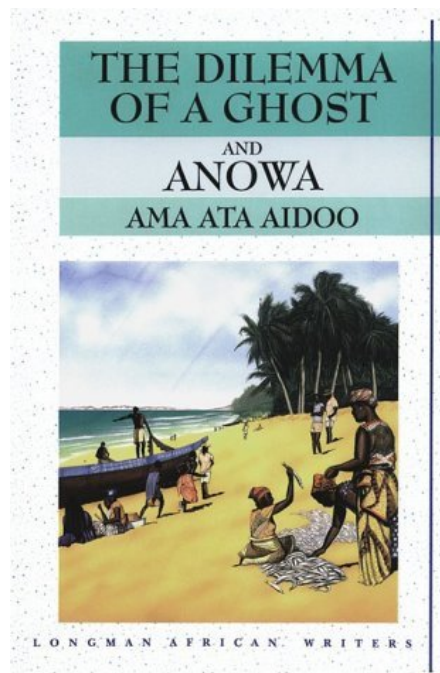




## The Dilemma of a Ghost and Anowa

*Ama Ata Aidoo*

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# The Dilemma of a Ghost and Anowa

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## **The Dilemma of a Ghost and Anowa** Ama Ata Aidoo

These two witty and perceptive social dramas are sympathetic and honest explorations of the conflicts between the individualism of westernised culture and the social traditions of Africa. Both plays have been performed throughout the world.

## **The Dilemma of a Ghost and Anowa Details**

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## From Reader Review The Dilemma of a Ghost and Anowa for online ebook

### Halle says

In the ending of Ama Atta Do's play Dilemma of a Ghost, Eulalie and Ato have a fight wherein Ato slaps Eulalie and she goes away for the night. Throughout the play Eulalie has been seen to be the superior one between her and Ato. In the end, however, Ato regains the upper hand when he hit her. After he hits her, Ato could not locate Eulalie and goes to his mother Esi's house looking for Eulalie. When Ato explains to Esi that he hit Eulalie and lied about her being receded, Esi finally understood why Eulalie acted the way she did. Eulalie was oblivious to the traditions of Ato's family and Esi saw that it was all Ato's fault for not informing her. In the end Esi tells Ato, "And we are angry because we think you are both not doing what is good for yourselves. And yet who can blame her? Hmm. . . my son you have not dealt with us well. And you have not dealt with your wife well in this." She says this as a way of scolding Ato for his lack of informing his wife of their traditions. So with Esi's enlightenment on Ato's mistakes, perhaps Eulalie will be excused by his family and Ato will enlighten her of his family's traditions so she can be more respectful. Perhaps there will be some reconciliation of the conflict eventually as Esi leads Eulalie away from Ato showing a new connection between mother and daughter-in-law. It is also hilarious how all it took was one slap for all this to happen.

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### Jerome Kuseh says

TDOAG: Ato returns from studying in the USA with an African American wife – Eulalie, much to the bewilderment of his family. She is the cause of much pain and disappointment for Ato's family, especially his mother, as Ato is not brave enough to explain Eulalie's ways to his parents and they are left thinking the worst of her.

Anowa: Everyone knew there was something strange about Anowa since her childhood. Many, her father included, thinks she should have been sent to be an apprentice priestess. After refusing many men who sought her hand in marriage, she picks Kofi Ako, to her mother's chagrin. Her happiness in the marriage shrivels when he acquires slaves and then not even his exceptional wealth could make Anowa happy again.

Both plays exhibit rich Fante culture, religion and wise sayings. They give insight into the way of life of rural Fante folk in immediate post-colonial Ghana in the first play and colonial Ghana in the second. The humour is always present and serves as a foil against serious matters such as slavery and societal expectations of women.

Well worth their reputation and a must-read.

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### Betty-Ann says

The story in Dilemma of a Ghost happens even to Africans who marry from different ethnic groups. While dating the customs and practices of our partners are of no consequence to us but after marriage they become

ominous and of infinite importance. Definately a recipe for conflict.  
Sometimes I feel like Anowa. I cannot be happy with my fortunes because I know better.

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### **Belva Rae says**

These plays are beautiful.

I think a richer experience would be had by a reader with some understanding of the friction between Africans and African Americans on the point of slavery, but even without that background the writing is beautiful and the literary merit obvious.

If you like seeing modernity's failure to adapt and generally feel that the face of capitalistic endeavors is one of violence, then you will likely enjoy how she addresses those themes through this very particular cultural and historical lens.

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### **Breanna Morgan says**

Dilemma of a ghost - 3.5

Anowa - 4.5

Two great plays by a talented writer.

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### **Eric says**

Two poignant plays by Aidoo. Dilemma of Ghost is a well done, penetrating play about a Ghanaian man who marries an Africa-American woman and the challenges of living life in Ghana during the early years of independence. Anowa is a powerful play about who could be labeled a headstrong girl and woman who seeks to live life on her own terms in pre-colonial Ghana. Both offer vivid pictures of the values of Ghanaian society while offering criticism of the structures of society. Good introduction to Ghanaian life and society.

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### **Mercy Ananeh-Frempong says**

The Dilemma of a Ghost and Anowa are plays that deal with conflict of cultures (personal vrs community) within the extended African family. Roles are assigned to couples based on gender and status and when those roles are not fulfilled tension results. So, a couple must have children, and when they don't tongues begin to wag. A woman must take her parent's advice and if she doesn't she's rejected; and how her life ends up either endorses or questions accepted cultural norms within the community. A man may be chastised for certain behavior but gets away with a lot more than an African woman ever could. Entertaining and educational if you want to gain some insight into certain Ghanaian mindsets.

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### **Britt says**

This is a play about culture class of a stereotypical African American and her African husband moving to live in Africa with his family. It is an interested move towards the end because in a culture that blames women, the man takes all the blame from his ancestors.

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### **Raphael Mokoena says**

Excellent early work by this distinguished African poet, playwright and novelist. Explores diverse cultural striations and the like

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### **Kelsey says**

This is the ultimate clash of culture and tradition with modernity, but not in the way you might be expecting. The focus is more on the differences in te viewpoints of African Americans and those who are native Africans, which is apparently laden with discrimination against the African Americans for being the children of former slaves.

Overall it was quite surprisingly enlightening, and well written.

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### **Bryan Sebesta says**

Quite good, albeit a very, very short play. It's a compelling take on the colonization of an individual and the need to communicate better. ;)

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### **Jennifer says**

I read this one or school. I liked Anowa better than Dilemma of a Ghost but I'm not a big fan of reading plays. I think I would have enjoyed it more if it were a novel.

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### **Daniel says**

Both are good plays. Reasonably well-crafted, some interesting aspects.

At the risk of seeming pretentious or even inconsiderate, I found both works a bit too self-referential in the African-coming-to-grips-with-identity sub-genre that seems to have proliferated over the past decade or so. To put that comment in context, since the 1980's I was gobbling up works by Sembene Ousmane, Ike

Chukwuma, Ngugi Wa'Thiong'o, Chinua Achebe, Athol Fugard, and many other African writers. At some point, it became fashionable to examine the sub-Saharan ethos—wonderful! More deserving writers got attention. New writers flourished. Fantastic! At some point in the past decade, however, it seemed that every new African writer was pilfering Faulkner's narrative techniques, O'Neill's plot devices, and some sort of political stance combined with a smattering of pidgin English or Kikuyu language to express the dilemma of not conforming to traditional values or having a rough time growing up. Noble idea, but thin on the literary side. These plays are glaringly self-referential, their stories are so thin that they could make curtain liners, and the development of character and plot are... Trite. It was a struggle to find desire to keep reading—I already knew how things would turn out.

Examine the ethos of your culture, by all means, but please make good literature if it is going to be published.

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### **Sarah Norman says**

These are a pair of charming little plays written by a Ghanaian woman in the 1960s. She was born into a royal (and I'm assuming wealthy) Ghanaian family in 1942, and must have had some forward thinking parents, because she got a bit of formal education. She was sent to a convent school, and her headmistress there gave her her first typewriter. It's interesting to see what she has to say, because there are very few people who grew up in a rural, traditional African household and were given a chance to write about it before colonialism wiped that lifestyle out.

There was a very small window between those cultures meeting the West, and being able to dialogue with the West as 'themselves' - as it were - and the West then wiping them out. Well that sounds a bit dramatic, but you know what I mean. It's like *LARK RISE TO CANDLEFORD* by Flora Thompson. In one of the weirder comparisons of this blog. There's lots of writing about rural English people of the 19th century, but very little of it is by rural English people of the 19th century. The number of people who actually came from those communities and had the time, interest and access to write is tiny. By the time a large number had been sent to school, and learned to think about writing as a job (as opposed to digging potatoes or whatever) the rural community was gone, as they'd all been sent to school and were planning on being writers.

*DILEMMA OF A GHOST* is about a man whose Ghanaian family has scraped and saved to send him to University in the US. He returns with an African American wife, and neither wife nor family are happy. *ANOWA* tells the story - I think traditional - of a woman who rebelled against her family, and chose her own husband; and then, when her husband to everyone's surprise became successful, rebelled against him too. Both plays have strong central female characters, which is interesting, and unusual, and probably tells us a good deal about Aidoo. Both also have a good line in comedy, with the gossipy older ladies being particularly successful. Both set up strong and interesting oppositions. In *DILEMMA*, who will win our young man's soul? In *ANOWA*, what is wrong with Anowa? Both plays could be really great! But - you knew there was a but, huh? - both seem to go horribly wrong about three quarters in.

The big reveal in *DILEMMA*, which shocks and apparently (?) reconciles the family to the newcomer is that she is not barren, but simply waiting to choose when she will have children. And the big reveal in *ANOWA* is that her husband has become impotent. They both kills themselves upon hearing this news. I can only say: ?

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### **Marcy says**

"Anowa" is a terrific and powerful play, but "The Dilemma of a Ghost" is a bit of a disappointment. Both plays are wonderful examinations of the legacy the Transatlantic Slave Trade has left Ghana with. But the second play, "Anowa" is much richer in terms of the development of its characters as well as the staging, which is quite interesting even as one reads it. Of course, it would be even better to see these plays staged!

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### **Rattyfleef says**

Read this at BCC. I remember enjoying one of them, I suppose, but can't remember which, hence lack of star rating. Which mean this is the bibliophile version of Kilroy Was Here. So, uh, here is a compressed weasel in a top jat.

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### **Sarah says**

Two plays by ghanaian playwright Ama Ata Aidoo; pretty good if you ask me, and I'm not one for plays really. I preferred Anowa to The Dilemma of a Ghost, but overall, both were good, easy reads

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### **Nnedi says**

really enjoyed both of these plays. i read dilemma of a ghost as an undergrad, so it's been a while. my only quibble is that the african american character in dilemma of a ghost sounded more british than american. americans don't say "take the lot", for example. but i love that dilemma of a ghost addressed the relationship of african americans and africans. being nigerian american, i'm acutely aware of this friction. the misunderstandings and the need of atu (who was stuck between his african family and african american wife) to please both sides and failing miserably at doing either was so realistic and funny to me. he wasn't ready for any of it. anowa, the second play, was pretty textbook. girl goes against tradition because she is different, traditional parents lament,etc etc. but i can never get enough of that kind of narrative. the traditional battling or trying to coexist with the modern. the normal rubbing against the abnormal (hmm, well, it does have a kicker of an ending, which i loved, and it does touch on slavery, too, which was refreshing, it being an african narrative. i often feel like the slave trade isn't dealt with enough in african literature). when written well, i'll read such a narrative any time because it's timeless. i didn't think i'd read the whole thing so fast, but i did. note: i read this book for a specific reason. this was part research for my own writing. but it was really a pleasure to read.

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### **Athena Nguyen says**

Another required book I was forced to read for school. It was interesting to read about the expectation expected from family.

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## **Beautifulguyana says**

Great attempt to explore the schism between Africans and African Americans but needed to be fleshed out.

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