

## Feminism with a Small “f” in Buchi Emecheta’s in The Ditch

Amina Sail

University of Algiers 2  
Algeria

### Abstract

*Feminism and its application to African women’s literature has been always subject to hot debates among African women writers and critics. Some denounce its western origins and irrelevance to speak for African women who belong to different cultural, and socio-historical contexts. Others accept the feminist label but call for the necessity to redefine it in accordance with the African identity by discarding some of its aspects such as separatism and individualism that contradict with African values. In this respect, the Nigerian writer Buchi Emecheta has always expressed her discomfort in relation to feminism and prefers to be called a feminist with a small “f”. Through the study of her novel In The Ditch, we have tried to explore her perception of feminism and explain how she manages to adapt it to the African context where traditions and communal ties are deeply rooted in the Nigerian society.*

**Keywords:** Feminism, Africa, Women, literature, Gender,

### ***1- Introduction: An overview of African Feminism in Relation to Other Forms of Feminism***

Being a woman, and African born, I see things through an African woman’s eyes...I chronicle the little happenings in the lives of the African women I know. I did not know that by doing so I was going to be called a feminist. But if I am now a feminist then I am an African feminist with a small ‘f’ (Buchi Emecheta, 1986, p.178).

The quote above is one of the most famous comments made by the Nigerian woman writer Buchi Emecheta in relation to Feminism. It reveals her discomfort with the feminist label, and this applies to many African women writers who refuse to be defined as such. Emecheta’s use of the term “African” reflects her desire to be distinguished from other forms of feminism which are not African. The critic Juliana Nfah-Abbenyi relates this to the fact that feminism is an imported concept from the west: “Buchi Emecheta questions the very context from which the word ‘feminist’ originates- one that is European, Western, literate, developed and affluent” (F. Stratton, 1997, p.9). Like Emecheta, African women writers such as Mariama Ba, Tsitsi Dangarembga, and Ama Ata Aidoo, suspect “feminism of being a form of Imperialism with a woman’s face” (J. Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997, p.9).

In fact, African and European women do not share the same history and experiences which makes western feminism not always relevant to speak for the African women. The critic Carole Boyce Davies summarises this antagonism that opposes western feminism to African writers:

The obvious connection between African and western feminism is that both identify gender-specific issues and recognise women’s position internationally as one of second-class status and ‘otherness’ and seek to correct that...the failure of western feminists to deal with issues that directly affect black women, and their tendencies to sensationalize others create antagonisms as does the fact that white women are often partners in the oppression of both African men and women (C. Davies, p.10).

We can understand that there is no doubt that both African and western women writers’ first aim is to denounce gender inequalities in society and seek a better status for women. Both agree about the urgent need to fight men’s domination in the patriarchal system that characterizes most societies and empower women especially through education and equal job opportunities with men. In this sense feminism seems to be appealing to all women writers regardless their origins as it considers gender bias as a form of discrimination against women. However, western feminism ignores race as a form of oppression that is responsible for the suffering and low status of African women when their countries were under European colonialism. So, white feminism which calls for the liberation of women is in itself part of the western world that oppressed other women.

Race is, in fact, a salient aspect of African women’s literature that depicts gender and race as woven forces to subjugate women. Because of this exclusion of racial discrimination from western feminists’ agenda, African women writers prefer to identify with African American feminism that corresponds better to their interests. In this respect, The Zimbabwean women writer Tsitsi Dangarembga has stated in one of her interviews: “the black American female writers touch more of me than the white ones.” (C. Davies, 1989, p.106).

The black American branch of feminism seems to share with the African one a similar history of the whites' hegemony and racism through slavery and colonialism respectively.

Another point of discord between African women writers and western feminism is the cultural differences that separate the European and African contexts in which women evolve. It is inappropriate to approach African cultures from a western perspective. In fact, when used in the African socio-cultural contexts, the term feminism is often loaded with pejorative connotations, overgeneralizations and prejudices. The critic Katherine Fishburn warns western feminists and readers of Emecheta's works against such conclusions about the Nigerian culture that should be abandoned for the sake of women's emancipation: "I think the difficulty arises because we [western feminists] have generally failed to distinguish between reading Emecheta's novels as reflections *of* Nigerian culture and reading them as reflections *on* this culture" (K. Fishburn, 1995, p.58) [emphasis added]. We can deduce that without a cross-cultural reading of Emecheta's and/or other African women writers' novels, western feminism becomes another form of "cultural imperialism" (M. Kishwar, 1990, p.3) that aims to consecrate the idea of black Africa as primitive, and uncivilized cultures that need to imitate the west in order to liberate women from the grip of traditions. Commenting on women's emancipation and the role of western feminism to give them the right to work, Emecheta observes in one of her interviews: "The reason why we Africans have difficulty identifying with feminism is because we have always worked. So it's no use telling us that feminism is something new." (F. Jussawalla and R. W. Dasenbrock, 1992, p.94).

In addition to cultural disparities with the west, African women writers reject the radical separatist branches of western feminism that exclude men from women's world. African women rather claim men as part of their struggle affirming their heterosexuality. Although they denounce patriarchal systems that posit men as holders of power, their aim is not to create a separatist community with an antagonistic relation between the two sexes. It is rather a "conciliatory spirit between the sexes where the ultimate vision is for blacks—both men and women." (C.O. Ogunyemi, 1996, p.5). The feminist critic Catherine Frank is known for her separatist radicalistic ideology and controversial readings of African women's literature. She comments on Mariama Bâ, Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta's novels:

All these novels embrace the solution of a world without men: man is the enemy, the exploiter and oppressor. Given the historically established and culturally sanctioned sexism of African society, there is no possibility of compromise, or even truce with the enemy. Instead, women must spurn patriarchy in all its guises and create a safe, same, supportive world of women...this of course amounts to feminist separatism...the logical outcome of this ideology; Lesbianism. (C. Frank, 1987, p. 15).

Buchi Emecheta refuses this overgeneralisation of some feminists about men's abuse and lack of "compromise" in the representation of man/women relation: "I don't subscribe to feminist idea that all men are all brutal and repressive and we must reject them. Some of these men are my brothers and fathers and sons. Am I going to reject them too?" (B. Emecheta. 1994). In fact, Emecheta often depicts male characters' discrimination towards women but she often shows them as victims of established traditional systems that indoctrinate chauvinism or as victims of colonialism that stripped them from their masculinity which they try to recover by oppressing women. Her aim is not to justify men's domination in her society but rather to give an objective explanation of women and men's status in Nigeria. If women are socialised to be submissive and second-class citizen, men on the other hand are raised up to strongly believe in their superiority; hence, they are not to blame exclusively about their treatment of women.

Womanism seems to reflect African women's representation of men and their insistence on a rather complementary relation between the two sexes. Chikwenyi Ogunyemi explains this vision of African womanism as follows:

Nigerian women writers...do not view the twentieth century problem as 'woman palava' that is simply, feminism. Rather their perspective encompasses all oppressed people, men included, as a human problem. The Nigerian dilemma must be resolved by the collaborative efforts of men and women, rather than being treated solely as gender specific. (C. Ogunyemi, 1996, p.5).

We can hold then that the separatist aspect of western feminism, the ignorance of racial discrimination against black women and the different African cultural context are the reasons that could explain Emecheta and African women writers' reticence to be labelled feminists. However, it should be noted that these writers did not totally reject feminism in its broad meaning that is as "an ideology that questions the fundamental institutions of traditions in relation to their treatment of women particularly family, marriage, tribal authority and motherhood." (S. Zulfiquar, 2016, p.44). Therefore, there was an urgent need to redefine and readapt western feminism in accordance with the African cultural and historical contexts in order to make of it an effective instrument of women's liberation.

To achieve this adaptation, Buchi Emecheta and other African women writers found themselves in a difficult situation. Indeed, Emecheta's works bear some complexity for although she questions gender inequities and advocates the self-assertion of women as individuals, she has a lot of respect for her African community and traditions.

Feminism is generally defined as a profoundly individualistic philosophy which calls for a total break with traditions that may privilege the interests of the community over those of the individual. However, for Emecheta, communal ties constitute an important part of the black cultural identity.

Emecheta faced the difficulty to combine feminist individuation in which a woman exists as an independent entity and African traditionalism which values the group. Because of this controversial issue of feminism versus traditionalism, we can find some ambiguities in Emecheta's depiction of women who find themselves in a liminal position between their feminist aspirations for their self-fulfilment and their commitment to their African communities. According to many critics such as Katherine Fishburn, Rolf Solberg, and Chikwenyi Ogunyemi, her novels hold two paradoxical visions: one that is feminist and the other denying feminism.

This ambivalence with the representation of black tradition can be also justified by the African women writers' attempt to give a different image of Africa far from the distorted and pejorative ones often found in western literature. Emecheta was then divided between her respect for her African cultural heritage and her desire to discard traditions that may subjugate Nigerian women. This complexity makes Emecheta's novels particularly challenging to read in order to discern the subtle balance she creates between the feminist stand and the preservation of African culture. This vision that Emecheta labels "feminism with a small 'f'" will be demonstrated in one of her early novels namely *In The Ditch* (1972).

## 2- The Feminist Reading of *In The Ditch*

This autobiographical novel tells the story of Adah Obi, an educated Nigerian woman who lives in London with her husband Francis and five children. She is victim of an abusive husband who comes to England to get a degree in accountancy but he keeps failing his exams. Adah who works in a library finds herself solely providing for the whole family while Francis refuses to work. After she separates from her husband, Adah has to leave her small apartment to live in a council mansion called the Pussy Cat Mansions. Here starts Adah's bitter experience with the British welfare system that brought racist discrimination and poverty as Emecheta describes life in this environment as living in a ditch.

*In The Ditch* opens with a scene that illustrates the feminist view point of Emecheta. Adah, is expelled from her room in a building hold by a Yoruba tenant. She is placated by a racist British society that refuses to rent her a house because she is black. She finally succeeds to find a two-rooms apartment in an insanitary and decaying house owned by a Nigerian man called Mr.Noble. Subsequently, as a single mother with five children, she is asked to leave the house. Adah is judged as a bad woman according to Nigerian traditional norms because she dares to break her marriage. However, the protagonist clings to her home because she has nowhere to go waiting for a council house and here starts a long episode of intimidations and moral harassments by Mr.Noble to get rid of her. First Mr.Noble charges her double the normal rent although he knows the hardships she is going through; an irresponsible husband who refuses to provide for his family and her repeated pregnancies because of which she has to take unpaid leaves from her job at the library. Once Mr.Noble realises that Adah will not leave the house willingly, he treats her with hostility.

The novel starts with the juju scene where we see Mr.Noble using magic to frighten Adah: "The poor man, instead of sleeping like everybody else, would wake up very early in the morning, around three or four, drape himself in colourful African material, just like juju masqueraders on Lagos, and start moving to and fro to the music of his low-toned mournful songs." (In *The Ditch*, p,9). Mr. Noble's aim is to scare Adah and make her leave the house through the juju which represents a magical spirit in the Nigerian culture.

Surprisingly, Adah is not afraid and she overtly mocks him by sharing in the songs he keeps repeating at late hours because she considers the juju practice irrelevant in a place like London: "She had heard rumours, and read in the papers of other Africans in London being "terrorised" by juju. But I am tough and free, she thought, free, she repeated to herself. No the juju trick would not work in England" (In *The Ditch*, p.9). This statement holds a feminist stand through which Emecheta empowers her main character to resist the traditional beliefs and superstitions that aim to frighten women in order to control them and restrict their freedom. Buchi Emecheta then endorses a clear feminist position that discards man's control and abuse of women. Adah's mocking reaction is, in fact, a form of resistance to a patriarchal authority embodied by Mr.Noble who uses magic as an ultimate weapon to oppress the protagonist.

However, few lines below, the reader can notice Emecheta's ambivalent attitude towards her Nigerian culture when she starts to defend Mr. Noble. If Adah remains insensitive to the juju practice, her Irish white neighbour and the milkman are shocked by the sight of Mr. Noble disguised. He "had tied a red cloth round his naked body and arranged an ostrich feather sticking up at the back of his head, looking to them like a television red Indian"(In *The Ditch*,p. 10) and his wife looked devilish without her wig and her taken out hair threads. Surprisingly, Adah felt pity to her Nigerian landlord and his wife when she sees the discriminatory look in the eyes of the white spectators.

The critic Katherine Fishburn comments on the protagonist's reaction as follows: "although Adah considers her immunity to the juju a sweet victory, she is not as free of her Nigerian culture as she thinks she is..." (K. Fishburn, 1995, p.56). In fact, after looking scornfully at her Nigerian neighbour, she starts to reflect on the whites' consideration of the black people: "The plaits on the landlady's head would definitely remained any foreign person of the pictures of black devils they knew from their childhood, ... the landlord with the feather looked like the Devil's servant" (In *The Ditch*, p.10). With her "yellow and red splashes lappa", Adah realizes that she is part of that picture. This moment of realisation is very important as it forces Adah to change perspective once again: "Blast these illustrators! She thinks. 'who told them that the Devil was black?'" (In *The Ditch*, pp.10-11). In reaction to her whites' neighbours' racist behaviour, Adah takes side with her Nigerian counterparts by remaining silent when asked by the milkman about the behaviour of Mr.Noble:

She did not know why she was keen on keeping her landlord's secret, patriotism? After all, one did not like to have one's dirty linen washed in public. Whatever happened, they were all originally from the same country, the same colour, both caught in the entangled web of an industrial society (In *The Ditch*, p.11).

This passage shows a significant aspect of Emecheta's feminism that calls for the liberation of all blacks, men and women. The writer represents both black men and women as victims of racial discrimination in the English society and both have to unite to face this abuse. Mr.Noble moves then from a former oppressor of Adah to a partner in the face of whites' oppression and she unconsciously takes side with him. This passage may also answer the critic Ogunyemi's attack on Emecheta's misrepresentation of male characters as it shows sympathy with Mr.Noble in spite of his abusive attitude towards Adah. In fact, Ogunyemi describes Emecheta's early novels including *In The Ditch* as "deeply grafted in the British and Irish feminism in which she was nurtured" she equally criticises the writer for feminizing African males, for turning away from her African identity, and for being narcissistic" (C.Ogunyemi, 1985, pp.66-67).

In a similar ambivalent scene, Adah "cursed all African men for mistreating women" (In *The Ditch*, p.127) when she heard that her best friend whoopey was made pregnant by a Nigerian immigrant and she naively dreams to marry him. Adah is convinced that he would never marry whoopey with her two children and she is furious at the way Nigerian men treat women including her husband Francis. This scene may be considered as feminist according the western critics although it holds sweeping generalizations about the sexism of all African men. However, this statement is immediately followed by a sentence that contradicts Adah's criticism of African men as she realizes that she should not "rebuff men of her race; they were more sensitive than others" (In *The Ditch*, p.127). She concludes that in a place like Britain, she should show solidarity to the Nigerian immigrant men who "needed to have his moral boosted." (In *The Ditch*, p.128). As readers, we feel again that Emecheta does not limit herself to the criticism of men but she equally tries to find the real reasons behind their sexist and sometimes abusive behaviour.

Indeed, we should notice that Emecheta shows the impact of bad social and economic conditions not only on black men such as Mr.Noble but also on white male characters such as Mr.Small, Mr. O'Brien in addition to Mr.King who is beaten and driven out of the house by his wife. In fact, the western welfare system exercised in the Pussy Cat Mansions seems to be responsible for stripping even white men from their masculinity because the "systematic practice that makes women dependents on the benefits prohibits male company; hence the relative absence of men, the very few of whom shown in the Mansions being pathetically inarticulate figures." (O. Sougou, 2002, p.38). Emecheta shows again sympathy to men who are victims of the social system in London during the 1970's.

We can conclude then that through Adah, Emecheta vacillates between a mocking attitude about her Nigerian traditions in order to free herself and her defence of this same culture in the face of British whites' racism. Cynthia Ward explains this dilemma in Emecheta's works as follows: "Success in speaking unequivocally in the service of feminism produces a voice that serves neo-colonialism; speaking for anti-colonialism produces a voice that serves patriarchy" (C.Ward, 1990, p.86). In the same perspective, the critic Fishburn comments that passages like the juju scene that takes the entire first chapter reflect the "plurality of meaning" expressed by Buchi Emecheta in most of her novels making them ambivalent:

Though [this scene] concludes with Adah's loyalty to her Nigerian landlord, the scene is not altogether a defence of African ways. Like Emecheta herself, Adah Obi is a woman caught between two cultures. On one hand she has fled her African homeland...to escape the limitations of a patriarchal Igbo culture that would subordinate her needs to those of her husband...On the other, she has found England to be less than the Promised land... (k.Fishburn, 1995, p.57).

These two scenes could then explain the kind of feminism Emecheta adopts in her novels. She discards patriarchal traditions that may oppress women but she refuses also to adopt blindly the western culture as a way to free them. Emecheta is eager to denounce the racist discriminatory aspect of the British society that harms Adah as much as the patriarchal male domination of Nigerians. Her feminism in this sense focuses on racism and gender inequality as woven and equal factors that limit women.

Adah's life in the Mansions represents the shortcomings of the British welfare system which offers unsanitary dwellings to immigrants and poor people. Adah is shocked by the sight of the Pussy Cat Mansions that looked like "a mortuary" with stairs "always smelling with a tick lavatorial stink" (In The Ditch, p.21). The inhabitants of the 'ditch' are considered as family problems and Adah like the other women received a meagre help of thirteen pounds from the dole house in addition to some old clothes and shoes. Poverty is not the only problem depicted by Emecheta for Adah suffered also from the racist behaviour of her neighbours such as Mr.Small who is happy to reduce her to a second-class human: "Mr Small's eyes followed her movement and smiled. Happy he had put Adah in her place. A black person must always have a place, a white person already had one by birth right." (In The Ditch, p.22).

In addition to Mr.Small, the social adviser Carol stands as an important white character who embodies the British racial ideology that hides behind a philanthropic mask. Adah hates the patronizing attitude of Carol who imposes on the Pussy Cat Mansions' women her western white codes of educating their children. Carol does not hesitate to interfere in Adah's affairs and blames her for leaving the children alone:

you could be in trouble for that, real trouble. Things are different here. I know that in Africa neighbours are free to come and go, because your doors are always open to let cool air, but in England we shut our doors to keep out cold water. so people can't tell when kids who are by themselves get into trouble. Anything could happen- a gas explosion, oil heaters starting big fires, oh, all sorts of things. You do understand, I am sure. (In The Ditch, p.30)

This important passage reflects the western lack of understanding of African customs and life style in relation to child rearing. If leaving children by their own is a shocking behaviour for Carol, it is perfectly accepted in Nigerian communities. The extended family and neighbours in Nigeria participate actively in the upbringing of others' children which allows a mother like Adah to have a job and improve her situation. In another word, In Africa, children are believed to belong to all the community, and not just to their parents. In one of her interviews, Emecheta explains that western women are restricted by their roles of mothers in comparison to her Nigerian counterparts:

So for us, it is never ever that childbearing is a full time occupation. It is easier in our own area because we find older women who can help in raising the younger children so the mother can work in the fields or go out to teach...I think Africa is ahead of the West here. If women in our area are oppressed, we have a kind of freedom most Western women haven't. You don't have to live up to any rule. No African woman will criticize another one for going out to work... So that is the way we always work. But that doesn't mean, as it can in the west, not having children. (F.Jussawalla and R.W.Dasenbrock, 1992.pp 94-95).

Judging then Adah as a bad mother by the British standards when she left her children alone is inappropriate if one is aware of the cultural differences between the Nigerian and western communities. This incident could explain the reason behind Emecheta's reject of western feminism which makes sweeping and erroneous generalizations about African women as it ignores cultural particularities of her Igbo community.

The value of the community and women's loyalty to its codes are essential aspects of African women's writings. Buchi Emecheta's African feminism with a small "f" calls for the preservation of values such as women's bounding and solidarity that, according to her, can be assets to the wellbeing of the individual. Being feminist implies to prioritise the individual self over the others, but Emecheta shows that this would equally mean the sacrifice of some good values; hence, a balance should be stricken between the African woman's quest for self-realisation and her ties with the rest of the community.

In fact, Adah finds meaning to her life in England only in her friendship with the women living in the Pussy Cat Mansions. Although Adah is bitter when she has to leave her job in the British museum in order to take care of her children, she feels secure and comfortable in her belonging to the community of single mothers in the dole. This community substitutes the Igbo unions of women in Nigeria that provide help and warmth to its members. Adah even finds "joy in the communal sorrow" (In The Ditch, p.61) of the poor dwellers that helps her face the racism she experienced in London.

From her first days in England, Adah finds difficulties to integrate to both British and Nigerian immigrant communities. We learn from *Second Class Citizen* which is a sequel to *In The Ditch*, that when Adah first comes to England, she is rejected by her Nigerian immigrant neighbours for being an educated woman with a white man job that most Nigerian men fail to have. On the other hand, as a black woman, Adah faces racial discrimination especially when she tries to find a new house after she is chased from her first apartment. Adah "always felt insecure, uncertain and afraid. It is a curse to be an orphan, a double curse to be a black one in a white country, an unforgivable calamity to be a woman with five kids but without a husband" (In The Ditch, p.70). The only moment of security that Adah feels is when she ties friendships with the Mansions' women especially whoopey who becomes her best friend:

She joined the ditch dwellers' association. She joined the mothers' local socials...The smiles and limpid nods of these faded and rejected women reassured her. They seemed to say, "you are not alone. Look at us, we are humans too!" she was confronted by the warmth of their acceptance, and was thankful. (In *The Ditch*, p.25).

It is interesting to note that through her childhood and first years in London, Adah is a rather solitary woman who has a problem of integration and it is only when she opens up on the other women and shares in their sufferings that she reaches peace and harmony with herself. We can deduce that Emecheta suggests that a woman's self-assertion as an individual does not necessarily bring wholeness, but it is rather being part of a supportive and caring community that leads to self-fulfilment.

Missing the communal social organisation, Adah is happy to find some residues in Mrs Cox who reminds her of an African matron: "Mrs Cox also reminded Adah of most African matrons- you don't ask them to help you, they just do it. They, like Mrs Cox, have that sense of mutual help that is ingrained in people who have known a communal rather than an individualistic way of life" (In *The Ditch*, p.65). In this respect, the critic Cheika Ifemesia explains the importance of communal ties for the Igbo\*: "the training and discipline of children was both individual and communal responsibility" they are raised up "to be at once independent of and dependent upon one's family." Ifemesia further observes that this concept of interdependency is a key concept of Igbo ideology that is "exhibited now as duality or reciprocity, now as ambivalence or complementarity" (cited in K.Fishburn, 1995, p.60). The Igbo values of interdependency and complementarity expressed by Emecheta in her novel could explain the ambivalence that many feminists especially white western ones find in her works. These aspects rather correspond to the womanist ideology that calls for sisterhood or women's bounding as an empowering philosophy to help them overcome all sorts of discriminations they face as union makes force.

It is true that the novel ends with a very individualistic comment made by Adah: "she moved out of the Mansions, away from the ditch, to face the world alone, without the cushioning comfort of Mrs. Cox, without the master-minding of Carol. It was time she became an individual" (In *The Ditch*, p.121). However, it is interesting to note the words used by Adah to describe her life in the ditch for if she is happy to get rid of the patronizing Carol, she regrets Mrs.Cox's caring. In fact, it is rather the bad living conditions and the racial discrimination of the British welfare that pushed Adah to quit the Pussy Cat Mansions. As stated earlier, Adah has always suffered from loneliness either because of her people's incomprehension, and/or the British society's racism. Adah's reaction to these compelling forces is to withdraw from the external world and her refusal to tie any links with women around her before she moves to the ditch. However, her experience with the dole's dwellers makes her realize that although she must assert herself as an individual by pulling herself from the poverty and humiliation of the Mansions, she is aware that being part of a women's community will provide her with the support and love she needs. She understands that her self-fulfilment as a woman will be incomplete if she cuts herself from the rest of the society.

### 3- Conclusion

We can conclude that through Adah's experience, Emecheta has drawn a picture of her feminism with a small "f" according to which a balance should be made between the individual's aspiration for self-independence and his/her belonging to a community that brings him/her wholeness. It is a feminism that celebrates the African values of females' solidarity and integrates men to its universal ideology that aims at fighting all forms of oppression and racism. Instead of rejecting men, she tries to dig into the determinism of traditions and social conditioning that make of chauvinism an imposed characteristic of manhood. Emecheta then retains some aspects of western feminism mainly empowering women and fighting gender bias without necessarily sacrificing some positive values of her community.

### References:

- Boyce, Davies Carol (1989). "Introduction: Feminist Consciousness and African Literary Criticism". Davies and Graves, 1-23.
- Emecheta, Buchi (1979). *In The Ditch*. London: Allison and Busby.
- ..... (1988). "Feminism with a Small "f" Criticism and Ideology: Second African Writers' Conference, Stockholm 1986, Ed. Kristen Holst Peterson. Uppsala, Sweden: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 173-15.
- .....(1994). Lecture at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C on 8 Feb, cited in Gwendolyn Mikell (1995). "African Feminism: Towards a New Politics of Representation", *Feminist Studies*, 12.2.
- Fishburn, Katherine (1995). *Reading Buchi Emecheta: Cross Cultural Conversations*. London: Greenwood Press.
- Frank, Catherine (1987). "Women without Men: The Feminist Novel in Africa". *African Literature Today*. Trenton: African World Press, 14-34.

- Jessawalla, Feroza and Reed. W. Dasenbrock (1992). *Interviews with Writers of the Post Colonial World*. Mississippi: Mississippi University Press.
- Kishwar, Madhur (1990). "Why I Do Not Call Myself a Feminist". *Manuchi* 61, 2-8.
- Nfah-Abebenyi, Juliana Makuchi (1997). *Gender in African Women's Writing: Identity, Sexuality, and Difference*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Ogunyemi, Chikwenyi Okonjo (1985). "Womanism: The Dynamics of the Contemporary Black Female Novel in English". *Signs* 11,163-80.
- ..... (1996). *African Wo/Man Palava: The Nigerian Novel by Women*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Sougou, Omar (2002). *Writing Across Cultures: Gender Politics and Difference in the Fiction of Buchi Emecheta*. New York: Radopi.
- Ward, Cynthia (1990). "What they Told Buchi Emecheta: Oral Subjectivity and the Joys of 'Otherhood' ". *PMLA* 105(1),83-97.
- Zulfiquar, Sadia (2016). *African Women Writers and the Politics of Gender*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.