

Literature

'Wonder Women': Towards a Feminization of Heroism in the African Fiction: A Study of the Heroines in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* and Sembene Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood*

Jude Agho and Francis Oseghale
Ambrose Alli University,
Ekpoma - Nigeria.

Abstract

Feminism, especially the womanist brand, has been a very popular critical tool that most critics, men and women alike, have employed in their critical appraisal of African literary works. This is decidedly a very fertile area of contemporary scholarship. The emergence of this critical methodology in the African context stems from the perceived relegation of African women to the background, whether at the home front or in the domain of governance in the larger society. Essentially, feminism preaches equality of the sexes and frowns at the domination of women by men.

Paradoxically, African literary works, being products and reflections of the stresses and tensions of the African society, have replicated this scenario. African literature, consequently, is male-dominated. This has and is still engendering reactions from concerned female and male writers who are re-writing the history of the emergent literature, countering and challenging male chauvinism by presenting conscious, active, resilient and courageous female characters in their novels. It is this anti-male domination crusade that has given concreteness to the feminization of heroism in African fiction as exemplified, in this study, by Nigeria's Buchi Emecheta and Senegalese Ousmane Sembene, reflecting in the process, the singleness of purpose of female and male African writers in their collective fight against discrimination against women.

Introduction

African literature, beginning with pre-independence writers, depicts literature as a masculine entity. The protagonists in novels like Amos Tutuola's *The Palmwine Drinker*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and *Arrow of God* are men. This is because of the cultural, social and existential importance attached to men at the expense of women. Also, this was the age of the celebration of valour and tenacity. Hence, women in these novels are relegated to the background. The portrait of the African women in the novels written by Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe, Elechi Amadi and Cyprian Ekwensi is stereotypical. The ideal female

character created by these writers often acts within the framework of her traditional functions as wife and mother, singing and dancing during ceremonies. In fact, she is sentenced to a life of insignificance and subsidiary existence. She is only heard and not seen.

Later, in the post-independence era, some of these writers portray the African woman as a free woman, a courtesan or prostitute. This is to further denigrate the image and status of the female folk in the African novel. In fact, the women are not given important function. They are portrayed as mere shadow beings that hover on the fringe of the plot of the novels.

It is in sharp reaction to the negative presentation of women in the novels written by men that concerned female writers like Flora Nwapa, Buchi Emecheta, Zaynab Alkali, Zulu Sofola, Grace Ogot, Mariama Ba and Ama Ata Aidoo who believe in re-writing the history of African literature, came out to respond adequately to the hitherto unchallenged male-oriented chauvinistic art by portraying and representing conscious, active, resilient and courageous female characters in their novels. Some male novelists also join the women novelists in the crusade of re-writing the history of the battered image of the African woman. Some of these writers include Isidore Okpewho, Femi Osofisan, Ben Okri, Festus Iyayi, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Sembene Ousmane, Alex La Guma and Nuruddin Farah. It is in the light of this anti-male domination crusade, which has given concreteness to the feminization of heroism in African fiction, that we are examining in this essay Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* and Sembene Ousmane's *God's Bits of Wood*.

Women as Characters of Praxis in *Second Class Citizen* and *God's Bits of Wood*

The novel *Second Class Citizen* depicts the story of the struggle for survival of Adah, a young and enterprising girl who had to fend for herself since she was small. She marries and goes to London where she goes through all kinds of experiences and realizes at last that a wife in the African society is like a slave, a second-class citizen, subjugated, suppressed and oppressed by her husband. Through the picture of Adah, Buchi Emecheta develops a heroine who is able to assert her right and develop herself personally as a being who is no longer a surrogate or a protégé of any man. This image of Adah seems to validate the view of Emelia Oko when she says:

For the first time woman emerges as an entity to examine her place in the scheme of things, not as an adjunct to man as propagated by Adam's myth but as an existential entity. (91-92)

In fighting against male chauvinism, one thing that Buchi Emecheta points out through the picture of Adah is that though physically the weaker sex; women are not mentally and intellectually inferior to men. She shows that through self-determination and the will to survive, women can be very intelligent and successful in life when compared to men. Hence, Adah's successes and achievements throughout her life are juxtaposed with Francis' failures and weaknesses.

Adah was not sent to school simply because she is a girl. Instead, her younger brother, Boy, will be sent to school. As important and useful as education

is, African men do not consider women's education as significant. This is because of the cultural, social and existential importance attached to man at the expense of woman. This discrimination between men and women is as a result of the belief that boys lift up the prestige of the family and keep its name alive. Hence, Nuruddin Farah says, "Even a moron-male cost twice as much as two women in terms of blood compensation" (13).

This view of the superior nature of man over women seems to confirm the view expressed by Ama Ata Aidoo who says, "As the sourest yam is better than the sweetest guava, the dumbest man is better than a woman" (7). As a result of views like these, the society has no time to waste with a woman's education. This is because, women's contributions to communal matters centered around singing, dancing during ceremonies, procreation and other domestic duties. Hence, their education is not considered worthwhile.

However, Adah through dint of hard work, hardship and sheer determination to succeed in life, manages to pay her way through primary school and wins a scholarship to study in a Teacher's College. After this, she worked briefly as a staff in the American Embassy before she leaves for London. Despite the obstacles, frustration and intimidation from the society, her desire to be independent and assertive as a woman spurred her on. As the narrative voice tells us, Adah wants to go to the University: "She was going to Ibadan and she was to read classics and she was going to teach at the end of it all" (25).

But to read for her "A" level's papers, she needs a home because single girls are not allowed to stay alone in Lagos. So, she is stuck to Francis. Adah, therefore, gets married for security reasons and to be able to continue her education. She sees education as a tool for liberation, which every woman should have. Adah sees education as a formidable weapon in the battle against patriarchal tyranny. Her views about education affirm Chioma Opara's view that "...ideal women are armed with pen which constitutes a formidable weapon in the battle against patriarchy" (125).

In *Second Class Citizen*, through the character of Adah, Buchi Emecheta also emphasizes the significant function of education in the political, social and economic liberation of women as demonstrated by Adah. If Adah had not been educated, she would not have been able to become the family's breadwinner. Emecheta seems to be articulating the view held by Mariama Ba in *So Long a Letter* that with education, a woman is free. Aissatou, after leaving her husband, Mawdo, is able to overcome all her problems because of her education. Hence, Ramatoulaye says of her: "You set yourself a difficult task, and more than just my presence and many encouragements, books saved you. Having become your refuge, they sustained you" (32). Mariama Ba and Buchi Emecheta are saying that with education, a woman is free politically, socially and economically. According to Katherine Frank, quoted by Cynthia Ward:

Slavery ...is for Emecheta the inherent condition of African Woman. Education is the crucial liberating force in the lives of Emecheta's heroines, and in fact their degree of servitude is inversely proportioned to the amount of education they receive. (85)

Adah represents the modern liberated Iboza woman because of her education. In Lagos and London, she is exposed to a great deal of social interaction

with foreigners. She gains a lot from such contacts. This enriched her life economically, socially and academically. Oladele Taiwo, while discussing the practical resourcefulness of Adah in the novel under discussion highlights the liberating essence of the heroine's education when he says:

She therefore lives the life of an enlightened housewife ready to experiment with strange ideas like the use of contraceptives, and play the role of breadwinner for the family. (104)

Taiwo's view of Adah in *Second Class Citizen* is also in agreement with the view held by Francis Oseghale and C.I. Oriahi about the importance of women education. According to them:

Once a woman is educated, she is empowered financially, economically and politically. She will be able to raise up responsible children, take care of the needs of her family and contribute to the advancement of other women educationally and liberate them from the bondage of ignorance... (237-238)

In *Second Class Citizen*, there is a reversal of roles. The heroine Adah plays the role of the man in the family. She is the bedrock and breadwinner of the family. She gives money for its upkeep. Adah makes the important decisions in the family. She is saddled with a husband who is perpetually a dependant. He is unemployed and has no means of sustaining the family. At times, Adah does the house keeping and takes care of the children. Francis' only function is to constantly demand for sex at night. While Adah is portrayed as intelligent and independent of her husband, Francis is portrayed as lazy, undecided and brainless.

Adah as a liberated modern woman readily throws away some traditional norms that inhibit her march to progress when they clash with her new orientation to life. However, she is still conscious of her responsibility to her husband and the indigenous society; hence she agrees to have more children under very difficult economic and financial circumstances.

Adah's successes and achievements are compared with her husband Francis' failure and weaknesses throughout his life. Francis was intellectually deficient. He cannot take decisions on his own. Before he goes to London, he used to consult his parents before taking decisions on the problems bedeviling him. When he gets to London, he starts to rely on his neighbours to tell him how to manage his family. He is a coward who cannot face up with the challenges of the moment. He cannot cope with the ever-increasing demands of the society in which he finds himself. So, when Francis says of Adah: "Brainless females like you who could think nothing except how to breast-feed her baby" (184), one cannot help but laugh because it is Francis who is brainless and not Adah, the intellectual power house of the family. Adah's superiority and achievements tower over that of Francis, the "woman made man". In other words, while Adah has masculine traits, Francis has feminine traits.

Francis in the novel is presented as a typical Ibusa man who cares little for Adah's new perception of life. He believes African men are the same anywhere in the world. So, he expects them to behave in the same way, whether they are at Ibusa, Lagos, America or London. He, therefore, refuses Adah any atom of freedom of expression and action. He frowns at her social interaction and integration with the Europeans. His attitude to the woman has been the same over the years. It has not changed in any way:

To him, a woman was a second-class human, to be slept with at any time, even during the day, and, if she refused, to have sense beaten into her, until she gave in, to be ordered out of bed after he had done with her, to make sure she washed his clothes and got his meals ready at the right time. There was no need to have an intelligent conversation with his wife because, you see, she might start getting ideas. (181)

Francis in *Second Class Citizen* is portrayed as a semi-god who lords it over his wife Adah, though he has no means to sustain the family as the supposed breadwinner. Adah provides all the needs of the family and all that Francis does is to constantly make Adah pregnant. According to Remy Oriaku: "This represents the first and most common form of subjugation woman experiences" (77). The life of Adah in the hands of Francis illustrates what Judith Newton and Deborah Rosenfelt call "The intersections of multiple oppression" (xix).

The conflict in the novel arises from the simple fact that Adah vehemently refuses herself to be subjected to these kinds of inhuman treatments. She would do things as she likes and programme her life the way it suits her. Adah does things the way she likes because of the fact that Francis, her husband, depends on her for his daily survival. Although Adah believes he will definitely change with time, however, she is wrong because we are told "Francis was an African through and through" (30). He asserts his African man's right over his wife and children. He dominates and oppresses them without the means of fulfilling his manly obligations to them. His refusal to change, when change is absolutely necessary, brings in its wake untold agony and anguish to his family. This makes Adah to opt out of the marriage.

By creating women like Adah in *Second Class Citizen* and Adoku in *The Joys of Motherhood*, who opt out of their marriages, Emecheta is not only insisting on the recognition of the worth of women as human beings in their matrimonial homes, she is equally making a feminist statement. In other words, marriage should not be an imprisonment to a woman. The matrimonial home should be a place where woman's fundamental human rights are respected. It should not be a place where man is the sole authority. Rather, it should be a place where there should be mutual and reciprocal respect for each other; a place where no one is master and no one is servant.

From the foregoing, we can vividly see that Adah succeeds in all her undertakings. In the school, she has no equal, in her working place, she is a model, in her matrimonial home, she is the engine of the family. In fact, she is the man of the house. However, her husband Francis is the complete opposite of her person; an embodiment of failure. In the school, he performs below expectation, in his place of work, he performs poorly; hence he finds it difficult to be employed. In fact, he does not want to work. At home he is a complete dependant. He cannot play the role of the breadwinner as the head of the family. So, one can conveniently and safely say that Adah is the 'hero' of the novel.

In *God's Bits of Wood*, Sembene Ousmane presents the evolution of conscious new women who show solidarity with their male counterparts during the Dakar-Niger railway workers' strike of 1947-1948. The men of the Dakar-Niger railway line embark on a strike to press for better conditions of service from their colonial authority. The strike serves as a catalyst that brings the women group to

support their men for the demand of a better deal from the French colonial authority. In their common predicament, the women develop common bonds of interdependence, which culminates in a successful revolution.

In this novel, Sembene Ousmane explores the role played by the women as group and as individuals in ensuring the success of the strike action embarked upon by the men. As a result of the strike, the women tear away their veil of invisibility and confront the situation boldly. This is manifested when they start to address public meetings. The men were astonished and dumb-founded at the new role being played by the women. The strike action creates amazons out of women like Ramatoulaye, Mame Sofi and Penda. Sembene Ousmane in *God's Bits of Wood* portrays Ramatoulaye as an embodiment of courage, endurance, and resourcefulness. She takes on different kinds of responsibilities, which she performs admirably and creditably. Ramatoulaye shows her great ingenuity, inventiveness and resourcefulness when the French colonialists cut off water supply and withdraw credit facilities from the people as a result of the strike. These result to great famine and hardship in the land. There is now tension in the lives of the women on whose shoulders the burden of feeding their families now rests.

Faced with the resultant deaths emanating from the starvation, the women led by Ramatoulaye quickly responded to the situation by finding an alternative means of sustaining their survival. As Lewis Nkosi (1981) has affirmed, "Ousmane's characters are created ...to meet the demands of political category (as the women are) defined by the situation in which they are obliged to act" (43). Ramatoulaye as head of the women begs her brother, El Hadji Mabigue for some grains and promptly disowns him when he refuses. This is because El Hadji Mabigue is in intimate relationship with the French authority. Hence, Ramatoulaye disillusioned about her brother's action says: "You are in league with Islam, Mabigue and you are a fornicator as well....You are a thief in addition" (44-45).

In fury, Ramatoulaye kills Mabigue's fat ram. The people are very happy because the ram killed by Ramatoulaye will go a long way to assuage their hunger, even though she is arrested for her action. The women collectively bound by the spirit of solidarity battle successfully against the police. Although in the process, many houses are burnt down, their courage, determination and resilience must be seen as a significant index of their determination and unwavering spirit to challenge the colonial forces that perpetuate man's inhumanity to man. To avoid further destruction, Ramatoulaye voluntarily goes with the police, although she refuses to submit to official intimidation. When she is asked to apologize to Mabigue, she bluntly refuses saying: "I would rather lose my eyes and be burned alive over a slow fire than speak a word again to that man (126).

Truly, Ramatoulaye is an amazon; a 'patriarch'. She belongs to the class of Wanja in Ngugi Wa Thiong's *Petals of Blood*. Both Ramatoulaye and Wanja are women of dynamism and vitality. They belong to that remarkable class of African women, like the Aba women, Madam Tinubu of Lagos, Yaa Asantewa of Ashanti in Ghana and Queen Nzingha of Angola; all of them are resilient, resourceful, creative and determined. There is an element of masculinity in all of them. Perhaps, they have to be masculine to make up for their male folk's indecision and lack of resolution. Ramatoulaye could also be likened to Abena in Ayi Kwei Armah's *Two Thousand Seasons*, who according to Eustace Palmer,

"functions as a moral voice, courageous in her defiance of the king, determined in her loyalty to the group and consistent in her search for the way" (235). In fact, Ramatoulaye demonstrates rare qualities of endurance, courage and initiative, which we would never suspect her to possess if not for the strike and its attendant hardships.

Another courageous and determined woman worth discussing in *God's Bits of Wood* is Mame Sofi who leads the violent attack against the police and mobilizes the women on a rampage on Mabigue's house. Mame Sofi also stands as a bulwark against the arrest of Ramatoulaye when she kills Mabigue's ram to feed the starving people. She says: "We'll die here if we have to, but she is not going to the police" (118). She insists that all the women should follow Ramatoulaye to the police station. She encourages the women to be bold and fearless when the policemen use water canon to disperse the crowd of women. Hence, Kenneth Little (1980) says: "It was Mame Sofi, in fact who principally organized the women after Ramatoulaye has made her gesture" (97).

Also, there is Maimouna, the blind mother of twins. Far from being an object of pity, she is an object of admiration, a reservoir of strength, a symbol of endurance and the will to survive. When we first meet her, she is characteristically singing the legend of Goumba N'Diaye – the woman who measured her strength against that of men before she went blind. The song suits her and the other women, for in spite of her blindness; her courage, determination and resilience make her more than a match for the men. However, while Maimouna sings in praise of the living, one of her twins crawls away and is trampled to death beneath the boots of the soldiers. Demonstrating tremendous fortitude in the face of this misfortune and tragedy, she recovers and plays a leading role in the resistance during the strike and becomes not only a source of strength and courage, but also an agent of rescue and of healing and a repository of knowledge and wisdom. Hence, the author says of her: "All the women seemed to want to walk behind Maimouna, as if she trailed a protective wake in which they would be safe" (199). The march to Dakar is successful largely because of Maimouna's courage and inspiration.

Another outstanding and courageous woman in *God's Bits of Wood* is Penda. Her contribution ensures the success of the strike. As a woman leader, she addressed the women and men. She educates them on the importance of a united front in fighting any cause of action. She takes over the distribution of ration in order to ensure equitable distribution and to avoid unnecessary squabbles among the people. Penda plays a leading role during the negotiations with the French authorities. She is at the forefront of every activity. During the great march, the women endured all manner of odds with the help and encouragement of Penda. They march on even when the sun was behind them, beating ever harder on their backs, they paid no attention to it, and they knew it well. The sun was a native. Penda encourages the women who were tired to join the others at the front. The adamant women are forced to join the others when Penda started to count them. To the women, it is a taboo to count '*God's Bits of Wood*'; it will bring evil on them.

With persuasion and force, Penda was able to lead the women to follow her to Dakar. When they got to Dakar, soldiers were at the entrance to the city. This makes the women to be jittery, but Penda assures them with her courage and

equanimity. With encouragement from Penda, the women are now undeterred. They enter the city coming with banners and pennants printed with slogans, some of them reading: "Even bullets could not stop us... we demand family allowances" (212). The women are received into Dakar as "heroes" returning from a battle. Penda the courageous woman, the amazon and the indefatigable leader of the women is however killed by the police who refuse them safe entry into Dakar. She dies as a militant martyr. Her death ensures the success of the revolution.

Penda is compared to Mhendi's wife and the other women in Peter Abrahams' *A Wreath for Udomo*, who in their defiance become the victims of imperial madness. As Mhendi informs Lois:

The women didn't want to give up the homes and lands that had been theirs as far back as our history goes. So, they turned on the whites who came to supervise their removal. My wife led the stoning party... (26)

As a result, the imperial leaders open fire, killing eleven of the women among whom is Mhendi's wife. The courage and will of the women who lay down their lives in pursuit of their legitimate rights in *a Wreath for Udomo* is comparable to the activities and sacrifice of Penda in *God's Bits of Wood*.

In Dakar, all the workers from Dahomey, Guinea and Senegal agree on a general strike. It lasted for ten days before the pressure from all sides forced the management of the railway to enter into dialogue with delegates of the workers. After much consideration, the Governor accepts the demands of the workers and the strike is called off. The success of the strike is as a result of the mutual cooperation of the women with their male counterparts. In fact, they exhibit the spirit of womanism. This is in harmony with the view expressed by Elizabeth Ogini in "Feminism and Womanism: A Historical Perspective" when she says:

Womanism is a special culture that reminds men with special indication that without woman's full involvement in the system, man is incomplete in actions as in achievement.... (18)

This is why the women in *God's Bits of Wood* have to be the ones to take up the struggle against the colonial authorities. The women are very militant; more militant than the men. This militancy of the women seems to affirm the view held by Catherine Acholonu when she says: "They (women) were actually the final arbiters in community politics and local socio-political affairs" (47).

We can see from the foregoing that the potential autonomy, economic independence and the educational and political power of the African women are vividly exhibited by the women in *Second Class Citizen* by Buchi Emecheta and *God's Bits of Wood* by Sembene Ousmane. Adah in *Second Class Citizen* contributes in no small way to the success in the running of their matrimonial home, while the women in *God's Bits of Wood* contribute in no small way in ensuring the success of the strike action. These women succeed where their men have failed.

In both *Second Class Citizen* and *God's Bits of Wood*, the authors emphasize the independence of the African women in every sector. In the educational sector, Adah is portrayed as intelligent and articulate. Hence, she is able to assert her rights and becomes the breadwinner of the family and succeeds where her husband Francis fails woefully. In the school, Francis was always

unsuccessful. In his working place, he is very incompetent, hence he always changes jobs. Also, he depends on his wife for everything.

Also, in the political sector, the women in *God's Bits of Wood* are portrayed to be highly successful. They play important role in the economic and social emancipation of the people during the period of strike. They succeed in the confrontation with the colonial masters. So, like Adah intervening in the running of her matrimonial home, when Francis soils his responsibility, the women in *God's Bits of Wood* equally intervene when the men fail to combat the colonial masters. Which is why Judith Allen says:

What has not been seen by Westerns is that for some African women, actual or potential autonomy, economic independence and political power did not grow out of Western influences but existed already in traditional tribal life. (62)

Both Buchi Emecheta and Sembene Ousmane question traditional male chauvinism and succeed in enlarging the political, social, economic and educational base of their women. They resolutely challenge man's domination of their lives.

In terms of characterization, both Buchi Emecheta and Sembene Ousmane make their female characters prominent and tower over the male characters. In *Second Class Citizen*, Adah assumes the functions of the man in the matrimonial home. She dominates all the actions in the novel. Adah throws away that rural, timid and subservient behaviour of traditional African women. She is a modern woman, a full human being, rotund, individualistic and assertive. In fact, action revolves around her and she dictates the pace of things in the family. On the other hand, Francis her husband is passive, docile and a complete dependant. He is an embodiment of failure, while his wife is associated with everything that is successful. So, one can conveniently say that Adah is the 'hero' of the novel.

In the same way, in *God's Bits of Wood*, action revolves around the female characters. They are at the forefront of everything, while the men are at the background. They confront the armed soldiers during the strike with clubs, iron bars and bottles. They succeed in overwhelming the armed soldiers. They have the rare courage of intervening in difficult situations like the railway workers' strike in which they record monumental success. They come to the rescue of men when the situation becomes helpless. In fact, the men proved incapable of restoring law and order.

In both novels, the female characters are the true 'heroes'. In *Second Class Citizen*, Adah is the only central hero, while in *God's Bits of Wood*, there is no one major central hero. Actions revolve around all the women in the novel. The hero is not individualized. Rather, we have what we may refer to as collective heroism. This is because actions revolve around all the women collectively. So, their victory is collective victory. It cannot be ascribed to one person.

Indeed, one of the hallmarks of Buchi Emecheta and Sembene Ousmane in their writings is the prominent role given to their female characters. Their world is one in which women seem to be supreme. They always portray the female characters as more powerful, intelligent, forceful and determined than the men. What Buchi Emecheta and Sembene Ousmane have done is to restore the African woman's lost dignity and assert her rights politically, socially and economically. They also show us the significance and potentials of the African

women, which have been impugned by some of the male writers. This dignity is restored in female characters like Adah in *Second Class Citizen* and the women of Dakar in *God's Bits of Wood*.

References

- Abrahams, Peter. *A Wreath for Udomo*. London: Faber and Faber, 1977.
- Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, 1958.
- ____. *Arrow of God*. London: Heinemann, 1971.
- Acholonu, Catherine. *Motherism: The Afro Centric Alternative to Feminism*. Owerri: Afa Publications, 1995.
- Adebayo, Aduke. "The African Mother: Her Changing Perception in West African Fiction." *Feminism and Black Women's Creative Writing*. Ed. Aduke Adebayo. Ibadan: AMD Publishers, 1996. 178-192.
- Aidoo, Ama Ata. *Anowa*. London: Longman, 1984.
- Armah, Ayi Kwei. *Two Thousand Seasons*. Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1973.
- Ba, Mariama. *So long a Letter*. Trans. Modupe Bode Thomas. Ibadan: New Horn Press, 1986.
- Emecheta. Buichi. *Second Class Citizen*. London: Flamingo/Fontana, 1974.
- ____. *The Joys of Motherhood*. London: Allison and Busby, 1979.
- Farah, Nuruddin. *From A Crooked Rib*. London: Heinemann, 1985.
- Frank, Katherine. "Women Without Men: The Feminist Novel in Africa." *African Literature Today*. No. 15, 1987. 1-15.
- Little, Kenneth. *The Sociology of Urban Women's Image in African Literature*. London: Macmillan Press, 1980.
- Newton, Judith and Rosenfelt Deborah. Eds. "Introduction". *Toward a Materialist-Feminist. Feminist Criticism and Social Change: Sex, Class and Race in Literature*. New York: Methuen, 1985.
- Nkosi, Lewis. *Tasks and Masks*. London: Longman, 1981.

Ogini, Elizabeth. "Feminism and Womanism: A Historical Perspective". *Feminism and Black Women's Creative Writing*. Ed. Aduke Adebayo. Ibadan: AMD Publishers, 1996. 11-19.

Oko, Emelia. "The Female Estate: A Study of the Novels of Buchi Emecheta." *Feminism and Black Women's Creative Writing*. Ed. Aduke Adebayo. Ibadan: AMD Publishers, 1996. 91-109.

Oriaku, Remy. "Buchi Emecheta: If Not Feminist, Then What?" *Feminism and Black Women's Creative Writing*. Ed. Aduke Adebayo. Ibadan: AMD Publishers, 1996. 72-90.

Oseghale, Francis and Oriahi, C.I. "Perspectives on Women's Education in the 21st Century." *Journal of Academics*. Vol. No. 1, 2 006. 235-242.

Opara, Chioma. "The Emergence of the Female Self: The Liberating Pen in Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* and Sembene Ousmane's *Letter to France*." *Feminism and Black Women's Creative Writing*. Ed. Aduke Adebayo. Ibadan: AMD Publishers, 1996. 153-167.

Ousmane, Sembene. *God's Bits of Wood*. London: Heinemann, 1979.

Palmer, Eustace. *The Growth of the African Novel*. London: Heinemann, 1982.

Taiwo, Oladele. *Female Novelists of Modern African*. London: Macmillan, 1984.

Thiong'O, Ngugi wa. *Petals of Blood*. London: Heinemann, 1977.

Tutuola, Amos. *The Palm Wine Drinkard*. London: Faber and Faber, 1961.