





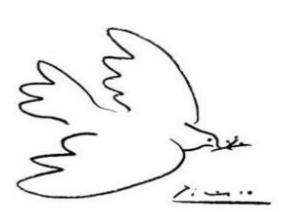
ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

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Literature and Human Rights: The Fight against Gender and Racial Discrimination in the Fiction of Buchi Emecheta and Caryl Phillips



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ABSTRACT

The aim of my thesis is to analyse the contribution of literature to advancing human rights. The role of literature is to make the theoretical concept of human rights less abstract. I chose novels by two internationally acclaimed writers to highlight how literature can function as a medium of social and political protest. In particular, the works chosen depict gender and racial discrimination as on-going human rights violations. By focusing on *Second-Class Citizen* and *In the Ditch* by the Nigerian-British writer Buchi Emecheta, I draw attention to the plight of black women in African and British society. By discussing the novels *A Distant Shore* and *In the Falling Snow* by the Caribbean-British author Caryl Phillips, I highlight the deeply rooted racial prejudice in British society and the reaction of the English people to the contemporary wave of refugees. My objective is to demonstrate that literature reflects human rights abuses and violations, foregrounding at the same time individual suffering. Literature is a space to express the grievances of the marginalised and to assert their human status and dignity. Therefore, it is an ideal forum for political debate and activism.

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