

International Journal of Language, Literature and Gender
Studies (LALIGENS), Bahir Dar- Ethiopia

Vol. 6 (1), Serial No 13, February, 2017: 52-65

ISSN: 2225-8604(Print) ISSN 2227-5460 (Online)

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.4314/laligens.v6i1.5>

**Literature as a Moral Thermometer: A Humanistic Approach
to Festus Iyayi's *Violence* and Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class
Citizen***

Ogene, Mbanefo S., Ph.D.

Department of English Language & Literature

Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka – Nigeria

E-mail: mbanefogene@gmail.com sm.ogene@unizik.edu.ng

Abstract

From the classical period till the present, questions have always been asked over what values that a course of study in any human society can be to the scholar. Plato started the debate on what value or contribution which literature can make to a well-ordered republic. Later scholars defended the view by asserting that literature plays a vital role in the development of any nation by providing criticism, aesthetics, beauty of language uses, oratory and policy formulation, as well as contributing to the historical record and other societal values in any given society. It does not only satisfy the aesthetic needs of a people through arts, but redesigns, reconstructs and redirects the focus of that given society. Through the medium of criticism, literature studies, analyses and judges the ethics and mores of a given society. It therefore stands as a moral thermometer for measuring and healing the identified social maladies. This is contrary to Plato's idea. This paper examines the role of literature in the national development. Festus Iyayi's *Violence* and Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* are used as reference texts to assess the values of literature and its contributions to the sustainable development of the country Nigeria. The paper employs the use of the concept of humanism as a term applied to a variety of beliefs, methods, and philosophies that place central emphasis

on the human beings. Since the main source of inspiration of humanities deeply lies in the efforts and contributions of the classical literature, the paper revisits Plato's ideas about literature which is negative to the discipline. Analyzing Iyayi's *Violence* and Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*, the paper concludes that they have not only exposed the big gap that existed between the rich and the poor, but have frowned at this social malaise that has bedeviled the Nigerian society.

Introduction

The discipline of Literature has attracted so much attention over the years that scholars have continued to discover daily its additional values in education and other aspects of human civilization. Literature tells stories when it takes the form of prose. It assumes figurative/symbolic meanings under poetry and also takes the form of dialogue and imitation when presented under drama *genres* or simply put, species of Literature. Scholars have variously attempted different definitions of Literature. All these definitions have different relevance and contributions that they make to the field of humanities, but there has not been a single definition that has totally enunciated the full meaning of literature. Literally Literature means a conglomeration of written and non-written ideas that project the ideas of a people over a period of time. *The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary, International Student's Edition* defines literature as "a piece of writing that are valued as works of art, especially novels, plays and poems (in contrast to technical books and newspapers, magazines, etc.)" (863) This definition agrees with the concept of humanities which is believed to originate from the Renaissance emphasis on classical studies that in the early 15th century consisted of grammar, poetry, rhetoric, history, and moral philosophy. Today, different *genres* and *sub-genres* have developed from the field of Literature. These include poetry, drama and prose.

The concept of Moral Thermometer stipulates an approach to regulate the conscience and proffer a sound economic planning which engenders intellectual cum utility growth while maintaining a steady socio-political system for the benefit of the future generations. Its popularity in the last two decades of the 20th century notwithstanding, this concept has proved difficult in many circumstances. Part of the primary factors behind this difficulty is the dependence of long-term sustainability analyses on the particular resources focused upon. This factor has not only affected the creative/critical views of literary artists, but has influenced their biases over issues in the society. Social events, economic and political circumstances discussed in some post-independent Nigerian literature are reflective of the poverty state and hopelessness of the poverty victims over their state. The extent of development of any society can be determined by the level of provision of the basic amenities and infrastructure that satisfy the need and comfort of the people who dwell in that society. A nation that lacks such basic necessities as good housing, education, employment opportunities, food, portable

water, health care, clean environment, security of life and property, plus sound moral values cannot be said to be developed.

Literature plays a vital role in the economy of every nation. In Nigeria, many people have engaged in the writing of literature texts, publishing, editing and sell of these texts as a means of sustaining their immediate needs and equally developing their economy. Others have engaged on criticism, sustenance of aesthetics, language use and policy/historical formulation and other societal reforms. These offered employment opportunities to the teeming masses of the unemployed youths in the country. Literature also offers a good opportunity for those in the teaching profession or auxiliary vocations like counseling, legislation, education and media practice. Literature does not only satisfy the aesthetic needs of a people through arts, but redesigns, reconstructs and redirects the focus of that given society. Through the medium of criticism, literature studies, analyses and judges the ethics and mores of a given society. A good knowledge of Literature has also offered serious help to those in diplomatic corps as well as those serving in the armed forces and other paramilitary vocations. Literature has also helped in the understanding of special problems encountered by people in their different fields of endeavour as it often exposes the real situations or behavioral pattern that leads to suffering and misery in a given society. This discipline equally compliments the study of and better understanding of Language as the beauty of any Language is sifted from its Literature. It therefore stands as a moral thermometer as well as strong foundation for identifying, measuring and healing of the identified social problems. This is contrary to Plato's idea. To Plato, poetry is not only infectious but harmful to sound moral values. It is three steps removed from the truth and should not be accepted in a well-ordered Republic.

Background to the Study

Plato (427 – 347 B.C.) was very remarkably distinguished in his contributions to the discipline of Philosophy. Many of his postulations cut across different fields of learning, including literature. Part of the reasons proffered by him on the valueless ness of Literature was that it was not useful to the society of his time either for political constitutions or for human life, since according to him, 'it possessed an inferior degree of truth being thrice removed from the king and the truth'. Plato went further to insinuate that an artist is an imitator of 'appearance' and not of 'reality'. To him this imitation of an artist is useless as well as dangerous. Plato was convinced that literature awakens, nourishes and strengthens the feelings and impairs the reason, as well as indulges the irrational nature in man. He used the analogy of Literature with God's creation of a bed. This original or universal bed was accepted by Plato to be the representation of the 'truth'. Plato saw the carpenter who makes a bed as an imitator of the original copy created by God. This 'second' bed was two steps removed from the 'truth' or reality. Applying this analogy to Literature, Plato concluded that the literary artist was three steps removed from the 'truth' and 'reality', since God is the 'first'

artist who created the idea which the literary artist recreates through creative imagination and then writes down on paper for others to read. This position placed Literature to the position of not only inferior arts but useless and irrelevant to the society and use. To Plato, the only aspects of Literature that would be permitted in a well-ordered Republic were hymns to the gods, especially in honour of tragic deeds, battles and conquests of foes. As a classical philosopher with the Greece orientation of criticism, Plato's statement attracted much response from other scholars starting from Aristotle to Sir Phillip Sydney and to other modern theorists in literature.

The other major ones are Wordsworth, Shelley and Wilde. Aristotle who started the defense of Literature claimed that it was not three steps removed from the 'truth' or reality and so was not inferior. To him, tragedy and comedy stood out as the main aspects of literature that played a lot of roles in the life of the people. The high point of Aristotle's defense being that tragedy (which he attributed with high accolade) excites emotions of pity and fear, which results to purgation of feelings (i.e. catharsis). To Sydney, the poet (i.e. literature writer) does not affirm the truth of events they projected and never lied. Sydney's defense in his book *An Apologie for Poetrie* gave credit to the literature writers as those who 'make', instead of imitate. He traced the word 'poet' to the Greek source and expressed the view that the poet makes a better world than he met in the course of writing his text. The argument on the usefulness of Literature, especially on its part in moral development has taken a long period of time that it deserves serious attention.

Critical Approach

The critical method used in this paper is both humanistic and pragmatic. The humanistic approach expresses disapproval of Plato's criticism of Literature and offers a positive aspect of the issue earlier condemned or denigrated. The pragmatic method is beneficial in openly surveying the contributions of literature to the national development and freely making comments on them. It is obvious that many people lack the knowledge of the importance of Literature to sustainable development. This paper fills that vacuum that existed in the knowledge of Literature to sustainable development.

General Views / Appraisal of Literature and Moral Reconstruction

Literature plays an active role in the sociological and political transformation of any society. It is pertinent to study the subject matter of Literature from its relationship with politics. Obviously, there is an aspect of Literature that goes with aesthetic commitment, while the other aspect goes with propaganda. Any genre of Literature that goes with aesthetic commitment does not always go with politics, but those aspects that go with propaganda could strictly adhere to politics. In the second aspect, Literature transcends space and becomes timeless. To elicit the exact level of commitment that

goes with a piece of Literature is the foundation under which the discovery could be made on the difference between Literature and Politics and Literature and Propaganda.

Every society is patterned in a way that there is commitment that goes with it. There is also a level of stability and instability that goes with every society. Literature artists serve as judges, priests or prophets in these troubled societies. Their role transcends arts. They extend to scientific dialectics and visionary as they can forecast, theorize and introduce therapy where necessary. Arnold sees Literature as a discipline which more than any other body of knowledge, is of immense value to mankind. (Quoted in Umeh 15) This immense value could come in form of ideas used in interpreting life for man, consoling and sustaining those in need.

Literature is a social institution that makes use of language as its medium of communication. It is a field that projects life with its social reality. Writers therefore have the duty to either correct the society in which they exist and make it a better place or leave things in the hand of cruel and wicked people to control. The Marxist view sees Literature as that which should be totally committed to changing the society for the better. It is on this note that Plato's view could be held in contempt. Obviously, Literature plays a significant role to life and largely contributes to moral and sustainable development.

Theories of Literature

Various theories exist of Literature. Lindfors in a topic published in *African Literature Today* compared the story of literature to a fable that discussed the blind men and the elephant. The story highlighted on the six blind men who were encountering the elephant for the first time. According to Lindfors:

Each man, seizing on the single feature of the animal which he happened to have touched first, and being incapable of seeing it whole, loudly maintained his limited opinion on the nature of the beast. The elephant was variously like a wall, a spear, a snake, a tree, a fan or a rope, depending on whether the blind men had first grasped the creature's side, tusk, knee, ear, or tail (53).

His further explanation was that the fable epitomized the problem of every critic who is confronted with a new work of art, especially one which came out of a culture different from his own. Lindfors maintained that it was impossible for the critic to see the thing whole. Obviously, Lindfors emphasis here was on the aspect of Literature and criticism. Viewed from the perspective of theory of Literature, its scope is as broad as the elephant. Definitions that go with Literature are many. Some critics see it as "a wall, a spear, a snake, a tree, a fan, a rope." Like the blind men, each of these critics "bicker about the accuracy of their perceptions while truth stands huge and

unrecognized in their midst” (Lindfors 53). Literature is in most cases seen as a big mystery. It largely permeated every segment of human endeavour.

Another theory of Literature is on the genre of poetry, specifically captioned “Poetry as a Mode of Thought: The Protean Encounter.” The story goes that in the fourth book of *Odyssey*, Homer told the following strange tale. After the war at Troy, Menelaus wanted very much to get home but was held up in Egypt for want of a wind because, as he later told Telemachus, he had not sacrificed enough to the gods. “Ever jealous the gods are,” he said, “that we men mind their dues.” But because the gods work both ways, it was on the advice of a goddess, Eidothea that Menelaus went to consult Proteus, the old one of the sea, as one might consult a travel agency

Proteus was not easy to consult. He was herding seals, and the seals stand even through the ambrosia Eidothea had provided. And when Menelaus crept up close, disguised as a seal, and grabbed him. Proteus turned into a lion, a dragon, a boar, a film of water, and a high – branched tree. But Menelaus managed to hang on until Proteus gave up and was himself again, whereupon Menelaus asked him the one great question: How do I get home? And Proteus told him: You had better go back to Egypt and sacrifice to the gods some more.

As an aspect of Literature, poetry uses so many figurative and symbolic meanings. The theory above talks about the evasive nature of the meaning of poetry. A single approach to this genre may not easily yield its complete sense or meaning. The interesting thing about Literature is that it will always yield positive results for those who can exercise patience on its reading.

Literature as a Moral Agent

Literature is not written in a vacuum. It reflects what is happening in the society. Like every other artist, a writer needs to be committed to a set of social, political and ethical ideas. More than other “leaders of thought”, a writer must be in the vanguard of those who are articulating the goal of their races, formulating the aesthetics, serving their communities and raising the level of political and cultural consciousness of their people. The society of a writer may be a stable one allowing him to indulge in frivolous aesthetics, writing solely for entertainment, but as it so happens, there could be conflicts which usually accompany every human society. These activities that call for action is politics and man by nature, including the writer, is a political animal. It is impossible for a writer to isolate himself from the political activities that go on at his surrounding whether religious, psychological, sociological or anthropological. This therefore calls for the study of some writers and their contributions to moral reformation in Nigeria.

Critical Analysis of Iyayi’s *Violence*

Festus Iyayi was born on September 1947. He hails from Edo State, Nigeria. Iyayi graduated with a doctorate degree in Business Administration. He served as a lecturer in the University of Benin and was a labour activist before his conflicts with the

government led to his forceful retirement. He thereafter engaged the authorities in a long period of court litigations, which he later won and had his terminated employment reinstated. He has since gone into private business in Benin after volitional disengagement from service. Iyayi's labour activities as a member of the national executive of the Academic Staff Union of Universities led to his quarrels with the University of Benin authorities, as well as the Federal Government of Nigeria at different times. He voluntarily left the university and engaged himself in writing and running his consultancy business in Benin. He has authored and published three novels namely: *Violence* (1997), *The Contract* (1982), and *Heroes* (1886). His collection of short stories, *Awaiting Court Marshal* was published in 1996. His writing generally has a strong ideological underpinning as he makes a conscious use of the poor, the farmers and workers, plus low class members of the society in sharp contrast with the rich who controlled the economic resources in their environment as sources of inspiration in his writing.

Violence is a novel by Iyayi which x-rayed the interaction between two classes (the rich and the poor) in the Nigerian society and the social forces that dictated their daily activities. The novel is more of a satire on the Nigerian society, especially on the factors that weigh down on the meaningful and sustainable development of the post-independent city of Benin Nigeria, where the author made the setting of his novel. Poverty happened to be the major problem confronting the protagonist of this novel who is identified as Idemudia. His friends: Osaro, Omoifo and Patrick shared in this poverty state, while Adisa who is Idemudia's wife contributed to the burden of the poor man, Idemudia. She is sharply contrasted with Queen who is extraordinarily rich. Queen resembled corruption and oppression in the novel *Violence* as she exploited the poor labourers like Idemudia and his friends to improve on her already very rich condition. Queen could afford a houseboy in the person of Richard, sending her children to the best schools and receiving the free supply of meat, egg, milk and fish through notorious means of extra marital relationship and exploitation of the poor masses. Iyayi aptly portrays her as follows:

Queen poured out the drink for herself. She had managed to get this cement from the factory, and cement now cost upwards of six naira per bag. When six naira was multiplied by one thousand five hundred the figure was staggering. Just to think! The things a woman could do!

She already owned two modern storey buildings in New Benin. One of the houses she had let out to the University at nine thousand naira a year and the University had paid rent for two years in advance. The things a woman could do!

For Queen had a pair of neat legs, long and straight. Her backside was a landslide, her breasts heaved like a bunch of ripe oranges on an

overweighed branch. Her oval face ended in a small chin, her shifty eyes were half concealed by bushy and jet black eyelashes. Queen had a husky voice, as if she suffered from a sore throat.

But men forgot about her voice when they looked at her hips, the neat pair of legs, the breasts heaving to go, the ... Queen was a woman to look at and once looked at, never easily forgotten.

At the moment when her husband was trying to expand the Freedom Motel, she was building another house at Ugbowo. She had been reliably informed that the future of the city lay there and she was determined to get a foothold there before it became too late (23).

The means of acquisition of this wealth were so notorious that those who controlled them lacked human conscience, but derived more pleasure in lawlessness and immoral behaviour. The sexual scandal experienced in the novel was of such a high magnitude that the reader feels a sense of guilt when Idemudia stubbornly resisted the manipulations of Queen and her selfish urge to sexually conquer the poor Idemudia and foil his strike plan. Queen smartly made the unemployed Idemudia her foreman so as to gain easier asses to him, after her discovery of illicit and secret sexual relationship between Adisa and her husband, Obofun. The couple did not even care about their extra-marital relationships as Queen simply planned to pay back to the husband's sleeping with Adisa with her personal involvement with Idemudia who was the husband of Adisa. Adisa was maneuvered into serving as the marketing agent to Obofuns. Queen only became very bitter when Idemudia refused to call off the strike that he agreed to embark upon with the other labourers working for Queen and for the poor man's refusal to collect the bribe offered to him, as well as his refusal to the supreme offer of Queen's body, which she voluntarily offered free to Idemudia at a chalet reserved in her family hotel, named Samson and Delilah. This seductive move was aimed at making Idemudia to call off the planned strike, thereby making Queen richer and self-sustaining.

Exposing the Faces of Corruption and Exploitation

Corruption took various shapes and dimensions in *Violence*, indicating the level of moral decadence, political decay and lawlessness in the Nigerian society of the time in which the author wrote his text. Sexual exploitation, seduction, blackmail, intimidation, poor health facilities, bribery and other negative social tendencies bedevilling the society were well portrayed. Iyayi contributed to the Moral Development through the use of Literature as a means of exposing moral decadence in the Nigerian society. His writing is reformative as he used the Biblical example of Jesus Christ sermons on the mountain to his disciples to condemn and satirize the poor, obnoxious and uncivilized aspects of the Nigerian culture. Jesus emphasized that it was the rich in the society that exploited the poor. It was the rich ones like Obofun, his wife Queen and Iriso, the

notorious government agent who subjected the poor ones like Idemudia and Adisa his wife to hard labour, adultery, blackmail, poverty, exploitation, sickness and untimely death. The poor masses were equally helpless over the conditions in which they found themselves especially as the means of production was in the hand of the few corrupt rich ones. The case of unemployment that was noticed in Iyayi's *Violence* is so much that the helpless masses (here represented by Idemudia and his wife Adisa) were compelled to sell their blood at very cheap prizes to the rich bidders, did all manner of hard labour which contributed to their daily ill health and premature death and equally forced into sexual union with these rich ones. Shortly after he was discharged from the hospital, after receiving treatment over pneumonia, Idemudia resorted to resuming his labourer's job, as well as the secret selling of his blood to buyers to feed himself and his wife. Iyayi portrayed this incident as follows:

How could he go back to all these things, to the overpowering heat of the sun, to the numbness of hunger, to the despair of returning home each evening after a day's long wait? How? What alternatives had he? And what hadn't he done to earn money? He had even sold his blood to make money. Yes, given out pints of his blood for as little as fifteen naira a pint. Sold his blood so that he and Adisa would not starve, so that they could survive. And this he had done not once nor twice but many times. Always, the men who wanted the blood came to them at Iyaro in their big long cars. Always, they were hesitant to say they wanted to buy the blood.

'We want some ...' and the men would hesitate, looking at the hard-set faces of the labourers. But the labourers understood, always.

Always, after they had decided to sell their blood, they would stand in the shadow of the water tower, away from the main body of the other labourers and as they waited, their faces hard and set, they would be hungry, frustrated and silent. Always (154).

It was on this condition of the poor state imposed on the suffering masses that their daily actions and behaviours were dictated. The masses were yoked with suffering, as well as bribery and corruption. They were compelled by circumstances beyond their control to sell their bodies for sex. The problem of the masses was shown by Iyayi through the introduction of a play in which the hospitalized Idemudia watched the 'Counsel for the Defense' state that he knew that the whole society stood on trial, that there were those who could be said to have greater justification for robbery with violence and burning down edifice. He attributed the causes of crime, madness, prostitution and adultery to lack of opportunities. According to him:

In my understanding acts of violence are committed when a man is denied the opportunity of being educated, of getting a job, of feeding

himself and his family properly, of getting medical attention cheaply, quickly and promptly. We often do not realize that it is the society, the type of economic and hence the political system which we are operating in our country today that brutalizes the individual, rapes his manhood. We often do not realize that when such men of poor and limited opportunities react, they are only in a certain measure, answering violence with violence (185).

As a writer committed to the cause of Marxism, Iyayi suggests that bad social system is the main cause of suffering in the society and that this demands violent approach. In line with this belief the beating of Adisa by her husband, Adisa's sexual union with Obofun, the suffering of the masses and other social problems experienced in the society were not brought about by the individual failures, but was caused by bad leadership and corruption in the society. Just imagine how Obofun redefined his act of adultery with Adisa:

This is no adultery. You do it, or let me put it another way. We do it because of something you need. Where is the adultery there? I have told you I'll give you the drinks at the lowest price ever. Then I'll give you another fifty naira so that you can start off in your own trade. Do you call that adultery? Do you still insist that it is indeed adultery? (129)

The poor and helpless state of Adisa who had a better moral understanding than Obofun drew the attention of the 'rich men' to the real meaning of adultery in the following words, "I don't know anything ... I only know that when a married woman sleeps with another person who is not her husband, then it is adultery. I want to go home. Please let me go." (129) The way Adisa responded to Obofun's animalistic desire when he conquered Adisa at last shows that the woman did not really want to engage in such ungodly union, but was overcome by the overriding need of her in raising money to pay her husband's hospital bill, after all her attempts to borrow money from both her friends and relatives had failed. According to Iyayi:

She struggled once more and attempted to break free but it was no use. Obofun weighed down heavily on her and her fight was nothing but the last spasmodic movements of a dying animal. She gritted her teeth and her body was tense but cold and her eyes were vacant, as if she was not here but far, far away (170).

This state is in sharp contrast with Queen's response to sexual demand when Iriso insisted that she should not pay him in cash for the eggs, milk and meat he supplied her, but in kind through sexual gratification. According to Iyayi:

Finally, Queen said, 'Let me get up.'

‘Why?’

‘Oh, I am tired of struggling. I will undress. By myself.’ Iriso let her go. But he didn’t believe her.

Queen got up from the bed and very slowly began to undress. First, she removed her lace buba. Next, the lace wrappa went. On the bed, Iriso struggled with his tie. Then he kicked off his shoes before undoing the buttons of his trousers

They slept together for an hour, then exhausted, both fell apart. (100)

Iyayi uses Literature as a tool of contrast between moral and immoral behaviours of characters in his novel. He seems to suggest that corrupt persons were succeeding in Nigeria, while the patriotic citizens were suffering because of high level of corruption and lawlessness in the society. This therefore calls for a serious moral reform and reorientation of the citizenry. Idemudia served the role of a social reformer when he rejected Queen’s seductive moves. In the midst of poverty and other harsh economic conditions facing him, Idemudia still harbored in his heart the attitude of being faithful to his wife. He became very emotional when Queen repeatedly taunted him to be sure that his wife was faithful to their matrimonial bed. Reflecting on the factors that linked him to Queen and her husband, Idemudia saw the possibility of infidelity on the side of Adisa his wife behind this. He was bent on killing the wife for her betrayal, but later rescinded his decision when he remembered that his wife’s infidelity was caused by her desire to save his life, by paying his hospital bill. His action however caused serious disapproval and injury to the rich class represented here by Queen and her husband, Obofun. The last words of Queen confirmed this:

Ask her about last Saturday evening at the Samson and Delilah. With my own husband. My own husband! Now you can get out of my house! Get out of my house and do not appear any more on my site. The police will be waiting for you there. Clear out! Get out! Her voice had risen and she was shouting (302).

The main idea suggested in this context is that there are those who have the development of the country Nigeria in mind. They may be in the minority, but there is hope that if such patriotic individuals were given the opportunity to lead, the country would be a better place. Literature is the only discipline that seems to freely expose this cankerworm bedeviling the society. It equally seems to offer the panacea for solving this problem.

Critical Analysis of Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen*

Onyebuchi Emecheta was born in Lagos in 1944. Her parents were from Ibussa, in the then Mid-Western region of Nigeria. She had her primary education at Ladilak School

and Reagan Memorial Baptist School, both in Yaba, Lagos. She went for her secondary education at the Methodist Girls High School at the age of ten and later attended the University of London where she got her honours degree in Sociology. Buchi as she was popularly known lived in North London since 1962. Her published novels include: *In the Ditch* (1972), *Second Class Citizen* (1975), *The Bride Price* (1977), *The Slave Girl* (1977), *Double Yoke*, *Destination Biafra* and *Naira Power* in 1979, *Rape of Shavi* (1986). Her dramatic pieces include *A kind of marriage* (1973) *Juju Landlord* (1976). She has a collection of poems *The Family* (1989) and has as well written series of children literature.

The novel, *Second Class Citizen* is Emecheta's story of a young and clever girl Adah who struggled against negative circumstances confronting her to obtain a formal education. Against the wish of her family, Adah was able to apply for a scholarship and pursued her post primary education after her father had died. On the completion of her education, Adah's family planned to give her hands away in marriage to a wealthy man who was far older than her in age, but the young girl refused this arrangement, preferring a young man Francis in this case. Considering the Igbo social background and cultural milieu in which Emecheta sets her novel, the actions of Adah were a big surprise to the members of her family.

By providence however, Adah secured a well-paid job and worked as a librarian in Lagos. She still had the dream of traveling to London for greener pastures. Though she met some resistance in traveling, her husband Francis convinced his parents to allow them to travel. The parents consented on the ground that Adah should stay back. She sponsored Francis' studies as well as paying for his sisters training from her salary. As Francis traveled to London, he was later joined by Adah and their two kids: Titi and Vicky.

A big disappointment confronted Adah as she arrived in London due to the type of accommodation available to them in a public house. She also encountered the problem of discrimination from their Nigerian neighbours who felt that she was doing a first-class job as well as being restrictive of their children social contact with them. Added to her problems was the case of Francis who was no longer doing well in his examinations. Francis views ran counter to Adah's own as he wanted the woman to continue bearing children, while Adah wanted to engage in family planning. This difference in views obviously annoyed Francis who invoked the Nigerian culture and implemented it on his wife, by beating her often to subdue her to surrender to his own demands as the head of the family. Adah had no option but to fight back. After bearing two more children, she opted out of the marriage to safeguard herself from the continued physical and sexual assaults from her husband. Adah went further to court and later gained custody of the four children born with Francis as well as the fifth one which was under pregnancy stage.

Emecheta used Literature as a tool for moral reformation by producing a book that teaches its reader both language and good moral conduct, as well as economic planning of family. Starting from the time the book was published, the book has been marketed in both local and foreign markets even up to this moment. It has seriously added to the income of the writer and therefore is a good source of moral and sustainable development. The book is also revolutionary as it has shown the black man that he is not inferior to the white man. Moreover, there is an aspect of the book that has taught Nigerian women that they are equally as important as men. *Second Class Citizen* has exposed the reader to the fact that woman's inferiority to man is only limited to mind. It has disproved the cultural barrier that imposes certain restrictions on the female gender which made them feel that they are not important in a nuclear family, as they belong to other families outside their parental home. According to Emecheta, Adah the protagonist of the novel "was a girl who arrived when everyone was expecting and predicting a boy. So, since she was such a disappointment to her parents, to her immediate family, to her tribe, nobody thought of recording her birth. She was so insignificant." (7) Adah sustained herself by working hard to keep herself in school. She disproved the theory that only men 'married' women in Igbo culture from where the author was born by sponsoring her husband Francis to travel to London and further succeeded later in dragging her husband to court and winning the case against him which enabled her to keep custody of their children. The Nigerian society in London wanted Adah to maintain the *status quo* of suffering under the inferiority complex imposed on them by the whites and keeping her family members in a public home where Africans who travelled to London usually stayed, by renting a better place for her family. This action has clearly shown that Adah as a character had contributed to the charter that established the universal human rights. Although she was not trained as a legal practitioner, Adah's action has contributed in the reformation of many people who were ignorant of their rights.

Second Class Citizen has two settings, one in Lagos-Nigeria and the other in London. Through the use of these settings, Emecheta exposed the reader to two different cultural milieus, one more civilized than the other. The social, economic and political setting of London was very significantly more civilized than that of Nigeria. The context in which this text was published was in the early days of post-colonialism in Nigeria portrayed in Literature. Adah's parents' exposure to the urban city of Lagos apparently built up a talent in her which was English inspired. There was of course the introduction of a new system of education to the black man by the whites in the novel. Through this new form of education, a new consciousness was created about labour and wage; Nigerians now enrolled in civil service jobs, instead of the usual manual labour or total dependence on agriculture. There are equally scientific and technological discoveries and advancements exhibited in the novel. These include the transportation industry, tourism and telegraphic communication. The characters in this novel must be obviously

involved in the travels and uses of these facilities as well as goods and other material resources in the novel.

Conclusion

Moral Reformation has been viewed from its various aspects of being a process, as well as a particular kind of social change in a given context. Since development is dynamic, what may not be accepted as contributing to the development of an individual, society, institution or nation may not continue to be static. Plato might have written at the time that Literature was not considered as contributing anything to the society, but this status has changed now. Today Literature has been highly valued and accepted as contributing meaningfully to the moral stability and development of individuals, national and political life.

Works Cited

- Aguirre, S.M. "Sustainable Development: Why the Focus on Population?" *International Journal of Social Economics*. Volume 12: 2002. 923 – 945.
- Chukwujekwu, S.E. *The Role of Legislators in Enthroning Sustainable Development in Anambra State Through the Application of Science and Technology*. An Unpublished Paper Presented at the First Anniversary Celebration of the Anambra State House of Assembly: Assembly Complex, Awka, July 2, 2004.
- Emecheta, B. *Second Class Citizen*. London: Allison and Busby, 1974.
- Encyclopaedia Britannica. "United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)." *Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2011.
- Iyayi, F. *Violence*. Harlow Essex: Longman, 1979.
- Lindfors, B. "The Blind Men and the Elephant", Eldred Durosimi Jones Ed. *African Literature Today. Volume 7 Focus on Criticism*. London: Heinemann, 1975.
- Hornby, A.S. Ed. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English, International Student's Edition*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, Seventh Edition, 2005.
- Umeh, P.O. *Poetry and Social Reality: The Nigerian Experience*. Onitsha: Benamax Publishers Limited, 1991.