

## The Theme of Alienation in the Selected Short Stories of Ama Ata Aidoo

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### Abstract

Alienation is a type of rootlessness or baselessness or isolation which shapes up main theme of Studies such as Psychology, Sociology and Philosophy. In some respects, it is the prominent theme of human Condition in contemporary perspective. Alienation takes its origin as a natural impact of survival crisis both intrinsically and extrinsically. The alienation here has been discussed with multiple manners by modern critics in general and Ama Ata Aidoo in particular. The alienated character is a recurrent matter in Ghanian Literature. In Ama Ata Aidoo's writings it is not an exceptional in this regard. Due to reasons made historically and socio-culturally Afro Ghanian Literature must not be Separated from its contact. Ama Ata Aidoo has used the theme of alienation in her remarkable short stories in multiple manners. Sometime to denote the impact of colonialism and sometimes to indicate the deplorable conditions of African women; Sometimes to explore the social, and economic deteriorating conditions, she has used The Alienation Theory. Here in this paper the remarkable short stories like; *No sweetness Here*, *Other versions*, *Everything Counts*, *For whom Things did not change*, *messages*, have been studied and scrutinized vividly to find out the theme of alienation in diversified forms.

**Keywords:** Alienation, Rootlessness, Identity, Isolation, Deteriorating.

### Introduction

This relevant paper is an attempt to bring about the mystery of the term 'Alienation' from different points of views. It is also an attempt to discuss the matter of alienation in modern Sense concerning the short Stories of Ama Ata Aidoo. The aim and objective of this attempt is to admit the students and other enthusiasts of Literature with the fact of alienation in selected short stories of Ama Ata Aidoo. This study may help the researchers and teachers in accelerating their knowledge about Ama Ata Aidoo and enthuse them in further study and research.

### A Brief Conception over Alienation

A dictionary meaning tells us: "Alienation is the State of being alienated or estranged from Something or somebody; it is a condition of mind". Encyclopaedic Britannica indicates alienation as "The state of being estranged or separated from ones millieu, work, products of work or self". The English word, 'Alienation', has Come from the Latin word 'Alienates'. It is a form of word noun which has appeared from the verb 'alienare', which indicates to shape a matter for others;, to take forcibly to avoid, to obliterate etc. In French Alienation is used in a same Sense as English language. There is also a slight controversy that Anomie is used as the matching word of alienation. The usage of these words is nodoubt in wider sense in modern times. In this respect, Gr. Nettles says, 'Anomia' is an indicator of personal disintegration of man from the society he lives. A great thinker Four Lewis informs that the word alienation is

provided to convey the mental condition which Coexists any behaviour in which the person is obliged to work self destructively. According to the views of keninston," Most usages of alienation share the assumption that some relationship or connection that once existed that is natural desirable or good, has been lost" (5). So it is clear from the thinkers knowledge that there is an indication of an existing tension and disintegrating human relationship. Martin Buther termed alienation as" the proliferation of the-world. Sidney Finklestein the exposes alienation as, "as psychological, Phenomenon, as internal conflict, a hostility a felt towards something seemingly outside oneself which is linked to oneself, a barrier erected which is actually no defense for an improvement of oneself . As per Hegel, alienation is of two types. First one rises due to one's incapability in his own personality and Second one is connected with Society or circumstances. Here in lies the theory of Rousseau's principle 'Social Contact!'. In some times, the concept. of alienation is classified in the following manners, such as: i) Political Alienation and ii) Economic Alienation. Marx tells about political alienation that due to political crisis, the economic alienation may appear consequently. According to Marx- to get rid of political alienation one must get rid of basic economic alienation. Keeping in the mind the theory of Eric Fromm, many thinkers have discussed the process of self- alienation. Karen Horney, in her work. New ways in Psychoanalysis exposes her thought about self alienation. As per Horney "that man is self alienated whose spontaneous individual self stunted, warped or choked, he is said to be in a condition of alienation from himself".

### **The Alienation applied by Ama Ata Aidoo**

In the famous story, Everything Counts two female characters negotiate their status with a view to bring about a sea change in their native land but all attempts are in vain due to the ideological influence of imperialism. While they had been pursuing their higher studies in Europe, they had been physically alienated from their own native land but in mind they had been always in the thought of improving their country's condition. With this view they quickly returned to their motherland and tried their level best to bring about any welfare. But they faced hard realities by realizing the dire impact of colonialism. They grasped the colonial hegemony in all affairs: such as political, social and economic. In practical sense, Sissie, the main character of the very story realized how colonial impact had alienated common people from their native cultural identities. In mind Sissie, becomes disappointed and hopeless realizing that the colonial effects have deep-rooted in their native society. Thus African cultural identities have been alienated from African innocent common people due to colonial impact in every aspect of society. For this cultural alienation, actual improvement of African Society is not possible. In a word, there is no doubt to comment that alienation looms largely in Society misleading actual welfare of African society. The unification or integrity achieves Success but separation or alienation makes any matter failure. Only disappointment and disillusionment prevail largely in the mind of people. In the course of the story, 'wig' is playing the role of symbol of alienation to indicate cultural alienation among the people of the Ghanian society.

In the story, Other Versions, Aidoo upholds another version of colonial impact and shows how African male members of society encounter with it. Here Colonialism plays havoc, of course, to bring about separation between Common people and their indigenous culture. Patriarchal structure of the Society is also a format of colonial impact. In this story, a koffie ,a character comes to his country but could not bring about any expected change to his family. and even to his own country because Colonialism has alienated his native morality and obligation. Like everywhere, Ghanian society Suffers from patriarchal domination and a mother is unable to

accept her son's gift there. In This story Patriarchal domination is playing great role to alienate a son from his mother's true love and affection. In return ,a mother is also a victim of patriarchal domination in same manner.

In one attractive and exceptional story, "No Sweetness Here" patriarchal domination has marginalized the helpless woman in an African traditional society. Thus innocent African women are deprived of their proper justice and right. They deserve proper honour, and right in the society they live. But instead of these they face exploitation, marginalization, and molestation. There is none to look after them. There is no one to speak for them. They are so alienated that they have no right over their own children. As per the Story, Chicha informs Kewshi's mother that she may kidnap her Son because he is not only handsome to look at but also sharper in mind. On hearing this his mother is pleased in one hand and felt panic on the other hand. Despite being the first wife, she is emotionally and financially avoided by her husband. As a result she has accepted divorce to be free in future, Thus Aidoo has used the tool of divorce to apply the alienation theory. It is also found that immediately after the divorce, Kweshi is bitten to death by a Snake. In this manner, the future hope in any Society is destroyed and alienated for ever.

If any comparison is made between Sissie in Everything Counts and Chicha in No Sweetness Here, it is found both the characters realize the same conclusion the failure of national liberation to bring about any effective Social change. The failure of national liberation must lead to the alienation of nation from its improvement. As a result innocent common people's life Suffers from disillusionment and hopelessness. Due to failure of activities of national authorities, alienation has occupied a prominent place in Ghanian Society.

One remarkable story, "For whom things did not change predicts the disillusionment of innocent common people during neo colonial government rule after independence. Aldoo exposes deplorable economic and social conditions of Ghanian society during post independent period. One thing she Suggests that no change has been taken place for Common people after independence.

There is also a funny story named Message tells how a few words in the form of message throws the old woman into a world of hopelessness. There is none to draw her out of this situation. She is thrown into the situation of mental crisis. No one out of his neighbours comes to tell her the real meaning of message. Actually an woman of indigenous culture fails to understand the culture of neo- colonialism. Here, of course, colonialism has played a significant role to create situation of alienation in the mind of old inhabitants of Ghana. A wide gap of co-operation and mutual under- standing is observed between the old Ghanians and the new ones. When in course of story, woman reached the hospital of Capecoast, she found there herself helpless amidst modern activities of Colonialism. She could not understand their rules and restrictions. Thus through out the story, the old woman is alienated at every step. She is failed to adjust the contemporary post colonial Society. In mind and action, She is alienated and separated from each and every member of Ghanian society. In true sense of the term, she is unable to convince any one of the society about her actual mental crisis and there is none to understand her mental problem. The innocent old woman suffers a lot in mind and experiences the cruel attitude of society where morality mercy and mutual understanding etc are lost and it is very difficult to restore them again in society due to the dire consequences of colonialism.

## **Conclusion**

After going through some selected stories, it appears that the matter of alienation has pervaded everywhere in the stories in full swim. In the most of the cases Society has played a vital role than the mental condition of any human being. In this respect, it may be concluded that Ama Ata

Aidoo had wanted to bring about a massive social change. One thing is common is that in almost all Stories, women have faced mental and social crisis and by dint of their own efforts, they have overcome all obstacles. Thus short Story writer, has showed how to overcome alienation and her sole aim is to expose the women's deplorable condition in African Society. Ama Ata Aidoo knew how averse situation may cause alienation in one's life- and to overcome this she has taken multiple precautions in her stories. The most of the characters of her short Stories have not only overcome mental and social hindrances but also they have proved that despite alienation the Subalterns not only Speak but they also establish their point of views by achieving success at last.

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