# CHAPTER TWELVE

# CHANGING REPRESENTATIONS OF IGBO WOMEN IN BUCHI EMECHETA'S *THE SECOND CLASS CITIZEN* AND CHINUA ACHEBE'S *ANTHILLS OF THE SAVANNAH*

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In order to depict modern representations of Nigerian women within the postcolonial and post-independent Nigerian society, Nigerian authors Albert Chinualumogu Achebe (1930-2013) and Buchi Emecheta (1944-2017) produced different yet substantial portraits of the new Nigerian women with a vision which advocates that women should play a prominent role in society. Buchi Emecheta in *Second Class Citizen* (1974) demonstrates that it is possible for Nigerian females to achieve economic and social independence which they lost in time on account of British colonialism and the African understanding of patriarchy. In *Anthills of the Savannah* (1987), Chinua Achebe's first developed female protagonist, Beatrice, leads and guides the people around her in a postcolonial and an independent African state along with the other strong female figures. While Achebe defines Beatrice as the modern African woman who has a good education and holds a significant position in the government, Emecheta, in her semi-autobiographical novel, depicts Adah as an extraordinary woman in terms of fulfilling her ideals and ambitions to be a librarian, to go to London and to be a writer. The aim of this article is to analyse the changing representation of African women -specifically Igbo women- in postcolonial Nigeria in Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* and Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*.

Along with colonization, previous social position of women was appropriated according to European patriarchal values that were nurtured by Christian principles and myths.[1] As April L. Gordon states about the declining role of African women in colonial rule, "[t]he commercialization of agriculture through the introduction of cash crops altered the customary gender division of labour in many ways mostly disadvantageous for women."[2] Thus, as the ways that Nigerian women used to earn their living slowly vanished during colonial rule, their economic roles and responsibilities that empowered them socio-politically also disappeared. Additionally, the absence of women's participation in economic sphere rendered them powerless and worsened their socio-cultural rights and status. The British colonial rule ignored and undermined female political presence and power while women's responsibilities toward their families -economic and domestic duties- grew.[3] What is more, the introduction of private ownership of land made it almost impossible for women to own land and grow cash crops for income since they did not have the means to buy it.[4] Even after independence, African male leaders would continue the colonial legacy by sustaining the same imposed Western patriarchal values that were not originally in accordance with the former African patriarchal values.[5] Hence, women are subjected to "double colonisation" which "[refers] to the ways in which women have simultaneously experienced the oppression of colonialism and patriarchy."[6] Colonisation celebrates male achievement while women are represented to be subjugated by

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1 Carolyne Dennis, "Women and State in Nigeria: the Case of Military Government 1984-85," in *Women, State and Ideology: Studies from Africa and Asia*, ed. Halef Afsha (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 15.

2 April L. Gordon, "Women and Development," in *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, eds. April L.Gordon and Donald L.Gordon (Colorado: Lynne Reinner, 1996), 254.

3 A. Gordon, "Women and Development," 254.

4 Ibid., 255.

5 Ibid., 250.

6 John McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism* (Manchester: Manchester UP, 2000), 175

the principles of colonial discourse and values of European patriarchy.[7]

All in all, oppressive rules of patriarchy and lingering traces of colonialism (even after the decolonization process) come into question while attempting to establish a better position for Nigerian women. Colonialism brought alterations in every aspect of life some of which were beneficial for Nigerian females. Some former privileges of women in terms of financial, social, political, marital rights were influenced by European patriarchy in the twentieth century with the changes in gender relations in colonised Nigeria. Hence, they were doubly-colonised and mostly ignored in public life in terms of having proper education and earning enough money. Women who were not Western and white were projected as exotic sexual objects of "Western heterosexual male desire," whereas white Western women were iconized owing to their Western- epitomized higher morals and civil standards.[8] However, in Igbo society the position of women is not that simplistic as an Igbo woman could achieve or earn respect that was originally thought to belong to males "through intelligence, resourcefulness, industry, resilience, talent, wealth or impeccable character."[9] Emecheta is highly critical of the male dominance and female subjugation taken as the norms within the society while her determination to preserve the social structures and positions (such as being a daughter, sister, wife and mother) which enable women to obtain and sustain power to a certain extent.

*Second Class Citizen* depicts the new Igbo woman through protagonist Adah who is a quite unusual Igbo girl. She is unconventional since she could have submitted to the oppressive patriarchal understanding permeating her society and her family; however, she always finds a way to assert herself in the existing patriarchal and oppressive order. As poverty is a significant issue for the majority of families in Nigeria, unfortunately education for girls

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7 McLeod, *Beginning Postcolonialism,* 175-176.

8 Ibid., 175-176

9 Marie Umeh, ed., *Emerging Perspectives on Buchi Emecheta* (Trenton: Africa World, 1996), 1.

is not seen as of primary importance to those families. Likewise, Adah is not considered as the first choice by her mother and it is decided that her brother goes to this expensive school that Adah wants to attend.[10] Her family is forced to make a choice between their children due to economic reasons, but unfortunately, the choice that is made is not in favour of Adah, so she suffers from the gender inequalities in terms of education. However, there is also the fact that the more educated a girl gets, the more her bride price will increase, which also complicates bride wealth in Igbo society.

> [Adah] got great satisfaction, too, from the fact that Francis was too poor to pay the five hundred pounds bride-price Ma and the other members of her family were asking. She was such an expensive bride because she was "college trained", even though none of them had contributed to her education. The anger of her people was so intense that none of them came to the wedding.[11]

Since Adah is determined to continue studying to be a librarian, she has to find a way to accomplish her purpose. In order to be successful in what she aspires, she manipulates the institution of marriage for her own sake. When she agrees to get married without a bride price, she actually has a plan for her future. She chooses to marry Francis without a bride price, which is very unconventional in Igbo society. Nevertheless, not being able to pay Adah's costly bride price, Francis' family would be in debt to Adah's family -or Adah in this case- for a long time and this makes Adah advantageous over the situation since she does not have to follow every decision in Francis' family and she can object reasonably and she can be more powerful compared to her former life with her mother's relatives. Also, Adah's refusal of bride wealth means her rejection of becoming a profitable source of wealth for her own extended family, which characterises one of Adah's rebellions against the Igbo traditions that she cannot benefit from for her purposes.

In formulating solutions to the self-realization of the individual, Emecheta is very much to the point; her female characters in the

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10 Buchi Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen* (New York: George Braziller, 1975), 9-10.
11 Ibid., 24.

novels as well as her semi-autobiographical protagonist, Adah is quite successful at being "weavers of [their] own destiny" as long as they rescue themselves from being dependent by education and economic self-sufficiency."[12] Although Adah is actually quite content with her life in Lagos as she is "cushioned by the love of her parents-in-law, spoilt by her servants and respected by Francis's younger sisters,"[13] she aspires to continue her education to be a librarian and later a writer since she feels that being content with all this would be "superficial."[14] While not refusing the roles that she traditionally fulfils as a dutiful mother, wife and a daughter-in-law, she also does not refrain herself from developing intellectually and individually, which she achieved due to her education.

Adah's intellectual development is not encouraged by Francis as well when she wants to become a writer since he thinks that "[t]he white man can barely tolerate us men, to say nothing of brainless females like you who could think of nothing except how to breast-feed her baby."[15] He fails to decolonize his mind from the falsely exposed notion of inferiority and oppression unlike Adah who believes that she, an Igbo woman, stands a chance of being published one day in London despite the cold welcome or discriminating attitude. Adah does not accept the discrimination and inferiority but challenges the idea of superiority of white men, also demystifies the colonial myth about the honesty and civilised nature of the white folks when she discovers that Trudy, the British daily-minder for Adah's children, mistreats and neglects her children so much that one of them develops meningitis due to exposure to unhygienic environment and malnutrition:

> […] one of the myths that she had been brought up to believe: that the white men never lied. She had grown up among white missionaries who were dedicated to their work, she had then worked among American diplomats who were working for their country in Nigeria, and since she

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12 Tuzyline Jita Allan, "The Joys of Motherhood: A Study of a Problematic Womanist Aesthetic," in *Womanist and Feminist Aesthetics: A Comparative Review* (Athens: Ohio UP, 1995), 98.
13 Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen*, 26.
14 Ibid., 26.
15 Ibid., 167.

> came to England the only other white she had actually mixed with were the girls in the library and Janet. She had never met the like of Trudy before. In fact she could not believe her ears; she just gaped in astonishment.[16]

The tension between Adah and Francis reaches its ultimate point when Francis burns her manuscript which is Adah's "brainchild" and actually reflects his patriarchal and misogynistic attitude which is dominantly the result of the injection of patriarchal values especially of his upbringing. Upon burning Adah's manuscript, Francis defends himself by claiming that "my family would never be happy if a wife of mine was permitted to write a book like that,[17] which reveals his insecurity to make decisions by himself even though he is miles away from his homeland. Adah is also aware that "Francis could never tolerate an intelligent woman."[18] They have a marriage that is filled with many challenges emerging especially when they start to live in London. Thus, Adah decides that divorce would be the escape from Francis, but the utterance of divorce in Igbo culture is not tolerated. As Ngcobo states:

> The image of divorced women in our society and our literature is negative. Only a handful may earn the understanding of the community such as in cases where the woman has a clean reputation which contrasts sharply with her husband's maltreatment of her. Only in a few cases do some women win the sympathy of the public. This is confirmed if they are seen to behave with dignity after the divorce. On the whole a wife will do everything to endure even a stressful marriage, for in a divorce she comes out the loser: Even when her husband is the offending party, society sees her as having failed to hold him in place-therefore his failure is her failure as well.[19]

Being able to conceive the world completely isolated from her traditional way of thinking (her Igbo way of life) is not an option for Adah and she still blames herself saying that "[if] she would not

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16 Ibid., 52-53.
17 Ibid., 170.
18 Ibid., 168.
19Lauretta Ngcobo, "African Motherhood-Myth and Reality," in *Criticism and Ideology: Second African Writers' Conference Stockholm 1986*, ed. Kirsten Holst Petersen (Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 1988), 149-150.

have had this urge to write now; her marriage would have been saved, at least for the time being, because she knew that sometime later she was going to write."[20] Yet, yielding to the demands of an oppressive husband is definitely not a step for achieving greater things in an Igbo woman's life, and although being a wife and a mother is important in their culture and identity, she does not have to be oppressed by the expectation of her husband and her society. Birth control becomes an issue when Adah does not want to get pregnant again before she gets accustomed to her new life in London. Emecheta points out one of the struggles in monogamy in the context of an Igbo family, as both Francis and Adah grow up in a society that values woman's fertility yet curses birth control practices. As educated parents, Francis and Adah should be in control of their family planning ignoring the outdated and superstitious beliefs and practices of their culture. Nevertheless, only Adah wants to apply birth control until she is harshly rejected and condemned by Francis who thinks that birth control caps are "invented for harlots and single women."[21] In this respect, Adah's concerns are quite unusual for a traditional Igbo woman since a woman's control over her body is a relatively new concern and traditionally an Igbo woman did not use any contraceptive methods to prevent unwanted pregnancies. Hence, Adah is creating a new Igbo woman image that has her say and independence since she is economically superior and she is taking control not only of her life but also her body and as a result, Adah is redefining her roles and rights.

*Anthills of the Savannah* also employs a female protagonist who can be considered to be a new Igbo woman and will be confident enough to lead the society, since the existing male-favoured system fails to be the solution. In this respect, this female protagonist, Beatrice is the metaphor that signifies the major change that should be made in a society. The fictitious Kangan state depicted in *Anthills of the Savannah* could well be considered as an alternative state suggested by Achebe. As postcolonial Nigeria has been ruled and administrated exclusively by men so far and they have failed to a

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[20] Emecheta, *Second Class Citizen*, 168.
[21] Ibid.,146.

large extent in terms of building socio-cultural and socio-economic stability and peace, Achebe urges a system change in nation-building that calls for the participation of the new Nigerian woman that is embodied by Beatrice in *Anthills of Savannah*. Achebe expresses how he feels about women's participation in African societies; he says:

> It's not enough for men to work out what women should do now. I think women should organize themselves to speak, from a real understanding of our situation and not just from a copying of European fashions, women's lib and things like that, but out of our own traditions to work out a new role for themselves. This is the challenge I throw both to the men and to the women, but particularly to the women.[22]

Beatrice Okoh is portrayed to have a strong character with a very determined and self-assured nature which enables her to take "a walloping honour's degree in English from London University."[23] She has a significant position in the government as the Senior Assistant Secretary in the Ministry of Finance and because she graduates from collage with an honour's degree, Sam (the young dictator) expresses his admiration by saying that "Our Beatrice beat the English to their game."[24] In this respect, Beatrice becomes a different representation of an Igbo woman, who not only has a good job, but she is capable of being at the top of the administration of her country. Beatrice reflects her self-righteous rebellion when she is constantly told that she cannot be too ambitious among her androcentric environment:

> I was determined from the very beginning to put my career first and, if need be, last. That every woman wants a man to complete her is a piece of male chauvinist bullshit I had completely rejected before I knew there was anything like Women's Lib. You often hear our people say: But that's something you picked up in England. Absolute rubbish! There was

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22 Bernth Lindfors, ed. "An Interview with Chinua Achebe," in *Conversations with Chinua Achebe* (Jackson: UP of Mississippi, 1997), 150.
23 Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* (New York: Anchor, 1988), 57.
24 Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*, 68.

> enough male chauvinism in my father's house to last me seven reincarnations![25]

One of the important features of Beatrice's representation as the new Igbo woman is her strong character that is demonstrated by her rebellious nature due to the oppression that she experienced from her own father in her childhood. Like Adah, she is oppressed by patriarchal realities both at home and in the Igbo society. Beatrice specifically underlines her awareness of the existing male oppression and states that it is not something that she "picked up in England,"[26] but it has always been with her. When she remembers the bitter memories of her childhood, she questions the oppressive attitude of her father and the passive-aggressive nature of her mother. Her father is an abusive man who resorts to physical violence toward his wife and children while her mother sustains the violence at home by remaining silent and doing nothing to prevent it although she is oppressed physically and mentally by him, too. Beatrice's questioning of her physically and verbally abused childhood sheds light on the physical violence in families, while it actually makes Beatrice a developed character as her psyche is observed at the same time. However, unlike Adah, Beatrice manages to gain self-confidence via her education and career earlier than Adah does, since Beatrice has more options to achieve what she desires compared to her.

Ironically, Beatrice bears a name that is actually an indicator of the patriarchal code of her society and she has to face the feeling of inferiority regardless of her successful degree from London University or her high-esteemed position in her career. Nwanyibuife, Beatrice's baptism name, means "a female is also something,"[27] her birth was not a joyful event to celebrate for her mother since she had five daughters but not a single son. Beatrice expresses her mother's disappointment in her by stating "I didn't realize until much later that my mother bore me a huge grudge because I was a girl -her fifth in a row though one had died- and that when I was born she had so

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25 Ibid., 81.
26 Ibid., 81.
27 Ibid., 79.

desperately prayed for a boy to give my father."[28] Since in the patriarchal Igbo community, giving birth to a son (preferably to sons) is a sign of respect and appreciation both from the family and society for a mother since she would guarantee the continuation of the family. In this case, Beatrice's mother resents having another baby girl who will not be capable of continuing the legacy of her family by eventually getting married and moving out of her family.

Due to her failed attempt of looking for affection and intimacy from her parents, Beatrice looms a cocoon to isolate herself from the members of her family, and by doing this she actually grows to be a distant woman who is quite sceptical and cynical of the people around her. In a way, she must have developed a defence mechanism that would prevent her getting hurt by her loved ones. In this respect, she resembles Adah who is urged to learn how to be self-sufficient earlier in life not to be damaged and move on with her life. By employing reason and judgement when she has to cope with an issue, Beatrice is not portrayed as a stereotypically coy or naive woman who can be easily seduced by any men. On the contrary, she does not fall for any tricks or "sweet tongues" that her suitors might use to lure her as she is perfectly aware of her own beauty and qualifications. Furthermore, she objects to being a damsel-in-distress and refuses to wait for a man since she is quite confident about her strength as an individual yet she does not lack the emotional depth as Beatrice and Chris have an affectionate and a quite impassionate relationship. Even though Chris is a fugitive as he is given the death penalty and being searched by the government, Beatrice does not miss the chance to meet him despite the danger that she will probably be in, so she is quite brave for embracing an active role in their relationship. Beatrice is not a passive lover and decides to spend a night with Chris before he leaves the town. It is clear that she predicts she may not see Chris for a while, but still Beatrice is determined not to accept a weak role in a love affair that would reduce her to a simple fiction character in a love story:

> Why should she accept this role of a star-crossed lover in a cheap, sentimental movie waving frantically from the window of an express

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[28] Ibid., 79-80.

> train at her young man at his window in another train hurtling away on opposite tracks into a different dark tunnel? And so she rebelled with a desperate resolve grounded on a powerful premonition that Chris and she had tonight come to a crossroads beyond which a new day would break, unpredictable, without precedent; a day whose market wares piled into the long basket on her head as she approached the gates of dawn would remain concealed to the very last moment.[29]

Beatrice states that she does not wait for anyone even any man to rescue her, and as Jago Morrison states, "with Beatrice, we are offered a woman who is the intellectual equal of male companions."[30] She does not fit into the description of a stereotypical female that is recurrently –falsely- represented as acting with the guidance of her emotions, not according to her logic; on the contrary, Beatrice always employs her intellectual nature in making decisions and does not have idle dreams. In one of her conversations with Chris, Beatrice makes such a remark about the situation of Kangan: "Well, you fellows, all three of you, are incredibly conceited. The story of this country, as far as you are concerned, is the story of three of you."[31] Beatrice means Sam, Chris and Ikem and explicitly mocks their vanity as they are so self-centred and preoccupied with their own agenda. Also, as Carroll states, "their connectedness is asserted not through solidarity but through competition and resentment: this is the world in which their careers have developed."[32] The reason why she has the potential to influence and lead people is that she has "her modern self" and "prophetic self."[33]

Beatrice's reason is generally contrasted with the weakness of masculine male characters whose power is ostensibly effective and endless. She is associated with Idemili, the daughter of Almighty, who is sent "to bear witness to the moral nature of authority by wrapping around Power's rude waist a loincloth of peace and

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29 Ibid., 181.

30 Jago Morrison, *The Fiction of Chinua Achebe* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 150.

31 Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*, 60.

32 David Carroll, *Chinua Achebe: Novelist, Poet, Critic* (London: Macmillan, 1990), 170.

33 Romanus Okey Muoneke, *Art, Rebellion and Redemption: A Reading of the Novels of Chinua Achebe* (New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 148.

modesty."[34] Her endeavour, as Muoneke argues, to "wrap modesty around Sam's rampaging power" is the embodiment of her prophetic role which also could be illustrated when she warns Sam against his corruption and betrayal of his country due to his own benefit.[35] As stated above, Beatrice is courageous enough to think that it is women's turn to tell men what should be done to change the country for the better, so she is quite bold in her actions and thoughts unlike Chris whom she finds to be too reasonable to speak openly about what he thinks. Beatrice is quite critical of other male character's opinions, especially Ikem's, on the position of women in their society. She criticises the prevalent notion that the role and position of women should also be decided by males. She argues that women are seen as last resort when males fail to come up with any solutions. However, Ikem later admits Beatrice's contributions to make him realize "the new role of women" and hands a letter which will encourage Beatrice to take an active role as she leads the naming ceremony of Elewa's baby.[36]

Achebe portrays Beatrice as an individual who makes logical choices and realistic deductions in order to display her reasonable nature. As Simon Gikandi argues, "In his detailed representation of Beatrice, as both a narrator and character, Achebe also seeks to narrate a salvational perspective."[37] Beatrice, a woman of reason, functions as a mediator in the world of irrational men and women, and becomes the sole survivor of the narrators due to her practical insight and correct evaluation of the events. Upon the exercise of extreme authority in Sam's dictatorship, Beatrice grows restless and agitated since she is not sure about her security. When she witnesses Sam's reckless use of his authority, Beatrice realizes that they are all under a great threat. As Robin Ikegami states, Beatrice's "concerns are not based solely in egoistical interests, like Chris's and Ikem's initially are, but in the connections between people, the interconnectedness of all."[38] She successfully senses the growing

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34 Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*, 93.
35 Muoneke, *Art Rebellion and Redemption*, 148.
36 Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 151.
37 Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 138.
38 Robin Ikegami, "Knowledge and Power, the Story and the Storyteller: Achebe's *Anthills of the Savannah*," in *Postcolonial Literatures: Achebe,*

threat concerning all three of them and warns Chris against this approaching danger. Hence Beatrice succeeds in leading and guiding people and she literally unites them safely under her roof unlike the male characters –or narrators- in *Anthills of the Savannah*. She becomes the symbol of change in her society while being a role-model for Elewa and Agatha who are the women coming from a lower social background compared to Beatrice. For instance, Beatrice stays calm and she comforts Elewa who learns that her boyfriend, Ikem gets suspended and is being searched by the government. Not yielding to depression or grief, Beatrice is aware that she should look after this girl since Elewa yearns for her sisterhood and compassion and Beatrice says "[m]y sister, make you no worry yourself. As we de alive so, na that one better pass all …"[39] It is clear that Beatrice sympathises with Elewa's concerns and problems rather than looking down on her emotions even though they have almost nothing in common.

Beatrice can transcend the barriers of her socio-cultural and socio-economical class; although she holds degree in English, she speaks Pidgin English with Elewa but not in a condescending manner as it is obvious that Beatrice wants to show Elewa that she can understand what Elewa is going through and she is ready to help her. That Beatrice can reconcile with the people from different backgrounds by embracing differences between them enables her to be a surviving narrator at the end of Anthills. To illustrate, she can overcome the difference between her and Elewa since she is able to predict what is happening in their country "The future she saw unfolding so relentlessly before them would demand brutal courage, not squeamishness, from the likes of Elewa and herself, from now on."[40] After the sudden death of Ikem, Beatrice takes care of Elewa and although Beatrice is suspicious of her at first, Elewa proves herself to be a mature young woman by making Beatrice her role-model.

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*Ngugi, Desai, Walcott*, eds. Michael Parker and Roger Starkey (London: Macmillan, 1995), 75.

39 Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah,* 138.

40 Ibid., 157.

As Romanus O. Muoneke points out Ikem functions impeccably successful in carrying Beatrice to her leading role at the end.[41] Beatrice's wish to alter the traditions in the name of the benefit for the future of women and their society could be best exemplified with the naming ceremony of Ikem and Elewa's daughter, since it is unprecedented to have the ceremony initiated by a woman. As Muoneke argues, "In this ceremony the role of women is defined and given free expression," when "Beatrice performs the ritual role traditionally reserved for men, and does not subsume the role men play, [but] adds a new dimension, invigorating society with the strength, fortitude, endurance, and fruition of the Earth Mother."[42] Not only does Beatrice decline the new ruler's invitation to the state funeral that is arranged for Chris, but also undergoes a transforming role in her nature as she is the redeemer of Igbo society promising hope and improvement with the naming ceremony. The baby girl is named "Amaechina" meaning "May-the-path-never-close", which as Gagiano argues, is the most apparent symbol of the endeavour theme in the novel for a transformative society since the Nigerian society they dwell in is no longer conventional or rural but it is modern and urban.[43] Still adhering to her Igbo roots, Beatrice chooses an Igbo name for her, yet the naming ceremony bears both the elements from various religions, Christianity, Islam, Pagan rituals of Igbo society, and the starting of unprecedented interpretation of already-existing rituals. Thus, Beatrice is the embodiment of the new woman, who will be capable of steering the society to a hopeful course, and it is vital for them not to close this symbolic path in order to make drastic changes for the future of their daughters, and sons. Morrison notes that "Achebe invents considerable importance in gender as an axis of positive political change."[44] On the significance of the name that Beatrice decides for the baby Achebe states:

> Amaechina is a real name and the implications of the "path", "May-the-path-never-close," is really that is only a boy who can keep the family homestead alive, and the path they are talking about is the path that leads

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41 Muoneke, *Art, Rebellion and Redemption*, 151.
42 Ibid., 152.
43 Annie Gagiano, *Achebe, Head, Marachera: On Power and Change in Africa* (London: Lynne Rienner, 2000), 107.
44 Morrison, *The Fiction of Chinua Achebe*, 157.

> to the family's compound. Girls don't count because they go out, they marry elsewhere. It is only the boy who stays in the compound. If there is no boy, then the compound closes. This is why if you find a family that is having difficulty having a male issue, but finally succeeds, they are likely to call him Amaechina: their hope of immortality hangs on this one person.[45]

Achebe calls all women in postcolonial countries of Africa "to bring sanity to an insane world dominated by the masculine principle, to rebuild and heal the society devastated by male aggression and abuse of power."[46] The future which Achebe signals in *Anthills* is full of hope and endeavour for women to overcome the oppressive patriarchy since they will be capable of "reconciling the contrary forces and binary oppositions that define the postcolonial state"[47] Beatrice, who has the formal higher education in the United Kingdom, is a representation of modern and independent Nigerian woman who can reform the conventional traditions and become a leader in her society, so she is the Igbo woman whose conventional roles and duties have been changed to fulfil the expectations of postcolonial Africa.

Emecheta and Achebe, both being Igbo writers, feel the necessity of defining the modern Igbo woman's role and status in the Igbo society after the independence of Nigeria. Accordingly, the female protagonists in *Second* and *Anthills* assert themselves as individuals in the patriarchal order of Igbo society; both Adah and Beatrice have to struggle against the oppression and discrimination in similar ways although their educational backgrounds, jobs, marital status and socio-political roles in society differ in many ways. Adah reflects the traits and qualities of the new Igbo woman who is confident and determined enough to make use of the opportunities that colonialism brought to Nigeria in order to become an independent, intellectual, and a fully-realised woman while not yielding to the old fashioned traditions of her identity which would not be in her favour. However, Emecheta does not eliminate all the elements of her African (specifically Igbo) identity and culture in defining the new role of the

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45 Lindfors, *Conversations*, 147.
46 Muoneke, *Art, Rebellion and Redemption,* 152.
47 Gikandi, *Reading Chinua Achebe*, 147.

modern Nigerian woman; on the contrary, she celebrates and emphasizes some of them which can be of use in her development and gaining of integrity. Adah fulfils her dream to be a writer while she does not give up all the constituents of her Igbo identity. Likewise, Beatrice in *Anthills* is a sophisticated woman with a high-profile career in addition to her ability to preserve the cultural, traditional and religious characteristics of her Igbo identity as manifested in the naming ceremony. While Beatrice can be a hopeful symbol of the new Igbo woman as a survivor at the end of the novel, Adah can be one of the first representations of a modern and diasporic African woman who is able to overcome many problems in life and succeed in the end.[48]

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