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Buy instant access (PDF download and unlimited online access): Page 2 Buy instant access (PDF download and unlimited online access): Research in African Literatures 34.3 (2003) 184-187 [Access article in PDF] Emerging Perspectives on Ama Ata Aidoo, ed. Ada Uzoamaka Azodo and Gay Wilentz. Trenton: Africa World P, 1999. 481 pp. This is a comprehensive collection of essays, commentaries, and memorabilia on Ama Ata Aidoo, the versatile and significant female Ghanaian writer. In the past four decades Aidoo has consistently, diligently, and interestingly explored her society through stories, poetry, drama, and essays. In terms of recognition, the publication of Vincent Odamten's The Art of Ama Ata Aidoo: Polylectics and Readings against Neocolonialism (Gainesville: UP of Florida, c1994) and the essays collected in the present volume indicate an appropriate acknowledgment of a major African writer. It is this same recognition that should be accorded more African writers—male and female—who have in their various creative productions widened the intellectual and literary horizon on African literatures. It is about time, too, that the scholars producing critical studies engage in intellectual interrogations with the corpus of an individual writer's works in order to make proper assessments and not assumptions. Apart from the introductory essay (xv-xviii) and the two-part "Conversations with Aidoo" (429-55) authored by Ada Azodo, the two editors (Azodo and Wilentz) collected twenty-one essays on the various aspects of Aidoo's creativity. This collection follows in the tradition of the pathbreaking Emerging Perspectives on Buchi Emecheta and Emerging Perspectives on Flora Nwapa, edited by Marie Umeh. Perhaps it is equally appropriate that the Emerging Perspectives series should commence with the studies of women writers, but even established writers need to be re-examined in the context of emerging perspectives, considering that ideas are in constant motion as they reinvent themselves. [End Page 184] Part one of the book, entitled "Writing Back: Aidoo's Critical Voice," has two essays, one by Wilentz and another by Ama Ata Aidoo. "Reading the Critical Writer" by Wilentz (3-10) is a restatement of Aidoo's position, interestingly articulated in her famous essays disseminated through Ernest Emenyon, who invited her to Calabar in 1980 to participate at his well-attended annual International Conference on African Literature and the English Language. Thus the republication of Aidoo's "Unwelcome Pals and Decorative Slaves or Glimpses of Women as Writers and Characters in Contemporary African Literature" in the volume (1-14) re-emphasizes those issues that prompted the production of this Emerging Perspective volume as well as the intrinsic resentment accorded women's writing decades ago. The essay is somewhat dated and some aspects of Aidoo's personal grouse have been overtaken by events, but it ultimately portrays the problems that sensitive writers, especially women writers, encounter. She concludes succinctly that "what is clear, though, is that right now, over and above all the other [problems] we share with our brothers, we suffer these aspects of being—yes—an oppressed section of society: if not always, sometimes, as women only" (22). This essay sets the tone for many of the contributions in this book. In the volume, Angeleta K. M. Gourding situates Aidoo's works in the context of "slavery in the diaspora" (concessions 327-44), a sensitive issue concerning the contributions of Henry Louis Gates, Jr. Another problem in Gourding's novella, however, continues that Aidoo is "ruthless in working to raise a historically and politically charged diaspora consciousness" because "she writes as she immunes herself to the world as she immunes herself to her pasts, presents and future to face one another" (41). Complementing this essay is Mildred A. Hill's study "Ama Ata Aidoo and the African Diaspora" (45-60), which discusses the poems in *Selby: Tales of the South* as "a hybrid of traditional and modern cultures." There is no doubt that Ama Ata Aidoo creatively engages in her discussion of the colonial pasts, presents and future to the African diaspora. It is through this creative focus that she carves a literary niche and widens the horizon on international relationships. Essays by Maureen Eke ("Diasporic Ruptures and Rehearsing History," 61-78) and Gay Wilentz ("The Politics of Exile," 79-102) on the one theme intellectually expand the understanding... A Commonwealth Prize-winning novel of "intense power... examining the role of women in modern African society" by the acclaimed Ghanaian author (Publishers Weekly). Living in Ghana's capital city of Accra with a postgraduate degree and a career in data analysis, Esi Selyi is a thoroughly modern African woman. Perhaps that is why she decides to divorce her husband after enduring yet another morning's marital rape. Though her friends and family are baffled by her decision (after all, he doesn't beat her!), Esi holds fast. When she falls in love with a married man—wealthy, and able to arrange a polygamous marriage—the modern woman finds herself trapped in a new set of problems. Witty and compelling, Aidoo's novel, according to Manthia Diawara, "inaugurates a new realist style in African literature." In an afterword to this edition, Tuyzline Jita Allan "places Aidoo's work in a historical context and helps introduce this remarkable writer [who] sheds light on women's problems around the globe" (Publishers Weekly). The volume, *Essays in Honour of Ama Ata Aidoo at 70: A Reader in African Cultural Studies* (2012) pays tribute to a woman writer from the African continent who has touched worldwide audiences and acknowledged her status as a "literary mover and shaker". The literary-criticism core of the book is complemented by papers on such issues as African oratory, new media, popular culture texts, African identity, race construction and gendered image. Ama Ata Aidoo was born in Abeadzi Kyakor in what was then the Gold Coast (later Ghana) in 1940 and grew up in a Fante royal household. She attended Wesley Girls' High School in Cape Coast and then the University of Ghana at Legon from 1961-1964 where she graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English. During this time, she also wrote her first play, "The Dilemma of a Ghost", which came out in 1965 and made her the first African woman dramatist to be published. Since then, Aidoo has written other plays, novels, short stories and poetry as well as numerous essays on African literature and the status of women in African society. One of her best known novels is 'Our Sister Killjoy, or, Reflections from a Black-eyed Squint' (1977). She has won many literary awards, including the Commonwealth Writers Prize for Best Book (Africa) for her second novel, 'Changes: a Love Story' (1991). Aidoo's works of fiction deal with the tension between Western and African world views and the politics of gender and sexual inequality in African society. In addition to her literary career, Aidoo was appointed Minister of Education under the Provisional National Defence Council in 1982, but resigned after 18 months. She then moved to Zimbabwe to become a full-time writer. She has also lived and worked in the US and the UK and Germany. Aidoo was a long-term Visiting Professor in Africana Studies and the Literary Arts at Brown University. Prof. Ama Ata Aidoo delivered the Abiola Lecture at the ASA's annual conference in Philadelphia on 1 December 2012 with a talk entitled 'Clapping with One Hand, or a Fundamentally Flawed Management of Post-Colonial African Public Spaces'. Publications by and on Ama Ata Aidoo can be found in the ASC library catalogus Katrien Polman, December 2012 Vincent Odamten January 1, 1994 Ama Ata Aidoo ranks as one of the most creative and prolific African writers. Her social and political vision of Ghana in particular and of Africa and the Third World in General addresses the needs of all oppressed peoples. Her writing describes exploitation in a way that demands a new and sophisticated understanding—both from Western readers and from Africa's educated elite—of the colonial attitudes that led to inequality and injustice. Written by fellow Ghanaian, this book examines the strengths of Aidoo's work from a perspective the author terms "polylectic" criticism, a "reading against neocolonialism." He discusses Changes: A Love Story, Aidoo's recent novel that won the prestigious Commonwealth Literature Prize (Africa region), along with her other fiction, poetry, and two plays. University Press of Florida Reviews "The first full-length scholarly study of the total corpus of a major African female writer, at once comprehensive in scope and intensive enough to take us to the complex depths of major critical issues." Kofi Anyidoho, University of Ghana, Legon Preview Preview books of ama at a aidoo, is ama at a aidoo alive, is ama at a aidoo dead

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