

THE INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF HUMANITIES & SOCIAL STUDIES

A Comparative Analysis of Camara Laye's the African Child, Wole Soyinka's Ake: The Years of Childhood and Ayikwei Armah's Fragments as Autobiographies Using the Genettean Mode

Dr. David Ako Odoi

Lecturer, Language Centre University of Ghana, Ghana

Abstract:

This paper identifies four main sub groups of the autobiography namely: the factual autobiography, the fictionalised autobiography, the literary autobiography and the autobiographical fiction as present in many ways in the works of practising writers in the West African sub Region. The last three are glossed as having enough information and literary value to merit an analysis using the Genettean model. Genette's macrotexual classifications of Time, Mood and Voice and their subcategories are used to show the differences between these identified autobiographies. The paper also shows the three works on a continuum from the most factual to the most novelistic.

Keywords : *Time, Mood Voice, Analepsis, Summary, Scene, Diegetic, Autodiegetic*

1. Introduction

The autobiography as literary genre has almost always reigned in the periphery of Literature (Opoku Agyeman, 1989; Finney, 1985; Odoi, 2010). It has and still is regarded as the 'dark continent' of Literature (Shapiro, 1965). The level of bastardization of the art form culminates from the fact that critical discourse on it is quite sparse and far in between. Besides, leading critics on the autobiography or life narratives have labelled it as nebulous and difficult to identify or study (Jay, 1984; Olney, 1979; Bakhtain, 1981 & de Man, 1979). Indeed, Smith and Watson (2001) identify fifty-two (52) types of life narratives and even claim that this figure is not adequate. The sheer numbers of life narratives identified by these two critics add to the levels to which the autobiography becomes a murky area of study. Critical study of the autobiography is sparse in the West African sub region (Opoku-Agyemag, 1989; Odoi, 2010). However, it has been found out that though the West African sub region is almost bereft of the autobiography as a genre and there are few critical discourses on it, aspects of the autobiography can be found in most West African novels or work of art. It is on the strength of this that Odoi (2010) identifies four types of the autobiography in the novels from the sub region. Odoi (2010) however notes that of the four, it is only three that have literary value mainly because they are works of practising novelists who are conscious of the intricacies of writing that generates interest. Therefore, this work has selected the works of three practising novelists namely: Camara Laye, Wole Soyinka and Ayi Kwei Armah. This paper analyzes three identifiable types of the autobiography in West Africa, namely: the fictional autobiography exemplified by Camara Laye's *The African Child*, the literary autobiography exemplified by Wole Soyinka's *Ake: the Years of Childhood* and the autobiographical fiction represented by Ayi Kwei Armah's *Fragments*. The thrust of this discussion is that, the differences in the types of autobiography can be gleaned from the method of narration. This paper will compare the three types of autobiography which are written as Literature, to show the extent to which each may be classified as inclined towards personal history or towards the artistic. The paper relies heavily on the Genettean theory of the macrotext of the narrative discourse. Genette identifies Time, Mood and Voice as key to unlocking a narrative.

2. Summary Of Genette's Theory On The Macrotext Of A Narrative

Gerard Genette (1972) identifies Time, Mood and Voice as key to analyzing any work of art or narrative. The following is a Summary of Genette's theory on the Narrative.

2.1. Time

Time has three sub-categories namely: ORDER, DURATION and FREQUENCY.

2.1.1. Order

Order: This sub-category of Time has two sub-divisions: *analepsis* and *prolepsis*. *Analepsis* refers to a flashback or taking the story backward into time of the commencement of the novel. *Prolepsis* on the other hand, takes the narrative forward in time.

Genette also distinguishes between *Prolepsis* and *Amerces*. While *amerces* refer to indirect hints about future events, *Prolepsis* is a definite statement of narration on later events internal or external.

2.1.2. Duration

Duration is the second sub-category of Time. *Duration* is generally perceived as the narrative pace and it has four sub-divisions: Pause, Scene, Summary and Ellipsis. Two different times are proposed and isolated within the narrative for the critic to understand these sub-divisions of *Duration*, and these are Narrative Time (NT) and Story Time (ST).

- *Scene*: This normally refers to a dialogue and it refers to pure dialogue (stichomythia) like we have in drama. Since the dialogue advances the narration, NT is at the same pace in duration as ST. 'Scene' is pure dialogue which does not mark any gestures, looks or hesitations except through typography or punctuation.
- *Summary* is defined as a state in the narration when a few words are used to say, talk about or describe the entire story.
- *Ellipsis* is where NT is avoided altogether by the omission of large or small portions of the story either because they are implied in the narrative or are left out in the telling.

The various pace of narration which has been referred to as *Duration* may be summarised in the following:

Pause: $NT > ST$ (Narrative Time is greater than Story Time)

Slow- down- scene: $NT > ST$ (Narrative Time is not infinitely greater than Story Time)

Scene: $NT = ST$ (Equal)

Summary: $NT < ST$ (Narrative Time less than Story Time)

Ellipsis: $NT \ll ST$ (Narrative time infinitely less than story time)

Duration as a sub-category of time is very crucial to the analysis of the narrative.

2.1.3. Frequency

According to Genette (1972) for example, an event can either happen once or many times and it can be told once or many times in a narrative. The next major category that has been identified in a narrative is Mood.

2.2. Mood

Mood is the second major category that has been identified by structuralists. There are two sub-categories of Mood and these are: *Distance* and *Perspective*. *Perspective* is the first sub-category of Mood. Structuralists explain *Perspective* by making a distinction between Mood (second major category) and Voice (third major category). Voice refers to the one who speaks or the narrator within the narrative itself whereas Mood is the one who sees or the one from whose point of view what is spoken is seen. *Point of View*, *Narrator* and *Character* come up for consideration. Point of view is P, Narrator as N, and Character as C.

2.2.1. Perspective

Perspective as a sub-division of Mood has three elements: non-focalization, internal focalization and external focalization. The term 'focalization' suggests 'bringing into view'. Focalization is Mood in terms of seeing or the point of view. The three classifications of focalization are the points of view from which the narrator can be presented.

- Non- focalization: it is commonly referred to as focalization '0'. In such a situation, point of view is from behind the characters hence the narrator knows more than the character. At non- focalization, knowledge can be represented as:

$P : N \geq C$

This type of focalization, otherwise referred to as 'Non-focalization' is used by the omniscient narrator to achieve realism or plausibility.

- The next type of focalization is internal focalization. Often, the focaliser or the person whose point of view dominates the story is an active participant in the narrative. The narrator therefore sees from the point of view of the character hence the narrator knows as much as the character and so is represented in a formula: $P : N = C$

There are three types of internal focalization: the fixed one where fixed refers to one character, one narrator. Then there is variable internal focalization. Here there are several shifts in point of view but one narrator. The third is the multiple internal focalizations where there are more than one character narrators.

- External focalization is that type of point view where the narrator knows less than the character, this type of perspective is difficult to apply than internal or zero focalization. Being external and knowing very little about the character, the focaliser cannot know and therefore cannot report any information about the character especially about his past.

To use external focalization would mean a need for other forms of focalization to fill the gaps within the narration. For this reason Genette for instance, suggests that it is better for a narrator to use other forms of focalization in a narrative where external focalization is to be used. Genette (1972) calls for polymodality, which refers to the multiple use of focalization both internal and external where external focalization is restricted in the use of point of view and non- focalization is omniscient.

This will lead our discussion to another sub-division of Mood, which is referred to as *Distance*.

2.2.2. Distance

Distance is the other category of Mood. *Distance* is how much or how little is told or how directly or indirectly information is given. Hence, *Distance* is the gap between the narrator and the information. To understand *distance*, there is the need to draw in mimesis and *diegesis*. *Mimesis* can be understood as *what is shown* and *diegesis* refers to *what is told*. 'Drama' can show, and 'Telling' cannot.

Mimesis as in terms of narration of events is to show or give as much information as possible with the least attention to the narrator. Hence, *mimesis* refers to a maximum of information and a level of effacement of the narrator. *Diegesis* is the act of telling more than what is told. Hence *diegesis* is a minimum of information and maximum presence of the narrator. *Diegesis* places emphasis on the availability of the narrator while *mimesis* shifts focus to the information itself. So when a narrator tells more of the story (*diegesis*), then distance becomes less but when the story engages in drama or dialogue (*mimesis*) then the distance between the narrator and the information becomes greater.

2.3. Voice

Voice is the third category that narratologists have identified. Voice has three subcategories: *Time of Narration*, *Narrative levels* and *Person*. Voice refers to the voice of the narrator not the author. Genette (1972) defines Voice as the narrative instance. Voice answers the question of 'Who is speaking?' In an autobiography (which is the genre of concern of this project) the author and narrator are equal and yet there is a need to have distance between *author* and *voice* despite the equality. Theoretically, the narrator must be distinct and analyzed differently from the author in any work of art. The narrative instance may be varied in even the same work and may not be necessarily the same throughout a particular work.

The three elements or sub categories of **Voice** namely, *Time of Narration*, *Narrative Levels* and *Person* operate in the same breath in a narrative but, for purposes of analysis, they are unwound from one another. We shall now take a look at each sub-category.

2.3.1. Time of Narration

Time issue is very crucial and inevitable to every narrative because a particular tense has to be used. A narration is normally done after the event has taken place, and so invariably most narratives are rendered in the past tense. There are a few exceptions to the rendering of the narrative in the past tense, and we have such examples like predictive or apocalyptic narratives which are rendered often in the future tense. Apart from normal narratives which are rendered in the past tense and the apocalyptic which comes in future tense, there are modern narratives which are all in the present tense. Because of the various times of narration elements that have been identified, structuralists or narratologists supply four time elements related to the narration namely: *Uterior*, *Anterior*, *Simultaneous* and *Interwoven*.

Uterior time of narration is done in the past tense. It is the tense used by the traditional novel and most novels generally. *Anterior time* refers to predictive time hence the predictive, apocalyptic or prophetic novels use the future tense. *Anterior time* is quite rare. The modernist novel however sometimes uses the *anterior time of narration* to deliberately transgress the notion of time. The first two *times of narration* (*ulterior* and *anterior*) are used judiciously by the traditional narrator. According to Genette, modernist narratives prefer *Simultaneous* and *interwoven time*. *Simultaneous Time* makes use of the present tense throughout. It presupposes that the event is being narrated simultaneously as it takes place. When it is used, the idea is to transgress the notion of time entirely. *Interwoven time* deals with duration and blends *Story Time* and *Narrative Time*.

Narrative Levels which is the second sub--category of **Voice** will next be explained.

2.3.2. Narrative levels

Narrative levels generally describe levels of narration within the narrative discourse. *Narrative levels* identify and represent characters as they speak in the narrative. Some characters are within the narrative while others are not. It is in the light of this that three narrative levels have been identified : *extra diegetic*, *intradiegetic* and *metadiegetic*.

The *Extra diegetic* level is outside the main story and describes the level before the events are told. The second level is *intradiegetic* sometimes called *diegetic* or main level narrative. It is purely a thematic level and this level has no relation to time or space. It is the level of events during a story. The third level, which is referred to as *Metadiegetic* occurs in special circumstances. It has been agreed by narratologists that this is level of a story told within the main storyline, it may be looked at as some form of *subplot* within a story.

These three narrative levels mentioned above, according to Genette (1972), are used in the normal way by traditional novelists. Whenever any of the levels is transgressed by not being used in the normal way, a *metalepsis* occur.

The last category under **Voice** which is *Person* will be the final subcategory to be explained.

2.3.3. Person

Person is the last category of presentation of events in terms of Voice. Voice is the person who speaks-- the narrator. There are two subdivisions of person: *heterodiegetic* and *homodiegetic* persons. The *heterodiegetic person* is the absent narrator telling the story of others. The *homodiegetic person* is the narrator present who is an active participant in the story as a character. According to Genette, the *heterodiegetic person* is absolute and an absent narrator is absolutely out of the story. A *homodiegetic person* on the other hand has the grace of presence. An *autodiegetic narrative* is a *homodiegetic narrative* in which the narrator is a hero, while the *alterdiegetic narrative* is a *homodiegetic narrative* in which the narrator plays the secondary role of an observer and tells the story mostly of someone else.

To sum up this section, the main points include the fact that modernist writings have a role to play in the autobiography. Hence, this section has looked at critical points of modernist writings as they affect the autobiography. This section also focuses on the narrative tools of Time, Mood and Voice. These narrative tools have been selected for the analysis of three distinct types of autobiography found in West Africa which is the focus of this project. The section explained into details the three narratological categories as well as their sub--categories and noted that it is these tools that will help to identify the distinct types of the autobiography.

3. Analysis/Discussion

The discussion will start with Time and its sub-categories. Since the three authors do not necessarily make use of all the sub-categories, the discussion will centre only those that are overt and can help with comparisons.

In terms of exterior analepsis, Laye's *The African Child* uses this sub-category once: when Laye's father tells his son about the little black snake and its visits. These occurred long before Laye was born yet Laye encapsulates these in his work. Soyinka also uses this method of narration at least once in *Ake* when he employs the story of his mother to explain why Uncle Sanya is an *oro* and the show of faith by Eniola's uncle, the Rev. J.J. Ransome-Kuti and his display of Christian faith in spite of preponderance of traditional religion. Armah in *Fragments* uses one exterior analepsis and this is in the first Chapter 'Naana' where Baako's grandmother goes as far back as when Baako embarked on his journey before the story that marks his return is focused on. In spite of the three authors appearing to be at par in terms of the use of exterior analepsis, Armah proves a more conscious craftsman since he uses a whole chapter as the exterior analepsis whereas Laye and Soyinka use parts of Chapters to show exterior analepsis. It is also arguable that in terms of the use of exterior analepsis, Soyinka is the one who goes the farthest because he narrates the story as far back as when his own mother was a girl. Laye follows Soyinka in the use of exterior analepsis with Armah pulling the rear. It is also fairly evident that the nearer the occurrence of the exterior analepsis, the likelihood of the work getting into the realm of fiction. In other words, Armah's exterior analepsis occurs about five years earlier to the return of Baako from the United States and there is an artistic representation of this by Naana narrating the occurrence in a whole chapter. Soyinka in *Ake* and Laye in *The African Child* go beyond the times they are given birth to by creating a metalepsis or creating metadiegetic narrators to fill in the gaps of narration.

Prolepses also come up in the three novels under interrogation. Prolepses refers to a flashforward in the narration. Laye, for instance, in his work notes that his father sees long ago that he is not destined to be a master blacksmith like himself. Again during the harvest in Tindican, Laye's youngest maternal uncle cautions him not to overexert himself since he is not meant to be a farmer. These hints are strong indicators of what Laye becomes as an adult. In *Ake*, Soyinka's dexterity at grasping his lessons at the primary school even with the presence of his older sister, and his attempt at attending the Government School are examples within the narration that mark him off as exceptional or gifted student. Therefore, Soyinka's prowess as an academic that he is known for as an adult takes roots from what he presents in *Ake*. In the case of Armah, there is no overt exterior prolepsis, the nearest to exterior prolepsis is the scene of a mad dog about to be hunted down which creates a form of interior prolepsis which pre-empts Baako's 'high fever' he suffers at the latter part of the novel; this event is more of an amorce or a hint rather than an Interior prolepsis. In all, if the argument is that autobiographies are written by adults looking back on their past, then whatever happens as a child will be seen as indicators to what happens to the adult autobiographer. Prolepsis is also possible in such works like the autobiography or an autobiographical work because the autobiographer never finishes telling his mythic tale in viva and the work only helps in understanding what the autobiographer is at the present time. In all three works under interrogation, there is no artistically conscious use of prolepsis by one author more than the others.

Under 'Duration' a sub category of Time, Laye uses dialogue and scene less frequently than Soyinka, and Armah appears most frequently to use dialogue and scene. In other words, Laye does more of the 'Telling' and less of 'Showing' since his work is ethnological as well as autobiographical. Soyinka lies in the middle and Armah does more of 'showing' and less of 'telling'. By such an activity, Armah creates the most realistic characters who can be isolated and analyzed on their own whereas Laye's characters seem to die out of the story once they finish playing their role in Laye's development. Again, Soyinka lies between the other two authors in their development of realistic characters extremes. Soyinka's situation becomes peculiar since he is writing an autobiography with trappings of a novel and so the balance must be well achieved. Under 'Frequency' a sub- category of Time we note that all three authors tend to narrate once what occurs once. However, there are a few occasions where the authors narrate once what happens several times. For instance, in Laye's work, he narrates issues concerning the harvest at Tindican once although he witnesses this several times because he says he always spends December at Tindican and it is in Tindican that he observes the harvest. Laye also witnesses several ceremonies related to initiation and circumcision yet he chooses to narrate this once.

The analysis will now shift to Mood, the second major category proposed by narratologists as it affects the three types of autobiography found in West Africa. The first sub- category of Mood to be discussed here is 'Perspective'. Laye's narration is basically internally focalized. This means the person telling the story in Laye's work is a part of the story. The person from whose eyes the story is told is Laye himself. Where Laye the protagonist is, there the story is and characters are shown from his perspective. In other words, the action of the novel and portraits of character are seen from what Laye, the character in the work, says.

In comparative terms, Laye's characters lack depth as compared to Soyinka's characters. However when Laye's work is compared to the factual autobiography of the Nkrumah type, Laye's characters and themes are of better and of greater literary value although presented by the first person narrator. For instance, Nkrumah's mother, Nyanibah dies out of the story immediately Nkrumah moves into Achimota. This is because it is only Nkrumah who goes to Achimota and not his mother. Besides, Nkrumah's mother has no direct bearing on the activities at Achimota and so she is effaced. Laye's mother has no name but her presence is relatively palpable throughout the novel. She is heard of in the novel the first time when she rescues Laye from a snake, she next points out to Laye a special snake which must not be killed, and she is described as having powers of sorcery and thus can make an obstinate horse obey her. Laye's mother is instrumental during his circumcision and her permission has to be sought before Laye embarks on the trip to France for further studies. So although Laye's mother is presented from a first person narrative point of view or the narration is internally focalized, she comes out as a more 'living' character than what Nkrumah presents of his mother.

The argument here is that Laye is a more conscious presenter of character from a first person narrative point of view than Nkrumah but this is to be expected since Nkrumah's work is not intended as literature but a factual/historical record, there is the need to posit Laye's work side by side for a better appreciation of Laye's fictional purpose. We may describe Soyinka's work as the middle point between the autobiography as history and the autobiography as literature. Soyinka being a literary and not a factual autobiographer is able to coherently narrate the first twelve years of his life such that though he is talking about himself, he is able to rope in other characters who can be given a fuller rendition and analysis. The narration is such that it is almost impossible to demarcate the life of Soyinka away from that of others. For instance, Soyinka's grandfather comes into the story once but his role thematically and rhetorically gives Soyinka the needed confidence to 'fight off' activities related to the spiritual at the Government Scholarship Examination. Though his grandfather's entry is brief, he is a literary character who can easily be isolated and analyzed with the critical tools of Literature. In *Ake*, the characters, except for the very minor ones, play large roles in the development of Soyinka. Laye in contrast only picks those that have a direct value to him to be foregrounded; for instance, Laye never mentions the presence of a step-mother until the circumcision when she presents a book to him as a symbol of a future of scholarship. In both Laye's and Soyinka's works though the story is told from an internally focalized perspective, the autobiographers give room to other characters to fill in the gaps of narration especially when an external analepsis occurs. In all these endeavours however, Soyinka is able to tell his story using more novelistic tools than Laye does. In other words, Soyinka is able to use the tools to more advantage than Laye although both works are internally focalized. The two works make use of autodiegetic narrators which is a special form of the homodiegetic narrator but when there are gaps to be filled, both employ a metadiegetic narrator. In the case of Armah, a large tract of the narration is done by a diegetic narrator or is told by an omniscient narrator who has the freedom of time and space to comment at will. However, when a homodiegetic narrator is employed as is seen in the first and last Chapters titled 'Naana', then metadiegetic narrators are employed to fill in aspects of the narration. We must note here that though Armah employs a homodiegetic narrator in the Chapters dubbed "Naana", the extent of the homodiegesis does not match that which is found in Laye's and Soyinka's works. In other words, Armah's homodiegetic narrator does share the same strengths that we see in Laye's and Soyinka's works. Armah does not use an 'autodiegetic narrator'. Besides, Armah's homodiegetic narrator, the 'alterdiegetic narrator' does not stretch the narration to the point of emphasizing the growth and development of her own personality to be described as 'autodiegetic' like we find in *The African Child* or *Ake* where there is a great emphasis on the growth and development of the protagonist.

One other way of comparing the three types of the autobiography under interrogation is by looking at 'Perspective' where we have to determine whether we have more of 'Narration of Events' or 'Narration of Speech'.

Laye's Narration, it has been argued, is close to that of Nkrumah who is generally not a practising creative writer. Because of this, we note that Laye does more of telling to give his readers an insight into what makes his society so 'special'. But this argument is true insofar as Laye's work is compared to that of Soyinka for instance. Laye's work is superior to that of Nkrumah in terms of narrative emphasis because Laye introduces other relevant characters to fill in the gaps of narration especially through dialogues and scenes. Laye therefore does more of 'mimesis' or 'showing' than Nkrumah does. However, Laye's narration is less novelistic when compared to that of Soyinka because Laye tries to fuse what happens in nineteen years into a relatively small novel whereas Soyinka chooses to narrate the first eleven years of his life in a longer narrative taking time to observe most of the narrative and artistic landmarks. Many of the issues raised by Soyinka cannot be glossed over in summaries and so he employs large quantities of scenes and dialogues to graphically display emotions and the messages he means to carry across. Soyinka ends up doing a lot more 'showing' than 'telling' and so he narrates 'Speech' more than that of 'Event'.

Armah is the ultimate master of 'mimesis' out of the three authors. Armah right from the beginning engages his readers' attention by making his characters to "show" what message he means to carry across. The employment temporarily of Naana as a narrator is itself mimetic since she carries the main thrust of the message: corruption and high expectations from a son who has been abroad, to the reader. Indeed, from Naana's monologue, there is adequate showing of Foli's corruption and the high expectations of Efu and Araba. The height of mimesis is displayed in the meeting of Juana and Baako's mother, the meeting with Ocran, the rebellion against Asante-Smith and a host of other scenes where Armah rather than 'tell' chooses to "show" what he means.

The third category of narratological discourse on the narrative is related to **Voice** or the person telling the story. This categorization helps to fine-tune the various types of the autobiography. The first sub-category of **Voice** is related to the time of narration. In Laye's work we find an adult looking back at what he used to be, and so the bulk of the narration is done using 'ulterior time' or the narrative voice which is predominantly in the past tense. The present tense is rarely used and it is used when a dialogue is introduced or when a metadiegetic narrator is introduced in the story, an example being Laye's father talking to his son about the appearance of the little black snake to him. The encounter is rendered in the present tense because it still has relevance in the present time.

Narrative levels also account for the artistry of any novel. There are three narrative levels, the extradiegetic level, the intradiegetic level and the metadiegetic level. In this comparative study, the metadiegetic level is the measure of artistry as it relates to the three types of autobiography identified. In Laye's case there is a metadiegetic level created at least once and this can be found in the encounter between Laye's father and the little black snake. This encounter is a story within a story, Laye's own story and his father's story which help to fill in the gaps of the narration since Laye was not born when the event took place (external analepsis). Laye's father assumes the narrator's position and therefore becomes a metadiegetic narrator since the main story is not about him. The works of Laye and Soyinka are predominantly presented on the intradiegetic level since we have a convergence of narrator and protagonist as one person. However, in Armah's work the prevalent voice is extradiegetic level since the narrator is not an active participant in the novel.

'Person' is the last sub-category under **Voice** and the last to be discussed

. Under 'Person' a sub-category of 'Voice', we can establish a heterodiegetic person and a homodiegetic Person. These two types of Voice are relevant to our discussion. Camara Laye invariably writes from a first person narrative point of view and so his narrator is homodiegetic. The level of the homogeneity in the person narrating the story is so great that he qualifies to be named in the special category of being autodiegetic. We however find other narrative voices that help with external analepsis and so the creation of metadiegetic Narrators become evident.

Soyinka toes a similar line as Laye does in the creation of persons to narrate the story. The predominant voice is that of Soyinka as narrator but then we also have Soyinka's mother serving as a metadiegetic narrator in an external analepsis narrating how Uncle Sanya was saved from spirits when an exorcism was performed on him. The metadiegetic narrator who at a certain time is Eniola, Soyinka's mother is able to show how challenging it is to have a juxtaposition of two religions: the Traditional and the Christian.

Armah, as has been noted earlier, is the most artistically purposeful of the three autobiographers. Because Armah has the latitude to deny or to equate his person to Baako, the hero, he creates at least two dominant narrative voices: the voice of an omniscient narrator (extradiegetic) and the voice of Naana as a homodiegetic narrator. Naana, is not the protagonist of *Fragments*, she merely observes and is too weak as a character to be effectual and so she comes under one of the captions of a homodiegetic narrator and in her case she is an alterdiegetic narrator'. Naana's type of narration is different from a metadiegetic narrator who comes into the story briefly and is effaced when his part of the story is finished. Since the dominant voice in *Fragments* is extradiegetic then the voice is equally heterodiegetic since he can comment on any character or event at will without any inhibitions.

4. CODA

This analysis has basically been a comparative one which draws on the categories: Time, Mood and Voice and their sub-categories in structuralist narratology and applied them to three novels. These categories and sub-categories help identify artistry in the narratives under interrogation as they reflect on the three types of autobiography of artistic value we find in the West African sub-region. It has been noted that the three autobiographers extensively use the fictive elements of narrative discourse. Under the limiting factor of writing in the first person, Laye and Soyinka have used both analepsis and prolepsis to make their narration interesting and plausible. In terms of 'scene' and 'dialogue', Soyinka presents more and gets close to 'showing' than 'telling'. Armah is the most 'dialogic' and 'scenic' since he uses in the main, an 'omniscient narrator' who has a lot of advantages as compared to the first person which is employed by the other two fabulists- Laye and Soyinka. Therefore, in spite of a dearth of autobiographies and critical discourse on them in the West African sub region, the autobiography exists in various forms within West African novels and the various types can be identified from their mode of narration. Indeed, from the discussion above it is noteworthy that the various types of autobiography range from the most factual like that of Laye, to the most novelistic one like Armah's .

5. References

1. Armah, A. (1969) *Fragments* London: Heinemann.
2. de Man, P.(December,1979) *Autobiography as De-Facement*. In *Modern Language Notes* 94 no.5. pp. 919-31.
3. Camara , L. (1954) *The African Child* Paris : Jeune Africain
4. Bakhtain, M. (1981). *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays.*(C. Emerson & M. Holquist, Trans.) Houston: University of Texas Press
5. Finney, B. (1985). *The Inner I* London: Faber and Faber
6. Genette, G. (1983). *The Narrative Discourse: An Essay on Method*(J. E.Lewin, Trans.)
7. Ithaca: Cornell University Press
8. Gusdorf, G. (1956). *Conditions and Limits of the Autobiography*. In James Olney(ed., 1980) *Essays Critical and Theoretical*. Princeton University Press.
9. Jay, P.(1984). *Being in The Text*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
10. Nkrumah , K.(1959). *The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah*, Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd.
11. Odoi, D. A. (2010) *Elements of the Autobiography in the West African Novel*. (Unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Ghana)
12. Olney, J. (ed.) (1979) *Essays Critical and Theoretical*. Princeton University Press.
13. Opoku-Agyeman, K. (1989). *African Autobiography and Literary Theory*. In Y. S. Bofofo(ed.) *Asemka* Cape Coast.
14. Smith, S & Watson, J. (2001). *Reading Autobiography: A Guide for Interpreting Life Narratives*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
15. Shapiro, S. (1965). "The Dark Continent of Literature: Autobiography." In *Comparative Literature Studies* 5. (Pp 421-454)
16. Soyinka, W. (1980) *Ake : The Years of Childhood* Lagos: Spectrum Books.

6. Appendix

A Glossary Of Narratological Terms

- ANALEPSIS :A flashback in the narrative. Analepsis can be both internal and external. External Analepsis refers to a time outside the narrative itself.
- ANTERIOR TIME: A time period in a narrative where the story is told in the future tense. This is typical of Apocalyptic and Futuristic novels

- **AUTODIEGETIC NARRATOR:** A special form of the Homodiegetic Narrator where the Narrator is the same as the protagonist of the story and the story seen from his perspective.
- **ALTERDIEGETIC NARRATOR:** This is also a form of the Homodiegetic Narrator. In this instance, the narrator is an active participant in the story but he is not the protagonist. The events of the story are narrated from his perspective.
- **EXTERNAL FOCALISER:** A situation in the story where the one who sees and is telling the story is OUTSIDE the story. He is not an active participant in the story.
- **FREQUENCY:** This refers to the number of times an event is told in a story. An event that occurs once may be narrated several times and habitual events may be narrated once.
- **INTERNAL FOCALISER:** An internal focaliser is a participant in the narration .He may be an active participant or may have the grace of presence and events are seen from his perspective.
- **INTRA DIEGESIS:** It is sometimes called Diegetic and is the main narrative level under *Voice*, the third Narratological Category. In other words, it is the voice of the narrator who may be a participant in the story.
- **HETERODIEGETIC NARRATOR:** This refers to the absent narrator telling the story of others. He is normally effaced from the story itself.
- **HOMODIEGETIC NARRATOR:** A type of Narrator who is an active participant in the story. The Homodiegetic Narrator may be the Protagonist or another major character.
- **MACROTEXT:** This refers to one part of the *Recit* as opposed to the *Histoire*. It refers to the make or structure of the narrative as opposed to the storyline itself.
- **METADIEGESIS:** This refers to a part of the story where another person takes up the story from the regular narrator to fill in gaps in the narration which the regular narrator may not be privy to.
- **MICROTEXT:** It is the other part of the *Recit* which looks at words and sentence structures for example as they affect the narration.
- **MOOD:** This is the second major category of Narratological Criticism three categories. Mood refers to the one who sees or the one whose point of view the story is presented. Mood is divided into two main areas namely : Distance and Perspective
- **NARRATION OF EVENTS:** This refers to a situation in the story where there is more narration and less mimesis. Or, there is more action and less narration.
- **NARRATION OF SPEECH:** This refers to the quantity of Mimesis (action) shown by the speeches in the story. The more indirect the speech, the less character presence and more narrator presence. Inversely, the more direct the speech the more character presence and the less narrator presence.
- **PAUSE:** This belongs to the second sub- category of Time under Duration. Pause refers to a part of the narration where no or advancement takes place in the story but rather time is spent describing or commenting on issues.
- **PERSPECTIVE:** It is the second sub-category under *Mood* and this deals with who is seeing the events that is narrated. The person narrating the story could be someone outside of the story(External focaliser), or the person could be someone who is a character within the story(Internal focaliser).
- **PROLEPSIS:** This belongs to the first subcategory under Time named 'Order'. It refers to a flash forward or an advanced point in the story.
- **SCENE :** This also belongs to the second subcategory of Time under Duration. In a Scene whatever is to be narrated is enacted through dialogues especially. Story Time and Narrative Time are equal in a Scene.
- **SIMULTANEOUS TIME:** A type of narration where the present tense is used throughout. It is presupposed that the event is narrated as it occurs.
- **SUMMARY:** Summary belongs to the second sub category of Time labeled 'Duration'. In Summary the Narrative Time is shorter than the Story Time since few word are used to describe an entire event.
- **TIME:** The first major category of Narratological Criticism that comes with other categories like 'Mood' and 'Voice'. Time has sub categories '*Order*', '*Duration*' and '*Frequency*'.
- **ULTERIOR TIME:** A type of narration where the language used is predominantly in the past tense.
- **VOICE:** This the third major category fashioned by narratologists. The other categories being Time and Mood. Voice refers to the person who *speaks* in the narration as opposed to the one who *sees*(Mood) Voice has the sub categories: *Time of Narration*, *Narrative Levels*, and *Person*.