

**Being, Be-coming and Be-longing in Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965):  
A Polylectic Reading**

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**Resumé:** Cet article se veut une lecture polylectique de *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965), qui est une pièce de théâtre de l'écrivaine ghanéenne Ama Ata Aidoo. Il s'agit de montrer que toute évaluation peut expliquer autant que possible les complexités du (con)texte spécifique d'un produit littéraire quelconque. Pour ce faire, il explore les relations entre espace/ lieu, culture et identité plurielle dans la production de « soi », analyse ce qui a trait à la différence et examine le discours de cohésion contenu dans la scène de réconciliation. L'objectif recherché est de mieux comprendre le processus d'« être », de « venir-devenir » et de « désir-appartenir ».

**Mots-clés:** Noir, espace/lieu, culture, identité, esclavage, colonisation, réconciliation.

**Abstract:** This article is a polylectic reading of Ghanaian writer Ama Ata Aidoo's play, *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965). This is about approaching the work in a self-interpellative manner, bringing to [our] reading and critique a knowledge that [our] evaluation may account for as many of the complexities of the specific (con)text of the literary/cultural product as possible. To this end, it consists in exploring the relations between space/place, culture, and identities in shaping 'self,' analyzing politics of difference through the contextual and situational differentiation, otherization and ethos, and unearthing the togetherness discourse in the reconciliation scene in order to better understand the process of "being," "be-coming" and "be-longing."

**Keywords:** Black, space/place, culture, identity, slavery, colonization, reconciliation.

### **Introduction**

Since the time of slavery, Africans and African-Americans have always been the racial and sexual "other" in societies governed by white supremacist ideologies. The economics of slavery has thus contributed to the production of normative assumptions and stereotypical mental representations of black people in those societies. In fact, the negative images that were used to label them have so long shaped their self-definition as well as their distant and "conflicting" relationship in Africa and America. The internalization and further the internationalization of such negative images derived from the discourse of slavery and reinforced by colonization inevitably led to a negative mutual self-perception which, as K. Sue Jewell argues, not only "affects male-female relations, but also extends to the area of

cultural conflict among members of the black community.”<sup>1</sup> The white supremacist ideologists have created *othering* discourses that have maintained distances and reproachful relationship between these two groups that form actually one, but separated by history, the slave trade, and geography, the Atlantic Ocean. Therefore, the inability to share the mode of power informed by history and geography, marked by *otherization* and differentiated ethos, has forced some writers to revisit history and the nature of the link between Africans and people of African descent in order to redefine and reshape their self-images within the intra-cultural network of relationship. Ghanaian playwright Ama Ata Aidoo uses love as a pretext to implement necessary and loving boundaries into the relationship. In her play, *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965)<sup>2</sup>, she revisits the history of slavery and colonization, and their effects on the interaction between African and African-Americans. The play can, in many respects, be read as a form of resistance, from both sides, of the denigrating, downgrading and restrictive images, the misunderstanding as well as their distant and distrust bond since the time of slavery. In addition to the theme of love, she addresses issues of culture, identity, education and migration, as pretexts, in order to show how the characters define themselves (being) after having gone through different life historical experiences (slavery and colonization), after their contact with other cultures through migration and education (be-coming), and search for acceptance and self-fulfillment (be-longing) in a new space/place and a new identity.

Ama Ata Aidoo’s *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965)<sup>3</sup> centers around the Afro-American graduate bride, Eulalie Yawson born Rush, who is married to a young educated Ghanaian Ato Yawson and has accepted to travel to Ghana with him among his people, the Odumna Clan. The play takes place against the backdrop of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and rising British colonialism in late 19<sup>th</sup> century Ghana, the then Gold Coast. One main conflict will be that of man versus society, as Eulalie attempts to adjust and adapt to a new culture, and Ato who seeks to experiment his new self among his people as someone torn between two ‘selves.’

This paper is a polylectic reading of Ama Ata Aidoo’s play, which requires approaching the work in a self-interpellative manner, bringing to [our] reading and critique a knowledge that [our] evaluation may account for as many of the complexities of the specific (con)text of the literary/cultural product as possible. Then, this will be about looking at the

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<sup>1</sup> K. Sue Jewell (1993), *From Mammy to Miss America and Beyond : Cultural Images and the Shaping of US Social Polivy*: New York: Routledge, p. 44.

<sup>2</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, Longman House, London.

<sup>3</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*

text, context, and pretext, and how they are related to space and place as integral part of the personal, local, and global dynamics. A polylectic reading of the play consists in acknowledging the interdependencies, as well as recognizing the overdeterminate autonomies of writer, text, audience and social whole.”<sup>4</sup>

What is the critique of the interplay between Africans and African-Americans in recontextualizing self and accounting for the politics of difference engendered by space/place, identity and culture? How can one build up harmony in a differentiated *otherization* and ethos, and go beyond the prejudices that bind Africans and African-Americans as well as the hindrances to bridging the gap, breaking territories and pushing boundaries through dialogue and reconciliation?

### **Mapping And (Re)Shaping Space/Place, Culture And Identity: Recontextualizing Self and the Politics Of Difference**

Ama Aita Aidoo’s *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965)<sup>5</sup> tells the story of two graduate black people, an African (Ato) and an African-American (Eulalie). They met at a United States of America-based university and got married, compelling Eulalie to move ‘back’ to Ghana. The playwright focuses mainly on the cultural prejudice of thinking African-Americans “inferior” and “different” as they are descendants of slaves. Meanwhile Eulalie, for her part, as someone with western education and upbringing, considers many of her husband’s family’s customs ‘backwards’ and ‘dismissive.’ In fact, a critical analysis of history and the relationship between husband and wife, and wife and family-in-laws shows a dichotomy between the “self” and the “other” that variously characterizes the link between Africans and African-Americans. This also includes the very much politicized race and ethnic relations in the *otherization* politics of white supremacist ideologies. It is within this politicization context that “*in-group*” and “*out-group*” formations, otherwise herein referred to as *otherization*, that is dialogued the various types and level of differentiated identities in Aidoo’s play. These in turn foreground the dichotomization of *us* (Africans) versus *them* (African-Americans) in an attempt to lend a voice to the reactions against the way each group looks at the other.

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<sup>4</sup> Vincent O. Odamtten (1994), *The Art of Ama Ata Aidoo: Polylectic and Reading against Colonialism*, Gainesville, University Press of Florida, p. 6.

<sup>5</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*

In fact, African literature, which is considered by some African thinkers to be a supporting ground, changes the reader's consciousness of personal and public history (the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonization) which highlights three dimensional temporalities embodied in space/place, culture and identity. Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965) shows the aforementioned elements can shape the individual's personality, attitudes, behaviours, and mindsets. A cross-analysis of the three dimensional temporalities will help to grasp why Eulalie does not quite fit into the African lifestyle and culture, and why also Ato, the scholar who, after a sojourn in the United States of America, is highly regarded for his accomplishments, but critiqued for his difficulties to meet what is expected of him by his family and find balance between his willful Eulalie's needs, wishful thinking and desires in a different environment and culture. Aidoo's action and time-frame of the play is spread out over a year. Unfortunately, over the entire time Eulalie has been in the Odunma Clan, she fails to get accustomed to the customs and life. She rather finds refuge in alcohol drinking and continues to do much as she pleases in her 'new' place with impossible "metamorphosis" and accommodation. To grasp her attitudes, it is essential to link how the renewed interest in theorizing space in postmodernist and feminist theory<sup>6</sup>, embodied in such notions as panopticism, simulacra, deterritorialization, post-modern hyper-space, borderlands, and marginality force one to reevaluate such central analytic concepts in that of "culture," and, extension, the idea of "cultural difference."<sup>7</sup> Doing this shows how much the representations of space/place, culture and identity in Aidoo's play are remarkably linked with images of break, rupture, and disjunction.

The distinction of societies Aidoo depicts, Africa and the America (the West), nations and culture (Africa and American cultures), is based on a seemingly unproblematic division of space/place, on the fact that they occupy "naturally" discontinuous spaces/places. Her adoption of a premise of discontinuity forms the starting point from which one can theorize contact, difference, conflict, misunderstanding, contradiction, misinterpretation and misconception between culture and societies. It is also within the same premise that should be looked at identity and its relations with space/place and culture in the play. The author's representation of the world as a collection of "countries," thus of different and varied

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<sup>6</sup> See Anzaldua 1987; Baudrillard 1988; Deleuze and Guattari 1987; Foucault 1982; Jameson 1984; Kaptan 1987; Martin and Mohanty 1986.

<sup>7</sup> Akhil Gupta & James Ferguson (1997) eds., *Culture, Power, Place. Explorations in Critical Anthropology*, Durham & London, Duke University Press, p. 261.

spaces/places conceives it as an inherently fragmented space/place, divided by different colours into diverse national societies, each “rooted” in its proper place (cf. Malkki) and culture and identity. From her portrayal of Eulalie, Ato and his family, one can therefore take for granted that each society (space/place) embodies its own distinctive culture and identity. And when two different cultures meet, there is likely to be conflict. So, at the onset of the play in the prelude, which starts with “darkness,” one automatically guesses a potential conflict to arise as later evidenced by the narrator’s words “I can furnish you with reasons why this and that and other things happened”<sup>8</sup> to warn the reader that Eulalie, the African-American bride, is different from the girls back home. As far as the short prelude then, Eulalie and Ato are shown arguing, as a way of urging the reader to believe in the potential of love to conquer all and go beyond their differences as framed by their respective spaces/places (America and Africa). This is reminiscent of the different sequences throughout the play that denote conflict, misunderstanding, misconception, misinterpretation as influenced by the characters’ space/place and culture that have shaped their identity and how they interact with other “identities.” As such, man versus man is when the couple, Eulalie and Ato, is arguing. Man versus self would be her decision as to how to fit in this new culture (African culture) and if she has made the right choice in marrying an African man (Ato) who comes from a different culture. Man versus nature is when she will have to adjust to the weather, the food, and all that comes with living in Africa. Another man versus man features Eulalie and the other women as they seek to show her how to be a true African woman and wife, which she turns down and resorts to alcohol drinking and cigarettes smoking.

Ama Ata Aidoo’s *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965)<sup>9</sup>, in its central pretext, engages the reader into realizing how space/place, culture and identity have been constructed in the Africa past, why one (Eulalie) feels they belong to some spaces/places and not to others. The inextricable link which the Ghanaian author displays evidences how they have shaped the attitudes, behaviours, and reactions of Esi Kom, Nana, Monka, respectively Ato’s mother, grandmother, and sister, and 1<sup>st</sup> woman and 2<sup>nd</sup> woman in the play. Exploring the link between space/place and culture deepens the reader’s understanding of identity formation and its role in the characters’ societal and psychological development, inner thoughts, mindsets, mind-sets, and attitudes. Aidoo’s combination of space/place, culture, and identity unearths why Eulalie is not ready to bear children though it is what is expected of her as a woman and

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<sup>8</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>9</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*

wife living in Africa; why Ato does not seem to be also ready to fulfill what is expected of him as a man and husband. But they both decide that they will begin a family as soon as they want, arguing “If we wanted children, she would have given birth to some.”<sup>10</sup> Esi thinking that “everyone should come and listen to this”<sup>11</sup> and walking round in all attitudes denote surprise and disappointment as she has not heard anything like this before. She proceeds with her anger at what she hears from her son who tries to make her swallow “human beings deciding when they must have children”<sup>12</sup> and Eulalie’s conception of marriage based on western individualism as opposed to African collectivism. Ato, in turn, is confused at her mother’s reaction since he is at a loss for what to say to this. In her mother’s mind only a barren woman can take this as a pretext. The only solution he gets before her is to plead for a ‘new civilization,’ referring to this as “in these days of civilization.” Esi is angry because she thinks that Ato and Eulalie are not both doing what is good for them, adding “[...] we are angry because we think you are both not doing what is good for yourselves [...] and yet who can blame her? No stranger ever breaks the law.”<sup>13</sup> For her, if Eulalie dares decide when to bear children, it is because Ato has allowed it to happen despite knowing what the marital norms are about among the people of the Odunma Clan. Esi does not understand that Ato’s conception of maternity and motherhood has changed over time, which first woman who is barren ironically refers to as “or is the wife pregnant with a machine child?”<sup>14</sup>, and 2<sup>nd</sup> woman, in turn, as does she know what it is to be pregnant – even with a child of flesh and blood?<sup>15</sup> For them, Eulalie is “as an orange which has been scooped of all fruit,”<sup>16</sup> which compels Petu to remind the reader that in the Odunma Clan, “when two people marry, everyone expects them to have children. For men and women marry because they want children.”<sup>17</sup> But, second woman, as one of Aidoo’s mouthpiece, highlights the particularity of the marital bond. She conceives it as a marriage that binds two people from different cultures; therefore, in her own words, “the plays in this set are not equal.”<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>12</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>17</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, op. cit., p. 41.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

The bond between space/place and identity has influenced the play's characters' social formations, cultural practices and political actions. This has also influenced Ato's and Eulalie's decisions not to procreate until they both feel like to. These cultural attitudes are much embodied in the Ghanaian writer's process of staging in *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965) several characters' ghostly feelings of displacement and estrangement from their respective communities (Eulalie and Ato Yowson). As a matter of fact, the characters, who all to a certain extent, have experienced the consequences of western civilization, Eulalie because of her having grown up in western country as a descendent of former slave brought up, educated and living in America, and Ato because of his having received a western education and lived the side effects of colonization in Africa, and travelled to the United States of America for his education. In addition to experiencing westernization, they suffer from a state of melancholy (being) fostered by their unsuccessful attempt to "return" to a space/place and time (be-coming) that should enable them both to "belong" and to start their lives anew (be-long). In fact, these characters realize that no return is ever possible, and that what they try to look at by turning around always seems to be disappearing under their longing gazes (be-longing).

Indeed, reading Aidoo's wandering and exiled characters as examples of this melancholy that not only haunts postcolonial African literature in the 1960s<sup>19</sup>, but also the post-slavery and post-civil rights African-American literature and afterwards accounts for the play's "rite of passage," rests on its exploration of the remote in what Hannerz terms "the most other of others,"<sup>20</sup> whose critical function is seen to tie in its juxtaposition of radically different ways of being (located "elsewhere") with that of the characters (western culture), there has been surprisingly self-consciousness about how space/place can frame people's culture and identity. In portraying Eulalie who comes to live in Africa with her husband Ato, Aidoo urges the reader to pay attention to some necessary related concerns of location, displacement, community, identity, and culture. Her portrayal of Eulalie in her new home, Africa, among the people of the Odunma Clan in Ghana, shows the various and multiple ways in which space/place and identity intertwine. It is this same vein that social psychologist

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<sup>19</sup> David I. Ker, (1998), *The African Novel and the Modernist Tradition*, Peter Lang Publishing, New York, p. 84.

<sup>20</sup> Hannerz Ulf (1986), "Theory in Anthropology: Small Is Beautiful, the Problem of Complex Cultures." *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 28(2):362-367, p. 363.

Irwin Altman and anthropologist Setha Low's (1992)<sup>21</sup> concept of place attachment explores the ways in which people connect to places, and the effects of such bonds in identity development, place-making, perception, and practice. This accounts for Eulalie's difficulty in feeling and making Africa a home. She has a problem of personality that is haunting her as a result of what one can term a 'double displacement' (slavery and return) and status of double consciousness<sup>22</sup> (African and African-American/Western cultures). This describes the internal conflict she is experiencing as someone who belongs to a 'subordinate group' in an oppressive society (the United States of America). Her split personality is syndromic and traumatic for her as she tries to cope, consciously or unconsciously, with her double identity as an African and African-American. But Eulalie's African-American identity has taken it over her African one. Being moulded by the western culture, she stands ignorant of all that has to do with Africa. Her cultural psychology has been determined by the physical space of the American environment. This is evidenced by environmental and social psychologists Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe L. Fabian, and Robert Kaminoff<sup>23</sup> who state that space/place identity is a sub-structure of a person's self-identity, and consists of knowledge and feelings developed through everyday experiences of physical spaces. From macro to micro: from the clash of culture (Eulalie represents another culture) to the biographical impact (the individual).

Therefore, an analysis of the personalities of Eulalie and Ato expresses a sense of space/place identity derived from the multiple ways in which space/place (Africa) functions to provide a sense of belonging, construct meaning, foster attachments, and mediate change of attitudes and behaviours for both Eulalie and Ato. As former reminds her husband of the promised he made to her while in the United States of America, "why don't you tell them you promised me we would start having kids when I wanted them?"<sup>24</sup>, it is also the space/place where both evolved that determined the promises they made to each other. But, Ato keeps on repeatedly telling what his people like and do not like her to do: "Eulalie, my people say it is not good for a woman to take alcohol. Eulalie, my people say [...] My people [...] My people

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<sup>21</sup> Irwin Altman & Setha Low (1992), *Place Attachment*, Springer, New York.

<sup>22</sup> W. E. B Du Bois (1994), *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York, Avenel, NJ: Gramercy Books.

<sup>23</sup> See Harold M. Proshansky, Abbe L. Fabian, and Robert Kaminoff, (1983), "Place-Identity, Physical World Socialization of the Self," *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, Vol 3, 57-83.

<sup>24</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.



[...].<sup>25</sup> Ato's 'childish' 'dolorous,' and 'coward' everlasting reminders get her annoyed, compelling her to angrily and chokingly respond to him saying: "damned rooted coward of a Moses. I have been drinking in spite of what your people say. Who married me, you or your goddam people?"<sup>26</sup> Thus, it is the space/place identities of Eulalie and Ato and his family that inform about their experiences, behaviours, and attitudes towards other spaces/places and other people from other spaces/places. Eulalie's search for the "self" is internal since it is more linked with the mind, the psyche than it seems to appear. This is found among many Blacks who are slave descendants and have made America their home. Then the struggle for identity is more pressing within the "self" than within other social circumstances such as marriage and love. Eulalie does not seem to be aware about and have knowledge of the past, the Trans-Atlantic slave trade. As such, Aidoo's manipulation of Eulalie in the play denotes the latter's inner sufferings as someone who is longing for a place to belong to (be-longing) and who to be and become (be-coming) in this quest for the "self." She remains lost, which is an expression of the psychological essence of her "self: in her search for her real roots and connections. Aidoo's depiction of space/place makes memories cohere in complex ways and people's experiences in that place intertwine the sense of space/place and the politics of space/place, culture and identity. For instance, the two locations: the United States of America where the two used to live before jetting off to Africa to make their eternal home as a married couple.

The author's expression of the notion "self" is very poignant, especially in the way the characters are manipulated. Aidoo's discourse of the "self" is here associated with education and what it means to be an African. Education has triggered changes in the protagonist Ato. In his "former self," he used to be humble and to abide by his community's cultural standards. In his "new self" in which he has been in contact with western education and the western world (he has travelled to the United States of America to complete his education), he has embraced a "new being." His life experience has enabled him to be in contact with both a new space/place and a new culture. Once back home, Ato's attitude toward his own culture has changed since he is, like Eulalie, torn between "two selves." To him, western education has no business with cultural assimilation even if he lives according to western based-practices, way of life and of thinking. As an example, his decision to postpone childbearing is shocking as his people do not see eye to eye with him. For them, his decision

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<sup>25</sup>*Ibidem.*

<sup>26</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 44.

goes against the cultural standards of the community. The author uses the flash back in which the mother goes to knock at the door of Yaw Mensa to ask for the hand of his daughter for him. She is preparing an arranged marriage without knowing that, as in 2<sup>nd</sup> woman's words, "those days are over."<sup>27</sup> Here school is seen as a spoiling mechanism as regretfully evidenced by Ato's mother when recalling all the sacrifices she has been through for her son to be educated: "Apart from the lonely journeys I made to the unsympathetic rich, how often did I weep before your Uncles and great Uncles while everyone complained that my one son's education was ruining our home."<sup>28</sup>

Unfortunately, his education and sojourn in the western world has uprooted him. So, Ato is a "been-to" who suffers from in-between-ness. He is torn apart between two ways of life, two mindsets, two cultures, and two "selves." That is why his attitude toward his clan's culture is confusedly expressed by Monka who, referring to him, thinks that, in his two-ness, "the Master scholar was sitting on the chair studying, so he could not move off. After all, what is he learning? It is the knowledge of the leopard skin."<sup>29</sup> To draw the reader's attention to the fact that Ato's new mindset is related to the space/place he has visited and the education he has received. Monka revisits those moments as she "remembers the time he was preparing to go to the white man's land where he went to take up [indicating Eulalie] this 'Wonder.'<sup>30</sup> The attitudes and reactions of Monka, Esi, Nana, and the other members of the family should not come as a surprise to the reader. This reflects, as Africans, their conception of education. For them, this is just a journey into 'cultural slavery' that leads to "two-ness" and "in-between-ness."

### **An Analysis of the Situational and Contextual Differentiation, *Otherization* and Ethos**

A critical analysis of history suggests that dichotomy between the "self" and the "other" variously characterizes the relationship between Africans and people of African descent. It is then within the context of politicization of race and ethnicity around the world, 'in-group' and 'out-group' formations, otherwise herein referred to as otherization, that there is need to dialogue the various types and levels of differentiated identity expressions in Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965).<sup>31</sup> This should help to consolidate widespread

<sup>27</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 31.

<sup>31</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

faith in African identity, ethos, and citizenship that take into account new identity formations. As an attempt at lending a voice to reactions against the said conflict situation between the two groups, within this context, it is therefore important to dialogue the differentiated otherization of black people along the line of us (Africans) versus them (African-Americans). The point of reference, focus, and (con)text that Aidoo has chosen in her masterpiece is love. She believes that dialogues of a synchronic and diachronic nature can be pursued. To this end, she presents some of the levels and categories of otherization and ethos, which pit them against *us* as products of dichotomized relationship.

Etymologically studies indicate that ethos is derived from a Greek word that designates “accustomed place,”<sup>32</sup> as in a school where horses are schooled. Originally, the meaning was not associated with morality. It is the philosopher Aristotle who has widened the word to refer to the ability of a writer to persuade their audience, the starting point of which, he argues, is personal character used to describe the guiding beliefs or ideals that particularize a community, nation, or ideology. Ethos forms the root of ethikos to mean “moral, showing moral character.”<sup>33</sup> In modern usage, it denotes the disposition, character, or fundamental values particular to a specific person, people, corporation, culture, or movement whereas in sociology it refers to the fundamental spirit of a culture; the underlying sentiment that informs the beliefs, customs, or practices of a group or society; dominant assumption of people or period. In addition to encompassing all the aforementioned characteristics, in Aidoo’s dramatic literary work, it determines the characters’ actions, thoughts and emotions. Indeed, the topic of the relationship of black Americans to Africa and Africans is not new. It has roots in slavery. Consequently, many of the newly transplanted Africans, though held in bondage never gave up the dream that one day they would return to their homeland. In literature Olaudah Equiano and Phillis Wheatley, two of the earlier writers in African-American letters, with their contrasting images of, and attitudes to the continent which they remembered as home but from which they had been so forcefully removed, stand as the pioneers of a long time of black Americans writers who had sought to redefine their relationship to Africa and Africans. Interestingly, rarely does this relationship appear in the writings of African authors.<sup>34</sup> From then on, Aidoo’s play epitomizes the terrible stereotypes

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<sup>32</sup> Proscurcin Jr., *Der Begriff Ethos bei Homer*. (2014) pp. 162–63.

<sup>33</sup> Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, Book 2 (1103a17).

<sup>34</sup> Jacob Drackler (1975), *Black Homeland, Black Diaspora: Cross-Currents of the African Relationship*, p. 190.

and assumptions that Africans have about African-Americans and vice versa, which goes back to knowing how slavery wreaked havoc on them.

Compounding the problem is the ‘indifference’ of a large number of Africans towards the legacy of slavery, which is a constant reminder to African-Americans of their ‘subordinate’ status in a predominately white society which remains essentially racist even long after the abominable institution of slavery was abolished. They do not have memories of the practice as much as African-Americans do. As a case in point, Nana astonishingly reacts when his grandson Ato has announced the girl he has married, saying harshly “My spirit Mother ought to have come for me earlier, now what shall I tell them who are gone? The daughter of slaves who come from the white man’s land.”<sup>35</sup> For people like Nana, Esi, and Monka, it is all in the past, the distant past so much so that they do not need to have any memories of it. Whereas the legacy of slavery is very much an integral part of daily life for people like Eulalie in the United States of America, and even when some of them travel to Africa. Unfortunately, the aforementioned characters feel they have nothing to do with the practice; their ancestors did, and they are even ignorant of it. As such, they do not feel sorry about it either, as many African-Americans expect them to be. Aidoo acknowledges in her play that slavery is a divisive issue between Africans and African-Americans. This decisiveness is more elucidated in *Anowa*<sup>36</sup> which is a dramatization of an old Ghana legend as well as soul-searching on the causes and consequences of slavery. The play is set in the 1870s on the Gold Coast, and tells the story of the heroine Anowa’s failed marriage to the African slave trader Kofi Ako. This ignorance of the past is further reflected in the mispronunciation of Eulalie’s name as “*Hurere*,”<sup>37</sup> and “*Uhu-hu*”<sup>38</sup>, insisting on having her real name and the name of her tribe. The resort to a qualifier by 2<sup>nd</sup> woman, “*black-white woman*”<sup>39</sup> to refer to Eulalie, is also an illustration of this ignorance and lack of care from many Africans.

As a matter of fact, a negative ‘*otherization*’ between these two groups is obvious. This was mainly carried in the past by white supremacist ideologies that sought to pit Africans against their African-American brothers and sisters by falsifying the true history of slavery as a mercantile practice and showing them that they are different from whoever hailed

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<sup>35</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

<sup>36</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo (1970), *Anowa*, London: Longman Group.

<sup>37</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

from Africa. That situation then emerged as a longstanding manifestation of political polarization, ethnicization, (de)territorialization, and specialization of relationship, and the convergence of all the other forms of *otherizations*. Based on negative ‘*otherization*,’ stereotypical and assumptional relationship abounds, and these have always impacted on their interactions. Aidoo’s portrayal of bonds between two individuals grown up in two different spaces/places, even if with the same roots, ascertain that myth and reality, as aspects of ethnicity and relationship basis, complement the analysis of *otherization* by foregrounding forms of cultural, social, economic, and political ideals that are complex and contextual. Most significant is the author’s critique of the *otherization* and differentiation that lead to conflict, hatred, and hence the *us* versus *them* dichotomy as evidenced by the tree camps that she displays composed of Ato, his family (Esi, Nana, Akyrere, Mansa, Petu, Akroma), and his wife Eulalie. The ethnic group, no more than ‘race’ or any other ‘non-reality’ invented for the purposes, has never been a true basis relational reality in the African pre-capitalist worlds. As such, the *us* versus *them* dichotomy along relationship between Africans and people of African descent, has been most pronounced as a divisive tool between the two. It is because of ethnocentrism that white supremacists ideologists are able to pit them against each other. According to Aidoo, much of the tension between Africans and African-Americans exists because the two sides do not talk about their uncomfortable relationship. In so doing, she slams the ethnocentric nature which is an expression of ignorance in that one often thinks that their history is taught to everyone else.

The black Americans also, for their part, have swallowed and have taken for granted the same assumptional and stereotypical attitudes towards Africans and Africa: “I do not know the difference, and I don’t care either. Coconut palms, palm-palms, aren’t they not the same? And anyway, why should I not go and see your folks?” Eulalie knows nothing about Africa; she only knows what she has heard and what people say about the continent which is based on assumptions, stereotypes, and generalizations. Hegel’s racist representation of Africa as an ‘epistemic void’ and a as a ‘jungle,’ thus silencing her in hegemonic European historical discourse, which she once appropriated, is being questioned as she confesses that “Fiona would have been shocked to hear it. How we used to talk of the jungle and the wild life [...] and I haven’t seen a lion yet!”<sup>40</sup> In hearing the sound of the drum, she remembers what she has been said if ever she hears a sound like that, automatically and convincingly assimilating it with ‘witch-hunting’ and saying “I don’t know. I only thought it was witch-

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<sup>40</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

hunting.”<sup>41</sup> Eulalie’s perception of Africa is then built up on a negative otherization and ethos, urging Ato to ask her “witch-hunting? O mine, who put that idea into your head?”<sup>42</sup> But she understands that “there is always witch-hunting out here in Africa.”<sup>43</sup> Another ‘disgusting’ reaction of hers is when Esi pays them a visit and kindly gives her some food, snails. She ‘hypocritically’ pretends to like it and wait till her mother-in-law has left for her to throw the food away, saying to Ato: “my dear, did you see a single snail crawling in New York all the time you were in the States? And anyway, seeing snails and eating them are entirely different things!”<sup>44</sup> In so doing, she has forgotten or she ignores that Africa is different from America, and that each one side of the Atlantic has foods that reflect their own culture.

Eulalie has adopted the Eurocentric popular view of the position of African women which is one of subordination to husbands, and the repression of talents outside the domestic realm despite the asymmetrical nature of some African societies. She ignores that there were African women in indigenous Africa who played significant roles exercised by female leaders such as Moremi, Queen Amina of Zaria, and Olufunmilayo Ransome-Kuti. Out of ignorance, she engages the reader in the canonical politics of erasure by contending that “I suppose African women don’t talk.”<sup>45</sup> Aidoo, in turn, takes the opposite view by embarking the reader on an exercise of rewriting the once-falsified history of African women by breaking the silence. So, she portrays Esi and Nana as powerful characters, whose words are listened to and taken into account by the family members. With the characterization of her female protagonists, she complicates female identity as delineated in European colonial literature by critiquing both gender conventions and power relations between men and women in the homestead. She draws Eulalie’s and the likes of her’s attention to the poetics of cultural independence and self-reliance for female self-affirmation as embodied by her play’s female protagonists by forcing Ato to ask Eulalie: “how often do you want to drag in about African women?”<sup>46</sup> The author’s characterization of female protagonists like Nana and Esi complicate female identity as delineated in the western literature which Eulalie has

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<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>42</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 21.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibidem.*

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 27.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibidem.*

appropriated to talk about African women. Aidoo wants to make the black-white woman<sup>47</sup> and people like her know that this position of African women is rooted in resistance, but also protest against their one-dimensional images either as wives, mothers, *femmes fatales*, prostitutes or rebel girls. She at the same time posits the question of the position of African women in modern Africa.

### **Breaking Territories And Pushing Boundaries: Reconciliation in a Differentiated Otherization and Ethos**

Ama Ata Aidoo has not written *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965) in a vacuum. She has a constructive purpose in it. She believes in the need to “control the image”<sup>48</sup> to paraphrase the words by Charles Johnson whose idea has been strengthened by Mary Helen Washington who asserts that “we must also begin to realize that we have the power to choose which images we will celebrate. We have myth and image-makers of our own who have done their job well,”<sup>49</sup> has published *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965).<sup>50</sup> Therefore, all the ideas, thoughts, and languages, which are of three forms (the language used by Ato, the one by her mother Esi and the other by Eulalie), are dynamic, relational, and engage the reader in a process of endless re-description of the relationship between African and her Diaspora. Recalling Bakhtin’s analysis of languages is evidence to Aidoo’s. Whereas the former emphasizes the use of languages that maximize the dialogic nature of words, the latter seeks to go beyond their polyvocality in which various registers and the three types of languages used by the characters are allowed to interact with and respond to each, as an identity expression and a cultural dialogue and interaction: British English, Akan language, and American English. This cultural dialogue and interaction which Aidoo is pleading for, is just a reminder of the pasty cooperation that once existed between diasporic and continental talk Pan-Africanists, and the work of black intellectuals of the likes of William Edward Burghardt DuBois, Kwame Nkrumah, Wole Soyinka, Nugi wa Thiong’o, Leopold Sedar Senghor, Aime Cesaire, among others. It is also about the type of relationship she wishes and which Ato and Eulalie, consciously or unconsciously, are longing for.

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<sup>47</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

<sup>48</sup> Charles Johnson (1988), *Being and Race: Black Writing Since 1970*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, p. 11.

<sup>49</sup> Mary Helen Washington (1971), “Their Fiction Becomes Our Reality: Black Women Images Makers,” *Black World*, 23. 10, pp. 10-18.

<sup>50</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, Longman House, London.

Consequently, the last scene of the play starts with “light,” which denotes her feeling of optimism and desire to see a reconciliation take place. But, one remains nonplussed by the inertia in Aidoo’s play within the black community so much so that, according to her, there is enough blame on both sides of the Atlantic to build skyscrapers of shame and sorrow, of missed opportunities for constructive engagement and exchange. In having Eulalie and Esi reconciled in the last scene of the play, she is pleading for breaking territories and pushing boundaries, and going beyond differentiated otherization and ethos. Before the independences in the 1960s, different people with different spaces/places and different cultures, who previously lived ‘unaware’ of one another, were forced by history and their common destinies to come together within fluid and uncertain boundaries to form the Pan-Africanist movement under the colonial policy of divide and rule, thus muffing and standing against any political ideologies and issues that otherize differentiation. In the same togetherness perspective, Gupta and Ferguson challenge the notion that each country embodies its own distinctive culture and society, that is the notion of cultures being “discrete, object-like phenomena occupying discrete space”<sup>51</sup> Through her characterization, plot, and the different stories embedded in the story, Aidoo seems to be embracing this space/place, culture, and identity-related ideology by advancing the study of cultural difference through connection in the sense that senses of locality and community have become ‘obsolete’ to many, particularly to people like Ato and Eulalie who move from one place to another, who are “identifiable as spots on the map,”<sup>52</sup> pleading for finding “connection and contiguity of different cultures.”<sup>53</sup>

Interestingly enough is Aidoo’s use in the reconciliation scene of some aspects and elements of a ‘dialogical’ approach to language, communication and cognition through her combination of theoretical and epistemological assumptions about her characters’ action communication, and cognition (Eulalie, Ato, Esi, Nana, Momka, 1<sup>st</sup> woman, 2<sup>nd</sup> woman, boy and girl). An in-depth analysis of her use of language identifies six levels of language: the American English of Eulalie, the educated African English of Ato, the stylized poetry and prose of the Prelude, the childlike tone of Boy and Girl, the chit-chat in verse of 1<sup>st</sup> Woman and 2<sup>nd</sup> Woman, and the language of Nana, Akyere, Petu, Mansa, Akroma and Monka:

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<sup>51</sup> Gupta, Akhil & James Ferguson. “Beyond Culture: Space, Identity and the Politics of Difference,” in *Cultural Anthropology* 7, No. 1 (1992): 6-23, p. 7.

<sup>52</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.



[...] I shit upon such women. When we were young, a woman cleared her tongue. But now, they will allow their noise-making pans to lie around for people to trip over. But it is not their fault. If they had to use earthenware pots which broke more easily than eggs, they would have learnt their lessons long ago.<sup>54</sup>

Each of the author's character has expressed different opinions about the existential and relational situation in their language level, whose centrality is represented by Eto and Eulalie, from whom the changes of attitudes and mindsets operate. It is through their interactionalism, whose communication and cognition have involved interactions with other characters, mainly Esi, Nana, Akroma, Monka, 1<sup>st</sup> woman and 2<sup>nd</sup> woman (emotional and community-psyche-oriented), Boy and Girl (a wise childlikeness like Shakespeare's children), the prevailing traditional system in the Odumna Clan and the dimension of each 'self,' that Aidoo states the need to head towards reconciliation and togetherness. Despite all the discrepancies and misunderstanding between Eulalie and Esi throughout the play, in a moralizing move she describes that such interactions involve interdependencies that cannot be reduced to cause-effect relations. Therefore, the basic constituents of the discourse behind the reconciliation scene (contextualism) are interactions (exchanges, inter-acts), rather than speech or utterances of words. In fact, after resorting to 'literary silence' in the pauses mentioned in the stage directions to either create a tragic atmosphere or bring sadness, surprise or shock, and suspense with much anguish in the protagonists, Aidoo uses the same literary device in the reconciliation scene as a form of communicative constructionism that serves to convey a 'positive' message. The latter, built up on Berger and Luckmann's theory of social construction of reality,<sup>55</sup> she 'silently' invites both sides of the Atlantic to get rid of the social and cultural constructions that have been constructed from their imaginations.

However, even if Aidoo's 'togetherness' plea is based on interpersonal interaction (involving interactions with the world, albeit not always with other human beings, she does not deny that the world is "here" and "there" to be appropriated and understood, in what can be termed as hereeness and thereeness to be combined into oneness or togetherness which, she thinks, should antecede any particular or general act of cognition, even despite human being's ability to also construct, in and through language, act, and action, and communication

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<sup>54</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo, (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 7.

<sup>55</sup> Peter Berger & Thomas Luckmann (1966), *The Social Construction of Reality*, New York, NY: Free Press.

(silence or voice), out-there-ness.<sup>56</sup> Indeed, analysis of the soliloquy scene which contains Eulalie's monologue and the dreaming scene are evidences of Aidoo's togetherness plea. Dreams predict and torture or protect; dreaming enters other realities and is the site of ritual psychic healing; dreamself travel out of bodies, and sorcerers, gods, goddesses, spirits, and the dead physically enter the dreamer's presence; finally, dreaming transgresses chaos and contacts the highest sacred authority. This dream activity is beyond Freud and Jung, as the anthropologist Barbara Tedlock warns:

[...] we must remember that some cultures are much more interested in and sophisticated about alternative or altered states of consciousness [...] Western analysis of altered states would seem primitive to people who have been living with and actively developing these types of consciousness for centuries.<sup>57</sup>

Then the manifold dimensions found in African dream activity are significant when considered alongside Eurocentric perspectives, where dreams are basically aberrant fragments of experience which may elucidate problems previously encountered in waking life. Throughout Africa's ethnic diversity, dreaming is a gift passed down through a multitude of forbears and the dreaming received is full-blooded experience. Ato is the one who has dreamt, but this act of dreaming is twofold in that it embodies both Ato's and Eulalie's. In their cases, Aidoo is interested in their "double personality" or "double identity," a mixture of the "former self" and the "new self," and clash of culture. When Ato sees Eulalie as the "sweetest" and "loveliest" thing in Africa and American together, one automatically hints at a "split of personality" as both are being hunted by their "ghosts," symbolized by the characters Girl and Boy. In fact, when two different cultures encounter, there is often a clash when one tries to dominate the other or when one looks at the other as being "inferior," or when there is a process toward adaptability and acceptability as it is the case in Aidoo's masterpiece between Ato and Eulalie. Therefore, Ato's and Eulalie's conflicting 'selves' denote a picture of people with two conflicting cultures. Eulalie's disdain at the ways and manners her husband's family looks at her highlights a clash and the psychological essence of the self in the midst of the search of one's root.

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<sup>56</sup> Jonathan Potter (1996), *Representing Reality. Discourse, Rhetoric and Social Construction*, London, Sage Publication.

<sup>57</sup> Barbara Tedlock (1987), "Dreaming and Dream Research." *Dreaming: Anthropological and Psychological Interpretations*. Ed. Barbara Tedlock. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1-30, p. 20.

Nonetheless, the monologue shows that Eulalie is not “clannish.” From the language she uses in this part, one realizes that she is ready to make some steps forwards when thinking about her trip to Africa. She is caught up talking to Fiona, saying: “Now, I must confess that I am finding all this rather cute.”<sup>58</sup> Therefore, the humanistic-based approach contained in Aidoo’s work perceives differentiation and otherization from a positive and harmonizing perspective. It conceives them as beneficial opportunities to engage dialogue and negotiation with and achieve harmony and whole-ness. In line with the family systems theory developed by Murray Bowen<sup>59</sup> which identifies instinctual life forces, differentiation and togetherness through dialogue, in Ato’s family, the differentiation implies an assertion of *our* own though, feelings, beliefs, and decisions; make “T” statement of our feelings and beliefs without blaming, placating, or being defensive with each other’s. For instance, the scene when Esi and Eulalie get together with the latter crying in the hands of the former, the two are connected with each other emotionally, and above all, with the rest of the Odunma Clan, and operate in reaction to each other and then one another, they experience ‘togetherness,’ as illustrated by Eulalie’s words in the monologue: “As for their folks, they are cute. I adore the old one [...] his mother gives me a feeling though. Ma, I’ve come to the very source. I’ve come to Africa and I hope that where’er you are, you sort of know and approve”<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, in the reconciliation and ‘togetherness’ scene that highlights Eulalie and Esi being together with each one crying, Aidoo makes them development their identity in their relationship with others, seeking thus to balance differentiation and ‘togetherness’ so as to be able to be, as theorized by Bowen, a “T” who is distinct and separate from others, while also being a “we” who is connected with others. Through the new phase of the relationship between Eulalie and Esi, and imaginatively, the rest of the Clan, Aidoo emphasizes the need for undifferentiated people to engage in *triangling* where they talk about other people or other things as a way of not having to relate on a personal one-to-one level. Triangles involve three persons (Esi, Ato, and Eulalie with each having a distinct nature and mindset), things (Africa, America, and Europe), or issues (love, hatred, and reconciliation), and are formed when two

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<sup>58</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

<sup>59</sup> Bowen, Murray (1974), “*Toward the Differentiation of Self in One’s Family of origin.*” *Family Therapy in Clinical Practice* (reprint ed.), Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield (published 2004), pp. 529–547.

<sup>60</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

parts seek to balance their relationship with one another.<sup>61</sup> According to Aidoo, the real effectiveness of relational strategies, in spite of the differentiation and *otherization*, therefore, depends on a specific conjunction defined by a correlation that transcends history, time, and space/place that articulated the marginalized differentiation directed against Eulalie instead of building and enhancing harmony in diversity. An analysis of the history of Africans and African-Americans indicates that blackness and Africanness have become products of forced identities, which cleave at various points of social weakness that are easily wedged apart when the history of slavery is raised. Though traumatic and disheartening, the reconciliation tone with which Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965) ends conveys the message of the needs to transcend history, time, space/place, and culture so as to give way to opportunity, build up an all-inclusive African identity, and rethink the strategy towards differentiated and diverse dialogue-based and harmonious relationship between African and African-Americans. Ghanaian writer pleads for building a differentiated 'togetherness' between the two groups that history has separated so as to shape an all-inclusive African ethos. As Samule Esema observes: "[...] unless the past is clearly understood and the undoing of the pre and post colonialism as appropriately addressed, the foundation of the continent's stability and the capacity of the political, social, and economic independence shall always be a major concern [...]." <sup>62</sup>

Aidoo's reconciliation system, both individually (with one's own self) and collectively (with other selves), is likely to impact on the general level of differentiation between Esi, Eulalie, Ato, Nana, Akyere, Akroma, among other characters in the family of origin (Africa and America for Eulalie, and Africa only for Esi and Ato and the others) and one's role in the family. That is the reason why, Aidoo has married Ato and Eulalie with the same level of differentiation accompanied with anxiety, both personally and interpersonally before becoming communally as evidenced by the perpetual reactions of the author's mouthpiece, 1<sup>st</sup> woman and 2<sup>nd</sup> woman. The triangle building block of the emotional system in which the two experience anxiety (Ato and Eulalie or Esi and Eulalie) with each other, and a third individual (Ato) is used to stabilize the relationship or bind the anxiety between Africans and African-Americans. In this context, Ato has served as the bridge that helps to go beyond territories and push the boundaries that have been established between the two

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<sup>61</sup> Rhonda R. Hanish & Marie Anne Nuechrelein (1990), "*Our Mission and Ministry: Differentiated and Connected Identity and Relationship*," *Pastoral Psychology*, Vol. 38, N<sup>o</sup> 4.

<sup>62</sup> Emma Etuk (2008), *Never Again : Africa's Last Stand*, Universe, New York, Bloomington, Shanghai.

groups. This assertion by Chinua Achebe about the need for reconciliation applies to the situation Aidoo epitomizes:

How do you think we can fight when our own brothers have turned against us? The White man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clans no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart.<sup>63</sup>

Eulalie's spirit of adaptability at the end of the play has been also very helpful in entangling the prevailing conflicting situation as someone who has "come to the very source. I've come to Africa and I hope that where'er you are, you sort of know and approve."<sup>64</sup>

### Conclusion

This paper has been a polylectic reading of Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965). Considered to be a multi-form analysis, as opposed to a monolithic one which is one-analysis form, it has looked at the politics of historiography as a new source of evidence and methodology for analysis that leans on afrocentric, psychological and sociological approaches in order to display the relationship between these two groups that history and geography have separated and made seemingly different by their respective cultural environment and education background. It has analyzed how Aidoo has used love between an African and an African-American as a pretext to remove any doubt between the two groups that history and geography have divided. It has sought to capture and understand the movements, flows of memory and dynamics of behavioural changes in the play. It has further analyzed how to go beyond the oppositional discourse of conflictual relationship engendered by lack of communication and misunderstanding.

This paper has explored Aidoo's concern for both Africans and African-Americans to endeavor to set up peace, dialogue, reconciliation and unity initiatives in order to deal with the crisis which has roots in age-old historical *otherization* that has prevailed over time. It has been further interested in hypnotizing the possibility of harnessing positively the differentiation and *otherization* characteristics so as to nurture more harmonized relationship in recognition of diversity and "healthy" *otherization*. The article actually seeks to look for any possibility of articulating a 'black ethos' that cherishes an African identity. It analyzes identity as a multifaceted phenomenon just as reconciliation is a multifaceted process of

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<sup>63</sup> Chinua Achebe (1994), *Things Fall Apart*, Anchor Books, New York.

<sup>64</sup> Ama Ata Aidoo (1965), *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, *op. cit.*, p. 19.

transformation, which needs to be addressed from various dimensions and approaches. It opens up a dialogue regarding the concept of complementary differentiation, through which initiatives, encompassing communication, understanding and acceptance of the other self as one's *alter ego*, to collectively build a holistic Black/African ethos that is representative of the multifaceted, multi-varied, multi-lingual, and multi-ethnic identities and cultures which Africa and her Diaspora are endowed with.

In fact, the African-American who lives in the Western world is more likely to be linked with the culture of that world so that a mark of differentiation is often built up with Africans in the continent. On the differences over slavery, continental Africans did not experience the post-slavery syndrome or its effects on the attitude of a lot of African-Americans, mainly because the former were not exposed to it. When African-Americans hear this, many of them automatically conclude that their African brothers do not care about them and 'do not want them there,' meaning Africa. Yet, the context in which such sentiments are articulated, as Kofi Glover does, should be fully understood, *why* he said what he did, and exactly *what* he meant by that. That is what Ama Ata Aidoo has shown in *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965); that the differences between them over the practice is so deep that it could even strongly discourage or prohibit them from ever making Africa their permanent home. This is evidenced by all the discrepancies and ill-treatments Eulalie goes through in the Odumna Clan. The article has also highlighted the link between space/place, culture, and identity. Aidoo seems to be condoning, consciously or unconsciously, that a shared complexion does not equal a shared culture, nor does it automatically lead to friendship," according to Kofi Glover, who adds that "whether we like it or not, Africans and African-Americans have two different and very distant cultures."<sup>65</sup> One of the tragedies of post-slavery and neo-colonialism is that Africans continue to learn Western-tailored history with such externally-oriented empowerment and capacities that they become ignorant of their own history.

Aidoo's rich writings skill enhanced by her fertile experiences in the ways of the African, of course herself being an African, is brought to the fore through the interestingly language-coated play, *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965). The way she addresses the issues of marriage, love, education, culture, among others, is most remarkable. Indeed, Aidoo's play is an eye-opener into the true world of differentiation, *otherization*, ethos, conflict, and reconciliation. She has achieved this by relating several issues so as to display a

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<sup>65</sup> <https://www.library.yale.edu/~fboateng/akata.htm>, Tracie Reddick (1996) *African vs. African-American. A Shared Complexion Does not Guarantee Racial Solidarity*.

comprehensive knowledge of Africa and what the relation between Africans and African-Americans should be. She delves heavily into the heritage of Orature for the structure, the language, the themes, and the characters of her play. In using oral literary techniques, Aidoo portrays a sort of symbolic history of events which forces her audience to reflect on contemporary social, cultural, and political issues. The history of slavery and colonization has shown how history and language can be manipulated to build dramatic atmosphere. The history of slavery and colonization is in a sense told through the personal tragedies of, respectively, Eulalie and Ato Yawson. She has shown how dexterously language can be manipulated to serve dramatic atmosphere. She has a gift both for the sparse economical language of sadness, conflict, despair, communion, reconciliation, and for the gaiety, rollicking boisterousness and acid wit of satire, irony, and parody. Her use of language is an indication how African dramatists can portray with veracity and accuracy, delving into and sourcing from African oral tradition and culture, the continent's past, present, and future. For Aidoo, though the differences are profound and real, they cannot be glossed over, that is something the people themselves have to work on.

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