

## Literature and the African Culture: A Study of *The Dilemma of a Ghost* and *The Marriage of Anansewa*

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**Abstract:** This study is a study in Literature and Culture. Its primary objective is to throw light on and to contribute to the already existing school of thought as to exactly what the culture of a people is and to see how the elements of culture are successfully portrayed in literary works. To do these two Ghanaian playwrights namely: Efua Sutherland and Ama Ata Aidoo have been selected. A critical look has been taken at a play each of these selected playwrights. The study looks at Sutherland's *The Marriage of Anansewa* and Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost*.

**Key words:** Culture, marriage, polygamy, bride price, puberty rites, superstition

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### INTRODUCTION

One can say that there are as many definitions of culture as there are people who are trying to define it. In *Culture and Anarchy*, Matthew Arnold defines culture as the study of perfection. According to him, "Culture which is the study of perfection leads us, to conceive of true human perfection as a harmonious perfection, developing all sides of our humanity, and a general perfection, developing all parts of our society" (Arnold, 1996). Again writing under the title "On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture", Yuri Lotman and B.A. Uspensky also acknowledge that there are so many varieties of definitions of culture, however, Lotman and Uspensky are of the view that the fact that culture is conservative and disallows flexibility is attested to in all the various definitions of the term culture. Lotman and Uspensky's position is that culture is not a universal set in itself but a subset organised in a specific manner. Its particular nature is recognised in the fact that culture differentiates itself from what is anti-culture. Thus, in their argument, culture has its being residing in its very opposition. Sharing their own understanding of culture, Lotman and Uspensky say: "We understand culture as the non hereditary memory of the community, a memory expressing itself in a system of constraints and prescriptions. This formulation, if accepted, pre-supposes the following consequences. First of all, it follows that culture is by definition, a social phenomenon" (p. 411-412). Further according to Taylor (1891) in his book *Primitive Culture*, 'culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'. In his book, *Ghana in Retrospect*, Bishop Akwasi Sarpong defines

culture as "... the integral sum total of behaviour traits that have been learned, and have not only been manifested and shared by the members of a society, but also have been passed on from one generation to another in an uninterrupted succession."

According to the discussion and quotes above it is the tenets of culture that dictate the pace and direction in which the community should move. It is a set up with its own constraints and presumptions which are in no way flexible and it is only when one follows these tenets to the letter that one may be said to be heading towards attaining perfection. In *Peoples Differ*, the writer, Akwasi Sarpong, explains that culture is something that is acquired; it is learned. It does not come to one automatically, thus it is not the result of instincts and reflexes. It is learned, non-formally though.

Culture then comprises everything that a person in a community does. All the activities of a community combine to create the culture of the people. There are two aspects of culture that are worth looking at namely: performance and acquired. Culture must have a bit of performance about it. For something to be classified as cultural, it must gradually form part of the people. It must have a degree of stability for its people. It must not be something with a short life span; not something which is in place for a few years and is no more. Also, culture is acquired. It is learned. It is not just the result of instincts or reflexes. Nobody sits one down to teach him/her the dos and don'ts of his/her people but once one is born into that community, he/she learns to acquire these aspects of culture. Therefore culture identifies someone wherever he/she goes. People see one's dressing and his/her manner of going about things and conveniently conclude what his/her cultural background is. In recent times, however,

a person's dress code may not necessarily depict his or her cultural background. Thomas and Andesson (1982), in his book, *Sociology: The Study of Human Relationships* opines that culture:

consists of all the shared products of human groups. The products include physical objects and the beliefs, values and behaviour shared by a group (pp: 24).

Thomas believes therefore that culture is both shared and learned. He identifies four major components of culture in his book, namely: symbols, language, values and norms. According to him symbols refer to anything that stands for something else and its shared meaning in society. Language is an aspect of culture which refers to the organisation of written or spoken symbols into a standardised system. It is also used as a means of communication among people in a social milieu. Values as a component of culture are the shared beliefs about what is good or bad, right or wrong or desirable which help a group to determine the character of its people and the kind of material and non-material culture they create. Norms also mean the shared rules of conduct that tell the people how to act in specific situations. Hence "culture" refers to the way a group of people live in a society. Each specific society has its own way of life which is different from other societies. Arnold says among other things that "culture" is a non-hereditary memory of the community. A memory expressing itself in the system of constraints and presented in the society in which it resides. This brings us to the belief that strict adherence to these cultural practices is expected of each and every member of that particular society.

Having established the meaning of culture, this paper further proves that there is a strong link between literature and culture which is very strong and effective. Many writers, both African and foreign, have used literature as a platform to express culture. Most of these works have sought to teach culture through entertainment and hence have given a new meaning to culture. Hence, whatever is classified as literature should be able to teach true values. So literature is considered as a platform on which true values are shared. Therefore literature is a means through which culture is expressed. Literature has been used as a medium to teach values. Any aspect of culture that needs to be adhered to is projected; and other aspects that are uncalled for or have outlived their usefulness are condemned outright by these writers who seek to make customs and traditions their hallmark.

This study therefore seeks to establish the relationship between literature and culture with particular reference to Aidoo's (1965) *The Dilemma of a Ghost* and Sutherland's (1975) *The Marriage of Anansewa* and also examine the way African (Ghanaian) culture is portrayed in these two plays.

**Ghanaian culture as portrayed by Sutherland (1975) in *The Marriage of Anansewa*:** *The Marriage of Anansewa* a storytelling drama is considered Sutherland's (1975) most valuable contribution to Ghanaian drama and theatre. In the play, Sutherland transmutes traditional Akan spider tales, *anansesem*, into a new dramatic structure which she calls *anansegro*. The Marriage of Anansewa is about a cunning and dishonest father, Mr. George Kweku Ananse, the spider or the trickster figure in Akan oral narratives.

As a trickster, Ananse can take different forms and in this play he is an old man. Ananse tests the suitors of his daughter, Anansewa, who is a Western-educated urban woman. He tries to make money by demanding a bride price and playing with the hopes of the four suitors. Sutherland uses a storyteller who stands outside the action and mediates between the actors and the audience. In this wise, the audience can participate in the singing or recounting *mboguo*, musical performances that comment on the story. In this play Sutherland does not only make us see Ananse's legendary cunning but also educates the reader about Ghanaian culture such as investigation before marriage, polygamy, bride price and puberty rites.

**Investigation of family background:** Sutherland discusses the theme of marriage as given by the precepts of the Ghanaian culture. This discussion centres on traditional marriage. One important aspect of Ghanaian marriage is the tradition of making enquiries into the family background and the character of both the prospective husband and wife before the marriage is contracted. According to the Ghanaian culture, a prospective husband should be potent, hard working, well-respected in his community and of good character. There is therefore the precaution that people must take time in doing things as important as marriage. This investigation conducted into the family and background of a would-be wife or husband is due to the belief in the Ghanaian tradition that the parent or a trusted relative should lead or have a hand in the choice of a husband.

In the play Ananse plays the role of choosing a good husband for Anansewa, his only daughter and in fact, his only child. It is obvious that he enriches himself in the process but in the end he plays the role successfully and gets a suitable husband for Anansewa. In this search four suitors who are chiefs are involved and Ananse skilfully unties the knot which he initially ties around himself.

**Polygamy:** Sutherland further depicts polygamy as a type of marriage accepted by the Ghanaian society and a polygamous husband is not frowned upon. Chiefs upon enstoolment or enskinment are usually given stool wives regardless of whether the chief is already married or not. Sutherland, however, portrays the negative aspect of polygamy. One such negative aspect is rivalry among the

wives. The play goes on to discuss some of the reasons for which some men decide to marry other wives. For instance, in the case of the four suitors of Anansewa, three of them want to marry her for reasons other than love. According to the messengers of chief of Sapaase, the chief wants to marry Anansewa so that her presence in the chief's house will be:

For the purpose of putting to shame  
A certain bitchy, ugly somebody who  
Is there in Sapaase Palace (Sutherland, 1975 pp: 70)

This invariably refers to the chief's wife. Such rivalry oftentimes results in very serious repercussions. Also Togbe Klu's messengers reveal their master's intention to marry Anansewa.

he is looking forward to having a real helper  
at last to assist him in building up a  
substantial business. A helper who would  
not ruin him as some of his own relatives (pp: 73)  
he is ready to order giant trucks for bringing cattle  
from Mali. He has ordered a trawler for fishing ...  
documents for all these were to have been entrusted  
to his own wife's administration.

Chief of Mines has his own intentions of marrying Anansewa. In his case he wants Anansewa to:

... give enlightened training to the many children to  
whom his wives have given birth (pp: 68)

It is only chief-who-is-chief whose intention of marrying Anansewa is purely love and nothing else but love; and so because of this the items he presents for burial are like those of a man whose wife is dead.

here is the ring a husband places on a  
wife's finger ... this bottle of schnapps  
...what a husband does for a wife ... (pp: 76-77)

**Essence and Role of Bride Price:** Another aspect of Ghanaian culture portrayed by Sutherland is the essence and role of the bride price. According to the custom it is only the payment of the bride price that opens the door to a would-be bridegroom to claim a bride. Thus, as long as the bride price has not been paid the woman who is the would-be bride remains a member of her parents' household. This is seen in the love scene between Akwasi and Akosua. In spite of the gifts Akwasi showers on Akosua he cannot lay claim to her as his wife because no bride price has been paid.

Akwasi: You cannot spend my dough and treat me so  
Akosua: ... come home with me then, and tell my parents

I'm your wife ... they know I am not your wife  
until after you have come to their home and placed  
the customary head drink down on their table

Similarly, no matter the gifts, which Ananse receives from the various suitors of Anansewa, Ananse is covered by this tradition since none of them can claim Anansewa as his wife because gifts do not constitute bride price.

**Puberty rites:** The Ghanaian culture of puberty rites for the girl child is also portrayed. According to Sarpong's (1974) *Ghana in Retrospect*, these are rites which should be observed before a young woman's hand is given in marriage. The puberty rite performances which outdoor the female child are very important because it is believed that the rites usher the would-be bride into fertility which enables her to be productive. It also shows that the young lady has led a chaste life and is therefore worthy to be married to a responsible man. These rites help to ward off immoral lifestyles in young women. In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Anansewa is outdoored before she is ushered into marriage though the ceremony takes place five years later. Three older women, Ekuwa, Aya and Christie take time and pains to carefully prepare and outdoor her.

Ananse's mother grumbles:  
But to wait until five years after  
the girl has become a woman, and  
say "outdoor her" (pp: 44)

**Presentation of coffin:** Another Ghanaian custom which is portrayed in the play is the presentation of a coffin by a husband on the death of his wife. There is a traditional belief that a woman should be buried by her husband. Therefore since a would-be husband has not yet paid the bride price he is not obliged to perform such a ritual. In the play, all three chiefs lay claim to this tradition in their presentation of gifts for Anansewa's funeral and burial.

Chief of Sapaase's messenger claims: "... that since this is a case of no-sale-no-payment their families would simply consider.

The matter concluded ...."He is not reluctant at all to perform whatever custom he has the right to perform ... (Act 4, pp: 71)

Messenger of Chief of The Mines: "... that because this lady had not yet become his wife,  
he cannot give her burial; but that which custom does not permit, he is not reluctant to fulfill. (Act 4, pp: 69)

Togbe Klu's messenger also says:  
"... he was not even in favour of our coming here.  
What was the use, he said. But we said "no" we

have not yet had the vision he has had, which leads him to that point of view. Even if we came to do nothing we would show our face here. (Act 4, pp: 73).

It is only Chief-Who-Is-Chief Who as it were, goes the extra mile and as a demonstration of his love for Anansewa performs these rites. His messengers have this to say:

“Chief-Who-Is-Chief loved the lady Anansewa with a love so deep and adds that he accepts total responsibility for everything concerning the woman who had but one more step to take to enter his home(Act 4; 76pp).

**Superstition:** Another Ghanaian custom which is portrayed in the play is the fact that the average Ghanaian is superstitious. Superstitions, beliefs and how quick people associate every misfortune with evil ones and their enemies in society are seen in the reaction of Aya and Ekuwa. Indeed, in the Ghanaian society the belief is that everybody no matter your status has an enemy. When Ananse decides to fake the death of Anansewa and so has to get rid of his mother, Aya, and aunt, Ekuwa, he simply plays with their minds knowing how quick they will believe him and his lies to them that their enemies have set fire to their cocoa farm in Nanka, their hometown.

...someone has just reported to me that  
...enemies have set fire to our hope, our cocoa farm

True to his expectation and prediction their superstitious minds send them out of Ananse’s house, virtually running very fast to Nanka without giving a second thought to the news.

In conclusion it is plausible to say that in her book, *The Marriage Of Anansewa*, Efuwa Sutherland successfully portrays some aspects of the Ghanaian culture particularly Akan culture.

**Culture as portrayed by Aidoo (1965) in *The Dilemma of a Ghost*:** Like Sutherland, Aidoo highlights culture, particularly traditional marriage in *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, her first play. In the play she uses literature to mirror important components of Ghanaian culture.

**Marriage:** Aidoo portrays the theme of marriage in her presentation in which she juxtaposes traditional marriage against western marriage. She presents to the audience the marriage between Ato Yawson, a Ghanaian and Eulalie, his black American wife.

Ato who has been abroad for some time has recently returned. In the estimation of his mother, Esi Kom, and the entire family, it is time for him to marry. According to their custom the family should have a hand in their son’s

marriage so preparations have already been made towards the payment of the bride price. This is exactly what Esi Kom explains to Akyere, Ato’s aunt.

Akyere: what did you do with the money?  
Esi: I have not done anything with it  
It had been a good market and I  
thought I would find some more money  
And add it to give it to Ato’s father to  
pay for the bride price (Aidoo, 1965, pp: 10)

She goes on to confirm her action directly to Ato.

Esi: ... I was only telling your aunt that:  
I have sold your sheep to pay the  
bride price for you when you make  
up your mind to marry (Act 1, pp: 10)

However, to their utmost surprise and shock, Ato declares to the hearing of all that he is already married. In fact, he had married just about a week earlier.

Ato: ...but I am already married, Maame  
...that is what I was going to tell you  
... one week ago (Act 1; 11pp).

This declaration throws the entire family into shock and they simply throw a myriad of questions at Ato. One thing for sure is that they cannot reverse the situation; they simply have to live with it. To their disappointment they have no hand in the selection of the would-be bride for Ato. They cannot investigate the family background of Ato’s wife and they simply have nothing to do with the bride price payment; an issue which has already been settled. They are simply helpless. This certainly confirms the fact that culture is really cherished, and that despite the fact that Europeanisation has eaten into our cultural set up, some cultural practices are still adhered to. Even in churches, the paying of bride price is settled before a marriage is blessed by a priest. Aidoo is no doubt trying to mock at the educated Ghanaian who has forgotten his culture. This is a subject in most of her works. Gyimah quotes Vincent Odamtten as arguing that, “Aidoo’s works consistently address this issue of neo-colonialism and its impact on the educated Ghanaian elite.” (Gyimah, 2010:1).

It is quite surprising that when Ato’s family learns that he is already married and that they do not play any role in it they do not register any displeasure. Rather they probe further to know when he married and also who their in-law is:

Mansa: “... isn’t your wife ... eh ... Fanti?  
Ato: no Aunt  
Akyere: if so, what is her tribe? (Act 4, pp: 11)

Perhaps Ato's attitude is Aidoo's way of informing us that the Ghanaian society realises the need for a change in some cultural dictates which are outmoded. Perhaps Aidoo is re-echoing Sarpong's view in *Peoples Differ* that culture being dynamic changes according to the dictates of contemporary times (Sarpong, 1974).

Far from shunning Ato's wife the family tries to relate better with her; finding it difficult though, to pronounce her name, Eulalie.

Ato: I said "Eulalie"

Monka: "Hurere" ... Oh, let us say that some of the names that are coming into this world are fearful"

Esi: Ato, you know that some of us did not hear the school bell when it rang. Therefore we will not be able to say this name. This uhu - hu ... (Act 1, pp:11)

Ato's mother, Maame Esi Kom cooks for them and even sends them foodstuffs. The problem being, however that Eulalie simply cannot accept some food items like snails due to the different cultural background.

Esi: is it true that your wife has thrown away the snails I bought?

Ato: [defensively] she does not know how to eat them ... and ... (Act3, pp:28)

Eulalie also tries to relate well with Ato's family since she is happy to be in Africa- her roots but she fails. According to Secovnie (2011), Ama Ata Aidoo's *The Dilemma of a Ghost* and Osonye Tess Onwueme's *The Missing Face* demonstrate the process of finding a cultural identity that does not privilege an ordinary moment, yet provides space for a negotiated Pan-African identity for West Africans and African Americans. Both of these plays deal with the issue of constructing a Pan-African identity through connecting African Americans with West Africans and both highlight the simultaneous necessity for and failure of cultural translation to facilitate that connection.

**Child birth:** Another feature of the Ghanaian culture which Aidoo portrays is childbirth. The belief of the Ghanaian is that there is the need for every woman to give birth after marriage. However, when this does not happen after some time then it becomes a concern to both the individual and the society at large. The society's reaction towards the woman is normally not good and sometimes such a reaction may be rather harsh. There is almost always quick judgement and the blame is often and quickly given to the woman and in most cases she is ridiculed. In *The Dilemma of a Ghost* Ato and his wife Eulalie decide not to have any children until such a time that they are ready. In fact, it is Eulalie's idea that

childbirth should be suspended for some time, about a couple of years, so that she can take time to settle. This is a matter concluded and they cannot decide to do otherwise.

Eulalie: Ato, isn't it time we started a family?

Ato: ...first you got the feeling you needed a couple of years to settle down and now you are obviously getting a contradictory feeling. ... I think we better stick to our original idea.

On the other hand, Ato's family waits for a reasonable length of time for a grand child who is not forthcoming. The family straight away puts the blame on the woman and subsequently takes steps to avert the situation. To do this exercise it is the entire family which goes to Ato's house.

Ato: uncle, did you say you are going to use medicine to wash my wife's stomach? (Act 4)

Ato's family justifies their action in Petu's words.

Petu: ...what came out at the meeting is that we must come

and ask you and your wife what is preventing you from giving your grandmother a great grand child before she leaves.

From the fore-going, it is clear that the couple's inability to have children, as it were, has automatically been blamed on the wife and this has necessitated the washing of her stomach. Every Ghanaian society lives with some level of superstition and Ato's family is no exception. This is seen in the family's choice of the day to wash Eulalie's stomach.

Petu: we were to choose this day because, as you know, on this day we try to drive away all evil spirits, ill luck and unkind feelings which might have invaded our house during the past year. ...then pour libation to ask the dead to come and remove the spirit of the evil around you and pray them to bring you a child. (Act 4)

By portraying Ghanaian culture alongside western culture Aidoo is simply bringing to light some of the traditional beliefs which have outlived their usefulness and perhaps need a change. There is therefore no doubt that Aidoo uses her literary works to demonstrate Ghanaian culture.

**Similarities in Aidoo and Sutherland's portrayal of culture:** A critical look at the two plays gives an insight into some aspects of Ghanaian culture. The plays reveal

culture as practised by Ghanaians ranging from social that is talking about marriage, financial and spiritual aspects of our culture. This portrayal shows how rich Ghanaian culture is and further advises us to appreciate and to keep our cultural values without which we cannot be recognised as a people.

One major aspect of Ghanaian culture which is expressed by both playwrights is marriage. According to Nukunya's (2003) *Tradition And Change In Ghana: An Introduction To Sociology* marriage is!

Any union in which the couple has:  
Gone through all the procedures  
Recognised in the society for the  
Purpose of sexual intercourse, raising  
A family or courtship (pp: 42)

It will be erroneous to say that these two playwrights are against the traditional precepts of their culture. Far from that they rather in a very vivid way express the richness of Ghanaian culture throughout their plays. The audience is given a clear insight into the delicate intricacies of the Ghanaian culture, especially that of the Akan. In this way we have in these plays the presence of Ghanaian culture. What they do instead is to use their plays to bring to the fore, the need for society to maintain the good aspects of its culture and amend those aspects that are bad to become abreast with modern society. One such good aspect portrayed by them both is that they both share the belief that marriage should be based on love and not wealth and the physical look of a person. For instance in *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Anansewa collaborates with her father to be properly married to Chief-Who-Is-Chief. This illustrates why the marriage becomes successful. Sutherland, however, mocks at the use of marriage as a means to acquire wealth and hence mocks at Ananse for using his daughter's marriage as a vehicle to attain wealth.

In both plays, although the playwrights present Ghanaian culture in all its flamboyance and richness, their personal views on them can be seen in the manner in which they present their stories. In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Sutherland tries to put across to the reader that although it is good for parents to choose marriage partners for their children, it is also wise for parents to find partners who have the interest of their children at heart. There is enough proof that Anansewa's marriage to Chief-Who-Is -Chief is based on true love. In much the same way Aidoo says that a marriage partner should not be selected by one's parents. She also asserts that the choice of a marriage partner should not be based on good looks and romance only but one's partner should have one's interest at heart. In her play *Ato's choice of Eulalie* is unilateral and undoubtedly founded on nothing but pure love.

Both Aidoo and Sutherland have used literature as a medium to express Ghanaian culture. They both share the belief that culture has become a requisite to social development. Though they teach culture, they challenge it on certain issues such as marriage, polygamy and female fertility. The traditional role of the woman has been to give birth and to be an agent of nourishment. Both Aidoo and Sutherland have vehemently challenged the idea that the woman is only a biological apparatus. They have further criticised the reasons for which some men desire wives especially in a polygamous society.

**Dramatic Techniques Employed in Portraying Ghanaian Culture:** Some of the dramatic techniques include language, humour and imagery. The action in both plays like any other work in the drama genre has a beginning, a middle and an end. In the marriage of Anansewa the action in the play begins when Ananse is lamenting bitterly over his state of abject poverty. In his words life is "whipping" him just as rain "whip" him.

Ananse: while life is whipping you, rain  
also pours down to whip you  
some more. Whatever it was that  
man did wrong at the beginning of  
things must have been really awful  
for all of us to have to suffer so (pp: 1)

The action continues to the middle part where Ananse in his bid to improve upon his standard of living and to make life worth living goes ahead to look for suitors for his daughter, Anansewa. By his deeds Ananse is extorting money from the four chiefs but his words suggest the opposite:

since forwardness has never become one of  
my faults, I will not even dare to drop a hint that  
the way is open for you to begin oiling the wheels  
of custom (pp: 14)

The action in the play culminates to an end in the scene where Anansewa "comes back" to life apparently on the wings of love after having feigned death.

Ananse:  
My child is waking does have such power!  
Christie, open the doors and let everybody  
in to see the power of amazing love.  
... Love has awakened my child (pp: 80)

Their language is witty and contains some elements of transliteration. For instance, when the suitors learn about Anansewa's untimely death, the Sapaase messengers describe the situation as "a case of no - sale - no - payment" (pp: 71).

Again in the opening scene Ananse says about himself that “life is whipping me” (pp: 31)

When Ananse hears the news about Chief-Who-is-Chief’s intention to present the head drink of Anansewa within a couple of weeks, he is elated and consequently invites the messengers to share a drink with him.

*Ananse: Delicious news! ... cut a little whisky with me (...)*

There are certain aspects of the language which could be described as metaphoric. When Ananse realises that he has tied knots which may be too difficult to untie, he describes his situation thus:

... that I have seized hold of the tail  
of a wild beast who will bite me if I let go.  
So I’m holding on to it. What else can I do? (pp: 32)

Again there is the element of song in any work of drama. This is seen in the role of the ‘mboguo’ in the play. The presentation is in the verse form. It is used for the elements of elaborate appellations of the various suitors and can be described as pieces of poetry. Also the ‘mboguo’ gives the entire play a rich musical quality which heightens its dramatic impact. The singing and dancing emphasizes the African background of the play. Such musical performances add to the comic and festive atmosphere of the play. It plays the role of chorus in a work of drama; giving comments on the incidents which come before or after them or which are simultaneous with them. For example, the opening ‘mboguo’ draws attention to the struggles, pains and hardships of life, this reflecting Ananse’s initial state of mind.

Players:

Oh life is struggle  
Oh life is a pain  
Oh life is struggle  
Oh life is a pain  
In this world (pp: 1)

The eleventh and final ‘mboguo’ is a joyful song celebrating how powerful true love is and the rarity of true helpers. Its position is very apt. It comes immediately after Anansewa has supposedly “risen” from the dead and it consequently ends the play on a joyous note.

Oh oh  
Is love’s power so strong?  
Is love’s power so strong?  
...let’s relate in love  
That we may thrive  
True love is rare  
... thank you, chief so rare  
... thank you, husband so rare (pp: 82)

Another dramatic technique used by the playwright is humour. Humour can be seen in various parts of the play. For instance when Ananse says that he has been battling with his thoughts so as to improve his standard of living.

I’ve been thinking, thinking and thinking  
until my head is earth quaking! (pp: 2)

Again in his words:

since forwardness is not one of my faults  
I will not even dare to drop a hint that...  
begin oiling the wheels of custom (pp:6)

Humour is seen again in Ananse’s reaction when he receives a telegram from Togbe Klu, presenting Anansewa’s head drink. He asks the property man to blow him some breeze.

Ananse:

within a few minutes when he feels  
okay he calls the property man to  
“cut off the breeze” (pp: 32)

Indeed the entire rehearsal for Anansewa’s feigned death scene can be described as humorous.

Similar dramatic techniques are present in Aidoo’s (1965) the Dilemma of a Ghost. The action in the play begins when Ato and Eulalie are preparing to leave America and come to Ato’s hometown in Africa. Eulalie begins to imagine the scenery she is sure to see in Africa.

Eulalie:

Wow! The palm tree, the azure sea, the sun  
and golden beaches ... coconut palms, palms - palms,  
aren’t they all the same? And anyway, why should I  
not  
go and see your folks? (pp: 3)

The action continues to a middle part where Ato and Eulalie have arrived and are more or less acclimatising to the African Milieu. Meanwhile Ato’s folks are also adjusting to Eulalie’s rather strange ways.

What kind of wife has Ato brought  
home from America! Eulalie smokes,  
drinks, takes care not to get pregnant. (pp: 41)

The play ends on the note where Ato himself is more or less not sure of himself as to whether it is good for him to have married Eulalie or not; considering her inability to adapt to his traditional set up. This is seen in Ato’s childhood day’s song which comes to him again:

Shall I go to cape Coast?  
Shall I go to Elmina?  
I can't tell  
Shall I?  
I can't tell  
I can't tell (pp: 50)

Aidoo's language in this play is also witty and does contain some amount of transliteration. When Ato's people visit him and his wife, Akroma, Ato's young uncle, wants to talk about Ato's wife but hesitates, wondering if he can discuss such an issue.]

Akroma:

if I am not putting my mouth into an affair  
which does not concern me, may I ask you where  
your wife is? (pp.39)

Humour as a dramatic technique is present in the play. For instance when Ato's mother sends food items to Ato and his wife the items include snails which Eulalie is just too frightened of and Ato's mother does not see why such a delicacy should frighten someone.

Eulalie: Eh .. some crawling things!

Anyway, tell your mother we are grateful  
... those horrid creatures ...!  
... what rubbish? If you think I  
am going to sleep with those creatures  
then you are kidding yourself (pp: 27)

Again when Ato's family comes over to Ato's residence with the sole aim of coming to wash Eulalie's stomach so that she can have children,

Ato says:

Uncle, did you say you are going to use  
the medicine to wash my wife's stomach?

Aidoo also uses song as one of her dramatic techniques. In the play there is a prelude and then the presentation by the first and second woman who are presented as neighbours. Their role can be compared to that of the chorus. The prelude gives account of the story so far, thus preparing the audience for what to expect. Similarly the first woman and second woman give comments about incidents which have taken place in the past as well as those which are yet to take place and set the pace for subsequent actions. For instance it is their comments that tell the audience the impression created about Eulalie.

2<sup>nd</sup> woman: ... she uses machines  
This woman uses machines for doing  
everything ... then the young people of  
the coming days are strange ... very strange (pp: 34,  
35).

1<sup>st</sup> woman: but this is too large for my head  
Or is the wife pregnant with a machine child? (pp:  
.35)

A closer look at the discussions of the various dramatic techniques reveals that the two plays under review both use dramatic techniques in portraying various aspects of the Ghanaian culture.

## CONCLUSION

Efua Sutherland and Ama Atta Aidoo as Ghanaian playwrights use their plays *The Marriage Of Anansewa* and *The Dilemma Of A Ghost* respectively to express certain aspects of Ghanaian culture as part of their literary scheme of things. Indeed, their plays can be said to be a mirror reflection of integral parts of the Ghanaian culture especially the Akan culture. The two express culture especially the Akan culture. They express the view that culture is the back bone of every community and must be accorded the due recognition.

In much the same way these two playwrights agree with the notion that culture is dynamic and therefore in their presentation they point out that amendments should be made where necessary to meet the changing times; some changes must certainly take place in order to improve upon our cultural values.

From the fore-going, the conclusion drawn is that there is indeed a link between literature and culture and these two playwrights have undoubtedly used their literary works to portray culture bringing to bear some changes that must take place to reflect the dynamism of culture in consonance with the changing times.

It is also important to note that African literature and culture are inseparable. Simon Gikandi argues that Achebe for instance portrays African culture a lot in his works. This influenced writers like Marechera. According to Gikandi (2001), "the most remarkable about Marechera's subjects was the fact that they took the existence of this African literature for granted and considered it inseparable from the idea of an African identity and a Pan-African culture" Gikandi (2001).

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