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Representation of The *Other* in Ghanaian Literary Texts: A Reading of Some Selected Works

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REPRESENTATION OF THE *OTHER* IN GHANAIAN LITERARY TEXTS: A READING OF SOME SELECTED WORKS

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ABSTRACT

Ghanaian literary texts have been greatly influenced by post-colonial theory which tends to depict and (expose) the inaccuracy of the duality embedded in western imperialism manifested in the concepts of the self and the other. With post-colonial theory as background and specifically the theoretical formulations from Said's *Orientalism* (1978), Bhabha's *The location of Culture* (1994), and Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (2001), this paper examines how Ghanaian written literature re-inscribes the concept of the *Other* with intent of justifying the existence of the advantageous self which apparently denigrates the other. Using textual analysis of some representative texts, I argue that Ghanaian literary artists portray the concepts of the *self* and the *other* with different connotations and permutations which reflect the ideals of the society within the geo-political space of world Literatures.

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Introduction

The concept of the *Other* or ‘otherness’ has been variously represented and re-inscribed in Ghanaian literary texts with several shades of differing critical meanings from the perspective of post-colonial theory. This representation foregrounds the intellectual foundations of a typically Pan-Africanist agenda meant to homogenise Ghanaian literary history. Ghanaian poet and critic, Kofi Anyidoho, in an essay examines the Ghanaian literary scene with a futuristic stance on what it entails to achieve a Pan-Africanist ideal. He cites great writers like Hayford, Awoonor, Brew, Aidoo and Armah whose creative works recall the violence and distortion Ghanaian (African) civilization has experienced ‘in its disastrous encounter with Europe’ (81) with connotative references to the representation of the *Other*. This is firmly dedicated to a Pan-African ideal meant to liberate the African peoples worldwide from the incapacitating effects of slavery and colonialism (81). To achieve this vision, Anyidoho suggests ‘an urgent need for the re-education of African peoples’ which he believes several of the major Ghanaian creative writers have been committed to (81). He specifically cites Aidoo in *The Dilemma of a Ghost* and *Anowa* to illustrate ‘certain important implications of the slave trade and slavery for African peoples both at home and in the Diaspora’. He further makes reference to Aidoo in *Our Sister Killjoy* to examine ‘the new kind of enslavement and self-enslavement that has become a major and disturbing aspect of the neocolonial condition in Africa’ which recaptures notions of *Otherness* (82). Anyidoho concludes his essay by citing the artistic visions of Armah in *Why Are We So Blest*, *Two Thousand Seasons*, *The Healers* to diagnose the historical enslavement of African peoples and the mental bondage that has resulted from such enslavement in the portrayal of *Otherness*. All this, in the view of Anyidoho, prefigures a demonstration of a total dedication of a co-operative effort on the part of Ghanaian creative artists as presented in Armah’s *Osiris Rising* and *KMT*.

In a related essay, Tamakloe examines the concept of class in Ghanaian cinematography and provides details of the paradigm shifts since its inception in the country. She discusses the various manifestations of the concept of class, its representation of the social changes, different identities and statuses that the audiences/spectators bring to bear, either consciously or not, to their reading of films. She argues that Ghanaian audiences have been ‘defined by their ethnicity, class and environment’ to determine ‘what divides us more or less significant than what unites us’ (iv). She draws upon Foucault’s formulation of the concept of *Othering* to establish the claim that Ghanaian audiences of films express their statuses, whether politically, socially, sexually or in any other way different depending on the types of jobs they have, the amount of money they make, the kind of friends they have, the places they live, the social circles they belong to in relation to others (34). *Othering* therefore, within the Ghanaian context, in both psychological and philosophical sense becomes connected with power and knowledge which perceives a difference between *us* and *them*.

Both Anyidoho’s and Tamakloe’s essays (though arbitrarily selected) provide examples of the manifestation of the concept of the *Other* in Ghanaian literary texts and popular culture. They re-

inscribe the postcolonial rhetoric which Lois Tyson opines as seeking ‘to understand the operations – politically, socially, culturally, and psychologically – of colonialist and anticolonialist ideologies’ (418). The manifestation also explains how a ‘subject conceives itself in relation to the other, with how groups of *us* and *them* stand in relation to each other’ (418). The critical issue worth perusing is whether Anyidoho and Tamakloe’s representations reflect the Ghanaian concept of *Otherness* as portrayed in literary works and other forms of popular culture. Representations manifest in various forms such as films, paintings, adverts, photographs, television and other forms of popular culture. They also manifest in written literature such as novels, plays, poems and journalistic pieces.

The word *Other* or ‘otherness’ has been used in this essay to mean the following: the italicized *Other* or *Otherness* is used to refer to the concept itself or its form, and the word ‘other’ or ‘otherness’ with the inverted commas is used to describe an individual or a group that exhibits otherness. This paper examines the representation of the *Other* in literary discourses as portrayed in Ghanaian literary works. Using textual analysis (of representative samples) and postcolonial theory, I establish how Ghanaian written literature portrays the concept of the *Other* to justify the existence of the privileged self as contrasted with the other and exposes the inaccuracies which form the basis of western imperialism. The paper also argues that Ghanaian literary artists represent the concepts of the *Self* and *Other* with different connotations and permutations to express the Ghanaian society’s frustration and their complicated condition as they interact with western culture. In addition, the representations capture society’s anxieties, hopes, and aspirations about the future and how these portray the realities of society.

The content of this essay is divided into four sections. It begins with an exploration of the conceptual framework that anchors the work, drawing upon the formulations from Said’s *Orientalism*, Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture* and Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” to examine how some Ghanaian literary texts reflect these theoretical formulations in their works. This is followed by the second section: ‘The Other as the Insider-Outsider Dialectic’, which examines how Aidoo in *Anowa* and *The Dilemma of a Ghost* re-conceptualises the concept of the ‘other’ and demonstrates the advantageous self through the portrayal of the heroines in the texts. In the third section: ‘The Other as the Reverse of Hegemonic Popular Culture’, the essay discusses how both Aidoo in *Changes* and Darko in *Faceless* challenge hegemonic patriarchal masculinities to reflect their portrayal of the concept of the *Other*. In addition, this section also examines how Armah in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* and *Fragments*, and Awoonor in *This Earth, My Brother ...* reverse the philosophical foundations of what the Ghanaian society considers admirable or not admirable in their portrayal of otherness. Finally, the essay concludes with a brief summary of the major highlights of the paper and how a critic can incorporate postcolonial theory to interpret some Ghanaian written texts.

Theoretical Formulation

As part of the methodological approach, the essay imposes the formulations of three literary theorists of postcolonial literature – whom I describe as the Trinity of colonialist ideologies– to direct the textual analyses of some selected texts in written Ghanaian literature. The aim is to demonstrate what Culler (127) refers to as the ‘hybrid subjects, emerging from the superimposition of conflicting languages and cultures’. Edward Said’s *Orientalism*, Homi Bhabha’s *The Location of Culture*, and Gayatri C. Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” will serve as the main anchorage through which this paper seeks to explicate the representations of the *Other* in Ghanaian written texts. One common feature that runs through their works is the overt effort to fundamentally distinguish between two humans or things using language and culture as the basis. The theories (I argue) are crafted as an expression of hope to the powerless with the intent of providing an avenue for the least endowed members of society to express their personal idiosyncrasies and salvage their distorted identity.

The concept of the *Other* or *Otherness* has been a fundamental concern in postcolonial studies and it is Frantz Fanon’s formulation in *The Wretched of the Earth* that develops the idea from Hegel, one of the first writers who introduced the notion of the *Other* to express the basic awareness of an individual’s self-consciousness which suggests that the *Other* is ‘not me’ but he/she is the ‘other’. The *Other*, denotatively, suggests an individual who lacks identity, dignity, and has no sense of belongingness to societal norm. In addition, it suggests one who is anti-social, anti-logic, anti-language, anti-custom and by implication he/she is the ‘foreigner’, unaccustomed, weird, unconventional, inappropriate and the unsuitable. This concept connotatively generates the ‘self’ which sees the ‘other’ as different, reinforcing the formalist binary oppositions used in analysing a text. It perceives society as divided into exclusive opposites which suggest that if the ‘self’ is well-organized, sane, good, and possesses a masculine trait, then the ‘other’ is muddled, ridiculous, evil and exhibits a feminine trait. This construction is what Ashcroft, Griffiths, and Tiffin (3) describe as a ‘process of demonization, which in itself expresses the ambivalence at the very heart of authority’ that the self inscribes.

In *Orientalism*, Said uses the phrase ‘The other’ to describe the Western fascination with the Orient and he contends that the Orient has served Western Europe as ‘one of its deepest and most recurring images of the other’ (10). Further, he argues that the Orient has helped unconsciously to ‘define Europe (or the West) as its contrasting image, idea, personality, and experience’ (11). He sets up an argument motivated by Michel Foucault’s conception of discourse to explain how the Orient is an imaginary cultural creation of the Occident; a critical relationship which justifies the discursive representation of the *Other* as the opposite of the ‘self’. The *Other*, Said opines, is ‘a convenient political label for the self-definition of the imperial’ West, which justifies colonialism and racism, something that Sartre calls, ‘racist humanism since the European has only been able to become a man through creating slaves and monsters (quoted in Said 237).

Some Ghanaian literary artists, through artistic representations, re-inscribe the Saidian views of the *Other* which captures notions of slavery, class consciousness, oppression and marginalization of the ignorant and weak and the paradoxical neocolonialist tendencies. Examples of such texts include Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound* (1911), Aidoo's *Anowa* (1970), *The Dilemma of a Ghost* (1965), *Our Sister Killjoy* (1994), Armah's *The Beautiful Ones Are Not yet Born* (1968), *Fragments* (1971), *Two Thousand Seasons* (1973), *Why Are We So Blest* (1972), Awoonor's *This Earth, My Brother ...* (1971). These works portray differing images of the concept of the *Other* with a verve to rewrite uncontested stories about slavery and its related issues which serve as the basis of disparity, sometimes reversing a binary opposition so that what used to be the 'other' becomes the 'self' and vice versa.

Another paradoxical mode of representation of the concept of *Otherness* is Homi Bhabha's formulation of difference in *The Location of Culture*. He views colonial discourse as suggesting a sense of rigidity and an inflexible order as well as disorder, dissoluteness and recklessness. He opines that the 'paradoxical and ambivalent nature of the colonizer/colonized relationship has been a focus for post-colonial theory' re-inscribed in literary texts (65). To him the force of the ambivalence provides the colonial stereotype a level of currency which ensures 'its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjunctives'. It also 'informs its strategies of individuation and marginalization, its appearance as original and authoritative and its articulation as repetition and difference' (66). Bhabha further suggests that the ambivalence manifests in the division of self /other dialectics but different from both 'the Hegelian master-slave dialectic and the phenomenological projection of otherness (66).

This essay imposes Bhabha's formulation in the analyses of some Ghanaian literary texts to demonstrate what Kehinde refers to as the "unequal relations of power based on binary opposition: 'Us' and 'them', 'First World' and 'third world', 'Self' and 'other', 'Powerful' and 'powerless', 'Torturer' and 'tortured', 'Master' and 'slave', 'Superior and 'inferior', 'Human' and 'sub human'" (108). Examples of some Ghanaian literary texts which reflect this view include Darko's *Faceless* (2003), Aidoo's *The Girl Who Can* (1997), Awoonor's "Songs of Sorrow", "We have found a new Land", "The Cathedral", Brew's "The Sea eats our lands", "A Sandal on the Head".

Gayatri Spivak's formulation in "Can the Subaltern Speak?" provides another theoretical window to direct the thesis of this paper. Her formulation points to the roles of 'intellectuals and academics in the discursive creation of the colonial subject' as the 'other' which she associates with the 'poor black female' that has been muted for a long time (2222). She poses these questions: Can the subaltern speak? Will the subaltern woman forever remain silent? In response, Spivak advocates a systematic unlearning of female privilege which 'involves learning to critique postcolonial discourse with the best tools it can provide and not simply substituting the lost figure of the colonized' (2223). She sums up her formulation thus, 'the female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish' (2237). Spivak's ideas tallies with

similar views expressed by Simon de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, the Indian feminist writer, Saronjini Sahoo, and the Black-American writer, bell hooks, and others. For example, Beauvoir identifies the 'other' as the minority or the least favoured one. In addition, she sees the 'other' often as a female when compared to a male. Sahoo avers that the female (or women) can only free themselves by 'thinking, taking action, working, creating on the same terms as men, instead of seeking to disparage them; she declares herself their equal' (quoted in Tamakloe 36-37). This essay will utilize some ideas from the above formulations in the analysis of the concept of the *Other* or *Otherness* in the analysis of some Ghanaian literary texts.

The *Other* as the Insider–Outsider Dialectic

Aidoo, one of the relatively old Ghanaian writers, has not only established her stature as a committed feminist who portrays the female as the 'other' but she re-inscribes the 'other' within the postcolonial discursive narration of women's stories. Her artistic aim is to pose questions pertaining how and why African women are subjugated, abused, neglected and mistreated by society. She represents women as strong, independent and often wilfully detached from society. Yet these women are inclined to conforming to society's expectations and classifications of them as presented in characters such as Anowa in the eponymous play, *Anowa*, Esi in *Changes* and Eulalie in *The Dilemma of a Ghost*. These three texts have been selected to demonstrate how Aidoo reconceptualises the concept of the *Other* and uses the narratives to develop both a national and trans-national discourse.

In *Anowa*, Aidoo creates an identity of a stranger, not only as a youth but as a different woman unlike any other woman, a wanderer and a migratory character in the heroine whose restlessness and determination manifest a personality who becomes the 'other' while the entire society sees itself as the 'Self abiding privileged centre' (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 104). The play itself recounts the story of a young audacious woman who decides to marry Kofi Ako against her parents' wishes (and choice) after rejecting several suitors. In pursuance of her goals in marriage to Ako, she abandons her family and people in the Yebe farming community to help her husband trade in animal skins. Obviously, this vocation brings wealth and prosperity to the couple. The husband's insatiable crave for wealth coupled with his subsequent indulgence in the trade of humans is fiercely resisted by Anowa. She considers it abnormal and wrong while Ako (and even the consumer-oriented society) accepts it as normal, leading ultimately to their tragic ends.

Aidoo's portrayal of Anowa in the play re-inscribes the concept of *Otherness* in making the heroine a strange child in her spatial location as 'outsider' and 'insider' among her people. The heroine is portrayed as a spirit-body personality described as 'Ewumawu' (Akans), 'Ogbanje' (Igbos), 'Odonkor' (Gas), and 'Abiku' (Yorubas). These are spirit children who wander and shuttle between life and death with a repeated purpose of terrorising the hegemonic foundations of the

community's social and cultural formulations. Their nature and identity always make them the 'other' different from the normal. Anowa's difference is in her avowed position as a girl (like other girls in the community of Yebi) who desires to marry, but unlike the others, she wants the marriage on her own terms and conditions. When she is first introduced in the play, she is carrying an empty water-pot which she 'overturns' and 'sits on it facing the audience' (Aidoo 9). This feat makes her a metaphor of the 'other' who will throw overboard societal aspirations and norms. Later in *Phase Three*, she rejects Kofi Ako's riches and bourgeois life that every average woman in Yebi would subscribe to. She prefers to dress shabbily and walk barefooted. Several characters in the play including Osam and Badua, Anowa's biological parents, suggest this *Otherness* in her. In the "Prologue" to the play, the Old Man refers to Anowa as 'A child of several incantations, / She listens to her own tales, / Laughs at her own jokes and / Follows her own advice' (7). The Old Woman observes, 'That Anowa is something else!' (7) and she refers to her as 'a witch' (40). Osam also concedes to his wife thus: 'This child of yours ... hmmm.... She was never even a child in the way a child must be a child' (31). Later, Badua also admits that her daughter is the returned spirit of a formerly dead child, hence her restlessness which becomes the manifestation of Anowa's "otherness" that the self-inscribed Yebi society considers strange. Within the geo-political space of the Ghanaian society, such spirit children are the subject and object of any verbal discourse. No wonder, she gets all the attention of the people of the Yebi community and later at Cape Coast. Anowa's views on marriage, child-birth, marital conjugal rights, slavery and other issues in the play, coupled with her inter-personal relationships with her parents, husband, and the entire community are fraught with contradictions and paradoxes. These challenge societal norms and at the same time re-inscribe the hegemonic foundations of the Ghanaian society.

The dramatist invests this nature and spirit of 'otherness' in Anowa to criticise the abhorrent practice of slavery in which 'The pale stranger' collaborated with the 'Lords of our Houses' after they have eaten from a 'common sauce-bowl' to subjugate 'our more active kinsmen from the north' (Aidoo 6). These images of slavery in *Anowa* reflect Said and Bhabha's formulations of the concept of *Otherness* in which the Europeans and their capitalist neo-colonist Africans see themselves as the 'self' while the slaves become the 'other'. Inevitably this creates a society of the privileged rich against the less-privileged poor. Aidoo, in Anowa's rejection of Kofi Ako's involvement in the slave business with its capitalist and consumerism cult of the Ghanaian society in the micro-text, responds to a system in which the poor and marginalised suffer endlessly at the hands of the capitalist slave masters. Anowa refers to the poor who are enslaved as the 'wayfarer' and someone who is a traveller' (37). She explains that, 'to call someone a wayfarer is a painless way of saying he does not belong. That he has no home, no family, no village, no stool of his own; has no feast days, no holidays, no state, no territory' (37). These notions of the 'other' bring into sharp focus Aidoo's visionary stance in prompting the Ghanaian society of our collective guilt about the 'bigger crime' that produced the 'disparate breed' (6). This 'bigger crime' was committed 'after the Lords of our Houses / signed that piece of paper - /The Bond of 1844 they call it - /Binding us to the whiteman /Who came from beyond the horizon' (8).

Murphy argues that

though the transatlantic slave trade was outlawed in Denmark in 1803, in England 1807, in the USA 1808, in the Netherlands in 1814, and in France both in 1794 and again in 1818, the trade in human slaves was still a lucrative enterprise on the west coast of Africa into the 1830s and 40s. Slave prices in the Gold Coast actually rose after 1820 as a result of both continued demands for exports and a possible increase in domestic consumption after 1820 as a result of both continued demands for exports and a possible increase in domestic consumption after abolition (48).

Murphy's argument objectifies the new global order of consumerism in the Ghanaian society which Kofi Ako and the entire society represent. It portrays a society that shares in the capitalist view of money making at the expense of the 'other' who are enslaved, have no identity of their own and confined to vagrant meaninglessness of existence. Aidoo portrays these otherness (of the 'other' of Anowa) in the servants, carriers, labourers, Horn Blower, Panyin-Na-Kakra (who fan an empty chair for hours) and the occupants in the Big House of Ako in Oguaa. They are victims of Ako's world where they become disillusioned about their identity and reduced to commodities that are consumed by their masters. Aminu Rashid (2014) opines that the play *Anowa* dramatises the loss of humanity. He suggests that the issue of class is an important aspect of human life which the elite use as a metaphor to define the colonial relationship wherein one observes 'conflicts between the maker and the made, the superior and the inferior, the rulers and the ruled' (7).

This binary opposition of *Otherness* is another way Aidoo presents the concept in *Anowa*. The dramatist exploits this concept to discuss the capitalist orientation of some African (or Ghanaian) societies which had gained independence from European rule but cannot escape the trauma of inflicting those 'imperialistic feeling of domination and colonial relationship' on others (Rashid 9). Aidoo's portrayal of the 'other' in *Anowa* finds a comparison in Awoonor's poem, "We have found a new land" in which the latter satirically criticises some members of the professional elite of the independent African states. These professionals blindly imitate the mannerisms and dress codes of their colonial masters. The poet creates a dichotomy between an 'insider-outsider' 'They', the 'smart professionals in three piece' who pursue a false common humanity – 'a new land' –, 'want to be seen in the best company' and the real 'insider' 'We' who 'pause to relearn the wisdom of our fathers' (Awoonor 212). This dichotomy recalls the neo-colonialist discourse and African's search for a continental identity.

Aidoo's representation of the concept of *Otherness* in *Anowa* is further inscribed in her feminist consciousness which broaches issues that are considered a taboo. She addresses the many struggles and obstacles of African women within the context of what Wilson-Tagoe describes as the 'larger issues of social, cultural and economic relations, which in turn provide a paradigm for exploring national culture and agency' (229). Issues such as sex, childbirth, impotence, witchcraft, madness,

wives standing up to their husbands and questioning their virility have been regarded as taboo subjects for women to discuss openly. However, Aidoo portrays her heroine as an 'insider' with a strong voice to interrogate society's views on them, and as an 'outsider' to deviate from the 'teleological history of the nation' where the African woman is figured solely as the bearer of the nation's children (Wilson-Tagoe 229). In the play, Anowa is portrayed as the 'other' who remains childless and marginalised until her tragic death but ironically, she becomes the mother of the dispersed nation or continent whose progeny recaptures notions of slavery, Pan-Africanism and Diaspora experiences. Anowa's discourse with her grandmother and the intelligent questions she poses in Phase Three of the text foregrounds her self-determination, even as a child aged eight, to uncover the truth about her people and their history. These acts of Anowa set her apart from the others in the community. She becomes like the 'objectified difference' in Bhabha and Spivak's formulations which provoke questioning that generates change. Anowa frightens her grandmother, who labels her 'a witch' (Aidoo 40). However, for Anowa the narrative of her people's bondage and crime against their own people become the source of her psychic schism. For as the Old Woman observes, Anowa is not 'begotten by normal natural processes... but issue[s] from cancerous growths, tumours that grow from evil dreams' (40). Anowa's strangeness by the end of the play is objectified in her outburst against society's collective ills and also mortified in her silence that drowns the village. For her, the difference is always there in the music of the *atentenben* 'wailing in loneliness' (64) and haunting her community even after her tragic death. She has spoken the unspeakable.

In *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, Aidoo portrays another complexity of the concept of the *Other* which manifests in differing forms of the 'inside-outsider' dialectic. The dramatist exploits one of the dominant recurring themes in postcolonial literature – culture clash and marginalization – to discuss the constructed binaries of the insider/outsider, centre/margin, home/exile, acceptance/rejection and the concept of Diaspora experiences. The play dramatises the story of the young Ghanaian hero, Ato Yawson, whose return from abroad with his African-American wife, Eulalie, generates series of tensions. The young woman struggles as an outsider because she hails from a different country, whose culture contravenes the culture of Ato's people. Ato's failure to bridge the gap between his westernised wife's culture and his people, especially in the area of childbirth, culminates in the near tragedy and his subsequent beating of Eulalie.

Aidoo selects the issue of marriage as a central trope to manifest *Otherness* and the conflict in the play. Within the construct of African societies, marriage is a communal rite not enacted simply by two individuals. It is a cementing of ties between families and clans who expect children from such unions (Mbiti 1969; Sarpong 1974; Nukunya 1992). Ato's decision to marry Eulalie without the family's consent therefore becomes the potential source of the conflict in the play. The dramatist presents him as an 'insider-outsider' who marries (or introduces) a complete outsider into the community. Ato's status as an insider Fante exhibits a trait of an outsider by contravening the customs of his people in marrying a complete stranger, who has no 'real name, no tribe, no

people' and worse still 'a descendant of a slave' (Aidoo 11). The nature and physical disposition of Eulalie as an Afro-American wife (and a descendant of slave) brings into focus the postcolonial debate of race, colour, gender and memories (or trauma) of slavery of the African people (or the Orient). Said argues that such people are 'exoticised, mystified, and represented as savage and seductive carrying all the dark traits of humanity' (Barry 192). Eulalie is here portrayed as the complete outsider similar to the Europeans who have conquered the insider, Ato, and made him a stranger to his own people. Nana, Ato's grandmother, captures this paradox of *Otherness* in the story she envisages to tell the ancestors of 'the daughter of slaves who come from the white man's land... carried off the children of the house / In shoals like fish' (Aidoo 14). She anticipates to tell them that 'one of their [ancestor] stock/ Has gone away and brought to their sacred precincts/ The wayfarer!' (14).

Aidoo foregrounds this issue of the wayfarer in the centre/margin dichotomy within the geographical space of the popular cultures of Africa and America as portrayed in the marriage between Ato and Eulalie on the one hand and the relation between Eulalie and her in-laws on the other hand. Ato is well aware that his people, who represent the centre of Fante culture, will not tolerate any marriage (or woman) which will not produce children. Such a woman or marriage is treated with disrespect (or even disdain) and disregarded as the cast-off of the acceptable norm. Eulalie's posture of refusing to adapt to the customs and norms of Ato's people renders her the complete outsider who does not appreciate the central value of snails. She refers to them as 'horrid creatures' and 'crawling things' (27). In addition, she does not welcome her in-laws into her home by offering them 'seats to sit on or water to cool their patched throats' (30). She smokes and drinks alcohol in the presence of her in-laws, refuses to attend the Thanksgiving Service of Ato's relative (43) and insults Ato's people as backward. Listen to Eulalie's outburst:

What else would they understand but their own savage customs and standards? Have they appreciation for anything but their own prehistoric existence? More savage than dinosaurs. With their snails and their potions! . . . Do you compare these bastards, these stupid, narrow-minded savages with us? Do you dare...? (Aidoo 44-45).

The situational irony is that Ato's people see Eulalia's culture and behavioural traits as a manifestation of the complete stranger, marginalised and evil spirit that is haunting Ato. This view gains credence as a means of exploring the popular discourse of post-colonialism in which the literature of the colonising culture falsifies the experiences and truths of the colonised people and inscribes an inferior view about them. Shadi Neimneh affirms that colonial philosophies and 'discourses are Manichean in logic' that involves 'radical dualisms which set binary oppositions between the self and the other'. One major difference is seen in 'the supposed superiority of the coloniser as opposed to the supposed inferiority of the native' who is portrayed as 'savage, backward and undeveloped' (135). Also, the coloniser sees himself as the centre of the world and

pushes the colonised to the periphery or side-lines. The coloniser, by extension, sees himself to be morally loftier and perceives the 'other' as evil and enigmatic. These differences, in addition to those of skin colour and physical features, portray the 'other' as less human and more primitive.

In *The Dilemma of a Ghost*, Aidoo presents the dichotomy between the centre and the periphery as the product of what Fanon sees as a 'Manichaeism Delirium'. It is a partition into paired oppositional images such as evil/good, stranger/familiar, false/true, savage/cultured and black/white; wherein 'blackness confirms the white Self and whiteness empties the black subject' (Fanon 195). Ironically, Eulalie is black herself but ascribes unto herself whiteness and a culture which looks down on Ato's. This generates the tension and paradox between what constitutes the centre and the periphery and the civilized and savage, pointing to the relevance of dualistic oppositions in the post-colonial discourse. This phenomenon attracts postcolonial writers such as Aidoo to protest against the western polarised ways of labelling. The dramatist's attempt at exposing the hollow binaries which have been the basis of inequality and otherness is portrayed in the irony of Eulalie's personality as an outsider and Ato's own distorted personality. Eulalie is not really white but sees herself as one who has the moral right to refer to Ato as the 'damned rotten coward of a Moses' (Aidoo 45). Ato also is unable to properly identify himself with his people's mores, let alone lead a crusade to educate them (and his wife) on what is considered standard in cultural interactions.

Aidoo's dramatic skill in making Ato slap his wife and the subsequent discourse between Esi Kom and himself at the end of the play re-inscribes a homogenising concept of *Otherness* in the home/exile dichotomy. Ato, who thinks he is a home-bred boy (no wonder Eulalie calls him 'Native Boy') and will enjoy the support from his mother for enacting the African masculinity (the act of slapping Eulalie because she calls his people 'uncivilized') is shocked that his mother repulses him. Rather Eulalie who leaves home and wanders aimlessly throughout the night in exile 'sitting on the grass in the school' (46) returns home to the embrace of Esi Kom. She chides Ato thus, 'No stranger ever breaks the law ... Hmm ... my son. You have not dealt with us well in this. And you have not dealt with your wife well in this' (49). Esi Kom's resolve to tell the entire family about the 'homely' truth of Eulalie's predicament and Ato's 'unhomely' attitude to both the wife and family unfolds the truth that:

Before the stranger should dip his finger
Into the thick palm nut soup,
It is a townsman
Must have told him to (Aidoo 49).

The imagery of a stranger 'dipping his finger into the thick palm nut soup' prodded on by the townsman evokes narratives inscribed in Diaspora discourses. The stranger, Eulalie, is guided by the ancestors (the ghost of Eulalie's mother) and the elders alive (Esi Kom) 'through the door that

leads into the old house' (50). Aidoo's play foregrounds this home/exile dichotomy and constructs a Pan-Africanism that privileges African women experiences as a direct root to the concept of *Otherness*.

The *Other* as the Reverse of Hegemonic Popular Culture

A re-reading of Aidoo's *Changes* (1993) elicits another representation of the concept of *Otherness* in Ghanaian literary texts when we impose Spivak's formulation on interpreting Aidoo's femino-centric perspectives which challenge the hegemonic patriarchal masculinities. The novelist systematically sets out to deal with issues that are more complex [in] nature than those relating to the issue of sex roles. She engages concerns that affect the socio-cultural and economic relations of humans which invariably become a prototype to explore a national and trans-national catalyst for development. Aidoo inscribes the utilitarian role of the feminist artist to evoke a change in society's perception of the woman as a 'sexual aid; a wet nurse and a nursemaid for your children: a cook-steward and general housekeeper: a listening post: an economic and general consultant: a field hand and if you are that way inclined a punch-ball' (Aidoo 259). The narrative in *Changes* recounts the experiences of Esi Sekyi, a senior statistician in the public service, who negotiates a geo-political space in her marital ups and downs with Oko, a teacher in a secondary school. Esi's story intertwines with Fusena and Opokuya's whose struggles against the patriarchal privileges in marriage bring into sharp relief Aidoo's brand of revolutionary feminism. The artist's feminism focuses on the role of women as nation-builders while at the same time also explores ways of improving the condition of women trans-nationally.

The novelist invests Esi, the heroine, with a strong voice which makes her the 'other' of women (and even of society). The heroine is placed in a better and advantageous position than her husband. She holds a Master's degree as against her husband who has a first degree. She owns a car and an allocated government bungalow which she shares with her husband. In addition, Esi has numerous opportunities to attend conferences and travel outside the country. These socio-economic privileges are deliberate choices the novelist imposes on Esi to make her determine how the marriage with Oko will have to be conducted against patriarchal expectations. Esi's resolve to divorce Oko after the infamous marital rape scene and her decision to marry Ali, a Muslim, but later annul that marriage suggests the *Otherness* of an educated woman whose choices and determined will rail against the oppression and injustices women suffer in marriage. The novelist suggests that it is an existentialist struggle to re-affirm the positive self-definition of women as they negotiate their social-cultural spaces in a polarised marital landscape. Though Fusena and Opokuya's marital experiences with Ali and Kubi Dakwa respectively suggest the many struggles and obstacles that continually affect the lives of African women, Aidoo illustrates her feminism with Esi's experiences to exemplify the struggles and triumphs of the otherness in women.

Like Aidoo, Amma Darko, a contemporary Ghanaian writer who Anyidoho refers to as ‘a worthy successor’ of Ama Ata Aidoo and Efuia Sutherland, has demonstrated ‘considerable skill in portraying the plight of women and young girls in a merciless world dominated by greedy, irresponsible and often cruel men in their life’ (sic) (Anyidoho ix). Her trilogy, *Beyond the Horizon* (1991), *Housemaid* (1998) and *Faceless* (2003), recreates the sordid realities of the Ghanaian society which has become depreciatingly decayed, stagnated and crumbling under the weight of materialism. These realities, in the view of the novelist, are pursued to the neglect of admirable virtues of society such as the upbringing of children. The narratives in the three novels of Amma Darko portray an unequal relation of power reflecting a binary opposition of an utterly selfish and brutal greed of the adult society (or parents) against the vulnerable poor children (especially young girls/women). The future of the latter is perpetually confined to hopelessness and doom evoking images of the torturer (adult society) against the tortured (girls and women), of the master against the slave and the exploiter against the exploited. These images manifest the reverse in societal values where the adult society neglects their responsibilities of caring and providing for children.

In *Faceless* for example, Darko presents *Otherness* in the portraiture of the dichotomy between the adult society on the one hand and the ‘other’ scavengers pushed ‘into the devouring jaws of the streets’ on the other hand (18). The novelist provides a detailed characterisation of the uncaring adult society as portrayed in the bully, Macho; the no-nonsense street lord, Poison; the irresponsible fathers, Kwei and Kpakpo; the crafty rapist, Onko; and the heartless collaborators such as Maami Broni and the helpless, Maa Tsuru. These adult characters maltreat and exploit the young girls - Fofu, Odarley, and Baby T - who become victims of society’s mistreatment of children and a manifestation of the ‘other’. The fate of the latter as portrayed by the novelist recaptures notions of the *Other* as conceived by both the Hegelian master-slave dialectic and Bhabha’s formulation of individuation and marginalization (Bhabha 66). The exploited victims, as Darko in *Faceless* inscribes, represent the vast majority of the homeless, tortured and marginalised whose dreams, similar to the fourteen-year-old Fofu’s, is to

be able to go home one day to visit my mother and see a look of joy on her face at the sight of me. I want to be able to sleep beside her. I wish her tell me she was happy I came to visit her. Whenever I visit her, she doesn’t let me stay long before she asks me politely to leave. She never has a smile for me . . . one day she said to me, “Go. You do not belong here”. If I do not belong to where she is, where do I belong? (Darko 2)

The dream of these street children coupled with the rhetorical question that ends the above quote introduces Darko’s vision of social reality into the narrative discourse on the concept of the *Other*. In contrast to the hopelessness of the street children and their parents’ plight, Darko provides a picture of a seemingly stable family unit in the home of the Adades. Their children could at least enjoy the comfort of a secure roof over their heads, parental love and a ‘homely environment’. The

novelist's vision pays respect to the special role of Kabria, whose enterprising skills in managing the home and her collaborative effort with her fellow sisters at MUTE are commendable. Darko uses these women to uncover the hidden stories of the *Other* as portrayed in the central trope of streetism in the narratives. In addition, the novelist uses the efforts of these women to highlight her feminist point of view which questions societal values in raising children.

Another renowned Ghanaian writer whose works have been selected to illustrate the thesis of this essay is Ayi Kwei Armah. His novels and critical essays examine life in contemporary Ghana (and Africa as a metaphorical concept). They also mirror Africa's colonised past, the current problems that plague the continent and a strong advocacy for the return to traditional African mores and culture as the surest path to unity and Armah's Pan-Africanist drive. Despite the fact that Armah's works have generated controversial and provocative debates among scholars both in Africa and Western literary circles, (Mensah; Ravenscroft; Walker; Wright; and Anyidoho), he is considered an intellectual. In fact, Angmor (26) calls him 'the paragon' whose vision for Africa's future is greatly respected. In his first two novels, Armah contrasts two worlds of materialism and moral values, deep-seated corruption and utopian ideals, and social pressure and integrity. These connotatively portray the concept of the *Other* by reversing the philosophical foundations of what the Ghanaian society considers admirable or not admirable. The dichotomy between the two opposing worlds reflects what critic Gakwandi (128) describes as 'the social imbroglio'. In such a situation certain evil geniuses take advantage of society's inertia to satisfy their private interests and gratify their animal desires while certain other men who are neither evil nor heroic enough to actively oppose the evils they see around them are forced into social withdrawal.

In *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Born*, Armah chronicles the story of a nameless hero – The Man—who struggles to reconcile himself with the reality of post-independence materialistic Ghana. The fictive society the artist creates is peopled with characters which Edu Yankson describes as 'diseased corrupt souls' (55). These characters include the Bus Conductor, Amankwa, the timber contractor, the allocations clerk, Koomson and his Lawyer Politicians and the Policemen who mount road blocks to extort money from the public. The dizzying speed with which these characters loot the nation's coffers creates an overwhelming imagery of decay, putrefaction and rot that chokes the reader to the point of nausea, vomit and death. These "diseased souls" are hailed by the society epitomised in the characters of Oyo, the mother-in-law of The Man, the Party Men and Zacharias Lagos. As a contrast to these lot, Armah creates the 'other' in the characters of the hero- The Man- (a walking corpse), Teacher (a stark naked man), Maanan (a mad woman), Kofi Billy (a one legged man) whose impotence and uselessness to their families resonate in Awoonor's "Songs of Sorrow". In Awoonor's poem, the persona is pushed to the 'world's extreme corner' where 'I can only go beyond and forget' (41). The imagery of hopelessness and emptiness that characterises the 'other' which Armah creates in the novel is foregrounded in the symbol of the alienation of The Man. There is no hope of him asserting his individuality (just like Teacher in Armah's novel) in society. He remains anonymous, obscure and insignificant both in the stagnated office and at home where he is despised by his family and ignored by the world. This reversal in

society's psychology manifests Armah's portrayal of the "other" who instead of being applauded is rather taunted.

The imagery of hopelessness and futility which Armah portrays in *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* to reflect the lot of otherness is re-inscribed in his second novel *Fragments* (1970). The narrative tells the story of Baako's inability to meet the expectations of his consumerism cargo cult society. He is pushed over from the centre to the margin where he undergoes a mental breakdown ending in a psychiatric asylum. While there, Baako finds comfort in Juana, the psychiatric doctor. Indeed, Armah's artistic effort in presenting the experiences of Baako in *Fragments* suggests an 'other' who finds a comparison with Awoonor's hero in *This Earth, My Brother* (1971). Amamu's tragedy in the novel is partly attributable to his supreme idealism which renders him incapable of dealing with the rot of his society. He is always considered queer by his sordid world which has pushed him to the periphery of life. In a series of the narratives, we see:

Amamu leafing through a book he was holding. He had suddenly withdrawn from the discussion. His friends and the other club members were aware of this habit of sudden withdrawal. And they said he was a queer man. He also had a habit of introducing such outlandish topics as philosophy and theosophy.... Whenever he launched into these learned monologues, his friends listened with a shy deference, and admired his learning, but said to themselves: the man is mad (Awoonor 25).

The malaise of hopelessness in Amamu's immediate society drives him to find comfort in the physical romance with Adisa and spiritually with the mermaid. The similarity in the tragic experiences of Baako in *Fragments* and Amamu in *This Earth, My Brother...* homogenises the presentation of the 'other' as the reverse of the philosophical foundations of a society in which the 'admirable' is pushed to the periphery and the morally bankrupt take centre stage. These portrayals in Ghanaian literary writings reverse the discourses on the dualistic opposition between the 'self' and the 'other'. According to the formulations of Said and Bhabha, the *Other* is perceived as evil and drawn to the periphery, but in Armah and Awoonor's works the *Other* now becomes the moral centre and the 'self'. Conversely the 'self' becomes the evil and detested by society as the *Other*. Consequently, in Armah's *Fragments* the morally bankrupt characters (such as the greedy uncle, Foli; avaricious shrivelled mother, Efua; morally bankrupt sister, Araba; the bureaucratic blind head of Ghanavision, Asante Smith; the blood sucker, Akosua Russell; and the blind, enslaved souls of the new rulers who now occupy the proud seat of their slave masters) form the corpus of the *Other* of the dominant cultural ideologies. However, the morally upright characters like Baako and Naana (and possibly Juana and Ocran) become the 'self'.

Conclusion

These conflicting reverse differences between the ‘self’ and the “other” illustrate the thesis of this essay. They also demonstrate how the reader can apply and incorporate postcolonial theory as a corpus of ideas to interpreting some works of Ghanaian artists who not only counter the Manichean Colonial logic but also expose the contradiction and fallacies inherent in the formalist binary mutually exclusive terminologies. Thus, the differing meanings emerging from the discussion on the concept of the *Other* in the selected Ghanaian literary texts suggest the collective effort of literary practitioners to reconstruct an identity that reflects the ideals of the Ghanaian society. For Aidoo, she re-inscribes the *Other* by taking advantage of the issue of gender as a subject to interrogate the intellectual foundations of Ghana’s (Africa) colonial past and re-enact a discourse that acknowledges the creation of a new world order. In Aidoo’s artistic world, women– the “other”– will play active roles as demonstrated in her heroines Anowa, Eulalie and Esi. For Amma Darko, who follows in the footsteps of Aidoo in re-inscribing the feminist discourse, portrays a conflicted picture of the *Other* as the tortured and maltreated whose fortunes in life can be resuscitated under the tutelage of women championing an equitable society. For Armah and Awoonor, they reverse the formalist binary opposition of what society considers as the centre and admirable and introduce a moral centre which deviates from the norm.

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Teiko, Okain N. “Changing Conceptions of Masculinity in the Marital Landscape of Africa: A Study of Ama Ata Aidoo’s *Changes* and Buchi Emecheta’s *The Joys of Motherhood*”. *Matatu* 49.2 (2017): 329- 357. Print.

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