

Expressing Culture Through Drama: A reading of *Anowa* and *the marriage of Anansewa*

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between literature and culture through seminal effort exhibited in two plays; *Anowa* and *The Marriage of Anansewa* by Ama Atta Aidoo and Efua Sutherland respectively. With various discourse in the plays, we strive to analyse the link between literature and culture. The paper begins with a discussion of some theories of culture and literature and, per what is presented in the two plays, proceeds to establish the relationship between culture and literature. We observe that these foremost female writers are using drama to construct icons and symbols for women in particular and as a way of raising the consciousness of society or mankind in general about certain practises that affect women in particular in one way or another. Most importantly however, among other things, we also discuss the use of literature as a means of teaching acceptable cultural practices and also as a means of criticising unfavourable aspects of a particular culture. In a nutshell, we contend that literature can be used as a tool to sensitize a group of people and to teach and sustain essential socio-cultural practises.

1. Introduction

In this paper, we examine the relationship between literature and culture with a critical look at various discourse and aspects of life presented in two plays, namely *Anowa* and *The Marriage of Anansewa* by Ama Atta Aidoo and Efua Sutherland respectively. We begin with a discussion of some theories of culture and literature and proceed to establish the relationship between them in section 2. Besides the establishment of the culture-literature connection, we observe that the two plays aim to construct icons and symbols for women in particular and as a way of raising the consciousness of society or mankind in general about certain practises that affect women in particular in one way or another. Accordingly, in section 3, among other things, we explore the use of literature as a means of teaching acceptable cultural practices and also as a means of criticising unfavourable aspects of a particular culture. Section 4 concludes the paper with a clarification that the literature-culture connection is appropriate for the sustenance and re-orientation of traditional cultural stipulations.

2. Literature and Culture

Eagleton (1983)¹ opines that literature embodies the values and tastes of a particular social class. Here, Eagleton lays emphasis on content, which must teach those values considered important; "... in much that is classified as literature, the truth-value and practical relevance of what is said is considered important to the overall effect" (Eagleton 83: 8). Accordingly, it is clear that literature must provide a widely-accepted and approved forum through which shared values may be delivered.

Eagleton (1983) notes that the concept of literature in the 18th century referred to the whole body of valued writing, rather than creative and imaginative writing as we have it today. The writing which embodied the values and 'tastes' of a particular social class therefore qualified as literature. In this view, the plays, *The Marriage of Anansewa* and *Anowa* by Efua Sutherland and Ama Atta Aidoo respectively can be considered as classical portrayals of literature. They teach 'the truth-value'; they articulate the cultural values and tastes of their respective cultures.

From the 19th century onwards, literature became synonymous with imaginative writing. However, most of the issues that are taken up in the writings concern universal human values. Thus, the view that literature must teach shared values among other things is dealt with. Arnold (1882 [1993]) assigns two major reasons for the popularity of literature in the 18th century:² The first reason was the need to forge unity between the middle class and the ruling aristocracy and the second reason was the need to diffuse political and social manners as well as correct tastes and common cultural standards. The actual aim of the ruling aristocracy was to use literature as a means of distracting the masses from their immediate predicaments and nurturing in them a spirit of tolerance and generosity so as to ensure the survival of private property. Thus, literature was a means to an end; ensuring that the property of the ruling aristocracy is protected from the envy of the middle class. The link between Arnold's view of literature and Eagleton's lies in the power of literature as a vehicle through which acceptable values are taught.

Moving on to the term culture, among several but related definitions, Damen (1987: 367) define it as "learned and shared human patterns or models for living; day-to-day living patterns". He further explains that these patterns and models pervade all aspects of human social interaction, such that culture is mankind's primary adaptive mechanism. Arnold (1966) looks at culture as follows.

"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 as a general perfection, developing all parts of our society."

——— Arnold (1966: 11)

¹ Eagleton (1983) is a book entitled *Literary Theory: An Introduction* by Terry Eagleton. Eagleton is a tutor in English at Wadham College, Oxford and a renowned critic of literary works.

² Arnold (1882), which was republished in 1966 and with his other works in 1993 by Cambridge University Press, is entitled *Culture and Anarchy*.

The above definition corroborates Eagleton's (1983) discussion of literature. That is to say, if literature aims at teaching values and 'tastes' and culture aims at perfection, then, it can be said that literature is actually a means to achieving perfection; the values and 'tastes' taught by literature are calculated strategically to realise an orderly society. Furthermore, Arnold (1966) points out the fact that culture is conservative in nature and succinctly asserts it as follows.

"Perfection, as culture conceives, is not possible while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required under the pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection [and] to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping hitherward."

Arnold (1966: 48)

From the above, the conservative nature of culture is seen in the fact that it fiercely disallows flexibility and individuality. The above also holds true that culture has a passion for ensuring that all members of the community strictly adhere to its stipulations. The view that culture is conservative is attested to by Sarpong (1974),³ who explains culture as the integral sum total of behaviour traits that have been learned by members of the society and something that is passed on from one generation to the next; specifically,

"In every society, there is a continuity of thought and action which is safeguarded by sanctions against those members of the society who refuse to follow the accepted modes of behaviour that are laid down for them in the culture. These sanctions may be corporal (for example death), or spiritual (such as illness) or social (such as ridicule)."

Sarpong (1974: 198)

Lotman and Uspensky (1986) also note the conservative nature of culture.⁴ They explain that culture is not a universal set in itself, but a subset organized in a specific manner, and differentiates itself from what is anti-culture. Thus, they suggest that culture has its being residing in its very opposite; that is, it is in its opposite that culture reveals itself, as presented in the following.

³ Sarpong, P.A. (1974). *Ghana in Retrospect: Some Aspects of Ghanaian Culture*. Tema: Ghana Publishing Corporation. Peter Akwasi Sarpong is a recognised voice on issues relating to religion, culture and social development. He is the immediate past Catholic Archbishop of Kumasi, Ghana.

⁴ Lotman, Y. and B. A. Uspensky. (1986). On the Semiotic Mechanism of Culture. In Hazard Adams and Leroy Searle (eds.), *Critical Theory since 1965*, 410-413, Tallahassee: Florida State University. This paper seeks to explore in detail the inner workings of culture.

“Culture never encompasses everything but forms instead a marked-off sphere. Culture is understood only as a section, a closed-off area against the background of non-culture. The nature of opposition may vary: non-culture may appear as not belonging to a particular religion, not having access to some knowledge, or not sharing some type of life and behaviour. But culture will always need such an opposition. Indeed culture stands out as the marked member of this opposition.”

Lotman and Uspensky (1986: 410)

Lotman and Uspensky continue to share their own understanding of culture as follows.

“We understand culture as the nonhereditary memory of the community, a memory expressing itself in a system of constraints and prescriptions. This formulation, if accepted, presupposes the following consequences. First of all, it follows that culture is by definition, a social phenomenon.”

Lotman and Uspensky (1986: 411-412)

Culture as a social phenomenon therefore behoves members of a community, whose identity is linked to adherence to a particular culture, to ensure that their culture is upheld and defended. In other words, in any society where identity is linked to culture, there is a marked-off conservatism which acts as a blockade that disallows the intrusion of aspects that are considered anti-culture. Interestingly, Sarpong’s position that culture is passed on from one generation to the next, rather than being something which is biologically inherited, corroborates Lotman and Uspensky’s argument of culture as nonhereditary. Culture then can be explained as a system which evolved from the collective conscience of a community whose people decided to ‘invent’ all the aspects of a culture and identify themselves with it.

3. Exploring the two plays

The Marriage of Anansewa can be described as a cultural play. It tells of a father, *Ananse*, who submits his daughter’s suitors to test so as to find out which one of them can display financial strength and also seek the welfare of his daughter. Through tactical manipulation of some cultural stipulations, Ananse finally finds his choice and the daughter, *Anansewa*, is set for a happy marriage. What is observed in this play is a seeming loss of freedom and, in terms of traditional society, a submission to prescribed cultural practices by *Anansewa*.

Also, in *Anowa*, the issue of choosing a suitable partner comes up. However, unlike the *Anansewa*, *Anowa* (the heroine of the play) usurps patriarchal power by insisting that she would choose her own husband. Here, what appears as the expression of freedom by the woman is rather seen by the traditional society as a senseless display of pride. She is taunted as a witch, since she is considered barren. *Anowa*, however, vindicates herself by exposing to the world the truth about her husband, *Kofi Ako*. With this vindication of self, *Anowa* leaves this world and its troubles by drowning

herself in the sea. But, the traditional society vindicates itself by the suicide of Anowa.

As will become evident in the rest of the paper, the two plays bring out some important aspects of the Akan culture. With examination of four aspects of Akan culture (for want of space), we observe how literature has been used to express cultural values; that is, the literature-culture connection. The four aspects to be explored are the outdoor ceremony, the head drink, belief in the supernatural and ancestral veneration, and child birth and choice of a husband.

3.1 Outdoor ceremony as an aspect of Akan culture

In *Anowa*, much is not told of an outdoor ceremony. We are only told by Badua in the opening scene that her one major worry lies in the fact that, six years after Anowa's puberty, she has still refused to marry. This probably suggests that Anowa had been outdoored at puberty to 'inform' the traditional society that she is now ripe to marry and, apparently, Badua was so worried that Anowa had simply refused to marry, even though so many men had proposed to her within those six years.

In outdoor ceremony, the operative religious and/or cultural terms are 'puberty rites' and 'initiation ceremonies'. Sarpong (1974:74) observes that the most important effect of initiation ceremony, which includes puberty rites, is "that [it] introduces one into sex and marriage life". His observation reveals that on reaching puberty, the adult girl is exhibited through the puberty rite to the public as a way of informing them of her readiness to enter into marriage. Thus, by refusing all suitors, six years after her puberty, Anowa was not behaving as expected of her by the traditional society. In a way, this shows that the playwright is attesting to that cultural practice which insists on a girl marrying only after she has reached puberty. The anxieties expressed by Badua at the delay of Anowa's marriage after her puberty also explains a cultural fact; that is, time is valued, as there is supposed to be a right time for everything that needs to be done.

In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, on the other hand, we see an elaborate description of puberty rite, which is referred to as 'outdoor ceremony' in the play, as it was specifically meant by Ananse to show that Anansewa is ready to enter into the adult world of marriage.

Anansewa's outdoor ceremony was done late in her life as evidenced by Aya's complaint in the opening scene of Act 3:

"I can't understand my son Ananse at all. Why does he want an outdoor ceremony for Anansewa all of a sudden? You school people say you have thrown these things aside. Very well, throw them aside. But to wait until five years after the girl has become a woman and then say 'Outdoor her'! That's not good custom-keeping in anybody's world."
(Pg. 35)

Aya's complaint corroborates an earlier mentioned view that the traditional society believes in doing the right thing at the right time. The complaint also indirectly explains the reason behind the growing demise of some of our cultural practices. Aya categorically states in her complaint that Western education is to be blamed: "You *school people* say you have thrown these things aside." However, the fact that the ceremony was performed, irrespective of the apparent 'lateness', proves the relevance of this cultural stipulation. Of even more relevance is the fact that the ceremony could not be forestalled especially as Anansewa had been prepared to marry a chief. That is, as a chief's wife, she is obliged to fulfil all her cultural roles. The chronological order in our cultural setup is also attested to in this play.

The interesting aspect of the outdoor ceremony lies in the symbolic images used during the ritual. Anansewa, we read, is shaved and bathed with soap and water. This symbolises the need to keep a clean body in adulthood and the water is to give her long life. Also, lime is used on her head. According to Aya, the lime is to season Anansewa "so that when life's hardship approaches, she will be capable of standing firm to field them" (p. 39).⁵ Sacred palm-oiled yam is sprinkled to ensure the protection by the ancestors. This explains the belief that the ancestors too must be cared for by the living, so that the ancestors would in turn protect and mediate for the living.⁶ This probably explains Okonkwo's lamentation in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* that when he dies and becomes an ancestor, he would only come to find the ashes of past sacrifices, not fresh food because his effeminate son, Nwoye, had turned to Christianity.⁷

Furthermore, Anansewa's lips are touched with an egg to invoke blessings for her. The egg symbolizes fertility, as it protects and feeds the embryo. Here, it is important to realise that the ancestors are 'fed' before a request is made to them to bless Anansewa. This suggests that, in the ancestral world, appreciation is like an insurance policy that needs to be renewed. Even of more importance among the blessings is the unstated fact that the ultimate expectation is for the woman to give birth. We are also told that Anansewa, was also cleansed with *Nyanya leaves* to purify her and chase away all evil forces that may attempt to wreck her life. Finally she is decorated with ornaments; gold is used to adorn her and also to show to the world that she is as valuable as gold.

Having performed this ceremony, Anansewa is thus ready to 'marry a chief'. Here, there is a striking difference between Anansewa and Anowa; whereas Anansewa heeds to the advice of her father and generally co-operates with the traditional society, we read of Anowa undermining the traditional society by insisting on finding her own husband.

⁵ Lime is especially used to cleanse and to eradicate slime (especially in the preparation of snails). Thus the lime image symbolises the determination of these matrons to ensure that Anansewa does not slip on the slimy path of life.

⁶ See section 3.3 for further details.

⁷ Achebe, Chinua. (1964). *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, p.108.

3.2 Head-drink as an aspect of Akan culture

In *Anowa*, much is not told of the head-drink ceremony.⁸ This is because the eponymous Anowa walks out on her parents as they are against her marriage to Kofi Ako. In fact, we read that Anowa even shuns the protection of her mother and calls her a witch for expressing a contrary view of her marriage. None of her uncles are present on the day of her departure with Kofi Ako. Also we do not read of any items presented by Kofi Ako's family members to ask of her hand in marriage. These reasons explain the lack of adequate representation of head-drink in *Anowa*. However, the head-drink finds prominence in *The Marriage of Anansewa* and, here, Ananse's penetrative insight into the cultural stipulations of the traditional society enables him to manipulate culture in his own favour.

In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, we see the significance of the head-drink as an important aspect by which marriage is legally established. Referred to as the bride wealth by Sarpong (1974), it ratifies the marriage because it is considered as evidence that attests to the fact that matrimonial union has duly been entered into. Thus, it the duty of any man wishing to marry to pay the head-drink before he can claim the woman as a wife. In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, Ananse displays his knowledge of this traditional stipulation. He knows that the financial gifts he receives on behalf of Anansewa do not constitute the head-drink and, so, he coaxes the four chiefs to oil the wheels of custom. The playwright attests to this fact when she comments as follows.

"It is very clear that he knows the customs more than well. Notice how he has them at his fingertips spinning them out, weaving them into a design to fit his purposes. It would be amazing if there was any among those four chiefs who did not know that a man who desires to marry somebody's daughter can improve his chances by paving his way with gifts. Ananse has selected men who will do exactly as he hopes and do it properly." (p.16)

The micro story of Akwasi and Akosua in *The Marriage of Anansewa* buttresses the fact that no man can claim a woman as a wife even if he has given her a lot of gifts, unless he has placed the customary head-drink on the table. And, in *The Marriage of Anansewa* itself, this is also clearly expressed by the male messenger of Sapaase palace, who informs Ananse that the chief of Sapaase has disassociated himself from Anansewa's burial because he had not presented her head-drink; "Therefore, what our royal one has to say is this: he has no right to give burial to this child because the head-drink did not come to make it conclusive" (p.71). This utterance from the male messenger of Sapaase palace could indeed indicate the fact that the chiefs knew of the cultural stipulation of head-drink and this could explain why none of the three other chiefs dared lay claim of Anansewa after the latter had 'come back to life' to marry her sweetheart, Chief-who-is-chief.

⁸ The head-drink is (symbolised by) a token sum of money and some drinks, which is formally handed over to the family of the prospective wife on behalf of the prospective husband.

Sutherland's expression of the cultural stipulation of head-drink in *The Marriage of Anansewa* comes with a note of caution. It tactically advises prospective husbands to exercise some level of restraint when giving too many gifts to a young woman, since the woman is not obliged under any custom to refund those gifts in the event of a break up.

3.3 Belief in the supernatural and ancestral veneration an aspect of Akan culture

The Akan belief in the supernatural is also expressed in both plays. In *Anowa*, in particular, it is attested in the Old Woman's claim that Badua "will surely be punished by the gods for refusing to let a born priestess [Anowa] dance" (p. 8). In other words, the belief of many traditional societies is that gods and other supernatural elements are worshipped and that when one goes contrary to their prescriptions, it constitutes disobedience and the culprit will not be spared. This probably explains the anxieties of Badua at Anowa's haughty ways. In *The Marriage of Anansewa*, the belief in the supernatural is also seen in the sprinkling of the palm-oiled yam during puberty rights. As noted earlier, this stems from the belief that the ancestors desire our care and that, when they are kept satisfied, they would protect and mediate for the living. The potency of the Akans' belief in their ancestors and the supernatural in general has been appreciably captured by Sarpong (1974) as follows.

"The ancestors are said to send help to their relatives. One ancestor may indicate to one of his own people the remedy of an illness in his dream. Another may send material things such as money, clothing, etc. Another may see to it that the girls of his lineage are endowed with fecundity – the greatest blessing for the Ghanaian woman."

Sarpong (1974: 41)

Indeed, the above lines explain that the ancestors' desire to be venerated and the desire of the living to enjoy the constant goodwill of the ancestors.⁹ For instance, in *the Marriage of Anansewa*, Kweku Ananse invokes the supernatural and pleads with his ancestors to help him in his moment of utter difficulty (i.e., when he needed to make Anansewa wake up from her feigned death) as follows.

Ancestors, I am pleading with you,
If it is your desire
As it is ours
That Chief-who-is-chief
Should marry Anansewa,
See to it that she returns to life!
Wake her!
See to it that Anansewa awakes.
And returns to become a bride! (p.78)

⁹ Besides the sprinkling of the oiled yam and the offering gifts such as the pouring of expensive alcoholic beverages in the form of libation, etc., the ancestors are also venerated through praise songs and poetry recital which speaks volumes of the ancestors' character and achievements during their life time.

Now, considering the fact that Anansewa did not really die, but Ananse has to fake her death to hide away his exploitation of Anansewa's suitors and to ensure that she is properly married to the man who really loves her, it is understandable that Ananse diverted his thank you to the 'power of love' rather than to the ancestors. This explains that, while ancestral veneration is expected of every Akan, thanks are given to the source they are due. Had Anansewa really died and had she been really resurrected by the ancestors, Ananse would have given the praise to them.

For Sutherland to expose the extent to which one can lean unto the potency of spiritual powers in order to exploit others reveals her desire to use literature to warn her readers to be weary of fake spiritualist and other people of supernatural inclination and to be more rational on issues that border on the supernatural.

3.4 Child birth and choice of a spouse as an aspect of Akan culture

In the Akan society, as in many other traditional African communities, a married woman is expected to bear a child. If a woman fails to bear a child, it is considered an abomination. This disturbing traditional expectation of child bearing is revealed in *Anowa* as Anowa, the tragic heroine, is shunned by her traditional society because she had no child. She is taunted as a witch because she is seen as eating her own children and having the potential of eating other women's children. Girls tell this in the gossip at the fish kilns; Girl: "Takoia is certainly telling everyone that mistress, I mean mother, is swallowing the [babies] because she is a witch" (p. 48).¹⁰ Sarpong (1974: 67) attests to the woes of the woman who is considered barren and the implication of barrenness, thus "Pregnancy is to be considered a happy phenomenon ... for to be childless is socially disastrous". Sarpong reiterates as follows.

"Motherhood is the principal, if not the ultimate end, of marriage. Fertility for the girl is crucial especially in the matrilineal society since it ensures that the society does not die out. Barrenness is therefore the greatest calamity that can befall a Ghanaian woman".

Sarpong (1974: 69)

We observe that the playwright is using literature to revisit a disturbing cultural expectation, which assigns to women alone the responsibility of giving birth. Furthermore, the playwright tactfully calls on the traditional society to be objective in such cases, since the cause of the childlessness could be at the man's end. Indeed, we read in the play of Kofi Ako's abrupt refusal to Anowa's request that he takes a second wife through whom he might beget children. If Kofi Ako is a 'man', why should he refuse to marry a second wife and beget children with her when Anowa has allowed it? Again, why should he also restrain Anowa from telling it all to Nana? These behaviours on Kofi Ako's part suggest that he knows of his problem. Yet, relying on cultural misconceptions, he simply lays the blame of their childless marriage on Anowa. Getting involved in the village gossip about the plight of Anowa, Old Woman also suggests the possibility that Kofi Ako is impotent as follows.

¹⁰It is interesting to note that it was women who gossiped about Anowa and even called her a witch. The received view that women are their own enemies is thus manifested.

“Oh Kofi Ako! Some say he lost his manhood because he was not born with much to begin with; that he had been a sickly infant and there was only a hollow in him where a man’s strength should be. Others say he had consumed it acquiring wealth or exchanged it for prosperity. But I say all should be laid at Anowa’s doorstep ... they say she always worked as though she could eat a thousand cows.” (p. 63)

From the above lines, Old Woman also blames Anowa despite her suspicion of the possibility that Kofi Ako is impotent. But, this goes to support that fact that, in the traditional society, it is the woman who suffers for a childless marriage. The traditional society is more than ready to vindicate the man in a childless marriage and rush to blame the woman. As clearly expressed here, we contend that *Anowa* is cautioning against ‘culturally incorrect’ practices.¹¹ It can further be inferred from Old Woman’s accusation that the playwright is highlighting one of the stumbling blocks to the woman’s achievement of her full potential which, as demonstrated here, are cultural and not biological.

The issue of childbirth also comes up in *The Marriage of Anansewa*. This is expressed by the second female messenger from the Sapaase palace as follows.

“My lovely lady, I was campaigning for you so that I could get a beautiful baby from your womb to carry on my back, and display my pride for the purpose of putting to shame a certain bitchy, ugly, somebody who is there in Saapase palace.” (p.70)

From the above lines, we realise that Anansewa’s major role would have been to give birth had she entered Sapaase palace, an occasion which would have sent the barren wife of the chief of Sapaase packing out.¹² Indeed, with the exception of Chief-who-is-chief, all the three other chiefs express individual selfish desires for Anansewa. The chief of Sapaase wanted a child from Anansewa. Togbe Klu expected her to assist him to run his business. And the chief of mines wanted Anansewa to come and give enlightened training to his numerous children. Chief-who-is-chief truly love Anansewa and his true love for Anansewa was established by, for instance, his insistence on placing his ring on Anansewa’s finger. It is thus not surprising that Ananse was surprised. Through the show of love by Chief-who-is-chief, Ananse unties the final knot and gives Anansewa to him as wife.

Coming to choice of a spouse, it is important to state here that, in *The Marriage of Anansewa*, the traditional view of marriage and, for that matter, choice of a husband is redefined. Despite the fact that Ananse machinated the marriage of his daughter, which is largely in consonance of the traditional marriage procedure among the Akans, we observe that love ultimately ruled. Thus, it is proposed that

¹¹ Motivated by the definition of political incorrectness – i.e., the use of expressions and/or actions that can be perceived as excluding, marginalizing or insulting groups of people who are socio-politically disadvantaged or discriminated against – we suggest that cultural beliefs that put groups of people in a disadvantage is culturally incorrect.

¹² Here, the playwright’s sarcasm is revealed, as it is women who would have ensured that one of their own relinquishes her wifely role to a younger wife whom they consider a favourite.

marriage should be based on love and that all one needs in marriage is a loving partner. This opinion is expressed by Ananse as he cunningly admits to the power of love; "His love has won a victory for us all" (p. 81). Also in *Anowa*, Anowa's decision to marry Kofi Ako is based on love for we are told she had refused so many eligible suitors only to end up with "good for nothing" Kofi Ako. She rejects all cultural stipulations in Akan marriage procedure and marries Kofi Ako showing total disregard to her family. However, it is here that Anowa's tragic end begins to manifest. The love expressed by Chief-who-is-chief in *The Marriage of Anansewa* is absent in *Anowa*. For instance, we see Kofi Ako's readiness to expel his wife, Anowa, from his home because the latter is considered barren.

4. Conclusion

Through literature (drama) Efua Sutherland and Ama Atta Aidoo have portrayed the clarity and force with which traditional society views its cultural stipulations. However, as writers, they have used literature as a corrective measure and a medium of circumspection. This because readers are guided to refrain from practising those aspects of culture that exploit and/or undermine a section of the people, elevate superstition above reasoning and uphold patriarchy. Readers are also advised to recognise and hold on to aspects of culture that maintain or could be made to maintain societal integrity and sanity. Most importantly, however, the two plays present themselves as a vehicle through which received values can be transmitted as well as refined to suit changing times. In this way, literature may be seen as a powerful mechanism through which the society grows towards perfection.

We have not lost sight of the fact that, even with a few cultural stipulations of the Akans, Efua Sutherland and Ama Atta Aidoo have used literature to educate us as to why we ought to do an in-depth analysis of the rightfulness of individual cultural stipulations before adhering to them, rather than taking in whatever cultural stipulation there is in our communities. It is only when we have critically explored each cultural stipulation that we could avoid being exploited by the so-called experts who interpret them to suit themselves and their passion to exploit naive kinsmen.

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