a man and a woman, is doomed to fail if it is used to advance the mantra of women as subjects. The paper has highlighted the value of education in shaping the future of girls.

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