

ABSTRACT

The African Female Experience in Selected Novels of Buchi Emecheta

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In the Nigerian society, as in many other societies, the woman has had an ambivalent role. Her sole identify has been in the role of mother. Motherhood was held in high regard, but not the mother. Woman's contribution to the social and economic life was not recognized, mainly because all social agencies were male-dominated. In the writing of literature, women were kept out of the picture while the reading public had to be content with the view of women presented by men. However, a new vision of the African female experience has in recent years been presented by a growing cadre of African women writers. These writers attempt to reveal the African woman as she knows herself. Their writings challenge the assumptions men make about women, and attack the unfair male-dominated systems which deny women equal rights, and opportunities for self fulfilment.

This paper analyzes six novels by Buchi Emecheta, who is part of this developing tradition of women writers, and presents them as chapters of a full scale narrative demonstrating the experiences of the African woman in different stages of her life, in rural and

urban areas of her country, and in England. Taken together, the novels provide a comprehensive view of the African woman, with the woman occupying centre stage, dramatizing her own story.

The African woman has always been treated as a slave, but she struggles against tradition, colonial practices, sexual and racial prejudices to gain full acceptance and equal opportunities for self-determination.