

TRADITION AND TRANSFORMATION: REALISATION OF NEW GENDER ROLES FOR WOMEN IN ACHEBE'S *ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH*

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Abstract: *Chinua Achebe has been criticised for having portrayed women in secondary roles and of less importance in his early novels where he depicts the colonial period. However, in his later Anthills of the Savannah, the case is different. Here he writes about an imaginary African state, reflecting the late twentieth-century postcolonial realities, and depicts women who are well educated, even more successful than the male characters, acting more rationally and leading active and independent lives both socially and professionally. In this specific novel one of the four major characters, Beatrice, proves to be more competent than the male characters, and in the end of the novel is even called upon to undertake an important male ritual of naming a baby. In this novel Achebe calls attention to the changing values and definitions of women's roles and the necessity for their roles and responsibilities to be redefined. Achebe also emphasises the fact that this new definition of the gender roles for the new African world must take into consideration the needs and traditions of Africa rather than rely upon foreign ideologies.*