

CONTRIBUTION OF ADVERBS IN ARGUMENTATION IN *FRAGMENTS* BY AYI KWEI ARMAH.

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Abstract

Baako, the main character in *Fragments*, sees his education as preparation for the lifework of a socially innovative artist. His family, more pragmatic, expects him to convert into power and wealth in the real world his knowledge.

This led them to conversational interactions. His people will resort to argumentation techniques to make him resign. In this argumentation process, adverbs play a prominent role because they bear the marks of the speaker. We have learnt that the integrated adverbs in the given utterances were revealers of his protagonists' personalities, their intentions and even their mind states.

Key words: adverb, analytic, argumentation, enunciation, force, minimization.

Introduction

A man who asserts something intends his statement to be taken seriously. This will depends, of course, on many circumstances – on the sort of man he is, for instance, and his general credit. These merits depend on the arguments which could be produced in its support.

In fact, argumentation works interestingly in language through various devices: it can be an interrogative structure, a negation, an adverb, an interjection or so on. In this work, entitled “The contribution of adverbs in argumentation in *Fragments* by AYI Kwei Armah” we will consider only adverbs in relation to argumentation in the theoretical framework of enunciation.

That is, in the inquiry, we shall study the operation of arguments with adverbs, in order to see how their validity is connected with the manner of laying them out, and what relevance this connection has with the traditional notion of logical forms via adverbs. In other words, do adverbs affect the discourse they are used within? What orientations do they give to a particular discourse? What exactly makes adverbs particular in *Fragments* by AYI Kwei Armah.

I. **Argumentation** in *Fragments* by Ayi Kwei Armah.

Argumentation, being indeed a linguistic phenomenon, how can we provide a useful description of the linguistic operation involved in argumentative phenomena, and particularly of the subjective relations.

Some would say that all one needs to know about argument is to be found in Aristotle. The rest are footnotes. Without rejecting that idea, one can certify that for discourse analysis, argumentation is not a level of signification that should be isolated, it is strongly linked to discourse contents and genres. That is any dissociation between form and content is deeply inadequate. For Dominique MAINGUENAU (1991:228), its aims at convincing the co-speaker.

L'argumentation constitue un des facteurs privilégiés de la cohérence discursive. Elle suppose en effet une action complexe finalisée, un enchaînement structure d'arguments liés par une stratégie globale qui vise à faire adhérer l'auditoire à la thèse défendue par l'énonciateur¹

With this in mind, we can easily see why just from the first chapter of the novel the old Naana is sharing her conviction as far as the returning of Baako is

¹ Argumentation is one of the factors that favored discursive consistency. It presupposes a complex action finalized, a structured sequence of arguments linked by a comprehensive strategy that aims to make the audience join the argument of the speaker. (Translation mine)

concerned. She wants to be so persuasive that she will refer to uncle Foli. The adverb of degree “even” in

1- “Even Foli felt their presence” (*Fragments*: 3) reveals a sort of authority. For Naana, the simple mention of the name of Foli is likely to convince because of the power he has. Such a case is known as authority argument because uncle is Foli is socially powerful. Foli, to use Christian PLANTIN (1996:91) words «dispose de l’autorité que lui confère son rôle social et son charisme personnel²».

Argumentation is almost present anywhere in *Fragments* by Ayi Kwei Armah. For example, for Juana to state there is

2- “--- violence directed **only** against the weak” (*Fragments*: 32), a number of observations has to be displayed before. In the following case, the weak is the ‘shivering dog’: “For Juana saw there, as she looked and followed the line of each man’s gaze and the focused tension of the violence no longer hidden in these men’s bodies, a shivering dog in the middle of the road” (*Fragments*: 16). Shamelessly for the dog-killer, one can read “but for the killer himself, a wild feeling of relief seemed to have come” (*Fragments*: 20).

Moreover, in the second chapter for example, the reality of violence Juana wanted to convey has been done successfully due to argumentation. It is the abuse of a woman by a taxi-driver “And you are a foolish woman” (*Fragments*: 22). The adjective “foolish” appear debasing because the woman is not foolish. It appears obvious that each of the discourse participants will try to modify as much as possible the position of the co-speaker(s).

Her weakness led her reply simply as follows: “insult me, Owara” (*Fragments*, idem). In 3-“---but these days were full of **so much** violence---”

² « has authority that his social role and own charisma conferred him ». (translation mine).

(*Fragments*: 32), the adverb “so” coupled with the quantity adverb “much” witnesses the degree of violence. With some of these examples, it becomes more plausible to conclude that violence was directed.

Before going further, it seems relevant to discuss the real nature of adverbs for a sound analysis. In other words, what exactly is an adverb?

II. A complex word-class: adverbs

Adverbs are used to give us more information about a verb. They give us information on how something happens or how something is done. In 4- “something like the same thing, **really**, I have spent most of my life in America, and some of my people also came from **here**” (*Fragments*: 33). One can notice that many English adverbs end in “-ly” to the end of an adjective: real + ly = **really**. However, sometimes adjectives end in “-ly” for example: 5-“friendly” in “Baako saw there would be no way to escape the other’s **friendly** approaches” (*Fragments*: 43), making the distinction be less obvious as it sound. Adverbs can also be used with adjectives the meaning of which will be modified by the adverb. Take a look at the following examples: **unusually** strong in 6 - “He had not become suddenly aware of any **usually** strong feeling,”--- (*Fragments*: 44).

Under the heading “concordance for indicators of point of view”, one can read according to Alan Partington³ that “There are a number of linguistic indicators that are particularly useful in revealing an author’s opinions, attitudes and ideology”. This idea is also shared by Halliday (1985:11) who conceives grammar itself as a “social semiotic”. He explained as follows: “The code of language and how the utterance and text specify all the meaning potential, studies the functional and situational organization of language on the social context”.

³ Partington, A. (2004 :12)

Adverbs are so to say part of enunciative operators. For Claude HAGÈGE (1982:88), they are among “verbant” because of their affixation to verbs. He stated it as followed: “Les traces, dans l’énoncé, de l’attitude du locuteur, souvent traitées sous “aspect” ou “adverbe”, ou avec la négation, peuvent être rangées parmi les verbants, puisqu’elles sont affixées au verbe »⁴.

Their morphological identification being among others: adjective + ly according to Damodar THAKUR (2002:8) it will be fair no to be bound to this criterion. Consequently, “**here**” in 8- ““**here**” the nurse said””(Fragments: 14) is an adverb. 9- “There!” (Fragments: 75) is an adverb too. 10- “Today” (Fragments: 52) is an adverb. Similarly “well” in 11- ““Well” she said” (fragments: 75) is an adverb. One feature “here” “there” and “today” have in common is that they be understood only referring to the speaker, their subjectivity.

What is worth noting is that by this subjectivity, they create the connection, knowing that connection is a particular form of relation. One can even support rightly that relation is somehow the soul of the structure. The idea is that, by indicating “here”, it establishes a community of place between the discourse protagonists.

Which type or types of adverbs in *Fragments* will be focused in this work? What type(s) of argumentations will they prompt?

III. Analytic argumentation in *Fragments* by AYI Kwei Armarh.

I- Baako and Juana’s Argumentation

In the first chapter of *Fragments* by AYI Kwei Armah, entitled “Naana”, there is a wide range of adverbs: “too” in 12- “too true” (Fragments: 1), “even” in 13-“*even* here”, “now” in 14-“*even* now”, “there” in 15- “out

⁴ The traces, in the utterance, of the speaker’s attitude, sometimes discussed as coming from verb because they are associated to verbs.

there”. These adverbs are not terminated by the suffix “-ly”. These ‘non-ly’ ended adverbs made Claude Hagège (1982 :90) conclude: «les adverbs en – ment” du français, par exemple, ne sont pas un tout homogène»⁵ .

This view is shared by Zorobi Philippe TOH (2009:5) when he stated that «les adverbs eux constituent aussi un ensemble tellement vaste qu’il nous faut opérer un choix pour espérer conduire au mieux cette étude». In other words, adverbs are part of a great group and in order to study them deeply, one need to divide them. To use terminologies from Dominique MAINGUENAU (2001:56-61) terminology, one can distinguish integrated adverbs⁶ and non integrated adverbs⁷. Here are two examples he gave to display the difference:

1- Travaille t-il **sérieusement** son examen?

2- **Sérieusement**, travaille t-il son examen?

In the first case, the adverb is a complement of the sentence; it can be canceled or even removed. The question is to know if the student works conscientiously. On the contrary, in the second example, the adverb is not absolutely linked to the meaning of the sentence. It is a non integrated adverb.

As for the argumentation type, *Fragments* opens with an analytic argument terminated by 13-“So he will return” (*Fragments*: 1). This conclusive adverb “so” holds overpower the argumentation displays by Baako. To use the phrase of O. Ducrot and J. C. Anscombe (1983:28), it has an “argumentative force”. The idea being that arguments are not defeatable

⁵ The adverbs terminated by the suffix ‘ly’ are not homogeneous.

⁶ Adverbs intégrés à la phrase

⁷ Adverbs non intégrés à la phrase

or undefeatable in themselves but depend on the way they are presented.

They stated it as follows:

This by no means leads to a relativism according to which nothing would be sure in itself. Instead, it accounts for the importance of the presentation dimension in argumentation. An argument is never nude but always accompanied by a commentary, an instruction on how exactly the argument is to be taken. Most of the time, the argument provides the listener or the reader with instruction as to how to interpret it.⁸

The example 14- “**Very Catholic**” (*Fragments*: 123) is revealing an analytic argument. It means that every what precedes, that is, the prayer is much eloquent. This time, the conclusion is the result of a series of subsequent gestures all leading to a prayer of catholic Christians. 15- “she brought her hands together, palm to palm, and holding the fingers outward ran their tips slowly down his head, chest and fell in the waster, making a feeble sound” (*Fragments*:123). This is the pattern of the catholic prayer.

Through the enunciative operation marked by the adverb, “very”, the utterance “very Catholic” is endowed with stronger argument force precisely because it introduces an element which disqualifies the possibility of being of another religion and overpowers the being catholic argument. Even if in the mind of Baako, being catholic amounts to being pagan. The following example is quite a sign of his unknowingness of Catholicism:

16-“I think you’re a catholic or, better **still**, a pagan” (*Fragment*: 123). The integrated adverb “still” meaning ‘even now’ unveils this religious status overlapping. It can righteously be replaced by ‘nevertheless’. Moreover, the collocation of “still” and “better” is not in vain. It expresses emphasis. In short, the focus is on the sameness of Catholicism and paganism.

When referring to the mockery attitude of Baako toward Juana, one can easily picture how far he wanted to ridicule her.

⁸ O. Ducrot and J.C. Anscombe (1983 : idem)

17- “He had laughed at her for saying she herself was an atheist”. Atheism⁹ being the negation of Catholicism let alone paganism, one can notice how wicked Baako had been toward Juana. He laughed at her because for him the prayer she had performed is not worth being consider as such. It is a displaying of a mere process. In such a case, the laugh is quite justified.

Accordingly, Henri BERGON (1900:20) put: “les attitudes, les gestes et mouvements du corps humain sont risibles dans l’exacte mesure où ce corps nous fait penser à une simple mécanique”¹⁰. The shift from “atheist” to “catholic” and then the assimilation of that one to “pagan” witnesses the fact that ideas grow up. He certainly realized his toughness toward Juana and subtly changed from disbelief to belief in god(s). That is “L’idée est chose qui grandit, bourgeonne, fleurit, mûrit, du commencement à la fin du discours. Jamais elle ne s’arrête, jamais elle ne se répète. Il faut qu’elle change à chaque instant, car cesser de changer serait cesser de vivre”¹¹ (Henri BERGSON 1900:21).

In fact, Baako is taking advantage of the laugh to make Juana change. Her rejection of his touching her indecently is also followed by his laugh.

18-“Not that” she said “not **here**” (*Fragments*:124). The adverb “here” meaning “to this place or position”¹². As SILUE Sassongo Jacques (1986:63) stated the adverb is prompted out alone mysteriously where the sujet and the verb meets. “L’adverbe intervient mystérieusement tout seul à la jointure du verbe et du sujet c’est-à-dire à l’entrée du sujet dans

⁹ From Greek « atheos », from a- ‘without’ + theos ‘god’. It is the disbelief in the existence of a god or gods.

¹⁰ « attitude, gestures and movements of the human body are laughable in exact proportion as that body remind us of a simple mechanism » (translation mine).

¹¹ « idea is something that grows, buds, blossoms, ripens from the beginning to the end of a speech. It never stops, it is never repeated. It needs change every moment, because not changing would mean cease to live » (translation mine)

¹² Catherine Soanes and Angus Stevenson (2009):*Concise Oxford English Dictionary*, Eleventh Edition, Revised, Oxford University Press.

son action”. In fact, Baako dares touch Juana and wanted to go further. His goal was “to take her nipple and rub it between thumb and index finger”. In other words, the adverb “here” can be superseded using the synecdoche by ‘my breast’. Her reaction his not amazing probably because her Christianity background reminds her that “her body is a temple of the Holy Spirit”¹³ as indicated in I Corinthians 6:19.

His “Why not?” (*Fragments* :124) expresses that he does not understand Juana. He could’nt bully her. As a way to take vengeance he, Baako, will use anew the powerful arm: the laugh. The sequence

19- “--- heard his **laughter** behind her and words”. He knew that: “Toujours un peu humiliant pour celui qui en est l’objet, le rire est véritablement une espèce de brimade sociale”¹⁴ (Henri BERGSON 1900:60). Baako’s comments thereafter display his intention to induce her into error. That is, the manipulator Baako wants Juana the hearer to adopt a behavior consistent with his interest.

We can consequently conclude that all communication is in itself manipulative because it aims at changing, convincing or persuading the listener with regards to the subject matter under discussion. Therefore, we can somehow say that any communication aims at manipulating the behavior of the one or those listening. The idea is that Juana was wrong to refuse him. That sad situation can beget the crowd.

20-“**All** Accra **suddenly** coming and looking ---” (*Fragments*: 124). The utterance is left unfinished but we can obviously guess the end. “All Accra suddenly coming and **looking at us, and mock us**”.

¹³ THE BIBLE, Revised Standard Version (1971) : American Bible Society, New York.

¹⁴ Always a little humiliating for the one who is the object, laughter is really a kind of social bullying.
(Translation mine)

21-The integrated adverb **suddenly** conveys the degree of the mockery. Put in other words, they will be caught unprepared. All the subjectivity lies in this adverb. In fact, “suddenly” is not for all Accra but rather for Baako himself or at least Baako and Juana.

That violent reaction of Baako toward Juana can prove that her earlier conclusion was true:

22-“--- She too had come to accept as permanent a violence directed **only** against the weak---”.

This leads us to observe like Koné KLOHINLWELE (2013:81) that “Dans *Fragments*, la même idée de violence gratuite est partout perceptible”¹⁵. The use of the integrated adverb “only” is revealing a kind of restriction. It can be replaced by ‘uniquely’. The violence is not extended to anyone but to a target population, those who are supposed weak. What is expected through the roughness is that those weak people will not be capable to escape. That way of putting things is also manipulative. COCKROFF Robert (2004:195) rightly noticed: “the degree of truth depends on the personality and moral substance of the manipulator”

2- Baako and Ocran’s argumentation

Kofi Ocran, Baako’s old art teacher, explained to Baako, what he has to do. The beginning of his speech is quite manipulative. Consequently, the expected conclusion follows without delay.

¹⁵ « In *Fragments*, the same idea of gratuitous violence is everywhere perceptible » (translation mine)

23- “I understand, and what you say is true. But there is something I’d like to tell you. I know you’ll think I’m crazy or worse. Anyway, it doesn’t matter.” (*Fragments*, 81) In the following sequence

24-“I understand, and what you say is true”, we can see the intention of Ocran to be listened to. This desire is contained in the connective mark “but” which expresses the opposition between what went before and what will follow.

One can even decipher the euphemism¹⁶ behind that assertion. If it were true, there would have not been to use any “but”. To be rude, he would have said ‘I understand, what you say is wrong; here is the truth’. To avoid this unpleasant and embarrassing way, he opts for a persuading technique: to give the impression that you share the same idea so as to have the opportunity to develop one’s idea.

Habermas sees it as the linguistic activity in which participants construct arguments in order to justify or criticize problematic validity claims. For him, “We use the term argumentation for that type of speech in which participants thematize contested validity claims and attempt to vindicate or criticize them through arguments” (1984:18).

Stephen R. Covey (2007:15) stated the same idea like this

La véritable influence commence lorsque l’autre sent que ses paroles vous pénètrent, qu’il arrive à se faire comprendre de vous, que vous lui prêtez une oreille sincère et attentive et que vous acceptez son point de vue¹⁷

Ocran went on by saying

¹⁶ From Greek *euphémismos*, « use auspicious words », from *eu* « well » + *phémè* ‘speaking’.

¹⁷ The real influence begins when one feels that his words reached you, that he is successfully understood by you, that you devote a sincere and attentive understanding and that you agree with his viewpoint. (Translation mine)

25-“but there is something I’d like to tell you”. In other words ‘I would like to give you a piece of idea, you, the unexperienced and overzealous man’.

Ocran, is himself also taking time to evoke another disadvantage likely to be mentioned by his co-speaker. All this, to be sure to convince successfully Baako.

26-“I’m crazy or worse” (*Fragments*: 81). In short, kofi Ocran wants to be part of men of “general credit”¹⁸. That is “the words of some men are trusted simply on account of their reputation for caution, judgement and veracity”¹⁹. Moreover, the introductory verb is there to highlight things.

27- “I know” (*Fragments*: idem) denotes a particular type of argumentation: authority argument. According to Stephen Toulmin (2003:49) “When I say “I know”, I give others my word: I give others my authority for saying that S is P”.

The message itself can follow now after he has cleared the likely obstacle:

28- “if you want to do any work here, you have to decide quite soon than you’ll work alone” (*Fragments*: idem).

In 29- “if you want to do anywork **here**,---” (*Fragments*:81) the adverb “**here**” is not argumentatively vain. It refers to the communicative situation which is “the extra-linguistic situation where interaction takes place” according to Charaudeau, Patrick (2002:535). Needless to say, “here” means ‘Ghana’. To be down to earth, one can rephrase it as follows: ‘anything you would like to undertake in Ghana’. The idea is that we can discuss any other place but not Ghana because he knows everything that happens in Ghana. Ocran can go defeated when discussing a place unknown by him.

¹⁸ Stephen toulmin (2003 :11)

¹⁹ Stephen toulmin, idem

In 30-“you have to decide quite **soon** that---” (*Fragments* 81). Ocran is stating Baako’s lateness as far as the decision had to be taken. Baako has to realize very early from the beginning. Any delay will amount time and opportunity loss. Emphasis is laid on the likeliness of his speech through “these features of knowledge (‘I know’,---)²⁰.

31-“I know **definitely** that you can’t do anything serious **here** if you need other people’s help because nobody is interested in being serious”. (*Fragments*: Idem). The integrated adverb **definitely** reinforces this knowledge feature because definitely means: “without doubt”. The concise Oxford English dictionary added unhesitatingly “used for emphasis”. With “definitely”, we can see the presence of the speaker. There is a kind of subject-predicate welding.

Therefore the expected conclusion is reached: “I don’t know” Baako said can certify the consensus between Ocran and Baako.

What was opposing them was the view about art. Ocran advises Baako to work individually like in sculpture. Many people involve in art is not welcome. The following

32- “I don’t know” (*Fragments*: idem) supposes that from all that I have learnt from you, “ I will resign as a logical consequence”

This is how analytic arguments are displayed that is arguments are expressed in the form ‘Datum; warrant; so conclusion’. The conclusive “so” can be replaced by another words or simply left implicit: “in this case, accordingly, the backing of our warrant includes explicitly the information which we are presenting as our conclusion: indeed, one might very well

²⁰ Stephen Toulmin (2003 :53)

replace the word ‘so’ before the conclusion by the phrase ‘in other words’, or ‘that is to say’” according to Setphen Toulmin²¹.

3. Naana’s cyclicity view of time.

The opening utterance of *Fragments* by Ayi Kwei Armah deserves attention.

The beginning chapter reads:

33-‘Each thing that goes away returns and nothing in the end is lost. The great friend throws all things apart and brings all things together again. That is the way everything goes and turns round. That is how all living things come back after long absences, and in the whole great world all things are living things. All that goes returns. He will return.’

We can point out the datum answering the question “what have you got to go on?” according to Toumin (2003:90). In the case under study, one can answer: ‘each thing that goes away returns and nothing in the end is lost.’ The warrants: “it will be observed, correspond to the practical standards or canons of argument” according to S. Toulmin (2003:91). It equals to ‘the great friend throws all things apart and brings all things again, that is the way every goes and turns round’.

The same idea is provided using an argumentative technique: minimization. That is, not to give possible events power. For Bernard MEYER (2011:142), minimization is a ultimate form of softening. For him

minimiser consiste à dégonfler une baudruche, à démontrer qu’un fait ou qu’une notion correspondent à un cas particulier, qu’il faut reconnaître en tant que tel, mais dont l’importance dans une demonstration doit être limitée, ce qui exclut toute generalization. Minimiser, c’est refuser à un exemple ou à une idée un statut majeur

One can therefore see that Baako in the following piece will come back in spite of cruelty.

²¹ S. Toulmin (2003 :116)

34- “Everyone who goes returns. He will come. He will be changed, but we shall welcome him as the same. That is the circle. There has been a lot of cruelty done, but nothing has been done so grave that in this case the circle should be broken.” (*Fragments:3*)

The adverb “**there**” in 35- “There has been a lot of cruelty done” refers to the position of the speaker. It can overlap with here in this case. One can have ‘here, in Ghana, there have been---’. Its argumentative force lies in the fact of minimizing every what happened in the country. The adverb phrase “**so --- that**” indicates a minor consequence if it ever has. Moreover, the adverb “nothing” in “nothing has been done” proves the non-existence of a crime and by the same way conveys the intention of minimizing it.

The conclusion is: ‘he will return’. This matter of logic leads Stephen TOUMIN (2003:163) to view “logic as a system of eternal truths”.

“Now we may agree that there is not an exact parallel between the principle of syllogism and those other sorts of argument-governing rules”

The adverb “again” in

36- “---brings all things together **again**”. “Again” means ‘once more, returning to a previous position or condition’. Its subjectivity lies in the fact that the resemblance with the previous condition cannot be seen by someone ignorant of the situation. The adverb “**together**” preceding it (again) can be understood as: at the same time, without interruption. By itself, the conclusion becomes obvious, it is anticipated by the adverb “so” that has even been omitted or left implicit because of its obviousness.

Conclusion

Adverbs contribution in argumentation in *Fragments* by AYI Kwei Armah is considerable. This “rubbishlike” word-class plays a fundamental role in discourse. That is, adverbs when integrated to a given utterance strengthen the argumentation process. The occurrence of adverbs in structures in *Fragments* give obviously more information about the verb; they also provide more information on how something happens or how something is done but chiefly about the speaker’s intention. With this work, we have learnt that occurrences of integrated adverbs in *Fragments* by Ayi Kwei Armarh display the intention of the Ghanaian writer to go beyond the sameness, the sad realities his people are confronted with through Baako the main protagonist.

We have not taken into account substantial arguments and have not much focused on non integrated adverbs. These will be developed much later.

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