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Class Identity and Social Awareness in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974)

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Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my father BEGHENNA Abd El Kader may his soul rest in peace, and to my late mother BOUGAFFA Oum El Khir, may Allah grant you El Jana.

I also dedicate this dissertation to the best friend ever YOUNIS Mohamed.

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Abstract

This study examines immigrants' frustration during the fifties in Britain. Writers from different minor groups tend to convey this frustration to the world. They discuss notable themes and give more insight to the theme of class identity. Nigerian writers are among the black minorities who shifted to Britain during this period. Nigerian immigrants living in Britain experienced all sorts of violence at different levels, race, gender, sex, and class. Through Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974), this study will investigate the negative consequences of black immigration at different sights. It will explore the change that affects the protagonist's social class, by showing to what extent the protagonist accepts this rapid change of her social class. Moreover, an attempt is made to explore how the main character's experiences of domesticity and racism shape her class identity. Finally, this study demonstrates the transformation of the protagonist to a strong independent woman. It also emphasizes the positive attitude she develops about her blackness, and her awareness of her identity's uniqueness.

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Introduction

Anglophone African literature has gained its popularity in United Kingdom since 1940s. Different studies and efforts were carried out to investigate the richness of themes being discussed by African writers living in United Kingdom. By introducing such kind of literature, African voices have obtained empathy and compassion of others. They also conveyed to the world their culture as compared to the white culture. The term Black British literature became current in 1970's to describe writings by authors living in Britain, but with origins of former colonies, like Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. Writers like Ahdaf Soueif, Leila Aboulela, Jhumpa Lahiri and Jamaica Kincaid can be classified as Black British writers. Their literary outputs focused mainly on the rejection of leaders of independent African nations. However, the 1970's Nigerian writers' literary texts witnessed a thematic change. Black British writers shift from discussing problems related to their homeland such as; corruption, culture and traditions to highlighting issues of post-colonial immigration, alienation and discrimination in relation to Britain.

Buchi Emecheta, a late twentieth century Nigerian Igbo novelist is generally to this day the best known African female writer. *Second Class Citizen* (1974) is the most significant work for Buchi Emecheta. The setting of the novel is around 1950's, about six years after the end of the Second World War. During this period, Britain witnessed a mass migration from its ex-colonies mainly Nigeria. As a Nigerian writer who immigrates to Britain, Buchi Emecheta tries to reflect her experiences through her work *Second Class Citizen*. The novel turns around the experiences of Adah, the main character in the novel. Adah represents the authors' experiences and ordeals as an African woman through her journey in Britain. In sum, the novel is about what is like to be a second African black immigrant in British society. It revolves around the dilemma of class conflict of African immigrants through emphasizing social and economic conditions of blacks in London.

This study is conducted to investigate and analyze the issue of immigration in relation to minorities in general and black immigrants in specific. This study focuses on the Nigerian minority in Britain. Through *Second Class Citizen*, Buchi Emecheta, the Nigerian novelist, portrays the consequences of immigration and its effect on class identity. This study aims to show how the experiences of racial and gender discrimination have significant role in shaping the character's class identity. It also reveals the impact of class identity's conflict on the character's sense of inferiority. This study is also a depiction of the character's personal growth and consciousness about her class identity. Moreover, this dissertation questions whether minorities are able to be part of first social class, and wonders why minorities cannot be considered as first class citizens.

The frustration that minorities endure is a reason behind the choice of this theme. This work is triggered by a desire to highlight minorities suffering to create compassion and sympathy. The choice of the novel stems from the work's capacity to depict hardships and sufferance that the black minority endures in Britain.

Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* is analyzed through two major literary theories. The literary theories that will be used to analyze the novel are ideas of Gloria Anzaldua who introduces the concept of "borderland" or what is called "borderland consciousness". As well as Franz Fanon work's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). Moreover, the character of this novel is seen from Gayatri Spivak's theory of Subaltern. Buchi Emecheta shows how the main character in the story is oppressed and denied access to adequate work and housing. This suffering is linked to her limitless power and inaccessibility to first- class (upper class). Besides these famous literary theories, the postcolonial literary approach is also used since it consists of different concepts such as; the concept of "double otherness". The "concept of double otherness" is highly used to interpret the main character's struggle of class identity. These theories and concepts help to understand the relationship between immigration and the

struggle of class identity. The postcolonial theory is also used to deal with the loss of voice, in addition to the false consciousness that the immigrants have about their class identity.

The theme of this dissertation is tackled in three chapters. The first chapter is a theoretical one; it is divided into two sections. The first section will present an overview about Black British Literature. A particular attention will be paid to the different themes discussed by Black British writers, as well as, some problems that black immigrants face in their host country, Britain. In the second section the focus will be on the representation of identity as an important theme in British African literature. It will be also an opportunity to learn about black British writer such as; Leila abolaila, Samuel Selvon, Salman Rushdie, and Zadie Smith in addition to their most famous works that highly deal with the theme of identity.

The second and the third chapter of the dissertation will be analytical ones. The second chapter is divided into two sections. While the first section tends to examine the character's struggle with the issue of domesticity and gender discrimination, the second section will deal with the character's experiences of racial discrimination and its impact on her personal growth. The third and the last chapter is also an analytical one, it is divided into two sections. The first section will explore the change of the character's role as an independent woman. However, the second section is devoted to examine the change of the character's role as a colored person. Moreover, it explores the character's ability to develop social awareness and solve her dilemma of class identity.

To conclude with, the value of this study generally centers on analyzing the dilemma of class identity and social awareness of Adah as a fictionalized character of Buchi Emecheta. It is obvious that Buchi Emecheta succeeded in depicting both issues of class identity and social awareness in her work, because she draws experiences from her own life. *Second Class*

Citizen depicts Emecheta's struggles in receiving education and surviving in a European white society, while adapting to different religious beliefs and new ways of life.

Chapter One

A Theoretical Examination of Black British Literature

This chapter will examine major themes related to Black British literature. It is divided into two sections. The first section will present an overview of Black British literature by taking into consideration prominent themes tackled by black British writers. Then, the second section shows how the theme of identity is an important theme in minority literature. A particular attention will be paid to Black British Literature.

1.1. Themes of Black British Literature

British literature is literature produced mainly the English language. It is characterized by a variety of themes; British writers tackled gender, language conflicts, imperialism, culture, poverty, and class. Economic problems such as “class” attracted British writers. The term “class” has been firstly used by British writers to refer to discrimination based on social class. Poor people are always marginalized and face difficult situations mainly violence and oppression. Poor citizens are usually classified as the “other” or the second part of the society.

This discrimination goes beyond Britain’s borders to extend to its colonies. British colonies are marked by discrimination, oppression, violence . . . etc. Consequently, many people revolted against Britain and asked for their independence. The sixties is the period of decolonization and self- determination process, many countries got their independence. People from British ex- colonies started to move to Britain to look for better conditions of life. Among those who immigrated to Britain, one can mention politicians, lawyers, artists and writers....., etc. Immigrant writers were conscious about problems that are related to immigrants. Class conflict was the main issue targeted by black British immigrant writers, because British immigrants were not considered first- class citizens.

Besides class conflict, immigrant writers living in Britain and writing in English language discuss many issues such as; culture and traditions, corruption and the rejection of their independent nations' leaders. Moreover, they insist on issues of alienation and discrimination in relation to Britain. Their literature also could be known as "Black British Literature".

The term "Black British literature" became current in the 20th century. According to Bénédicte Ledent, "black British literature refers to a literary tradition which developed only after the Second World War, in the wake of the arrival of the Empire Windrush, the ship that in 1948 brought Jamaican immigrants to London and was therefore assumed to be the starting point of the black presence in Britain" (2). Ledent claims that black British literature emerged mainly after the year of 1945. After the Jamaican immigrants, Pakistani and Indian writers have joined writes from Africa and West Indies. Their immigration was a result of Indian and Pakistani independence, their writings also could be called Black British Literature, Ledent adds:

When the term Black British literature became current in 1970s, it was designated to describe writing by authors based in Britain but with origins in former British colonies in Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. It was at that time a political rather than a purely racial label, pointing out to common experiences of postcolonial migration alienation and discrimination, combined with an oblique yet potentially subversive assertion of attachment to Britain. (1)

Ledent declared that black British literature was officially acknowledged during the late of 19th century as writing of British ex-colonies such as; Asia, Africa and Caribbean. He also urges that the term black British literature was used to point out experiences of black immigrants like violence and racism. However, Ledent believes that, "the term has lost some of its early scope, and now conventionally refers to authors of African and Caribbean descent.

Writers with Asian roots are today often subsumed under the 'British Asian or Asian British' banner" (1). He points out that following the period of 1980s - 1990s, writers from India, Pakistan and South Asia are no longer classified under the term "Black British literature"; they are often grouped under the term "Asian British literature". Thus, the term Black British literature is used to refer to writings by Africans and Caribbean writers.

Black British Literature is very rich in terms of themes being discussed. Black British writers discussed different themes and issues in relation to their homeland as well as to Britain. In *The Thematic Tradition in Black British Literature and its Poetic Representation*, Carolina Fernández Rodríguez states that, "The aim of this paper is to offer a thematic study of Black British Literature. The analysis covers the way in which Black British writers have dealt with the issues of childhood, old age, history, return to the homeland, identity, language, and hybridity."(6). She tries to examine themes being discussed by black British Writers which revolve around old aging, history revisited, new languages. Despite the fact that black British writers came from different continents Asia, Africa and America, they endure the same struggles and mainly discussed the same themes.

One of the most notable themes tackled by black British writers is hopelessness of old age. Rodríguez reveals that this theme mainly centers on how old black British immigrants developed a sense of nostalgia, after spending several years in Britain. The immigrants have the dream to return back to the land of their childhood. Black British writers are interested in discussing hopelessness of old age ,they pay more attention to the journey of black immigrants as well as to how it is very difficult for them to return back home, due to discrimination and economic hardships they face (11-2).

Tsunehiko Kato in his work, "Caryl Phillips as a Black British Writer: the Experience of Caribbean Immigrants After World War II", once again reconfirms the idea that black

immigrants face many hardships in Britain. Among these hardships, one can mention discrimination as Kato reported that, “But the lives’ of the immigrants in Britain were not easy due to discrimination. They had to suffer discrimination in housing and employment, and especially when black men had relationships with British women, which aroused antipathy among British white men and often caused race riots”(122). Kato assumes that being an immigrant in foreign country like Britain is something difficult. She or he is likely to face racism and violence at the first place, and things may even get worse if a black immigrant had a relationship with a white woman.

The theme of old aging is highly depicted and described in black British literary production. Rodríguez stated that the idea of old aging is tackled in many novels, most notable ones are; Ravinder Randhawa’s *A Wicked Old Woman* (1987), and Joan Riley’s *Waiting in the Twilight* (1987) (12). Besides old aging, history revisited is also discussed in black British literature. Rodríguez claims that recent black British writers shed light on the theme of history revisited in order to treat problems related to the historical misinterpretation of the slave character mainly in literary scene and prominent discourses such as; political, historical . . . , etc. Recent black British writers aimed at correcting the false image of the slave character. They reveal a clear and exact idea about their experiences. Rodríguez emphasizes that, various literary works have been devoted to discuss the theme of history revisited, among them, one can mention work of Dabyd Dabydeen as well as Cary Phillips, Fred D’ aguiar ,and Bery Cilory (17).

In this regard Sofía Muñoz-Valdivieso assumes that in Andrea Levy’s work *Small Island*, Levy depicts how the black Caribbean immigrants helped Britain in its difficult days. Blacks have helped to reconstruct Britain after the end of the first and second world wars. Sofía Muñoz-Valdivieso explains:

The novel [Small Island] recreates not only their [Blacks] participation in the rebuilding of Britain after the war, but also their contribution to the war effort . . . She chose to close her novel with Winston Churchill's words for the RAF at the height of the battle of Britain ('Never in the field of human conflict has so much been owed by so many to so few'), thus making Churchill's acknowledgement necessarily extend to the Caribbean service personnel that the novel portrays. (163)

Valdivieso made an attempt to highlight the major role of black immigrants in general and black Caribbean in specific in Britain's main conflict that took place in the First and the Second World War. She also confirms that even the British Prime Minister Winston Churchill recognized the participation of blacks in Britain's concerns, mainly protecting British citizens and their land during the war. The third theme tackled in black British literature is the return to the homeland. This theme has strongly appeared in black British writings. Rodríguez indicates that the theme of the return to the homeland was examined by the first generation such as, Sam Selvon.

Then, during the 1990s, this theme was revised by the second generation of black British writers. While first generation of black British writers express hope to return back home, the second generation of black British writers show the impossibility to return back to their motherland. Rodríguez also claims that the majority of the literary works that dealt with the theme of return to the homeland reveal the hardship and the impossibility to return back home for both the first generation of black immigrants and their children (14).

The situation of the first generation of the black immigrants was so difficult, because they were brought to Britain at the first time as slaves; either to participate in the war or to work in farms, factories or home servants. The second generations of black writers focus on immigrants who were born in Britain. Consequently, it is impossible for them to return to the

country which they have never seen or lived in. Another important theme tackled by British writers is the theme of language. The issue of language is not something new for black British writers. Actually, the theme of the new language dated back to the first wave of black immigrants. Since communication is needed at the first place, the primary struggle of the foreign person in any host country is the language acquisition. The immigrant person would be hesitated whether to use his or her mother language or his\ her few broken English words which are usually not understood.

Language was an issue for all immigrant generations. First generation of black immigrants face problem of communication, that is to say, the lack of English use leads to a difficulty of adjustment. In case of black writers, language prevents them from reaching worldwide audience. The second and third generation of black writers used language as a tool to reflect their hyphenated identity. Second generation of black writers tend to revise the issue of language in their writings. Through the use of their African languages. This new way of writing has affected Black British Literature in terms of form and content.

Sam Selvon's major work *The Lonely Londoners* (1963) is the perfect example that reflects the theme of language; through his attempt to use Trinidadian dialect in his writing. Maria Grazia Sindoni in her work entitled "Creole in the Caribbean: How Oral Discourse Creates Cultural Identities" affirms that, "After World War II, in the age of transition from colonialism to post colonialism, Caribbean writers were torn between these two languages in a complex political and linguistic arena. Many opted for a linguistic compromise, using Standard English for the voice of the narrator and Creole for the dialogues" (224).

Maria Grazia Sindoni states that during the period of 1940's, many countries witnessed a great shift they are no longer under the control of the colonial power. Writers reflect this situation through writing. Consequently, the language of the colonizer has lost its power and

authority to give power to native languages. Caribbean voices choose the Standard English for writing and Creole as a way of dialogue (220). First generation of Caribbean writers like Sam Selvon and others have used the West Indies creolized English differently from the contemporary writers. The first generation used their dialect as cultural markers to show which country they belong to, whereas the second generation used it as a means of resistance to the major language.

Carolina Fernández Rodríguez explains the different reasons behind the use of the native languages for old contemporary black British writers. She states, “Selvon’s use of such language was primarily aimed at giving a naturalistic favor to his text. However, later Black British writers use West Indian Creole or Black British English self-consciously, in an attempt to resist and fight against white domination”(27). Rodríguez believes that the main purpose behind Selvon’s intervention of Creole in his English writing is that, he wants to designate it as a cultural marker. However, recent Caribbean writers use West Indian Creole mainly as a way to fight the major culture which is British culture. Through deconstructing the value of the major language, black British writers convey their message of resistance to the worldwide audience.

Black British Literature is not only rich in terms of themes; it is also marked with a diversity of genres. Because of this diversity of genres, Black British Literature gained importance and position in the world. In addition to, one cannot deny the great efforts devoted by black British writers. Bénédicte Ledent sheds light on the diversity of genres tackled by black British writers in this passage:

It [black British literature] has played a decisive role in the thematic and formal renewal of a variety of literary traditions. It would be impossible to pin down a typical 'black British' fiction, a genre which displays notable versatility. It includes crime

fiction (like Mike Phillips's *The Late Candidate*, 1990), children's fiction (*Benjamin Zephaniah's Refugee Boy*, 2001), fantasy fiction (Ben Okri's *The Famished Road*, 1991), or horror fiction (Courtia Newland, *Music for the Off-Key: Twelve Macabre Short Stories*, 2006). (20)

Ledent indicates that Black British Literature has a prominent role in the renovation of previous literary traditions such as crime fiction, horror fiction, fantasy . . . , etc. He also claims that black British fiction is diversified. Black writers from different origins made great efforts to renovate literary traditions through their writings. All these great efforts lead black British literature to become the concern of critics. Furthermore, with growing sense of national and social identities, black British writers and intellectuals contribute in protecting their identities and speaking up for their rights. They oppose stereotypes and discrimination as Ledent declares that, "Black British' writers have also produced challenging journalism, notably around issues of identity but also on more general political or cultural questions" (19).

Indeed, diversity of themes and genres discussed in black British literature denotes a growing sense of awareness. Black British writers write to be recognized. They write to oppose racism and discrimination. They no longer refer to Britain as the country of their dreams and hopes. As long as they have lived there discover the harsh truth, that Britain is the place where they lost their hopes and the power to speak for themselves. Black British writers feel that they are violated and being discriminated and much more than this, they lost their identities.

1.2. Identity in Black British Literature

The issue of identity and belonging has been discussed by many minority writers in Britain. Each of them refers to the theme of identity differently; some related it to social level while others to the cultural Level. It is difficult to define the concept of "identity", I will use

the definition offered by Oxford dictionary. Oxford dictionary defines identity as, "the fact of being who or what a person or thing is", another definition provided by Oxford dictionary, "the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is". Identity refers to the characteristics, behaviors, beliefs and attitudes that make one group of people different from another. The definition that is related to the study is offered by Vivian Hsueh-Hua Chen, she defines cultural identity as "identification with, or sense of belonging to, a particular group based on various cultural categories, including nationality, ethnicity, race, gender, and religion" she also adds that, "Cultural identity is constructed and maintained through the process of sharing collective knowledge such as traditions, heritage, language, aesthetics, norms and customs" (Chen).

The theorist Gloria Anzaldua introduced new theory related to the concept of identity which is "borderland theory" or what is called "borderland consciousness". Lamia Khalil Hammad in her work entitled "Border Identity Politics: *The New Mestiza in Borderlands*" explains that, "Anzaldua's Borderlands exemplifies the articulation between the contemporary awareness that 'all' identity is constructed across difference and argues for the necessity of a new politics of difference to accompany this new sense of self" (303). Lamia Khalil Hammad demonstrates that the new identity in foreign country is shaped and placed by the new cultural differences such as; race, gender, class, history, language, and culture.

The Struggles and issues black immigrant minorities experienced in Britain shaped their identities. Identity is highly portrayed in minor literature. Writers from different minorities in Britain such as; Africans, Asians and Caribbean present the theme of identity every one according to his or her experiences in the major country. Minority literature is defined as, "Minor literature is not the literature of a minor language but the literature a minority makes in a major language." Deleuze and Guattari" (qtd. in "Majorities and Minorities"). The term 'minor literature' is used for the first time by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. Both of them

have agreed that minority literature is literature introduced by minority groups using the language of the major country they live in. Every writer who belongs to a minor group, and uses the language of the dominant country in his or her literary production is called a “minor writer”.

Identity is an important theme in British minor literature. Black British writers related identity to cultural dislocation, social class, language and culture. The first issue facing any minority group in a major country is “identity crisis”. Immigrants are exposed to new language, culture, religion and new ways of life. All these cultural categories help both to empower and construct their new identities. Thus, black British writers make the theme of identity a theme in their writings, every one according to his or her experience in major country ‘Britain’.

Grace Nichols poems’ *Wherever I Hang* (1998) is one of the best examples that explore the theme of identity. Carolina Fernández Rodríguez declares that, “*Wherever I Hang* (1998), where we find an example of how the poet deals with the divided self of an immigrant woman who has left the Caribbean for England” (25). Rodríguez claims that the poem is about the journey of Caribbean woman with hybrid identity, she also adds that during her transition from her mother country she endures different obstacles. The phenomena of “divided self”, is the main issue the protagonist endures. The change of her identity and her detachment from her mother country affect her identity.

It is difficult to deny the contribution of the Indian British writer Salman Rushdie. His work *Midnight s’ Children* is an example of how identity is an important theme in black British literature. Salman Rushdie, as a minor writer, faces cultural dislocation from his mother country and England. Consequently, his personal experiences affect his writings. He projects events from his personal life to the literary scene, to show his identity struggles.

Selma Rushdie tries to reveal his hybrid identity through his character Salem Sinai. In their article entitled "Identity Crisis in Select Novels of Salman Rushdie" V. Gayathri and C. Shoba claim that, "Most of Rushdie's novels concern themselves with the identity of character and describe the violent struggles between different religions, classes, languages, and geographical" (185). Most of Rushdie's novels tackle the theme of identity conflict in relation to religion, class, culture and geographical location. In *Midnight's Children*, Salem Sinai's identity is related to 1001 identities of midnight's children. Each identity belongs to different religions, classes, and geographical locations.

Like Salman Rushdie, many Arab writers depict their quest for identity through their literary career. Leila Abolaila, the Sudanese writer reveals how religion shapes one's identity. According to her only those who have faith in God will overcome their identity struggle. Boukhari Sarra in her thesis entitled, "Sometimes a Shift Makes me Remember: Displacement, Identity, and Religion in Leila Aboulela's *Minaret*" suggests that, "Leila Aboulela is one of the Muslim writers of the modern era who tries throughout her work, *Minaret*, to take another direction of exploring how life can be better anywhere if only the Muslim does not lose his or her own identity within a coloured pot full of different identities and cultures (41). Boukhari confirms that Leila Aboulela suggests that, in order for Muslim British minorities to live in better conditions, they should not lose their identity in the process of dislocation from their homeland to Britain. According to Leila Aboulela the only way to preserve one's culture and identity in a host country is religion. For her, having faith in God and Islam is the key to find one's identity.

Indeed, identity is one of the recurrent themes discussed by black British writers. Their literatures are mainly about their hybrid identities and the troubles they face while trying to acquire the British identity. However, each minority (Caribbean, blacks or South Asians) has its unique way to deal with the theme of identity. Some black British writers related the

subject of identity to the issue of language. While others to the geographical transformation from their homeland to Britain which mainly resulted in identity conflict.

Other black British writers related the theme of identity to the cultural level; how the new language, class, religion, traditions and customs influence one's personal identity. Identity can be shaped and transformed by one's experiences such as; immigration, oppression, violence, and discrimination. The harsh treatment by the white society will obviously affect the way the black British immigrant's identity is constructed. In this regard, different works by black British writers are selected to explore the way they deal with the issue of cultural identity. The best works that could exemplify the subject of cultural identity are the works of Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), Caryl Phillips's *The Final Passage* (1985) and Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000).

In his article entitled "Construction of Hybrid Identity in Samuel Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* and *Moses Ascending*" Lui Tingxuan declares that the Trinidadian minorities settling in Britain are highly exposed to experience dilemma of identity in relation to their language. He explains that the Trinidadian immigrants feel confused and usually find themselves in between two choices. On one hand, they feel the need to acquire the new language, and British life style. On the other hand, they want to preserve and stick to their own culture and traditions. Tingxuan affirms that Selvon use of creole in his work is mainly to reflect his creole identity (1999).

Also, the title of Selvon's work *The Lonely Londoners* has significant identification. Selvon's use of the name is ironic; he wants to show that his community will not be considered as Londoners or treated as the native Londoners. All those who have tried to acquire the British culture and assimilate within the British community, they always face rejection by British society or by the members of their community. As it is illustrated by

Tingxuan, “All these immigrants are facing the identical crisis: to stick to their original cultural identity or to rebuild the new cultural identity, becoming one of Londoners? What’s more, these local Londoners will or will not admit their new identity and treat them as their fellows?” (1199). Tingxuan insists that, the dilemma of identity is attributed to all black immigrants living in Britain. He believes that even if black immigrants assimilate within the British society and forget about their own identity, they will not be recognized as British people by the British society. The way the British treat them will not change. They will be subjected to stereotypes and discrimination.

Another attempt to discuss the concept of cultural identity is made by Saman Abdulqadir Hussein Dizayi in which he made a comparison between two characters from Selvon’s *The Lonely Londoners* Cap and Harris. In his work “Immigrants Identity Crisis in *The Lonely Londoners*” Dizayi points out that, “The old identity of Cap is characterized by the use of fashion style from either Spain or Kingston, lack of cooperation, untransformed. Cap also uses his fashion style to disappear in moments when he does not want to be noticed” (187). Dizayi views Cap as a passive person in comparison to the British people. British people are known to be hard workers; they do not tolerate laziness. Also, the way Cap dresses is unfamiliar for British culture. The author also mentions that Cap dresses differently whenever he decides to disappear from the yard. His opposition to British culture is seen through his fashion style.

Dizayi also urges that, “Harris have [sic] a character that are [sic] contrary to those of Cap. Harris is an early model of what Naipaul defines as a mimic man; he is obsessed with earnings respect and adopts [sic] English traditions to the maximum” (187). Here, the author wants to say that in addition to the ones who resist any change from the outside and stick to their own culture, there are immigrants who are easily coped and assimilated with the British culture like Harris.

Another major work tackles the theme of identity is that of Zadie Smith's *White Teeth* (2000). Natalie Lewis in her paper entitled "Zadie Smith's *White Teeth*: Identity Construction between Historical Roots and Transcultural Hybridity" urges that, Zadie Smith made an attempt to reveal how identity crisis varies from one character to another and from one minority group to another. Zadie tends to make a comparison between both characters Archibald Jones and his friend Samad Iqbal, the latter his identity is much more related to the national level. He wants to show his position in the society, by informing people about his origins and culture from where he came and how much knowledge he got. While, Samad's identity crisis is much more related to the personal level, he feels confused and lost after the death of his first wife. Then, he resolved to overcome his identity conflict's (Lewis).

Zadie Smith related the theme of identity to the way characters overcome their struggles, either by becoming aware of their role in society like the case of Samad who tried to commit suicide after he lost his wife. His identity shifts from being weak to be more independent and stronger reliant person. However, Archi's main identity struggle is much more concerned with the stereotypes others draw about him. He wants to show that he is intellectual and different. He believes that he deserves the respect of the British people.

Another black British writer who gives attention to the subject of identity is, Caryl Phillips's *The Final Passage* (1985). Phillips relates the theme of identity to home and belonging as explained by Anca- Ioana Meire. She shows how the main protagonist's struggle starts while she decides to move to Britain looking for better conditions of life. Leila thought that in England she will be recovered from all her past experiences including her failed marriage, and could have a new beginning. Later on, she recognizes that Britain derives her from her origins and caused her more troubles and pain, consequently, she decided to return back home (128).

Identity is one of the main current themes discussed by black British minorities in Britain. Class identity is another issue related to the crisis of identity, it's about how social class affect the way our identity is constructed. Black minorities in Britain are exposed to class conflict even though they are intellectual or they come from a rich class in their country. From the British perspective, black intellectuals still belong to the lower class in the society despite their intellectual background or origins. Even with the second and the third generation of blacks who are born in Britain, they are not accepted and face rejection by the host country as British citizens, and mainly classified as second class citizens. It is quite natural that such kind of classification and marginalization will create problems related to identity crisis. The second generations of black immigrants who settled in Britain used to belong to rich classes in their mother country. In Britain they discover the harsh truth that they are no longer treated as first class citizens. In the process of achieving the British identity and being part of the first class, black British immigrants find themselves in a situation known as 'crisis of class identity'.

Chapter 2

Class Identity in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*

The second chapter is an analytical one; it will offer more insight into the struggle of class identity. The chapter is aiming at showing how both gender and race affect class identity. This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section will discuss the theme of class identity in relation to other problems such as domesticity. The second section seeks to examine the issue of racism and its impact on the character's class identity conflict.

2.1. Class Identity and Domesticity

Through her work, *Second Class Citizen* Buchi Emecheta tries to discuss several issues that lead to the emergence of the conflict of class identity. The feminist issues are highly presented in the novel such as; gender role, sexism, motherhood and women's position in the Nigerian Igbo society. Emecheta wants to show how gender discrimination and being a part of the Nigerian patriarchal society caused the Nigerian woman sense of inferiority and alienation. *Second Class Citizen* is a challenge to the traditional and accepted male ideas about the role of women in the Nigerian community. In the Nigerian society, the woman is a second class citizen. Women are supposed to give sacrifices in order to satisfy their families and their husband's needs. Such patriarchal systems and sexist attitudes cause Nigerian women to completely lose their identities.

Patriarchal attitudes succeed in making the Igbo woman accept the traditional ideas about the role of female in society. Adah's mother believes that Adah place should be at home, that is why it is better to spend money on her brother's education Boy. Boys bring glory and success to their families, not like girls because as soon as they complete their education, they

will get married. They bring benefit only to their husbands and not to their families. Catherine Lavender states:

When husbands went off to work, they helped create the view that men alone should support the family. This belief held that the world of work, the public sphere, was a rough world, where a man did what he had to in order to succeed, that it was full of temptations, violence, and trouble. A woman who ventured out into such a world could easily fall prey to it, for women were weak and delicate creatures. A woman's place was therefore in the private sphere, in the home, where she took charge of all that went on. (1)

Catherine Lavender believes that "Because the world of work was defined as male, the world of the home was defined as female" (4). Women's place is home due to their inability to live outside their circle, their families. Women are considered to be weak human being who cannot stand or succeed out of their usual role as a mother and a wife. However, men know better how to live in the world of work, because they are strong creatures. Unfortunately, this was not the case for Adah. Though, her husband Francis was a very strong Igbo man, he could not succeed in the world of work, but Adah did. She is the one who works and faces all the struggles to protect her family. Adah remarks, "She would not pay the rent, because it was a man's job to do that, she would not contribute to the food budget" (154). Normally such responsibilities are man's duty, but Adah has to deal with everything alone.

Many critics assume that being a part of the Nigerian Igbo society, women have to encounter many struggles. Among these struggles one can mention violence, racism, domesticity, which stands for sexist and patriarchal attitudes toward woman. In an attempt to resist such attitudes, the Nigerian educated women think of travelling to Britain, where they can complete their education, and get rid of such patriarchal systems that limited the ability of

the Igbo woman. In Britain, they have to face new challenge; they are doubly marginalized because they are women and blacks. In his work entitled, “The ultimate Other : Adah Obi in Buchi Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen*”. Ögunc claims that, “*Emecheta’s Second Class Citizen* deals with the protagonist Adah Obi’s adventures in postcolonial Nigeria and Britain. In both settings, Adah is treated as the ultimate other because of being female, being black and being the colonized” (36). Ögunc believes that in both countries, her mother home Nigeria and Britain, Adah, the protagonist of the novel, is discriminated because she is a woman and a black immigrant belonging to colonized country.

Motlalekhumo Solly Semanya states that women are “triply oppressed (as foreign, as women, and as black)” (39). Indeed, Adah faces this triple oppression. She is treated as the “Other” in her Igbo society, “Other” object to her husband Francis, and “Other” in Britain because she is Black and woman. Jean François Stazak defines the concept of “Otherness” as follows, “Otherness is the result of discursive process by which dominant in- group (“Us”, the self) constructs one or many dominant group (“them, the other) by stigmatizing different or real imagined- presented as negation of identity and, thus, a motive for potential discrimination” (2). Stazak believes that the concept of “Otherness” is created by the dominant group mainly the white. The whites refer to themselves as the self, which gives them a sense of superiority. By contrast, all other groups are considered as an “Other” and mainly inferior to the whites. Such kind of categorization creates a system of boundaries and racist ideas toward minority groups that are mainly considered as the “Other”. In Britain, Adah is doubly marginalized, because she is a woman and black immigrant. This double marginalization is due to her husband, and the British society which views her as the “Other” because of her color of skin.

At the beginning of the novel, the main protagonist Adah, was not sure about her age, the narrator comments, “She was not even quite sure that she was exactly eight, because, you see,

she was a girl. She was a girl who had 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” (1). Adah’s day of birth was not important for her family neither for her tribe, because her parents were expecting her to be a boy. Her parents felt disappointed and forgot to register her birth.

Normally, the date of birth is something related to one’s identity and Adah was not given a date of her birth. Adah’s identity has been denied since her childhood, she was not allowed to go to school only because she was a girl. After the death of her father, she was obliged to work as a slave in her uncle’s house. However, Adah resists all these hardships and finds a way to go to school. She has been a very strong woman since her childhood. She never accepts discrimination, and she challenges her parents and goes to school. Later on, after her marriage to Francis, Adah faces gender discrimination.

Buchi Emecheta shows how marriage can be a nightmare for Nigerian women. According to her, marriage is a system where the voice of Igbo women is silenced by their patriarchal husbands. Adah is denied her role as a strong independent woman because of her abusive husband who is treating her as his property. Sezgi Öztop Haner states that, “Adah has very little expectation from her husband concerning love, fidelity, companionship. As the patriarchal culture promises, Adah does not have the right to make a decision in the family matters even though she earns much more money than her husband”(155). Haner reveals that Adah’s husbands never considers her as his beloved wife, or treats her as she deserves to be treated. He does not even involve her in decision making or considers her opinions concerning family issues. Despite the fact that she is the one who affords the needs of the family.

At the beginning of her marriage with Francis, Adah was a very passive woman. She never refused his demands; she cannot even contradict him. She had a dream to travel to Britain and establish her personal and professional life. Instead of realizing her dream she paid for her husband's education in Britain, and took care of his family's needs. All those who are surrounding Adah, Francis and his family took advantage of Adah's money. As Francis declares, "Father does not approve of women going to the UK. But you see, you will pay for me, and look after yourself, and within three years, I'll be back. . . Why lose your good job just to go and see London? They say it is just like Lagos" (24). Francis treats Adah as a financial source; he does not even care about her dream claiming that England is just like "Lagos", the city where they used to live in Nigeria.

According to Igbo society, education and intelligence are something related to the Igbo men. Only men have the right to study and continue their education abroad, to write and share their own ideas with the worldwide audience. Igbo women's voice is not heard. It is not necessary for Igbo women to pursue their education, what matters is to be a good and successful housewife. Francis is that Igbo man who cannot tolerate his wife's success. When she first tells him about her plan to write a book 'The Bride Price', Francis replies, "You keep forgetting that you are a woman and that you are black. The white man can barely tolerate us men, to say nothing of brainless females like you" (178). Instead of encouraging Adah to write, Francis always reminds her that she is a woman and black and that her writing would not be accepted by white community. He describes her as a brainless woman.

All these stereotypes and images Francis has about women are based on his society's norms, where "the way girls brought up, they will never forget their position in life . . . they should behave accordingly. If a girl goes astray it will affect the whole family and its reputation" (Vasanummi 26). Mari Vasanummi believes that social norms and conventions construct gender roles. Children since a very early age in the Igbo society have been told that

only man have the right of education and woman should be placed at home. Igbo men grow up having these false images about woman, later on these false images result in discrimination and oppression. Throughout his life, Francis was taught that women are passive, and their place is home where they have to work for their husbands and their kids. As well as, Adah grew up in a family where the right of education is given to boys rather than girls. She was taught that the more woman gives sacrifices to her family, the more adorable she is. Buchi Emecheta believes that only through education, women can break and resist these false images. Only through education women can free themselves from patriarchal ideas and their subjection to males.

Adah's struggle with class identity begins in her childhood. As a girl in her family, she is always the last person to worry about. All the care and love were given to her brother. She has learned how to be responsible of herself at an early age. Then, after getting married to Francis, things become worse. Adah was treated as "second- class human" (47) by her husband Francis. Whenever she wants to achieve something, he always reminds her that she is woman and black, and that she belongs to a second- class citizen.

Adah gets married to Francis because she believes that he is the man that would help her realize her dream and take her to London. After spending several years with him, she is faced by his selfishness and his abusive behaviors. However, Francis believes that marriage is a way to dominate a woman, and mistreats her because she is a property. He remarks, "My father knocked my mother about until I was old enough to throw stones at him. My mother never left my father" (183). This oppressive act is something that is adopted by his family, Francis is so proud because his father used to beat his mother and the mother never thought of leaving him. He wants Adah to be like his mother and accepts domestic violence.

Adah has no control over her body. When she decides to have a birth control because pregnancy exhausts her, Francis refuses her decision claiming that, “men knew how to control themselves better” (135). When he discovers that Adah uses means of contraception, he beats her till death “Adah was happy when Pa Noble came, because at least it made Francis stop hitting her. She was dizzy with pain and her head throbbed. Her mouth was bleeding” (148). He beats her only because she wants to have a birth control. Francis is an example of an Igbo man who has inherited the Igbo traditions and customs. Although, Francis is an educated man who is affected by his interaction with the Londoners, he never misses any chance to practice his Igbo patriarchal ideas and actions of humiliating the woman (156).

In his work entitled “Marriage as Nightmare: Patterns of Abuse in *Second Class Citizen*”, Vincent Walsh states that, “Francis convinces Adah that the gross mistreatment he dishes out is somehow deserved and justified, even when it clearly is not. He persuades his victim that she is powerless to prevent these onslaughts, and that she therefore has no other option but to submit” (17 -8). Vincent Walsh claims that Francis always justifies his aggressive behaviors. He believes this is accepted in his Igbo society. Woman is a property and she can be beaten and violated at any time. Even when Adah resists his abusive speech or actions, he always reminds her that she is a black woman. The only thing Adah can do is to accept this reality and to be submissive to her husband.

Adah develops a feeling of inferiority because she is treated as a “second- human” in her patriarchal community. In the process of interacting and assimilating within British society, Adah is supposed to deal with another issue, which is racism. Due to her color of skin Adah faces many struggles. Though, she works in a first class job, she is as librarian, Adah is denied many rights.

2.2. Race and the Struggle of Class Identity

Racism is one of the struggles that face minorities in any host country. Racism can be revealed through peoples' attitudes toward a minority group, sometimes it can be reflected through racial- labels for instance, using the word “ ugly” to describe a black person. It can also be reflected in systems and institutions, when a group of people are denied access to particular job because of their skin color or their origins. Buchi Emecheta reveals her experiences with racism and discrimination as an immigrant in England, through her character Adah. Through *Second Class Citizen*, Buchi Emecheta shows how racism deprives the woman from enjoying her rights as a human.

Adah was so fascinated by the idea of going to England since her childhood, it was her dream. She thought that Britain is the country where all her dreams would be achieved; she believed that through marriage to Francis she would realize her dreams. She wanted to pursue her education and become a famous writer like Flora Nwappa. Adah wants to build her position in the British society as a strong independent woman. In Nigeria, she belongs to the first- class because of her job as a librarian and the amount of the money she earns. She wants to preserve this position even in Britain. In Britain things are different, all her expectations diminished.

Ömer Ögunc believes that, “The first interaction between the colonized and the mother country is depicted as follows: “England gave Adah a cold welcome” (40). When Adah first arrived at Britain she received a cold welcome, “The cold wind that blew on her face as she emerged on the deck was as heavy and hurtful as a blow from a boxer” (32). This cold wind indicates that Adha is not familiar with such a freezing weather; it is even hurtful to her skin. It is like England did not welcome her. Adah is surprised when she sees the place where she

will live with her kids. Francis cannot afford a big house for her like those of the British people. Francis comments:

Well, I know you will not like it, but this is the best I can do. You see, accommodation is very short in London, especially for black people with children. Everybody is coming to London, the West Indians, the Pakistanis and even the Indians, so that African students are usually grouped together with them. We are all blacks, all coloureds, and the only houses we can get are horrors like these. (35)

Francis could not afford house first because of his laziness; he does not search for another job in order to buy a house. Second, in Britain no one accepts to rent a house for minorities in general and blacks in specific. All minorities lived together in separated neighborhoods.

In their work entitled “Racial and Gender Implications in African Female Literature: an Afrocentric Feminist Reading of Emecheta’s *Second Class Citizen*” Dr. Coulibaly Aboubacar Sidiki and Dr. Maiga Abida Aboubacerin proclaim that the western ideologies and education succeed to convince Francis and other Nigerians that they are inferior, and accept to live under low- conditions in the British society. Francis is trying to make Adah accept these stereotypes and critical conditions (969). However, Adah does not accept such living conditions which were imposed on them, because she is an educated woman. She believes that she deserves to live a better life even if she is a colored woman. She does not accept to work in a factory as a second- class person, but rather she searches for another job in library.

Francis reminds Adah that despite her job, her high wage, and her educational background, she will be treated the same as all other blacks. Blacks are viewed as second-class citizens in Britain, Francis remarks, “but the day you land in England, you are a second-class citizen. So you can't discriminate against your own people, because we are all second-class” (36).

Racism is demonstrated when Adah is looking for a house. No one wants to rent her a house

because she is black, although, Adah is ready to pay more money. After many attempts, Adah finds someone who accepts to rent her a house. This was possible only after lying about her origins. However, the landlord discovers that she is black, and refuses her. Despite all her efforts to have a house the only reply she receives is “Sorry, no coloureds” (70). Access to housing and job is allowed only to first- class citizen. Within the British society, Adah is viewed as a second class citizen. According to Sezgi Öztop Haner, “what worries Adah most is the description ‘second-class’, but she is determined to fight against this kind of humiliating attitudes. She feels first-class only in the libraries where she works in because her education in Lagos and her first job as a librarian at the American Embassy provide her with a “first-class citizen’s job” in Britain” (155). Haner once again reconfirms the idea of Buchi Emecheta that education and economic independence are the means by which the Nigerian women seek freedom from their patriarchal society and the white society.

Ömer Ögunc sheds light on an important point in the process of racism. He believes that Adah has new challenge to face if she wants her children to acquire the British culture. The first thing she has to do is letting her children be raised by a white babysitter, and she is not supposed to impose any rules on the babysitter. In order to be accepted by the whites, Adah needs to respect and apply their norms (42). However, things are different within the white society, British people have the right to choose whether to raise their children by themselves or just look for a host- mother. Adah claimed that, “Only first-class citizens lived with their children, not the blacks” (38).

Despite Adah’s education and intellectual background, she is always perceived as a second- class citizen in housing, at work and even at home. Adah is denied access to first-class position regardless of her efforts to build a strong position in British society and enjoy life as a first- class citizen. She was considered as a foreigner. Immigrants from other minorities will not accept blacks to be their neighbors only because they have children. Adah

comments, “maybe if a West Indian landlord could learn not to look down on the African” (67). Immigrants from other minorities have a sense of superiority over blacks and the Londoners do not tolerate colored people at all, either with or without children. This double segregation caused Adah’s trauma and has a psychological effect on her. She views whiteness as something superior, she even thinks of changing the color of skin when she wants the lady to rent her the house. Adah comments, “If only they could paint their faces; just until the first rent had been paid” (72).

Adah too has a sense of superiority over others; her trauma leads her to be racist. Adah develops a racist attitude toward other minorities and to those who came from Nigeria, the narrator states that, “Then, to her horror, she saw that she had to share the house with such Nigerians who called her madam at home” (35). She could not accept to share the same marginalization and low social conditions as those who came from Nigeria, who used to call her madam, she felt that she shares the same class with them. With her arrival to England, Adah feels ashamed by her skin color. She has the image that all whites are superior, intellectual, and never commit sins like blacks. However, after the fight she had with Trudy, she changed her opinion and the feeling of inferiority starts to disappear, “whiteness’ could cover a multitude of sins” (36).

All minorities or colored people face racism, but black women’s situation is worse. The Black woman faces double marginalization because of her skin color and her gender. Nilay Erdem Ayyildiz adds that, “black women are in an unusual position in this society, for not only are collectively at the bottom of the occupational ladder, but our overall social status is lower than that of any other group” (qtd. in Ayyildiz 143). Ayyildiz argues that the black color gives more sense of inferiority to woman more than any other marginalized group, because the western societies usually relate blackness to ugliness and abnormality.

Ayyildiz also adds that, Adah tries to compare herself with other ladies working with her in the library, she feels inferior because her fashion style is not like theirs. She was astonished by their legs, Adah feels she cannot compete with them; she cannot see herself beautiful as they are (145). The narrator states that, “the other girls were assistants, very young with long, skinny legs; most of them seemed to be all legs to Adah. Unlike their superior, so she never really became too familiar with them. They made her feel inferior somehow, always talking of boyfriend and clothes” (35). Adah even thinks that most of their conversation is about unnecessary things that does not make sense to her.

Adah with her new job as a librarian finds difficulty to deal with her children, she finds herself obliged to look for a babysitter. Finally, she finds Trudy, and she was a white woman. Because of Trudy’s carelessness, Adah’s son Vicky gets sick and goes to the hospital because he consumes dirty water. When Adah goes to the police station to tell them about Trudy, no one believes her, because she is a black woman. At that time, she discovers the harsh truth that like blacks, whites can lie and make sins too. Trudy represents the negative side in British society. She no longer sees Londoners superior than her, she wants to prove the opposite that not all blacks are the same; there are good and bad blacks and even if she is colored she has the right to be treated as a first -class citizen.

Adah deep inside believes that to end all these negative attitudes toward blacks, there must be harmony and respect between blacks, as well as between blacks and other minorities. In Adah’s opinion the main racist actions and ideas begin at home with her husband Francis first then, extended to the British community. She believes that if her husband learns how to respect her, they will live in harmony and save their marriage. According to her, the same harmony should be achieved with other minorities like Indians. Adah comments, “maybe if the blacks could learn to live harmoniously with one another, maybe if a West Indian landlord

could learn not to look down on the African . . . there would be fewer inferiority feelings among the blacks” (70).

For Adah, racism begins at home before it reaches other levels. Domestic violence and racial discrimination leads Adah to develop dilemma of class identity. Her immigration to England is not what she expects it to be. She could not adapt to the new situation as a “second – class citizen” and accepts the change. Adah chooses to rebel against this expression “second- class citizen”, she believes that the first step is to get rid of her abusive husband, because he violates her rights as an independent woman.

Chapter 3

Social Awareness in Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*

The third chapter is an analytical one; it focuses essentially on the social awareness of the main character Adah through her ability to adapt to the change and accept her new role in the British society. This chapter is divided into two sections. While, first section will focus on how the main character Adah develops awareness about her role as a strong and independent woman, the second section will examine the change of the character's role as a colored person.

3. 1. Adah's Journey to Self- Affirmation

Women in Igbo society are known to be very submissive to their husbands. They are taught at a very early age to accept male dominance and to live under a patriarchal system. According to Igbo women, whatever their capacities or the opportunities they have, they must accept the fact that they are only women, and they cannot be competent to the Igbo men. In this respect, M. Okeng'o Matiang'i claims that, "as a particular group of lesser human beings, women are secluded within particular role groups by traditions, Even the most intelligent in their number, even one with more superior qualities than her husband has no chance to express herself just because she is a woman" (58).

The oppression and the abusive acts that Igbo women experience in their everyday lives become as something normal for them. However, this is not the case for an educated woman, because she is aware that like men, women also have the right to build a strong position in the society. Educated women believe that their place is not home. For them, home is an institution where woman's rights are transgressed and her freedom is violated. Even women who choose

to rebel and stand against these sexist rules that restrict women's ability to evolve, face oppression and violence too.

In her thesis entitled "Woman's position in the Igbo society according to *the Joy of Motherhood* by Buchi Emecheta", Mari Vusanummi claims, "It is the man's duty to earn enough or farm enough to provide descent standard of living for the family. Girls had to help their mother in their business of petty trade and also in the running of the households; therefore girls rarely had the luxury of education" (72). Mari Vusanummi shows how boys in the Igbo society are provided with adequate caring more than girls, because it is believed that boys are the ones who are going to support the family needs' in the future. Girls should be placed at home helping their mothers and learning how to be perfect housewives.

Adah, the protagonist of the story, is a very intelligent and a strong woman. Since an early age, Adah develops consciousness about her position as an independent woman. She never accepts the destiny her tribe chooses for her. The Igbo "were realising fast that one's saviour from poverty and disease was education. Every Igbo family saw to it that their children attended school. Boys were usually given preference" (5). For Igbo people, education is the key to achieve success and to change their status from poverty to wealth. However, only boys were allowed to attend schools. The narrator also adds:

So even though Adah was about eight, there were still discussions about whether it would be wise to send her to school. Even if she was sent to school, it was very doubtful whether it would be wise to let her stay long. A year or two would do, as long as she can write her name and count. Then she will learn how to sew. Adah had heard her mother say this many many times to her friends. Soon, Adah's younger brother, Boy, started school. (5-6)

Though, Adah's age is about eight, her mother still thinks if it could be wise to send her to school or not. What is important for Adah's mother is to see her daughter as a good housewife. Whereas, Adah is still home, her youngest brother Boy goes to school. Adah has never been subject neither to the norms of her family nor to the norms of her Igbo society. Unlike other Igbo girls, Adah challenges her parents and goes to school and finishes her education and even gets a notable job in the library. However, when Adah got married to Francis, she faces oppression and abuse. With her marriage to Francis, Adah's ambition endures a state of hibernation. Adah surrenders her ambition because deep inside, she has a hope and believes that when they are in Britain, it will come a day when Francis will change his treatment towards her. Unfortunately, Francis's selfishness and his Igbo mentality kill all her hopes. Adah is no longer able to bear his failure and the sickness he causes her. She is mentally and physically tired from Francis. Adah decides to stand up against Francis, she says:

Francis, you broke the laws of our people first, not me. And remember, Francis, I am not your mother. I am me, and I am different from her. It is a mistake to use your mother as a yardstick. You never loved or respected her. . . In the short courting period we had, I noticed that you never thought of giving her anything. It was always you, you all the time and she, poor soul, was always giving and giving to you. To her nothing is too much, no human is good enough for you. You remember the saying that a man who treated his mother like a shit would always treat his wife like a shit? That should have warned me, but I was too blind to see then. (165)

Adah for the first time speaks for herself, she reminds Francis about all his bad deeds toward his mother, and how she sacrifices herself only to see her son in high positions. Instead of rewarding her, Francis uses her as an example to show the power of the Igbo man over the woman. Now, Adah is sure that it is impossible for Francis to change. For her if a man mistreats his mother nothing will prevent him from doing the same thing to his wife.

Then, the narrator comments, “What followed is too horrible to print” (165). As usual, Francis could not contain his anger when Adah faces him with the harsh truth that he tries to escape.

After this scene, Adah decides to have a divorce. In the court Adah realizes that she is no longer afraid of defending herself, and her children’s rights. When Francis denies that the children are his. Adah gets so much power and with a “very loud and very clear” voice, she tells Francis, “Don't worry, sir. The children are mine, and that is enough. I shall never let them down as long as I am alive” (167). Adah feels that she is not only showing to Francis that she is a strong woman, but she is rather showing this to the entire world too. She can take care of her children without the need of anyone’s help. Through *Second Class Citizen*, Buchi emecheta wants to break one of the false existing images about womanhood in general and mothering in specific in Igbo society. In Igbo society, women are seen as reproductive machines. The more women produce children the more respect they receive from their husbands and the tribe in general. Vusanummi once again reconfirms this idea “the more children, the better, but the gender of the children has an effect on how the wife is valued” (31). Even the gender of the child plays role in determining woman’s position in Igbo society.

Adah decides to challenge this idea of women’s role of reproduction, when she takes the decision not to give birth to children. She starts to think about her future, education, and how she will become a famous writer. Adah is sure that if her husband discovers that she is going to have birth control, he will certainly oppose her act. Regardless of the results, Adah “did not care which way she achieved this, but she was having no more children. Two boys and a girl were enough for any mother-in-law. If her mother-in-law wanted another one, she could get her son another wife” (135). Adah takes a decision not to have another child. She strongly believes that three children are enough and if Francis wants another child, he must marry another woman. Adah comments, “Could not the woman be given the opportunity of

exercising her own will?”(135). On the basis of the decision she takes, Adah wants to have control over her body. She is no longer considered as an object to her husband.

Adah realizes that the only obstacle that prevents her from achieving her dreams, and stands as a barrier in her life is her husband, Francis. She becomes convinced about her decision of leaving Francis, when Francis beats her in front of their neighbors. The narrator remarks, “Her marriage with Francis? It was finished as soon as Francis called in the Nobles and the other tenants. She told herself that she could not live with such a man. Now everybody knew she was being knocked about” (155). When her neighbors learn about her miserable life with her husband, Adah feels so ashamed and disappointed. She takes decision of living her life without Francis.

In their work entitled, “The Significance of the Theme of Marriage to Character Development in the Novels of Buchi Emecheta”. Uriah S. Tetteh and Daniel Okyere-Darko state that, “Adah realizes that Francis can never change and also would want his failure to be her failure too. This also marks the point where the will of the female is asserted and she decides to confront the patriarchal representative in the form of Francis, her husband” (58). Tetteh and Okyere-Darko believe that Francis is an obstacle to Adah, he does not only mistreat her but also blames her for his failure. If Adah wants to be free from the Igbo patriarchal system, she must first end her marriage with Francis, because he represents all forms of patriarchy to Adah.

When Adah decides to end her marriage with Francis, he tries to remind her with the laws in his Igbo society, he says, “In our country, and among our people, there is nothing like divorce or separation. Once a man's wife, always a man's wife until you die. You cannot escape. You are bound to him” (164). Francis thinks that Adah still believes in such laws, he wants to say unless the woman gets married, she is a man’s property until she dies. She

cannot ask for a divorce or a separation, because divorce does not exist in his tribe. Francis does not know that things are different in Britain, and they are no longer in Lagos to threaten her with his tribe's laws.

Adah works very hard to build a future for her children, and not to let them live a miserable life like her. Adah's decision to leave Francis reaches certainty when she is in the hospital giving birth to their child. When Francis goes to the hospital, Adah feels so happy because she thinks that he comes to see her and to tell her about how much her children miss her. However, Francis could not hide his selfishness, he asks her to give him money for the test which he is going to have. He even tells her that if she dies, his mother will take care of the children, Adah could not bear Francis's selfishness, and his carelessness toward her and his children. Here we see the voice of a strong Igbo woman, Adah screamed in Francis's face saying that:

I brought my children here to save them from the clutches of your family, and, God help me, they are going back as different people; never, never, are they going to be the type of person you are. My sons will learn to treat their wives as people, individuals, not like goats that have been taught to talk. My daughters. . . God help me, nobody is going to pay any bleeding price for them. They will marry because they love and respect their men, not because they are looking for the highest bidder or because they are looking for a home. (125)

Adah tells Francis that by her arrival to Britain, she hopes to establish better conditions for her children. She does not want them to be like their father or adopt the patriarchal way of thinking. Adah wants to make sure that her daughters will never marry according to the Igbo's traditions. Adah also takes a decision that she is no longer going to pay for Francis education nor give him money to rent a house. She believes that this is a man's responsibility, and

Francis must find another financial support because Adah will not give him a pound any more. For Adah, Francis well-being is not her responsibility anymore. She is responsible to make herself happy through realizing her dreams, and her children's aspirations (154).

On Adah's independence, Tetteh and Okyere-Darko state that, "in the end, Adah asserts her psychological independence. Adah's reaction and the decision she takes, under the circumstances she finds herself in, is similar to what Emecheta herself does in her life. She also eventually leaves her husband, when life with him becomes unbearable, and decides to take control of her life and those of her children" (59). By leaving her husband, Adah frees herself from Francis's oppression, dominance, and his pessimistic ideas about her. Now, she can choose a destiny for her journey in England, and think about her children's future.

Adah develops social awareness about her role as a strong and independent woman, and as a mother. By adopting the role of an independent woman, Adah Obi does not deny her role as a mother. This idea is clearly reflected through Buchi Emecheta's view about motherhood. Vesanummi states that. "Emecheta reflects the hardships of an Igbo woman in such a convincing way that one is certain of her desire to change the system. However, at the same time woman's role seems to be so central in the maintenance and the reproduction of the society that it seems impossible to transform it" (62).

Adah is not against being a woman and a mother, because she believes that being a mother gives her more power. By contrast, she believes that the woman should have the right to choose whether she wants to be a mother or not, Adah believes that "Could not the woman be given the opportunity of exercising her own will? Whatever happened, she was not going to have any more children" (136). Motherhood is something innate and not something that we should impose on the woman. Through being a strong independent woman and mother, Adah

succeeds to gain a strong position. Now Adah's main struggle is to accept herself as a colored person.

3.2. Adah's Acceptance of her Black Identity

Blacks are in the bottom of the British society; they are denied access to many services such as; education, work opportunities, and housing. The majority of blacks live in separate neighboring. In addition to segregation, and discrimination one can mention, the sense of inferiority caused by blackness, which most of the time leads to trauma and identity crisis. It is believed that when blacks are secure about their images and accept their blackness, they could easily overcome the stereotypes the others draw about them. However, when blacks do not embrace their blackness, they develop a sense of inferiority which most of the time results in self-hatred and conflict between their peers.

In the foreign country and the motherland, the black woman cannot enjoy the basic human rights of life, or get rid of violence and discrimination. Buchi emecheta believes that black women can only succeed if they accept their blackness and see it as something beautiful, because racism tends to minimize the position and decrease the value of the black person. Adah, the main character of the novel faces racism, and due to the negative attitude she adopts about her race, she goes under psychological trauma yet Adah succeeds in changing these negative attitudes into positive ones.

Due to the western culture and ideologies, black children are taught that they are the other. In contrast to whiteness, everything related to blackness is ugly and strange. Blacks are seen as exotic. According to the post-colonialism glossary the term "exotic" is defined as follows:

The process by which a cultural practice is made stimulating and exciting in its difference from the colonizer's normal perspective. Ironically, as European groups

educated local and indigenous cultures, the schoolchildren often began to see their native lifeways, plants, and animals as exotic, and the European counterparts as "normal" or "typical" (*"glossary of terms"*)

Through the post- colonial glossary, the term "exotic" is a western creation, used by the European societies to colonize the mind of the natives through media and education. Black children in schools are taught that blackness reveals inferiority, and that everything related to black is something ugly and savagery. However, whiteness reveals purity and civilization. In the introduction of Franz Fanon's work *Black Skin, White Masks*, Ziauddin Sardar and Homi K. Bhabha explain that, " Whiteness, Fanon asserts, has become a symbol of purity, of Justice, Truth, Virginity. It defines what it means to be civilized, modern and human . . . Blackness represents the diametrical opposite: in the collective unconsciousness, it stands for ugliness, sin, darkness, immorality" (xiii). Sardar and Bhabha point out that according to the western beliefs, the whiteness represents beauty, whereas blackness is related to ugliness.

Adah since an early age has false images about British society and whites in general. She grows up in an environment where most of Africans if not all of them are amazed by Britain and British society. Adah believes that England is a heaven because most of her Igbo people want to go there. However, Adah has doubts about this perfection of British people, claiming that they cannot be just better than blacks because of their white color. She develops doubts towards whiteness. Before going to England she believes:

The title 'United Kingdom' when pronounced by Adah's father sounded so heavy, like the type of noise one associated with bombs. It was so deep, so mysterious, that Adah's father always voiced it in hushed tones, wearing such a respectful expression as if he were speaking of God's Holiest of Holies. Going to the United Kingdom must surely be like paying God a visit. The United Kingdom, then, must be like heaven. (5)

The respect and admiration given by Igbo people to Britain, and the British makes Adah believes that Britain is like heaven. She sees it as a place of God where there are no sins. She also believes that British people are so truthful, and that they never commit mistakes.

Villages in Nigeria differ in the sense of adoption and rejection of British lifestyle. Lagos for instance, is considered as modern city since its inhabitants imitate the British people's way of life. In contrast, Ibuza is considered as traditional city because it is devoid of the western impact. These differences create discrimination when inhabitants of Lagos feel more superior than other cities. Ömer Ögunc states that, "one comes across with the comparison between Ibuza, the symbol of all native values left behind by the Nigerians, and Lagos, which the symbol of civilization established by the colonizer. For the natives, living in the city" (39) will lead to degradation. Adah sees similarities between Britain and Lagos, due to the western education and culture.

Many natives in Ibuza share Adah's ideas, they consider Lagos as a corrupted place. Unlike inhabitants of Lagos who feel superior because they have acquired the western lifestyle, Adah believes that, "the people of Ibuza were friendly, that the food there was fresh, the spring water was pure and the air was clean. The virtues of Ibuza were praised so much that Adah came to regard her being born in a God-forsaken place like Lagos as a misfortune" (4). Adah has seen Ibuza as a pure place because it is not corrupted by the western culture and ideologies. In Ibuza, everything seems original to Adah nothing is fake like Lagos. Even people in Ibuza are so nicer than those in her village.

Adah's admiration of Ibuza, shows her love for her native culture. She is aware that discarding her native culture intensifies her sense of inferiority. Francis has great contribution in Adah's sense of inferiority; he also wants to extend this sense of inferiority to his children, by preventing them from using their native language. According to Francis using the Yoruba

language is not accepted in England, he feels ashamed because of his native language. Francis threatens his daughter if she speaks in Yoruba, he will beat her. When Adah's daughter Titi is asked to speak in Yoruba language, she answers, "Don't talk to me. My Dad will lash me with the belt if I speak in Yoruba. And I don't know much English. Don't talk to me" (50).

Adah does not want this sense of inferiority to extend to her children, but deep inside she is affected by her blackness she starts to compare herself with the white women. On the native sense of inferiority Sardar and Bhabha argue that:

When the black man comes into contact with the white world he goes through an experience of sensitization. His ego collapses. His self-esteem evaporates. He ceases to be a self-motivated person. The entire purpose of his behavior is to emulate the white man, to become like him, and thus hope to be accepted as a man. It is the dynamic of inferiority that concerns Fanon; and which ultimately he wishes to eliminate. (iiiv)

Sardar and Bhabha believe that in the process of interacting with the whites, the black person feels inferior. Because of this inferiority, he or she will underestimate his or her value, just to gain the respect and acceptance of the white society. Adah confesses that, "The other girls were assistants, very young with long, skinny legs; most of them seemed to be all legs to Adah. Unlike their superior, they were all fashion-conscious. They made Adah feel out of place, so she never really became too familiar with them. They made her feel inferior somehow, always talking of boyfriends and clothes" (41).

In her attempt to adopt the British culture and life style, Adah starts to imitate the white women. She feels she is not valued and accepted as white women. Her inferiority prevents her to cope with white women. This sense of inferiority caused Adah self-hatred and psychological trauma; she starts to question her blackness and sees her appearance as

something ugly and unacceptable. Adah feels ashamed not only because of her color of skin; also Adah's hair intensifies her sense of inferiority (40). Similarly, Adah's home-made traditional clothes make her feel inferior and strange because they "gave her the look of an overblown ballet dancer" (41). Adah is not satisfied with her appearance, she wants to be as beautiful as the white woman (41).

Besides Adah's inferiority because of her appearance, her baby's color intensifies her sense of inferiority too. She feels ashamed because of her child color, she does not like when the nurse in the hospital shows her baby to other people. Adah believes that her baby is not like all other white babies. The narrator comments:

She was sure that the women were all laughing at her and saying 'poor nigger!' She stood there, biting her nails, almost eating her own flesh in her anxiety. Give me my baby back, her heart cried painfully. But the nurse was showing them all, the women, the doctors, anybody who happened to be around, that this was their special baby, born miraculously, for whom the mother had suffered so. (120)

For the nurse, Adah's child is a very strange baby compared to other white children. Consequently, the nurse decides to show the child to all people working in the hospital (120). That was very distrustful to Adah, because she believes that the nurse wants to do so just to make fun of her own child. In her way home, Adah wonders "if the nurse could be really sincere? Did those women in the ward really admire her baby or were they just curious to see what a new African baby looked like?" (120). Adah rejects her black identity through rejecting cultural markers from her home of origin in the hope to be treated as a first-class citizen.

Despite Adah's rejection of her black identity, British society does not consider her as a first-class citizen. Adah's interaction with the whites leads her to change her attitudes and

opinions about the whiteness. Adah recognizes that Britain is not the heaven she used to dream about, and that whites are no longer superior. Whites can be bad like black people. According to her, “The concept of 'whiteness' could cover a multitude of sins” (64). She also realizes that, “There were bad whites and good whites, just as there were bad blacks and good blacks! Why then did they claim to be superior?” (50).

Adah even changes her attitude toward blackness, she is aware if she does not believe in her uniqueness and her intelligence, she will affect the way her children will be raised. In addition to that, she will not succeed in granting future for children. Adah changes her negative attitude about blackness, when she read about James Baldwin, “through Bill that Adah knew of James Baldwin. She came to believe, through reading Baldwin, that black was beautiful. She asked Bill about it and he said, did she not know that black was beautiful? (145). Adah was so happy because there is someone who believes in the uniqueness of blacks and show a great respect for them.

The Change of Adah’s attitude and perspective is considered as a turning point in the novel. She embraces her identity as a black person. Now, Adah is convinced that since she is a black person she will never be accepted as a Londoner. However, this does not mean that she stops fighting for her dream to become a writer and grant better life for her five children. Adah could solve the dilemma of her class identity by developing social awareness about her role as a woman and her identity as a black person. Adah accepts her black identity and the role assigned to her as a mother. However, she does not accept being a second- class citizen and decides to reach the first social class.

Conclusion

Black British literature gives the voice to many third world writers to share their personal experiences and ordeals to the worldwide audience. The main current issue related to black British literature is immigration. Black British writers reveal their feeling of nostalgia to their mother countries, as well as their shared experiences of racism and discrimination in Britain. Particularly, Nigerian British writers expose problems of racial discrimination practiced in different aspects of life. Through Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen*, this study draws attention to one of the notable consequences of immigration, which is the dilemma of class identity.

This study aimed to explore the diversified themes discussed by black British literature. It showed how Black British writers tackled different themes in relation to their homeland and Britain such as; history revisited, language, the hopelessness old aging, and return to the homeland. Identity is one of the central themes in black British literature. Different literary works have been devoted to discuss the theme of identity crisis. Among these works, one can mention, the work of Zadie Smith *White Teeth* and Sam Selvon's major work *The Lonely Londoners*. Each one of them related the theme of identity to personal experiences in Britain.

The dissertation's particular attention is paid to class identity. What affect the immigrants' identity are the change of their social class, and the shift of their roles they play in the society. Each writer relates the theme of identity to his or her own struggles in Britain. Buchi Emecheta presents the theme of identity in relation to social class. Through her main character Adah, Buchi Emecheta examines the different circumstances that lead to the character development of class identity conflicts. Among these circumstances is the character experience with gender discrimination, Adah as a woman is denied her rights to be as an independent woman. She faces oppression and sexism from her patriarchal Igbo society, as

well as her husband Francis. The study centers on how such circumstances have remarkable effect on the character submission and acceptance of patriarchal and sexist attitudes towards her.

Another issue that leads to the character development of class identity conflicts is the character experiences of racial discrimination. In an attempt to belong to the first social class citizen, Adah faces many obstacles. Among these obstacles is the color of her skin; being black immigrant. In the hope to resist against sexist and patriarchal attitudes in Britain, Adah decides to travel to London. However, she finds herself facing another complex situation; she develops a sense of inferiority due to her blackness. She faces rejection by the British society because of the color of her skin; she finds difficulty to accept the change of her social class. In her mother country, she is considered as a first- class citizen, she believes that she will receive the same treatment in Britain, but things are different .Adah is exposed to both gender and racial discrimination.

Besides, exposing different causes that lead to the development of class identity conflicts, this dissertation also examined the change in Adah' personality. She is no longer a submissive woman. Adah chooses to rebel against patriarchal attitudes that limit her abilities; she decides to rule her life and take care of her children. She gets divorce from her husband Francis, which was one of the impossible things in her own tribe.

Since Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* is an autobiographical novel, the main character Adah achieves the same success as the author. She succeeds to establish a successful life for herself and for her children. This success is clearly depicted in Buchi Emecheta's next work *Ditch* (1972), it is a story that reveals the protagonist's growth as a strong mother and a woman. Also the *Ditch* shows the protagonist success in pursuing her education and getting a degree in sociology. She becomes a university teacher who belongs to first class. Moreover,

she could realize her dream and continue writing her book the *Pride Price*, one of Buchi Emecheta's famous works.

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Résumé

Cette étude examine la frustration des immigrants au cours des années cinquante en Grande-Bretagne. Les écrivains de différents groupes minoritaires ont tendance à transmettre cette frustration au monde entier. Ils traitent des thèmes notables et donnent plus de valeur au thème de l'identité de classe. Les écrivains nigériens font partie des minorités noires qui se sont déplacés en Grande-Bretagne durant cette période. Les immigrants nigériens vivant en Grande-Bretagne ont été victimes de toutes sortes de violences à différents niveaux: race, sexe, et classe. *Citoyen de deuxième classe* de Buchi Emecheta (1974) examinera les conséquences négatives de l'immigration noire à différents niveaux. Il explorera le changement qui affecte la classe sociale du protagoniste en montrant dans quelle mesure la protagoniste accepte ce changement rapide de sa classe sociale. De plus, on tente d'explorer comment les expériences de caractère national et raciste du personnage principal façonnent son identité de classe. Enfin, cette étude démontre la transformation du protagoniste en une femme forte et indépendante. L'étude souligne également l'attitude positive que la protagoniste développe à l'égard de son identité noire et sa conscience du caractère unique de cette identité.

الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة لتحديد وتحليل معاناة المهاجرين خلال فترة الخمسينيات في بريطانيا ، في الواقع يميل كتاب الأقليات المختلفة إلى الكشف عن هذه المعاناة أمام العالم. حيث يناقش هؤلاء الكتاب مواضيع جديدة بالإهتمام مع التركيز على مسألة الهوية الاجتماعية. يعد الكتاب النيجيريون من بين الأقليات السود التي انتقلت إلى بريطانيا خلال هذه الفترة، حيث تعرضوا فيها لشتى أنواع العنف و الاضطهاد على مختلف المستويات من حيث العرق والنوع والجنس والطبقة. من خلال رواية بوتشي إيميشيتا "مواطن من الدرجة الثانية"(1974)، تركز هذه الرسالة على الآثار السلبية لهجرة السود من خلال بطلة الرواية من زوايا مختلفة. كما تبحث هذه الدراسة عن الاسباب التي ادت الى تغير طبقتها الاجتماعية، و التي بدورها ادت الى التأثير على هويتها. بالإضافة الي ذلك تسلط هذه الرسالة الضوء على مدى تقبل البطلة لهذا التغيير السريع في طبقتها الاجتماعية. علاوة على ذلك تهدف هذه الرسالة الي مناقشة كيف للعنف الاسري و التمييز العنصري ان يلعبا دورا هاما في بناء هوية البطلة الاجتماعية. أخيرًا ، توضح هذه الدراسة كيفية تغير شخصية البطلة الرئيسية للرواية لتصبح امرأة قوية مستقلة بذاتها ، بالإضافة إلى الموقف الإيجابي الذي طورته حول كونها من الافارقة، وكذا تطور وعيها بشأن تفرد و تميز هويتها