

THE PREDICAMENT OF THE POOR IN CHARLES DICKENS'S *GREAT EXPECTATIONS* AND BUCHI EMECHETA'S *THE JOYS OF MOTHERHOOD*

BY

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**DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE
FACULTY OF ARTS
UNIVERSITY OF BENIN**

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AN ESSAY SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH AND LITERATURE, FACULTY OF ARTS, UNIVERSITY OF BENIN, BENIN CITY, EDO STATE, NIGERIA, IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR AWARD OF BACHELOR ARTS (B.A) DEGREE IN ENGLISH AND LITERATURE.

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CERTIFICATION

This is to certify that this study was carried out by **Osahimwian Rhoda IGBINOSA (Miss)** in the Department of English and Literature, University of Benin, under my supervision.

Prof. Amen Uhunwangho
(Project Supervisor)

Date: _____

DEDICATION

This project is dedicated first to God Almighty, whose grace, wisdom, and strength have guided me through every stage of this academic journey. Without His divine help, this achievement would not have been possible.

I also dedicate this work to my wonderful parents, Mr. Igbinosa Matthew and Mrs. Igbinosa Faith, for their endless love, sacrifices, and encouragement. You are the pillars of my success.

Finally, I dedicate this work to everyone who has believed in me, supported me, and inspired me to keep going even when the road seemed tough.

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the representation of poverty in Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* and Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, employing Marxist literary criticism as the central framework. Although the novels are set in vastly different cultural and historical contexts Victorian England and colonial/postcolonial Nigeria both works expose the struggles of the underprivileged and critique the social and economic systems that sustain inequality.

Through a Marxist lens, the analysis demonstrates that poverty is not an individual failing but a structural outcome of class divisions, material scarcity, and systemic exploitation. Furthermore, the study argues that Dickens and Emecheta, despite their cultural differences, converge in their depiction of the poor as victims of social injustice, while at the same time portraying their endurance in the face of hardship.