

Francis as a Patriarchal Figure: Unpacking Power Dynamics in Buchi Emecheta's "Second Class Citizen"

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ABSTRACT

In many African societies, women face discrimination, power disparities, and significant barriers because of patriarchal systems. These circumstances restrict their agency, hinder their progress, and perpetuate gender inequalities. Thus, this study explores the role of Francis as a patriarchal figure in Buchi Emecheta's novel, *Second Class Citizen*, and examines the impact of his actions on the protagonist, Adah. The study aims to deepen understanding of gender inequality and the oppressive nature of patriarchal systems by analysing Francis's behaviour and attitudes. Findings highlight Francis as a symbol of patriarchal power, limiting Adah's autonomy and perpetuating gender inequalities through dismissive behaviour, double standards, and reinforcement of gender stereotypes. The study identifies implications for Adah's aspirations, self-identity, emotional well-being, and opportunities, emphasizing the far-reaching effects of Francis's patriarchal influence. The study further highlights the implications of these findings. Overall, this analysis sheds light on the pervasive influence of patriarchy offering insights into the discrimination and power imbalances faced by African women in traditional and immigrant societies.

Key Words: Patriarchy, *Second Class Citizen*, Inequality, Subjugation; Gender, Power disparity

INTRODUCTION

- Background information on Buchi Emecheta and *Second Class Citizen*

Buchi Emecheta, in full Florence Onyebuchi Emecheta, is a Nigerian novelist and pioneer of African women's literature, born on July 21, 1944, in Lagos, Nigeria and died in January 25, 2017 in London, England (Opara, 2017). She was known for her exploration of themes related to gender, race, and identity, particularly focusing on the lives of African women. Emecheta's works centre on her life, including problems she encountered in England. One of her most well-known books is *Second Class Citizen*, published in 1974. The semi-autobiographical narrative centres on the life of Adah, a Nigerian lady who struggles to achieve independence and personal fulfilment while facing a number of overwhelming obstacles. The story takes place in two distinct settings: Nigeria, where Adah is born and raised, and the United Kingdom, where she migrates in pursuit of a better life. In this novel, Emecheta deftly captures Adah's encounters with poverty, domestic violence, and societal expectations. Adah must overcome obstacles put in place by a patriarchal culture that wants to limit her opportunities because she is a woman. Her dreams of education and personal empowerment clash with the traditional expectations placed upon her as a wife and mother. Adah's determination and resilience become evident as she strives to break free from these constraints and assert her own identity.

The novel explores a variety of interesting topics. It highlights the difficulties faced by African women in particular while exposing the inherent injustices faced by women in both Nigeria and Western countries. With a similar emphasis on immigrant experience, *Second Class Citizen* shows the challenges Adah faces as she adapts to a new society or culture while balancing issues of identity and belonging. Emecheta's vivid

and evocative storytelling in *Second Class Citizen* has resonated with readers worldwide. The novel provides a captivating look into the complex realities that African women face, bringing to light the social and cultural forces that shape their lives. Her compelling story illustrates the enduring spirit of resilience and tenacity that empowers individuals like Adah to overcome hardship and forge their own destinies. Buchi Emecheta has left her mark on African and feminist literature with her groundbreaking works like *Second Class Citizen*. Her examination of gender, race, and identity-related themes has enhanced her standing as a visionary author and ambassador for the voices of African women by provoking and igniting important discussions.

- Overview of the novel's themes and the role of patriarchy

Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* explores a number of themes with a significant focus on the patriarchal system and how it affects women's lives. The novel highlights Adah's journey through a society that constantly discriminates against and oppresses women. Gender inequality is a key issue in the novel. Emecheta shows how patriarchal conventions and customs limit the options and restrict the ambitions of women. Adah, the main character of the novel, has to deal with cultural expectations that prioritise her marriage and motherly responsibilities ahead of her personal ambitions. The oppressive nature of these expectations becomes evident as she faces obstacles in her pursuit for education and self-fulfilment.

Another theme that is additionally explored in *Second Class Citizen* is the concept of immigrant experience. Adah's decision to emigrate to the UK is a reflection of her ambition for a better life and her search for opportunities greater than those available to her in Nigeria. Nevertheless, her immigrant status and the difficulties she encounters in a foreign country presents an extra hurdle to overcome. Emecheta depicts the challenges of cultural acculturation, the discrimination faced by immigrants, and the desire for a sense of belonging.

Resilience is another important theme in the novel. Despite the various setbacks and difficulties Adah faces, she demonstrates an unwavering determination and an unbreakable spirit. She rejects allowing cultural norms or the constraints placed on her by a patriarchal system to determine her value and potential. Adah's resilience serves as a catalyst for her quest for empowerment and personal freedom.

Patriarchal system is a major theme that runs through the novel. Emecheta highlights how patriarchal systems disparities in gender and keep women oppressed and marginalised. The damaging impacts of patriarchal dominance are made apparent through Adah's experiences with spousal abuse and the repeated dismissal of her ambitions. The novel critiques these oppressive systems and emphasises the need to build a society with greater equity.

- Exploration of cultural and historical context of Nigeria in the mid-twentieth century that contribute to the patriarchal systems

Nigeria in the mid-twentieth century was a time of significant social, political, and economic changes. The country was transitioning from its colonial past under British rule towards independence, which was achieved in 1960. Understanding the cultural and historical context of Nigeria during this period helps shed light on the patriarchal systems and societal expectations depicted in the novel *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta.

Socially, Nigeria was deeply rooted in patriarchal traditions and gender roles. Traditional Nigerian society was largely organized around extended family structures and kinship ties (Oke, 1986). Men held dominant positions within the family, and women were expected to fulfill domestic roles and submit to male authority. The colonial era had a complex impact on gender dynamics. On one hand, the British introduced Western education and ideas that challenged traditional gender norms. On the other hand, colonialism reinforced

patriarchal structures by adopting and codifying customary laws that favoured male privilege and authority.

Political developments during this period also influenced gender relations in Nigeria. The struggle for independence sparked political movements that sought to challenge colonial power and assert African agency. However, these movements were predominantly male-dominated, and women's participation was often limited to supporting roles (Agbalajobi, 2010). This exclusion of women from the political sphere reflected broader societal attitudes that relegated women to the private sphere and denied them equal opportunities for civic engagement.

Economically, Nigeria was undergoing transformations as well. The mid-twentieth century witnessed the beginnings of urbanization and industrialization in the country. With urbanization came new opportunities for education, employment, and social mobility. However, women faced numerous obstacles in accessing these opportunities. Limited access to education and discriminatory employment practices hindered women's economic advancement (Mabogunje, 1990). The prevailing belief that women should prioritize marriage and motherhood further restricted their economic independence.

Buchi Emecheta's novel *Second Class Citizen* portrays the experiences of Adah, a Nigerian woman who faces numerous challenges in her quest for education and personal fulfillment. Adah's struggles are representative of the systemic barriers and societal expectations that Nigerian women faced during that era. The novel sheds light on the patriarchal norms and gender inequalities that persisted despite the changing social, political, and economic landscape of Nigeria.

In all, Nigeria in the mid-twentieth century was characterized by a blend of traditional patriarchal values and the influence of colonialism. Social, political, and economic factors contributed to the patriarchal systems and societal expectations depicted in *Second Class Citizen*. Understanding this historical and cultural context is crucial for appreciating the challenges faced by Nigerian women striving for autonomy and equality during that time.

THE CONCEPT OF PATRIARCHY

- Definition and explanation of patriarchy

Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women (Walby, 1990). It grants power, privilege, and authority to men while subduing and oppressing women. The patriarchal system oppresses and subdues women in both the private and public sphere (Bhasin, 2006). Patriarchal relations structure both the public and private sphere, ensuring that men dominate both (Nash, 2020). As a social structure, patriarchy exists in various aspects of society, including politics, economics, culture, and relationships. Throughout history, patriarchal systems have shaped gender roles and power structures, with men typically holding positions of authority while women are assigned subordinate roles. Patriarchy operates through norms, beliefs, and gender stereotypes that reinforce male dominance and contribute to gender inequality. Overall, Sultana (2012) stipulates that patriarchy in its wider perspective means the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general. Although, the levels of dominance vary, the basic principle of patriarchy remains the same, that is, men are in control.

Patriarchy manifests in two folds; private and public. Private patriarchy is based upon household production as the main site of women oppression while public patriarchy is based principally in public sites such as employment and state (Walby, 1990). The manifestations of patriarchy are diverse and impactful. They include gender-based violence, restrictions on women's autonomy, and limited access to resources and opportunities. Patriarchy permeates various institutions, such as families, education, politics, and the workplace, reinforcing gender norms and stereotypes. Media representations also play a significant role in

perpetuating patriarchal values and reinforcing unequal power dynamics. These manifestations of patriarchy collectively maintain the subjugation and oppression of women within society.

However, feminist movements and the participation of males as allies, have created resistance against patriarchy. According to Chisale (2017), the struggle against patriarchy has a long history of resistance by individual women and women's movements. The goal of feminist movements is to overthrow oppressive systems and establish environments that support women's agency and empowerment. For this reason, African women are increasingly engaging in various forms of resistance against patriarchy. "African Women Writing Resistance: An Anthology of Contemporary Voices," by Hernandez, Dongala, Omotayo and Serafin (2010) showcases how African authors use literature to protest and resist patriarchy. Intersectionality, a concept that recognizes the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression, emphasizes the importance of addressing intersecting factors like race, class, and sexuality within patriarchal systems. Challenging cultural norms and traditions that uphold patriarchal values is a vital aspect of dismantling the system and promoting gender equality.

- The influence of patriarchy in literature and society

Patriarchy, as a pervasive social system, significantly influences both literature and society. The portrayal of gender roles and power relations in literature is frequently influenced by patriarchal ideals and traditions. Men are typically portrayed as dominating personalities, whereas stereotypes and limited roles for women characters are common (Chatraporn, 2006). The unequal power relations that are ingrained in society are reflected in and reinforced by these representations. When gender stereotypes are reinforced in literature, such as when women are portrayed as submissive and dependent, while males are portrayed as forceful and strong, patriarchal impacts can be shown. These representations help to shape and reinforce societal attitudes in addition to reflecting them.

Likewise, patriarchy has an impact on many facets of society outside of literature. In politics, patriarchal norms frequently lead to a lack of power and representation for women and other oppressed genders. The pursuit of leadership positions by women is significantly hampered by sexist prejudice and discrimination (Harmoon et al., 2020). Patriarchal power structures are also present in the workplace, where women frequently experience wage discrimination, a lack of career options, and occupational segregation. These structural impediments obstruct women's advancement and empowerment and support the continuation of gender inequity. In the modern world where women go ahead by their merit, patriarchy there creates obstacles for women to go forward in society (Sultana, 2012).

Traditions and customs are another area where society's patriarchal structure is clearly seen. Patriarchal ideologies frequently serve as the foundation for traditional gender norms and expectations that specify how individuals should behave based on their gender. As a result, restrictions on personal freedom and expression are placed on gender stereotypes. In the African environment, for instance, women are often expected to prioritise childcare and domestic duties while men are supposed to provide for the family's needs and assert authority (Gordon, 1996). These cultural standards perpetuate gender inequality and keep people from realising their full potential.

Nonetheless, initiatives have been taken to counter stereotypes and advance gender equality. Feminist movements have been essential for advancing women's rights and raising awareness of gender-based inequality. These movements aim to undermine gender stereotypes, promote gender equality, and challenge patriarchal power structures. A rising appreciation of the significance of intersectionality is also helping us to comprehend how many oppressions interact with patriarchy. In addition to gender, intersectional methods recognise that experiences of oppression are shaped by a variety of identities, including race, class, sexual orientation, and others (Warner & Shields, 2013).

CHARACTER ANALYSIS: FRANCIS

- Introduction to the character of Francis

Francis, a prominent character in Buchi Emecheta's novel *Second Class Citizen* embodies the challenges faced by the protagonist, Adah, within a patriarchal society. Francis assumes a strong position in their marriage as Adah's husband, exercising authority and control. His behaviour exemplifies the gender disparity and power imbalances that are inherent in patriarchy. Francis's disregard for Adah's wants and ambitions highlights the power imbalance between men and women and reinforces how submissive women are in the patriarchal system. His dismissive attitude towards Adah's educational and professional ambitions limits her agency and contributes to her struggle for independence.

Throughout the novel, it becomes clear that Francis doesn't respect or encourage Adah's aspirations. His disregard for her ambition places traditional gender roles and society norms above her own personal development and fulfilment. Francis's adherence to patriarchal norms hinders Adah's path to self-actualization and strengthens the restrictions placed on women by society. Additionally, his engagement in infidelity with Trudy and disregard for Adah's concerns reveal the discrimination and double standards that are upheld by patriarchal systems.

By portraying Francis as a character entrenched in patriarchal values, Emecheta highlights the pervasive factors that influence Adah's experiences and struggles. Francis serves as a powerful example of patriarchy's oppressive nature and its negative effects on women's lives. Through his actions, Emecheta, compels readers to confront the adverse effects of patriarchal standards on women's autonomy and self-fulfilment by exposing the inequality and power imbalances that exist in relationships and society at large.

- Francis's portrayal as a patriarchal figure

In *Second Class Citizen*, Francis emerges as a significant character embodying patriarchal ideals and power dynamics. He plays the role of a patriarchal figure, exerting authority and control over the protagonist, Adah, and shaping her experiences within a society marked by gender inequality.

Francis assumes a dominant position as Adah's husband, mirroring the expectations that society has of men in a patriarchal system. Adah's own objectives and desires are often overlooked when he has power and takes decisions. Francis's actions and attitudes exemplify the gendered division of power, reinforcing the subjugation of women that is prevalent in patriarchal societies. An example is when Francis makes a decision regarding their living arrangements without consulting Adah. He asserts his authority and tells her, "I have already found a place for us to stay...I've made all the necessary arrangements." This scene highlights Francis's unilateral decision-making power, leaving Adah with little agency or say in significant decisions that have a direct impact on their lives.

Throughout the novel, Francis consistently shows a lack of regard and support for Adah's goals and aspirations. He disregards her ambitions for education and a professional career in favour of upholding cultural conventions and gender roles. He states, "What is the use of your going to school? You are a woman, and you should be at home taking care of your husband and children." Francis's attitude, which is based on patriarchal principles, limits Adah's agency and makes it more difficult for her to create her identity and independence.

Moreover, Francis perpetuates gender inequality through his behaviour. He engages in infidelity and dismisses Adah's concerns, emphasizing the power dynamics within their relationship. He states, "It was just a little mistake...you know I love you, don't you?" This portrayal sheds light on the prevalent double

standards and societal acceptance of male indiscretions while condemning similar behaviour in women.

Throughout the novel, Francis constantly reminds Adah of her role as a wife and mother, reinforcing traditional gender expectations. For instance, he tells her, “Your place is in the kitchen, taking care of the children. Leave the thinking and decision-making to me.” This instance serves as an example of Francis’s insistence on gender stereotypes and his attempts to limit Adah’s involvement in activities outside of the domestic sphere.

Francis’s persona serves as a moving illustration of the patriarchal factors that influence Adah’s experiences and the difficulties she has as a woman trying to assert her independence and find fulfilment in herself. Francis is used by Emecheta to emphasize the pervasiveness of patriarchy and its negative effects on women’s lives. Readers are made aware of the realities of gender discrimination by his acts, and they are also prompted to resist the repressive systems that limit women’s agency and potential in society.

- Examination of Francis’s behaviour and attitudes towards Adah, the protagonist

Francis’s actions and attitudes toward Adah, reveals the unequal power dynamics and patriarchal norms that exist in their relationship. Francis consistently demonstrates a lack of support and respect for Adah’s aspirations and dreams.

One notable aspect of Francis’s behaviour is his dismissal of Adah’s educational and professional ambitions. He disregards her desire to pursue an education and a career, instead prioritizing traditional gender roles and societal expectations. This attitude reflects a patriarchal mindset that limits Adah’s opportunities for personal growth. Furthermore, Francis exhibits controlling tendencies, exerting power over Adah’s decisions and actions. He often makes choices without considering her wishes or needs, reinforcing the notion that he holds the dominant role in their relationship. Francis’s actions perpetuate gender inequality by reinforcing the idea that women should conform to the desires and expectations of their husbands.

Additionally, Francis engages in infidelity, betraying Adah’s trust and further highlighting the unequal treatment of men and women within the patriarchal system. While he engages in extramarital affairs, Adah’s concerns are dismissed, showcasing the double standards and societal acceptance of male indiscretions. Francis’ actions and thoughts toward Adah serve as an example of how repressive patriarchal traditions are. His disregard, dominance, and infidelity add to Adah’s fight for autonomy and self-actualization in a culture that values male power. Emecheta reveals the negative impacts of patriarchal behaviour on women’s agency through Francis’s representation and emphasizes the need to oppose and eliminate such uneven power dynamics.

POWER DYNAMICS IN SECOND CLASS CITIZEN

- Analysis of power imbalances between Francis and Adah, the protagonist

In *Second Class Citizen*, the power dynamics between Francis and the protagonist, Adah, highlight the imbalances inherent in a patriarchal society. Francis consistently holds a position of power and control, while Adah struggles to assert herself and find her own voice.

One significant power imbalance lies in Francis’s ability to make decisions that impact both their lives without considering Adah’s desires or aspirations. He often disregards her opinions and goals, imposing his own beliefs and expectations on her. This unequal distribution of power reinforces the notion that Francis’s perspective and needs take precedence over Adah’s. Furthermore, Francis’s dismissive attitude towards Adah’s dreams and ambitions showcases the patriarchal devaluation of women’s goals and potential. He undermines her desire for education and a career, relegating her to traditional gender roles. This power

dynamic restricts Adah's autonomy and stifles her personal growth, further solidifying Francis's dominance in their relationship.

Another manifestation of power imbalance is Francis's infidelity. His actions betray Adah's trust and demonstrate his sense of entitlement within the relationship. While Francis engages in extramarital affairs, Adah is expected to tolerate his behaviour and suppress her own feelings. This disparity reinforces the societal acceptance of men's indiscretions while condemning women for similar actions.

Adah's struggle to assert herself against Francis's power underscores the systemic oppression of women in a patriarchal society. Her attempts to pursue her dreams and find her voice are met with resistance and disregard, perpetuating a cycle of power imbalance and gender inequality.

The power imbalances between Francis and Adah illustrate the pervasive influence of patriarchy in their relationship. Francis's authority and control over Adah's life limit her agency and reinforce the subordination of women within society. Emecheta's portrayal of these power dynamics prompts readers to critically examine the structures that perpetuate gender inequality and advocate for equal power and autonomy for all individuals.

- How patriarchy reinforces power dynamics

Patriarchy, as a social system, plays a significant role in reinforcing the power dynamics between Francis and Adah in *Second Class Citizen*. It perpetuates and strengthens the unequal distribution of power, allowing Francis to maintain dominance while limiting Adah's agency and autonomy.

One way patriarchy reinforces power imbalances is through the enforcement of traditional gender roles and expectations. Patriarchal norms dictate that Men are often expected to be strong, tough, aggressive, and assertive (Guy-Evans, 2023), while women are expected to be submissive, nurturing, and obedient. These gendered expectations shape the behaviour of Francis and Adah, with Francis assuming the role of the authoritative figure and Adah being relegated to a subordinate position. Patriarchy validates and reinforces Francis's dominant role, making it difficult for Adah to challenge or question his authority.

Additionally, patriarchy normalizes and perpetuates the devaluation of women's aspirations and ambitions. Society often assigns higher value and importance to men's goals and achievements while downplaying or dismissing those of women. This devaluation is evident in Francis's dismissive attitude towards Adah's educational and professional pursuits. Patriarchy reinforces the notion that a woman's primary role is within the domestic sphere, reinforcing the power imbalance between Francis and Adah.

Furthermore, patriarchy operates through the social acceptance of male infidelity and the condemnation of women who engage in similar behaviour. Francis's extramarital affairs are overlooked or excused, reinforcing the idea that men are entitled to seek pleasure outside the boundaries of their marriage. In contrast, Adah's concerns and emotions are disregarded, contributing to her powerlessness within the relationship. This differential treatment based on gender further solidifies Francis's power and reinforces the submissive role assigned to Adah.

Patriarchy serves as a framework that reinforces and sustains the power dynamics between Francis and Adah. It perpetuates traditional gender roles, devalues women's aspirations, and tolerates male indiscretions. By examining the influence of patriarchy, we can understand the systemic nature of these power imbalances and work towards dismantling them to create a more equitable and just society.

IMPACT ON THE PROTAGONIST

- Examination of Adah's experiences under Francis's patriarchy

Adah's experiences under Francis' patriarchy in *Second Class Citizen* are characterized by subordination,

limited agency, and the suppression of her dreams and aspirations. Throughout the novel, Adah faces numerous challenges and struggles as a result of Francis' patriarchal behaviour and attitudes.

Under Francis's patriarchy, Adah is relegated to a subordinate role within their marriage. She is expected to follow gender norms and put Francis's needs and wants ahead of her own. Her hopes of continuing her study and seeking a career are therefore dashed and destroyed. Adah's agency is limited by Francis's patriarchal mindset, which reinforces the notion that her primary duty is to support and serve him.

Additionally, Adah experiences emotional manipulation and control from Francis. To preserve dominance and power, he dismisses her concerns and employs emotional tactics. For instance, when Adah confronts Francis about his affair, he deflects responsibility and attempts to make her feel indebted to him for the financial support he provides. This dynamic highlights the influence of patriarchy on Adah's emotional well-being and reinforces the power disparity between them.

Francis's infidelity and double standards further exacerbate Adah's experiences under his patriarchy. While he engages in extramarital affairs, Adah is expected to remain faithful and accept his indiscretions without question. This unequal treatment promotes patriarchal norms that give men power and freedom while holding women to stricter standards.

Adah's experiences with Francis's patriarchy also highlight the restrictions placed on her autonomy and self-expression. Due to Francis's restrictions and societal expectations, she finds it difficult to claim her own identity and achieve her goals. Within the patriarchal structure, her ambitions are undermined, her voice is silenced and her potential for personal growth is suppressed. Adah's experiences under Francis's patriarchy in the novel highlight the systemic oppression and inequality she faces as a woman.

- Exploration of the effects on Adah's personal growth and aspirations

The effects of patriarchy on Adah's personal growth and aspirations in *Second Class Citizen* are profound and hinder her ability to fulfil her potential. Adah's experiences under patriarchal systems limit her autonomy, suppress her aspirations, and hinder her personal development.

Adah is subjected to rigid gender stereotypes and expectations that define her worth primarily in relation to her role as a wife and mother. As a result, her growth and aspirations outside of these established roles are undervalued. Francis, who reinforces traditional gender standards and puts his own interests ahead of Adah's, dismisses her ambition for school and a professional career.

The patriarchal norms and power dynamics present in Adah's marriage stifle her agency and autonomy. Francis exercises control over her decisions, limiting her ability to make choices that align with her personal growth and aspirations. His dominance and disregard for her dreams leave Adah feeling trapped and unable to fully explore her potential.

Adah's aspirations are further undermined by societal expectations influenced by patriarchy. The prevailing belief that women should prioritize domestic responsibilities and subordinate their ambitions hinders her progress. The lack of support and understanding from those around her, including family members and friends, contributes to the suppression of her aspirations and reinforces the patriarchal barriers she faces.

In the novel, patriarchy limits Adah's personal growth and stifles her dreams. It restricts her to predefined gender roles, interferes with her independence, and limits her access to possibilities for self-development. Adah's struggle to break the constraints of patriarchy and achieve her aspirations serves as an affecting metaphor for the difficulties many women face in patriarchal societies.

- Adah's decision-making and moments of succumbing to patriarchal norms

Adah's decision-making and moments of succumbing to patriarchal norms in *Second Class Citizen* reflect the complex interplay of societal pressures, economic limitations, and personal aspirations that she faces throughout the novel.

Societal pressures play a significant role in shaping Adah's choices. Nigerian society in the mid-twentieth century had deeply entrenched gender roles and expectations. Women were expected to prioritize marriage and motherhood over personal aspirations and career ambitions. Adah's family and community constantly reinforce these societal expectations, pressuring her to conform to the traditional role of a submissive wife and mother. Adah's decision to marry Francis, despite his abusive behaviour and lack of support for her dreams, exemplifies her succumbing to societal pressure to fulfill the role of a married woman.

Economic limitations also influence Adah's decision-making. Adah's impoverished background and limited access to education create significant hurdles for her pursuit of personal and professional fulfillment. She faces financial constraints that make it difficult for her to pursue her dreams and gain economic independence. Adah's decision to migrate to England with Francis is primarily driven by economic considerations, as she sees it as an opportunity to improve her financial prospects and provide a better life for her children.

In addition, Adah's personal aspirations and determination to break free from societal constraints also play a role in her decision-making. Throughout the novel, Adah demonstrates resilience, ambition, and a desire for education and self-improvement. She is determined to become a writer and is willing to make sacrifices to achieve her goals. Despite the challenges she faces, Adah seizes every opportunity to educate herself and develop her writing skills. Her decision to enrol in night school and take on various odd jobs to support herself and her children showcases her determination to pursue her personal aspirations, even within the confines of patriarchal expectations.

Adah's moments of succumbing to patriarchal norms can also be seen as acts of self-preservation and pragmatism in the face of limited options. Her decision to tolerate Francis' abuse and infidelity can be understood as a response to her economic dependence on him. She lacks the financial means to leave the marriage and support herself and her children independently. Adah's compliance with patriarchal norms in these instances reflects her need for stability and survival within a society that provides few alternatives for women in her position.

In summary, Adah's choices reflect the struggle to navigate between societal expectations and her own desires for independence and self-fulfillment. Understanding the complexities of Adah's circumstances allows for a deeper analysis of the societal and personal forces that shape her decisions throughout the novel.

PATRIARCHY AND THE SOCIAL CONTEXT

- The novel's portrayal of patriarchy within the larger societal context

Second Class Citizen provides a compelling portrayal of patriarchy within the larger societal context, shedding light on the pervasive influence of patriarchal systems on women's lives. The novel delves into the experiences of Adah, highlighting the ways in which patriarchy manifests and perpetuates gender inequality within various aspects of society.

The impact of patriarchy on family structures is one topic that is covered in the novel. Adah and Francis's marriage exemplifies traditional gender roles in which the husband has the dominating position of decision-making and authority and the wife is supposed to act in a submissive manner. The patriarchal rules that control relationships and restrict women's autonomy are highlighted by the power dynamics inside the family, which reflect larger society expectations.

Another area where patriarchy has an impact is education. Francis and others who follow traditional norms that value women's household responsibilities over intellectual pursuits frequently discount and hinder Adah's aspirations for study. Women are encouraged to prioritise their duties as wives and mothers rather than seeking personal and professional growth, which reflects the systematic devaluation of women's education and continuing persistence of gendered divisions of labour.

The novel also explores the economic implications of patriarchy. Adah is financially dependent on Francis, which restricts her ability to assert her independence and pursue her ambitions. The unequal access to resources and economic opportunities experienced by Adah exemplifies how patriarchy limits women's financial agency and reinforces their subordinate position within society.

Second Class Citizen also emphasises how cultural norms and societal attitudes play a part in maintaining patriarchal values. Adah is subject to pressure from society and criticism when she deviates from traditional gender roles, for example, by taking up employment or expressing her desire for independence. The novel underscores how embedded patriarchy is in societal expectations and the consequences women encounter when they challenge or deviate from them. The portrayal of patriarchy in the novel illustrates its pervasive influence within the larger societal context. By exploring these dynamics, the novel prompts critical reflection on the oppressive systems that perpetuate gender inequality and the challenges women face in navigating and challenging these structures.

- Consideration of gender roles and expectations in the setting of the novel

In the setting of *Second Class Citizen*, gender roles and expectations play a significant role in reinforcing patriarchal norms and perpetuating gender inequality. The novel is set in Nigeria in the mid-twentieth century, where traditional gender roles are deeply embedded in the social fabric of the society. Women are expected to conform to prescribed roles as wives, mothers, and homemakers, while men are assigned positions of authority and dominance. Adah's experiences within this setting highlight the challenges she faces in navigating and challenging these gender roles and expectations.

Division of labour is one facet of gender roles that the novel discusses. In contrast to men, who are seen as the primary breadwinners, women are expected to prioritise household tasks and caregiving. Adah's ambitions for education and a professional career are opposed and dismissed since they are considered to be in conflict with her expected duties as a wife and mother. By limiting women's prospects for professional and personal economic growth, this labour division encourages gender inequality.

The setting further emphasises the pressure that society places on women to adhere to preconceived conceptions of femininity and beauty. Adah faces strong criticism and condemnation when she deviates from societal norms for behaviour and appearance. This highlights the ways in which patriarchal expectations of femininity and beauty act as tools of control, constraining women's freedom of expression and self-identity.

Additionally, the setting of the novel illuminates the unequal power dynamics between men and women. Men maintain positions of leadership in both the public and private spheres, while women are expected to accept their subordinate status and to submit to male decision-making. This power disparity is embodied by Francis, who exercises control over Adah's life choices and suppressing her aspirations.

By highlighting these gender roles and expectations within the setting, the novel prompts readers to critically examine the ways in which societal norms contribute to the marginalization and oppression of women. It calls for a re-evaluation of these gendered expectations and the need for greater gender equality and empowerment.

- Analysis of the social commentary provided by Emecheta

In *Second Class Citizen*, Buchi Emecheta makes a powerful social commentary on patriarchy's oppressive nature and its impact on women's lives. Through her storytelling, Emecheta reveals the pervasive inequalities and challenges women face in patriarchal societies, particularly in Nigeria during the mid-twentieth century.

One aspect of Emecheta's social commentary is the exploration of gender inequality and the limitations placed on women's autonomy and agency. Through the character of Adah, Emecheta portrays the struggles faced by women who aspire to pursue education, career, and personal growth. Adah's experiences reflect the societal barriers and prejudices that women encounter when they attempt to challenge traditional gender roles and expectations.

Emecheta additionally highlights how class and gender are intertwined in the maintenance of patriarchal institutions. Adah's challenges are made worse by her low economic status as a second-class citizen, which further strengthens the power dynamics in her marriage. Emecheta illuminates the ways in which poverty, social inequalities, and gender intertwine to further marginalise women and limit their opportunities for advancement.

Another significant aspect of Emecheta's social commentary is the examination of the effects of patriarchy on women's mental and emotional well-being. Adah's journey is marked by the psychological toll of living in a patriarchal society, enduring emotional abuse, and internalizing societal expectations. Emecheta portrays the emotional resilience and determination of Adah as she strives to assert her own identity and resist the oppressive forces that seek to silence her.

Through her detailed portrayal of Adah's experiences, Emecheta challenges readers to consider the bigger social systems that uphold patriarchy and the need for societal transformation. She challenges the status quo and calls for gender equality, empowering women to break free from the confines of patriarchal norms and pursue their aspirations.

Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* is a powerful social critique of the impact of patriarchy on women's lives. She reveals the inequalities, limitations, and psychological effects that women experience in a patriarchal society through her characters and storytelling.

Her works serve as a rallying cry for the abolition of patriarchal structures and advocating for gender equality and empowerment.

RESISTANCE AND EMPOWERMENT

- Exploration of instances of resistance against patriarchy within the novel

In the novel, there are instances of patriarchal resistance that show how determined the characters are to confront oppressive systems and assert their agency. These instances demonstrate the potential for personal empowerment and the pursuit of gender equality within a patriarchal society.

Adah's unwavering determination to pursue her education and dream of becoming a writer is one notable example of resistance against patriarchy. Despite facing numerous obstacles and discouragement from Francis, Adah is persistent in her quest for knowledge and personal development. For instance, she expresses her resolve by stating, "I wanted to become a writer. That was my goal." Adah's decision to attend night school and spend her free time writing showcases her refusal to let patriarchal expectations and restrictions hinder her growth and aspirations.

Furthermore, Adah resists patriarchal norms within her marriage. She challenges Francis's control and dominance by asserting her opinions and desires. Adah confronts Francis, saying, "I won't be treated like a second-class citizen in my own house." Her refusal to conform to traditionally mandated gender roles demonstrates her fight for autonomy and agency in her own life.

Emecheta also highlights resistance through the support and solidarity Adah receives from other female characters. Her friendship with Bisi, a fellow student, provides a source of encouragement and empowerment. They share their dreams and struggles, inspiring each other to defy societal expectations and pursue personal fulfillment. Bisi tells Adah, "We'll make it, you know. We'll make it in this country, I promise you." Through their bond, Emecheta portrays the strength found in collective resistance against patriarchal norms.

Furthermore, Adah's writing becomes a powerful form of resistance in itself. Through her stories, she explores themes of gender inequality and societal oppression, shedding light on the experiences of women within a patriarchal context. Adah's writing serves as a tool to challenge and confront the patriarchal structures that attempt to silence her and other women.

These examples of resistance throughout the novel are evidence of women's power and agency in a patriarchal culture. Emecheta highlights the importance of resisting oppressive practices and working toward gender equality while highlighting the possibilities for both individual and community empowerment. The novel offers readers a positive viewpoint and inspires readers to confront patriarchal systems in their own lives through these acts of resistance.

1. Adah's journey towards empowerment

The novel's central focus is Adah's journey towards empowerment, which shows how she transforms from a woman constrained by patriarchal standards to a determined person who asserts her agency and pursues her own fulfillment.

At the beginning of the story, Adah is subjected to Francis's power and control since he symbolizes patriarchal standards in their marriage. Her desires and dreams are neglected and she is relegated to a subordinate role. However, as the narrative progresses, Adah goes through a gradual process of empowerment and self-awareness.

A crucial component of Adah's journey is her pursuit of education. Despite Francis's resistance, Adah recognizes the importance of education and the opportunities it can provide. She enrolls at night school because she wants to challenge patriarchal standards and advance her intellectual development. Adah's personal development is aided by education, which bestows upon her a sense of confidence and autonomy. Her passion for writing also plays a crucial role in her journey towards empowerment. She explores and expresses herself through her creative outlet. Through her stories, she addresses the injustices and difficulties that women face in patriarchal societies, giving voice to their experiences. Adah uses writing as a means of resistance to establish her own story and challenge the oppressive structures in her surroundings.

Adah's determination resilience is further demonstrated by her reluctance to give in to social pressures and follow traditional gender roles. Even in the face of conflict, she confronts Francis and makes her opinions heard. Adah faces difficulties in her struggle against patriarchal norms, yet she never wavers in her pursuit for autonomy and contentment. As Adah becomes more empowered, she also forges connections with other women who share similar experiences. Her friendship with Bisi, another student, provides a source of support and solidarity. They navigate their journeys together, inspiring and encouraging each other to defy societal expectations and pursue their dreams. The camaraderie and collective resistance they embody highlight the transformative power of female solidarity.

Adah's journey to empowerment is proof of the tenacity and resiliency of women in the face of patriarchal oppression. Her transformation serves as a powerful narrative of personal growth and a call to resist the oppressive forces of patriarchy.

- Examination of Emecheta's message regarding female agency

In *Second Class Citizen*, Buchi Emecheta presents a compelling case for women's agency and the importance of standing up against patriarchal oppression. She highlights the value of women's voices, choices and autonomy while criticising societal conventions and standards that restrict women to subordinate roles and limited opportunities.

Through the character of Adah, Emecheta portrays a woman who actively works to establish her own destiny and refuses to accept her marginalized status. Emecheta's belief in the transforming power of female agency is reflected in Adah's journey. Adah faces the restrictions placed on her and works toward her own well-being by seeking education, writing, and resisting patriarchal standards.

The way Emecheta depicts Adah's desire for education is extremely important. Adah's empowerment is sparked by education, which enables her to learn, question societal norms, and pursue her aspirations. Emecheta emphasizes how education has the power to empower women and free them from patriarchal restrictions. In addition to education, Emecheta highlights the value of self-expression and creativity as instruments for female agency. Adah uses her love of writing as a tool for both self-expression and resistance. Emecheta highlights the value of storytelling as a tool for defying patriarchal norms and establishing platforms for the expression of women's narratives to be heard.

Emecheta's message regarding female agency goes beyond individual empowerment. She looks at the value of female unity in the fight for liberation. Adah forms connections with other women, finding support, strength, and shared experiences. Her friendships serve as a reminder of the strength that comes from women uniting to undermine patriarchal systems and establish platforms for their voices to be heard.

CONCLUSION

- Summary of key findings regarding Francis as a patriarchal figure

In Buchi Emecheta's novel *Second Class Citizen*, Francis is portrayed as embodying the characteristics of a patriarchal ruler who upholds gender inequality and power imbalances. Here are the key findings regarding Francis as a patriarchal figure:

Firstly, Francis is portrayed as a patriarchal figure with authority in his marriage to Adah. He assumes a dominant role in decision-making, without considering Adah's wants and needs. Secondly, He dismisses Adah's ambition for education and a professional career, favouring traditional gender roles and cultural norms that limit Adah's agency and personal growth. Again, Francis engages in infidelity while upholding double standards, expecting Adah to remain faithful. Moreso, when Adah expresses concerns about his infidelity, Francis dismisses them, further reinforcing the power disparities and making it harder for Adah to take care of her own emotional needs. Lastly, His behaviour and attitudes support gender stereotypes and uphold traditional gender roles, which ultimately helps to keep women in a patriarchal framework of subjugation.

From the preceding, Francis's portrayal in the novel exemplifies the patriarchal figure who maintains power and control within the relationship, limiting Adah's autonomy and perpetuating gender inequalities. His dismissive behaviour, double standards, and reinforcement of gender stereotypes highlight the detrimental impact of patriarchy on Adah's experiences and personal growth.

- Recapitulation of the impact of patriarchy on Adah's life

In Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*, Patriarchy has a profound impact on the life of the protagonist, Adah. Here is a recapitulation of the effects of patriarchy on Adah's life:

Patriarchy has a profound impact on Adah's life, suppressing her aspirations and dreams. Francis, as a patriarchal figure, dismisses her desire for education and a professional career, reinforcing traditional gender roles and limiting her growth opportunities. Adah constantly struggles to assert her identity and autonomy within a patriarchal society, as Francis's control and dominance restrict her choices and frustrate her. The power imbalances inherent in patriarchy take an emotional toll on Adah, undermining her emotional well-being and self-esteem through Francis's infidelity and dismissive attitude. Adah's experiences highlight how patriarchy reinforces gender inequality, with Francis's entitlement, double standards, and adherence to traditional gender roles perpetuating this system. Adah's access to opportunities is limited, and she faces social constraints due to patriarchy, confining her to domestic roles and impeding her personal and societal growth. Emecheta's portrayal of Adah's experiences sheds light on the pervasive influence of patriarchal systems and the challenges faced by women in their pursuit of agency and equality.

The impact of patriarchy on Adah's life is far-reaching, affecting her aspirations, sense of self, emotional well-being, and opportunities. Emecheta's narrative illuminates the pervasive nature of patriarchal systems and the obstacles faced by women in their pursuit of agency and equality.

- Final thoughts on the significance of the novel's exploration of power dynamics and patriarchy

Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* is a notable and influential piece as it explores power dynamics and patriarchy in a way that is thought-provoking. Through Francis's character and his interactions with Adah, the novel examines the negative consequences of patriarchal systems on women's life and shows the struggle for agency and empowerment.

The portrayal of power dynamics in the novel underlines the unequal allocation of power between genders, exposing the ways patriarchy oppresses and limits the lives of women. It shows the dominance and control that patriarchal figures like Francis exerted and the effects that this had on the aspirations, identities, and general wellbeing of women.

By focusing on Adah's personal journey, the novel provides a critique of patriarchal values and norms while also addressing the social systems that support gender inequality. It encourages readers to question and resist the oppressive forces that limit women's potential and deny them equal opportunities.

Additionally, *Second Class Citizen* is a potent social commentary that urges readers to challenge and overthrow patriarchal structures in both their own lives and society at large. It encourages consideration of how inequalities in power impact individuals and the importance of striving for justice and gender equality.

A call to action is made apparent by the novel's exploration of power dynamics and patriarchy, which highlights the need for societal change and the acceptance of women's rights and agency. It challenges readers to engage critically with the complicated gender dynamics and seek to create a more welcoming and equal society.

IMPLICATIONS

- Consideration of broader implications of the study's findings

The study's findings on Francis as a patriarchal figure in *Second Class Citizen* have broader implications for

society. They emphasize the need to recognize and challenge patriarchy in all areas of life, prompting us to critically examine our beliefs and institutions. The study highlights the importance of empowering women to overcome the constraints of patriarchy and create supportive environments for their growth. Additionally, it underscores the interconnectedness of patriarchy with other forms of oppression, calling for an intersectional approach to address gender inequality. The findings urge transformative action and collective efforts to challenge societal norms and power dynamics, advocating for gender equality and a more inclusive society.

The study's insights on patriarchy shed light on its pervasive nature and its impact on individuals and society. They serve as a reminder to actively work towards dismantling patriarchal systems and promoting gender equality for a more just and inclusive world.

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