CHAPTER – 5

MISERIES OF A MOTHER –

THE JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD
‘The Joys of Motherhood’ is a unique story which examines the tragic implications of the experiences of a traditional African woman caught between the traditional Igbo society and the modern Industrial World. Emecheta gives a thorough examination of the institution of marriage and counters the conventional male views regarding ‘Motherhood’. She addresses the issue by focusing on female victimization in the Nigerian society. According to Marie A. Umeh, “The Joys of Motherhood is a study of victimization and enslavement of traditional Igbo women to the dictates of traditional Igbo culture.”

The novel provides a comprehensive and expository survey of the traditional African Society, its dogmas, its very many ills directed more particularly towards subordinating a woman to a man. Though Nnu Ego is not a maverick and shows an eveready, uncomplaining, overwhelmingly huge compliance to the registered and unregistered norms of the society, she ends up as a ‘successful failure’. She is reduced to ‘gross nothingness’. Emecheta perhaps purposefully makes Nnu Ego as an archetypal, docile female African, at once moulding and getting varnished with only the normative, prescribed colours of the society which believes that a woman’s ultimate happiness and liberation lies in conformity and not in dissension.

Emecheta shows great psychological insight in the penetration of her characters’ thoughts. The novel narrates the protagonist’s initial craving for motherhood, the painful realization of the plights
of motherhood, and then her tragic death. Nnu Ego, the protagonist of the novel faces obstacles of all sorts at every moment of her life. She wrestles throughout in her life in order to be a perfect mother. She strongly believes that, "The Joy of being a mother was the joy of giving all to your children" (22). As a matter of fact, children are supposed to give joy to their mother, but the novel presents the darker side of motherhood. The author gives a heavily ironic title to this novel. In spite of her hardships, Nnu Ego is rewarded with nothing but abandonment, shame, and accusation. Her life ends as a dismal failure. Children in 'The Joys of Motherhood', according to Katherine Frank, are portrayed as, "... Millstones around the mother's neck, or as greedy insects who suck out and drain her life's blood".

The novel opens with Nnu Ego's suicidal enterprise. People thwart her attempts. A woman even slaps her. The unheralded death of her child leads her to such an extreme act of ending herself. To her, the loss of motherhood means loss of womanhood. "The African woman without children is clearly a better off dead, for she has no intrinsic value of her own". Nnu Ego bitterly cries out while her heart pounded in pain,

...I am not a woman any more, I am not a mother any more... The child is there, dead on the mat, my Chi has taken him away from me. I only want to go in there and meet her (62).
The people sympathize and console her only after she expresses her anguish. All of them knew that "A woman without a child for her husband was a failed woman (62)". Even the woman who had slapped her tells her that out of six pregnancies, she had only two children alive, yet she was still living. She reminds Nnu Ego that she is still young, and also adds, "Once babies started coming, they come in great numbers" (62). But to Nnu Ego having a son and losing him is more painful and moving than her first childlessness.

Nnu Ego is the daughter of the illustrious hunter and powerful chief of Ibuza, Agbadi and his mistress, the proud Ona, who refuses to become one of his wives. When Agbadi sees his day-old child he remarks, "This child is priceless more than twenty bags of cowries. I think that should really be her name, because she is mine, yes 'Nnu Ego' twenty bags of cowries (26)". According to the Ibo custom, if a mistress dies, even her slave should be buried along with her in order to accompany her into the next world. But as against such a custom, the young slave girl refuses to accompany her mistress, Agbadi’s senior wife, alive into the grave. Agbadi’s eldest son becomes impatient and gives her a strong blow, while Agbadi pities her and shows mercy upon her. The slave girl thanks Agbadi for his kindness, before she is thrown into the grave. She says, "I shall come back to your household, but as a legitimate daughter, I shall come back ..." (23). She does come back and exerts considerable power as Nnu
Ego's Chi. This proves to be definite when Nnu Ego loses her first born, "... the slave woman was making sure that Nnu Ego's own life was nothing but a catalogue of disasters" (9).

Agbadi gives Nnu Ego in marriage to a farmer Amatokwu. The father's choice is taken for granted in Igbo culture. But Nnu Ego fails to conceive for a couple of years. She prays to her Chi in agony, 

Please pity me. I feel that my husband's people are already looking for a new wife for him, they cannot wait for me for ever, he is the first of the family and his people want a heir from him as soon as possible please help me (32).

But all her prayers go in vain, Amatokwu becomes impatient with her barenness. After all he too was the product of the traditional Igbo society where people believe that, "When a woman is virtuous, it is easy for her to conceive" (31) and by Ibuza tradition she is a failed woman. He mercilessly tells her, "I am a busy man I have no time to waste my precious male seed on a woman who is infertile. I have to raise children for my line" (32).

Katherine Frank Comments, The only power a woman possesses is her procreative power, and if she is unable to exercise it, she is
deemed useless and expendable both in her own eyes and those of her culture.

Ignoring Nnu Ego's feelings and emotions Amatokwu marries another woman who conceives in the very first month of their married life. This adds much more misery and misfortune to her life and even degrades her to an unpaid labourer. Her husband tells her, "... if you can't produce sons, at least you can harvest yams" (33). After the birth of the co-wife's baby, Nnu Ego develops the habit of breast feeding the child while the other lady spends her time with their husband. Unfortunately, she is caught while breast feeding the baby. Amatokwu who fails to understand her motherly instincts beats her and asks her to go away. Disheartened, Nnu Ego returns to her father in disgrace.

This time, Agbadi chooses Nnaife as a second husband for Nnu Ego whom she has never seen before. She is sent to Lagos to join Nnaife. Before leaving for Lagos, she promises her father that she "... shall come with a string of children" (39). She readily accepts to go because, "When one grows old, one needs children to look after one. If you have no children and your parents have gone who can you call your own?" (38). When Amatokwu is informed about her marriage he scornfully says that she is "... as barren as a desert" (39).
At Lagos, Nnu Ego is horrified to see her husband, Nnaife, 'with a belly like a pregnant cow' (42). She never expected Nnaife to be so ugly with a protruding stomach. She questions herself, 'why marrying such a jelly of man' (42) which would be like living with a middle-aged woman (42). She feels frustrated at seeing his unmasculine stature. But in no time she makes up herself thinking, "Suppose this man made her pregnant would that not be an unexpected joy to her people?" (44), what she had expected indeed happens exactly. This makes her extremely happy. The long cherished dream of becoming a mother comes true. She now begins to respect Nnaife and also adjust with his 'ugly appearance', crude ways, and his occasional bouts of lassitude.

Nnu Ego feels very much contended for the first time in her life when she gives birth to a 'clean looking boy'. She names him as Ngozi, she starts loving Nnaife because it is he who has established her womanhood, who has attested her capacity to procreate. In her mood of thankfulness she thinks, "He has made me into a real woman all I want to be, a woman and a mother, so why should I hate him now?" (53)

Nnu Ego’s happiness is short lived. The unforeseen incident of losing her son, Ngozi, drives her to the suicidal attempt but fortunately she is rescued by the bystanders who comfort and console her. When Nnu Ego recovers from her distress, she goes on trading. In such an urbanized place like Lagos a woman has to
take up the job of supporting her family, when the husband’s earnings are insufficient. It is even more necessary for women like Nnu Ego who possess husbands like Nnaife lacking foresight in dealing with their family problems and are complacent.

Nnu Ego conceives for the second time and this time she is very conscious of her pregnancy. She even stops trading thinking that money and children do not go together. She prays to God, “please God, let this child stay with me and fulfill all these my future hopes and joys” (79) when the boy is born, she names him as Oshia. Her neighbours assure that, “... he will grow soon and clothe you and farm for you, so that your old age will be sweet” (80).

Now Nnu Ego is overwhelmed with joy because she expects the third child. Afterall she too was conceiving, like a normal woman, but even this time the misfortune chases her. Dr. Meers, the employer of Nnaife has to go back to their country and as a result Nnaife forgoes his job. It becomes extremely difficult for them. The meagre earnings of Nnu Ego do not serve their needs. Nnaife goes to Fernandopo to join as a domestic servant in a European family. Nnu Ego has to shoulder the entire responsibility. She feels more inadequate when a boy is born at this time of adversity. Even though she puts all her bones together at work, She fails to make the both ends meet. Malnutrition claims Oshia as its victim and reduces him to a skeleton. Worried Nnu Ego cries to Oshia: “Please stay and be my joy, be my father and my brother, and my husband... please don't
die and go away too” (104). The timely aid of her kind neighbours, Mama Abby and Iyawo rescue her and Oshia from such a miserable state.

Nnaife comes home with money and everything is well again. Nnu Ego is comforted a little. But the grand celebration of the naming ceremony of the new born and the extravagance of Nnaife further worsens their financial position. Though she has minor quibbles with Nnaife, she continues to love and respect him, since he is the man who made her a complete woman.

In *The Joys of Motherhood*, Buchi Emecheta also brings to light the controversial issue of polygamy which is accepted by men and women in Africa. According to the Ibo custom, a man inherits his brother's wives and children in case of the latter's death. A similar thing happens with Nnu Ego and Nnaife. Nnu Ego receives another blow in the form of the death of Nnaife's elder brother and Nnaife inherits his brother's family by tradition. Adaku, the most ambitious wife of the senior Owulum intrudes into the household of Nnu Ego along with her four year old child while the rest of the family decides to live at Ibuza itself. Adaku's intrusion into the family brings economic disaster and misery. On the other hand Nnaife is eager to accept her. Nnu Ego becomes envious of Adaku since she hated to share her husband, Nnaife with her. She resents the unexpected and undesired arrival of this lady. Nnaife takes Adaku to his bed that night.
Nnu Ego with severe jealousy tosses in agony all night imagining what was happening behind the curtained bed. At one moment she sits "bolt upright looking at the shadows of Nnaife and Adaku ... when Nnu Ego could stand it no longer, she shouts at Oshia (124). Emecheta pictures the emotional turmoil a woman had to undergo because of the polygamous practices in the African society through Nnu Ego.

As a senior wife Nnu ego's responsibilities are proliferated. She now gives birth to twin girls, Taiwo and Kehinde. With these children she becomes the mother of five children. At the same time Adaku also gives birth to a boy who dies immediately throwing her into deep depression. She cries, "O God why did you not take one of the girls and leave me with my male child? My only man child." (128) Nnu Ego senses danger to her sons because she had heard the stories of younger wives harming the sons of senior wife. She prays to God to give Adaku another boy so that there can be some peace and her sons can be secure. Marie A. Umeh remarks: "Emecheta records the inner turmoil and anguish of women who long for children and of mothers who worry about their children".

Nnaife is forcefully taken to Burma and is recruited to fight for the British in the Second World War. When he sends money to Nnu Ego and Adaku, they start their individual trades. Nnu Ego starts selling cigarettes, matches, and oranges. It is a great task for her to feed and educate her children. She feels as if she is imprisoned by the love and responsibilities for her children:
... it occurred to Nnu Ego that she was a prisoner imprisoned by her love for children. Imprisoned in her role as the senior wife she was not even expected to demand more money, for her family: that was considered below the standard expected of a woman in her position (137).

When asked for more money Nnaife asks Nnu Ego to shoulder the whole responsibility of her children, he says harshly, "its your responsibility of feed your children..." (136) and this was "... the way men cleverly used a woman's sense of responsibility to actually enslave her" (137).

Nnu Ego visits Ibuza to see her dying father and gives birth to a baby boy. As promised to her father earlier, she does indeed come 'with a string of children'. Meanwhile, there at Lagos Nnaife pays a short visit and leaves money with Adaku for Nnu Ego. Regretfully, when Nnu Ego come back she finds that a neighbour had completely ruined her house. She fails to invest enough capital to set a market stall. Thus, she has to compulsorily accept the contributions of her two sons, Oshia and Adim. On the other hand Adaku is successful in her trade and Nnu Ego is overshadowed by her success and is deeply frustrated and depressed and forgets her dignity just for once in her life. At the sight of a well dressed guest of Aduku, Nnu Ego is reminded of her children who are raggedly dressed and her own aged looks and compares with Adaku and her child. Envious thoughts run through her mind and she misbehaves with this new lady.
look at her, look at the expensive shoes she is wearing, look at the head tie, and even a gold chain. All this just to come and see her relative Adaku, and in this rain! God, the cost of that headtie! Whatever she paid for it would feed me and the children for a whole month. And she is the daughter of nobody! Yet look at me, the daughter of a well known chief, reduced to this ... (163).

Adaku’s relative thinks of waiting until Adaku came. Noticing the inimical stare of Nnu Ego she asks in wonder: “Are you all right, Nnaifes wife? Why do you look at me like that? I am not your enemy, eh?” (164). Nnu Ego rudely replies, “shut up! Shut up and go away! You can’t stand here, my baby is crying go away” (164) She asks her children to come inside and bangs the door shut.

When Adaku comes to know about the impolite and discourteous behaviour of Nnu Ego towards her relative she complains against Nnu Ego to the elders. But contrary to her expectations, the elders make it clear that she had no right to complain against the senior wife, a mother of three sons. Nnu Ego is conferred a higher status in the society since a mother of sons is rated far superior to that of daughters in an African society. This makes her think,
Because she was the mother of three sons, she was supposed to be happy in her poverty in her nail biting agony, in her churning stomach, in her rags... it was a confusing world. (167)

The above incident makes Adaku realize that her position in Nnaife’s household had not been ratified because she had no male child. She was only a lodger. She rebels against the unfair traditional system and decides to leave Nnaife’s household. Enraged she says, “My Chi be damned! I am going to be a prostitute, Damn my Chi” (168)

Adaku abdicates her responsibility and becomes a public woman. Emecheta portrays her as a rebel against the male dominated world who fights for female liberation. She decides to educate her daughters by taking them out of the conventional feminine situation. She is designed as a role model to all women who submissively accept their fate. In contrast, Nnu Ego, in spite of her yearning for emancipation from the restrictive nature of the male dominated world surrenders herself to the codes and conventions of the society respecting the traditional conception of manliness. Once Adaku leaves the household of Nnaife, she settles down on her own and leads a much better life. This perhaps makes Eustace Palmer comment that, “Adaku turns out to be a remarkably resourceful young woman, who is capable of branching out on her own, defying her husband and succeeding in a male oriented world”.

Buchi Emecheta, as if to reinforce her disapproval of the views of her society portrays Adaku as an indignant woman-who very early in her life realizes that her happiness, her views, her rights are
tampered with choked by the society who rebels against the stultifying values of the society and chooses her own happiness in life. Her valiant decision to leave her husband once for all, her sense of independency, her ardent desire to educate even her female children and place them on equal footing with males reveal the sparks of latent feminism. In a far more better sense, she is an ‘alter-ego’ of Nnu Ego. She implements in practice what all Nnu Ego conceives in her mind but holds within for fear of society of Adaku. What all Nnu Ego thinks of but fails to do, Adaku accomplishes. The attitudes and approaches of Adaku and Nnu Ego towards life may be diametrically opposite and may radically differ, yet both the roles created by Emecheta serve to show that happiness lies in ‘being’ what one is rather than in ‘becoming’ what the society wants one to be. These roles also prove wrong the foolish dictum that womanhood can be realized only through motherhood suggesting that womanhood has several other noble forms and motherhood is just only one among them.

Nnu Ego’s slim budget fails to cater to the educational requirements of both her sons and daughters. As a blind follower of traditional preference for sons she gets her daughters drop out of the primary school while the sons go on with their studies. When Taiwo, the twin daughter protests against such a discrimination, Nnu Ego shouts at her,
"... you are girls! They are boys. You have to sell to put them in a good position in life, so that they will be able to look after the family." (176)

Being a traditional mother she possesses the blind belief that her sons would shoulder the entire responsibility of the family after the completion of their education. Whenever Nnaife sends her money, she spends it on her son's education because she is aware of the merits of education. "She and her husband were ill-prepared for a life like this, when only pen and not mouth could really talk. Her children must learn" (179).

Nnaife returns from the war and the celebrations on his arrival from Burma go on for days. Though many changes had come over him, he still possesses the quality of his shrewdness. He spends lavishly until he is warned by Nnu Ego. When he learns about Adaku he dismisses her as an evil woman. His manly pride is further hurt when he learns that she is doing very well without him. In the process of soothing his wounded pride, he decides to go to Ibuza to claim Adankwo, the senior wife of his deceased brother. He maintains that it is his duty to go and see his dead brother's wife and family, he also declares,

"After I have rested, I must go and see that nice woman ... she must be longing for a man. For a woman to be without a man for five years! My brother will never forgive me" (182).
Nnaife does indeed go to stake his claim, even after he is told by Nnu Ego that she was expecting another baby. There at Ibuza though Adankwo accepts him, she declines to come to Lagos. Heedless of the economic and social consequences, Nnaife brings sixteen year old Okpo paying a huge sum of bride price to her parents under the pretext of helping Nnu Ego. All these events mirror the lustful ways of Nnaife.

Oshia, the eldest son of Nnu Ego wants to go a grammar school, where education is very expensive. When admonished by Nnu Ego that he should have won the scholarship as all the other boys do he accuses his mother for not providing a peaceful childhood. He says, "May be if I had a peaceful childhood, and not had to spend my young days selling paraffin and carrying firewood-" (185).

Nnu Ego breaks down in bouts of self pity and cries to God ".....to kill her with these babies she was carrying, rather than let the children she had hoped so much pour sand into her eyes" (185/86). But she soon realizes that, "Her love and duty for her children were like a chain of slavery" (186). She still hoped that, her children would grow one day, become people and deprive her of all the difficulties.

Nnu Ego feels more inadequate than ever before, after the arrival of her new twin daughters, Ablaegeli and Malachi. This has a subduing effect on her. The birth of the female babies does not
interest the men of the society. On the other hand, they are much concerned about the male babies who keep their names going. Now Nnu Ego is the mother of seven living children and instead of being content with her motherhood, her mind is stormed with depressive thoughts. This perhaps makes Eustace Palmer remark, that, "her Chi...... continues to plague her first with childlessness and then with children who bring her nothing but pain."10

Emecheta’s longing for social reform in regard to the position of women in Nigerian society echoes in the voice of Nnu Ego when, bemoaning her fate, and questions out in despair, "God when will you create a woman-child who will be fulfilled in herself, a full human being, not anybody's appendage?" (186).

Nnu Ego is disgusted by her condition and longs for freedom, she cries desperately:

"After all, I was born alone, and I shall die alone what have I gained from all this? Yes, I have many children, but what do I have to feed them on? ... I have to work myself to the bone to look after them ... and if I am lucky enough to die in peace, I even have to give them my soul. They will worship my dead spirit to provide for them.” (186).

She is aware of the fact that even in her death she will not be free, her dead spirit will be hailed as a good spirit as long as everything
goes on well, but if anything went wrong, her spirit shall be blamed for it. She questions the joys of motherhood, "Is it such an enviable position?" (187).

Emecheta, through Nnu Ego, speaks about the fate of all womankind who cry for total emancipation. She opines that the women play a major role in perpetuating their enslavement. Nnu Ego, yearning for liberation says, "We women subscribe to the law more than any one. Until we change all this, it is still a man’s world, which women will always help to build" (187). She thinks that woman can be free, when they begin to reject the patriarchal glorification of motherhood. She says, "The men make it look as if we must aspire for children or die (187)".

A baby is due to arrive into the household of Nnu Ego, when, she is forty. She gives birth to a lifeless girl and Nnu Ego heaves a gleeful sigh.

"I am sorry you are not staying: I am also glad that God has seen fit to take you back, my own reward, the joy of knowing that at this age, I can still have children for my husband" (194).

Nnu Ego feels guilty for heaving a sigh of relief at the death of the baby. She thinks, "Could she have so deteriorated into the kind of
woman who would not want her own child because she could not afford to feed or clothe her? (195).

Oshia, Nnu Ego's Eldest son intends to go to a university in the U.S.A., there by throwing water on the hopes of his parents that, "All will be well when Oshia returns from College" (190). He argues that, "Education is a life-long project" (191). He is recommended for a scholarship award to the U.S.A. Unmindful of the feelings of his parents, he leaves for the U.S.A. Infuriated by the irresponsible attitude of Oshia, Nnaife blames Nnu Ego and points out that they are her children whom she had borne to kill him before his time. She weeps bitterly for his wild accusation and asks him, "Why do you all make life so impossible for me? Where am I going to run to?" (202). She thinks in herself, "I wish I didn't have so many children, Now I doubt if it has all been worth it" (202).

Just then, Kehinde, one of her twin daughters' love affairs with a Yoruba boy takes the form of a major problem for Nnu Ego. Nnaife is disgusted and pointing out a finger of blame at Nnu Ego thunders aloud : "I have a mind to tell you and your brats to leave this house immediately. I was not created to suffer for you till I die" (206). Nnu Ego gets fed up with this two way standards, "When the children were good they belonged to the father, when they were bad, they belonged to their mother" (206).

Kehinde leaves her house one night and goes to live with the boy's family. Nnaife, an Ibo man hates the Yorubas. When he becomes
aware of the disappearance of his daughter, he gets enraged, takes his cutlass, and hurries towards their house screaming, "The butcher – I'll butcher him" (209). Nnaife is arrested by the police for his violent behaviour and is sentenced to imprisonment. Nnu Ego takes all pains to see that Nnaife is released. With all the worries and woes, she is reduced to bones. Adim, her son is horrified to see her in such a condition. To him she looks like a woman in her seventies. Her conversation with Adim about Oshia stands in evidence of her selflessness: “I don’t want him to worry or to think that he brought all this on us. When you reply tell him that we all love him and that we all pray for him too” (213). Emecheta, through Nnu Ego, holds a mirror to a motherly heart. She picturizes the difference between the love of a mother and a father for their children.

Some fathers especially those with many children from different wives, can reject a bad son, a master can reject his evil servant, a wife can even leave a bad husband, but a mother can never, never reject her son, if he is damned, she is damned with him... (214).

Taiwo is married to Magnus who works in the treasury. Nnu Ego spends the bride price of Taiwo for the education of Adim. It is Adaku and her children who drive home to Nnu Ego, the importance of education for a woman. That is why when Magnus, her kind hearted
son-in-law offers to take care of Obiageli. She tells him "See that in fifteen years time she becomes a well educated miss" (223).

Nnu Ego decides to go back to Ibuza with her two children. On the day of her departure from Lagos, she wears a new cloth, a gift from Magnus, steps into a Motor van like a queen to her coronation and waves to her daughters she is extremely sad to leave her children. In a tone of helplessness she says, "I don't know how to be anything else but a mother... taking the children from me is like taking away the life I have always known the life I am used to" (222). Nnu Ego looks at all her children with her tear filled eyes and bids them Good Bye!

Even at Ibuza, she is in no peace. Nnaife's people brand her a bad woman and she goes to live with her own people. Nnaife is soon released and he too comes to live in Ibuza with his new wife Okpo. He disowns Nnu Ego and lives separately.

Nnu Ego is very much disappointed by her sons, what actually hurts her heart is that her sons never bother about her. Month after month she expects to hear from them. This expectation of her's leads to nothing but frustration. With great mental agony she keeps floundering in the village and finally one night, she dies a miserable death, "With no child to hold her hand and no friend to talk to her she had never really made many friends. So busy had she been building up her joys as a mother"(224).

All her children including Oshia come home when they hear about their mother's sudden death. Her sons who neglected her when
she was alive, give her the greatest funeral Ibuza had ever seen. Even a shrine is built in her name.

As predicted by Nnu Ego when she was alive, even in death she had no peace. People said that she was a wicked woman in death because, though many woman pleaded her to make them fertile, she answered none of them. Perhaps she believes that a woman whether she was fertile or barren is doomed to failure and that motherhood has no gains but only pains. According to Marie A. Umeh Nnu Ego reveals herself to be a feminist, who "... in death becomes spiritually committed to heightening the consciousness of the African Woman."11.

Buchi Emecheta in her novel, *The Joys of Motherhood* presents the story from the female point of view which ideally suits her theme and this technique keeps the reader close to the consciousness. She describes the degraded status of a woman in patriarchal African culture and achieves success in her handling of her theme. She portrays the character of Nnu Ego quite movingly, and her life, a constant struggle from her cursed conception to a lonely death. Ernest N. Emenyonu comments, "The Joys of Motherhood is not only an ironic commentary, on the destinies of African womanhood, it is also a parable on the misplaced values of life in general, in Africa as elsewhere."12.

Emecheta while exploring the pains involved in motherhood focuses also on the evils in the traditional African society, such as the bride
price, the son preference, arranged marriages, polygamy, male domination, and the enslavement of the females.

Nancy Topping is of the opinion that, The Joys of Motherhood deals with the lives of the African women who share problems such as dependency, secondary existence, domestic labour and sexual exploitation.

Emecheta thoroughly examines the institution of motherhood, the bitter experiences involved in motherhood, and its impact on the minds of the African women. As Katherine Frank feels, "The complete futility of motherhood that we find in The Joys of Motherhood is the most heretical and radical aspect of Emecheta's vision of the African Women." Emecheta brings to light the traditional ideologies of male domination imposed on women in African societies. While projecting the dark underside of the African woman's plight she attacks the gender inequality. In all, "The Joys of Motherhood is a brilliant condensation of Emecheta's feminist ideologies, her ambivalence not withstanding."
References


6. Frank, 488.

7. Frank, 488.

8. Marie A Umeh, p.34.


14. Katherine Frank, 490

15. Kate C Onwuha, "The Tension of Two cultures, Ambivalence in Buchi Emechetas Feminism", *Critical Theory and African Literature*, 211.