

**Adverbial Placement in Ewe:
A Role and Reference Grammar Perspective.
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Abstract:

This article looks at adverbial placement and interpretation in Ewe. It takes from English adverbial placement in which several positions are possible. Implicitly, it looks at what is the same compared to English and what is different when we look at adverbials in Ewe. The study looks at Ewe adverbials from a Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) perspective.

Key words: adverbials, placement/position, Ewe language, RRG.

Introduction

This study is a description of Ewe adverb placement and interpretation from an RRG (Role and Reference Grammar) perspective. Ewe is a member of the Kwa branch of Niger Congo languages. It is also described as a dialect of GBE (Capo 1982). GBE is a cluster of five languages; Aja, Ewe, Fon, Gen, and Phla-Phera. Adverbs or adverbials modify verbs and basically go with verbs. They can also modify adjectives (e.g. a beautifully radiant sun) or the whole sentence (e.g. Essentially, all the dead go to the same place). The term adverbial or adverb will be used irrespective of the syntactic form. The form of an adverbial can be a single adverb, an adverbial phrase, a noun phrase expressing this sense (e.g. I received the parcel *this morning/that day/last holiday*), a prepositional phrase expressing adverbial senses, or an adverbial clause. Some Ewe examples are as follows:

- a single adverb: *blewu* ‘slowly’; *nyuie* ‘well’; *pepepe* ‘exactly’
- an adverbial phrase: *nyuie ηutɔ* ‘very well’; *nyuie kekeake* ‘best of all’
- a noun phrase: *egbe ηdi* [today morning] ‘this morning’
- a prepositional phrase: *le ηdi me* ‘in the morning’; *le blema me* ‘in former times’
- an adverbial clause: *ne suku me li o la...* ‘if school is not in session...’, *esime me va o la...* ‘since you didn’t come...’

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RRG theory holds that adverbs can occur anywhere on the tree representation and that the type of adverb and its position in the sentence will determine its interpretation. This is investigated in this article.

1. Adverbial description

Descriptively, there are several types of adverbials. There are adverbials of time, frequency, direction, place/space/location and manner, among others. Several other names for types of adverbials can be found in the literature (e.g., disjunct, conjunct, complement) depending on the function of the adverbial. Section 1.1 describes different adverbial types in Ewe. The list constitutes the main adverbials also attested in English (Van Valin & LaPolla, 1997:27; Beare, K. (about.com); the blog, aggslanguage.wordpress.com).

1.1. Adverbials in Ewe

This section illustrates the equivalent types of adverbials found in the Ewe language. It is found that Ewe expresses the same adverbial notions or types as in English. However, some difference in terms of how the language uses forms to convey adverbial senses can be observed. Firstly, let us look at the adverbial types in Ewe (See also Fiaga, 1997:43-44).

- i. Time adverbials (e.g., *le efe me*, “in the year”, *le ŋdi me* “in the morning”; *tsa* “formerly”, *enumake* “at once”, *etsɔ* (*si va yi*), “yesterday”, *etsɔ* (*si gbɔ na*) “tomorrow”, *nyitsɔ* “last time/day before yesterday”
- ii. Frequency adverbs (e.g., *edziedzi* “often”, *gbede* ‘never’, *koko/ko/gbe sia gbe* “always”)
- iii. Directional adverbs (e.g., *tu ta de* “head towards”, *yina de* “going to/towards”, *fu du yina de* “run to/towards”)
- iv. Adverbs of Place, Space (e.g., *le yedufe* “at the dance”, *le nusrɔfe* “at school”)

- v. Adverbs of location (e.g., *dɛ ɛkplɔa dzi* “on the table”, *dɛ xixenu* “outside”, *fi sia fi* “everywhere” *dzi fo* “upwards”, *afima* “there”)
- vi. Adverbs of manner: (e.g., *nublanuitɔɛ* “mercifully”, *fafatɔɛ* “peacefully”, *kabakaba* “quickly”, *pepepe* “exactly”, *piam/piampiam* “hurriedly”)
- vii. Degree/Intensifying adverbs OR emphasis (e.g., *ɲuto* “very”, *alegbegbe* “extremely/such a degree”, *kloe* “almost”, *fūu* “plenty”)
- viii. Aspectual Adverbials (e.g., *fio* “completely”, *keŋken* “totally”, *tẽ/laa* “continuously”, *kɔtɔ* “continue”, *madzudzɔmadzudzɔ* “non-stop/continuously”)
- ix. Adverbs of Modality (e.g., *teɲu* “can”, *dze agbagba* “try”, *dɔla* “have to”)
- x. Evidentials: (e.g. *dɛwohĩ* “maybe”, *vavaɲ* “really/truly”, *anye ne* “it is possible that/it could be/possibly”, *dzɔgbenyuietɔɛ* “fortunately”, *dzixɔsetɔɛ* “hopefully/faithfully”, *nukunutɔɛ* “surprisingly”, *nutefekɔtɔɛ* “evidently”, *tonametɔɛ* “reportedly” *edze fãã bel/dzenametɔɛ* “it is obvious that/obviously”)
- xi. Adverbials of reason (these are introduced by, e.g. *elabena* “because”, *esime* “as/since”, *togbɔbe* “despite the fact that”)
- xii. Adverbials expressing condition (these are introduced by, e.g., *ne ...* “if”, *hafi* “before”)

As said earlier, Ewe expresses the same adverbial notions or types as in English. However, the description shows some difference in terms of how the language uses forms to convey adverbial senses. For example, the

same prepositional form can occur in Ewe for different adverbial senses/types and the prepositional element itself can be expressed by disjunction. These are shown below (PROSP stands for Prospective).

1. a. Kofi yi le ŋdi- me. Time
Kofi go in morning- inside
“Kofi went in the morning.”
- b. Mie dogo le nufiala fe afe-me. Place
we meet at teacher POSS house-inside
“We met at the teacher’s house.”
- c. Takpekpe-a me va-ge le wɔna-wo megbe.
Time meeting-DET inside come-PROSP at deed-PL back
“The meeting will take place after the deeds.”

Examples (1)a & b show the form *le* combined with *me* to convey both time and place adverbial meanings depending on use. In (1)c, the body part term *megbe* “back” expresses the sense of “after” in combination with the earlier prepositional form *le*. The expressions below are ungrammatical if one of the prepositional elements is dropped.

2. a. *Takpekpe-a me va-ge __ wɔna-wo megbe.
meeting-DET inside come-PROSP __ deed-PL back
- b. *Takpekpe-a me va-ge le wɔna-wo __. meeting-
DET inside come-PROSP at deed-PL __

Another characteristic of Ewe adverbials is the preponderance of reduplication in adverbial forms where English uses either a bare form or phrase or a morphological particle (to form/derive the adverb from an adjective).

3. a. Me yi-na suku gbe-sia-gbe/edziedzi. Frequency
I go-HAB school day-every-day/occasionally/on and on
“I go to school everyday/I go to school occasionally.”

- b. Wo yi-na agble ɲdiɲdi/ɲdi-sia-ɲdi. Time/Frequency
they go-HAB farm morning-RED
“They go to the farm in the mornings/every morning.”
- c. Kofi le zɔzɔ -m kabakaba. Manner
Kofi BE walk.RED-PROG quick.RED
“Kofi is walking very quickly.”
- d. Wɔ kabakaba (kaba).
do very quickly (quickly)
“Do (it) very quickly (quickly).”
- e. Mi-me wɔ -na ema gbedegbede o. Frequency
we-NEG do-HAB DEM never.RED NEG
“We never do that.”

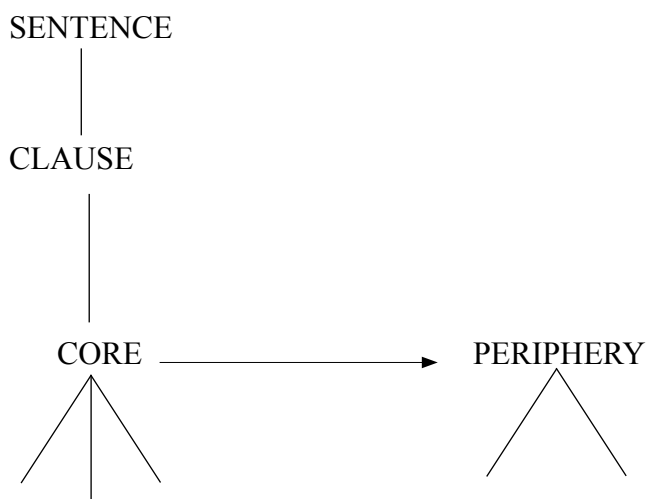
Finally, Ewe can take the nominalizer *-tɛ* to derive an adverbial sense, or form one directly from adjectives. Some examples are as follows:

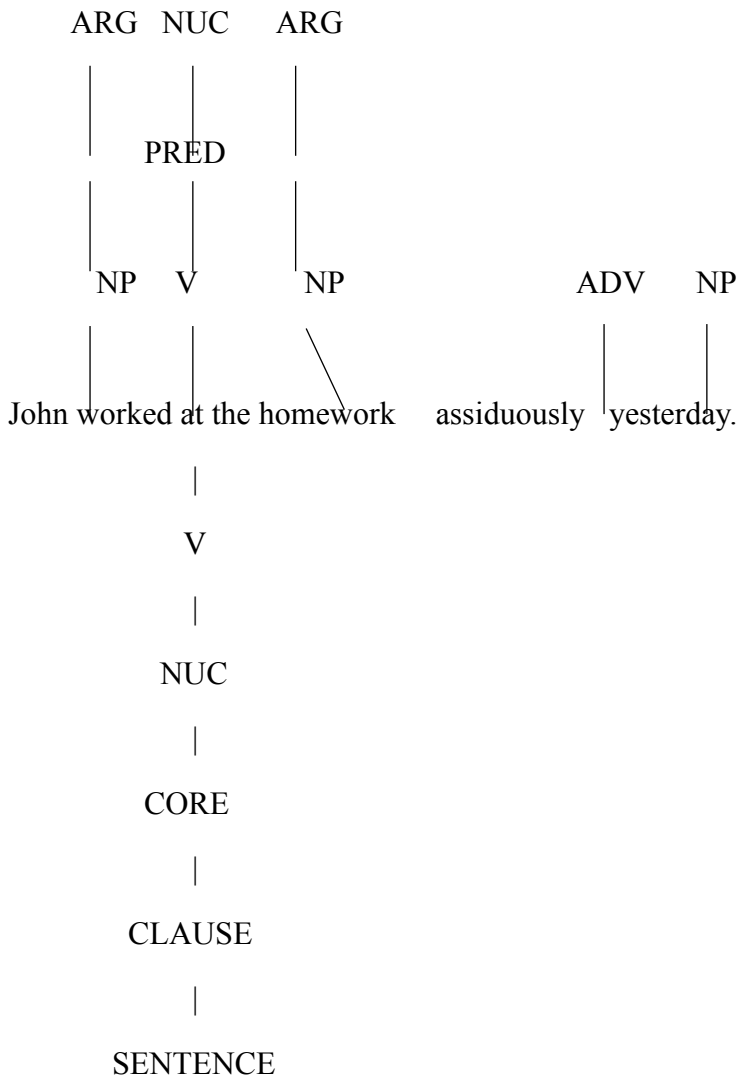
- 4. a. E-wɔ -avukalɛ-tɛ e. Manner
3SG-do-dog brave-NOM
“He/she fought bravely.”
- b. [Dzɔ-gbe nyui-tɔ e la], dɔnɔ -a ga. Modality
happen-day good-NOM TOP sick.person-DET heal
“Fortunately, the sick (person) got healed.”
- c. Kofi fu du sesié. Manner
Kofi run race quickly.
‘Kofi ran quickly.’

In (4)a & b, the adverbial is derived from the adjectives glossed as “brave” and “good” respectively by affixing *-tɛ*. In (4)c, the attributive adjective *sese/sesi* is transformed into the adverbial *sesié*. The Modality in (4)b is Epistemic.

1.2 Role and Reference Grammar and Adverbials

Role and Reference Grammar is a non-derivational syntactic theory which takes the real surface word order of languages into account. This means that it does not derive *surface structures* from *deep structures* and therefore presents only a single level of clause structure. Again, intermediary levels are unavailable in RRG theory. This theory works within a framework called “the layered structure of the clause” which considers syntactic nodes as layers. The single representation of the sentence has two projections: Constituent projection and Operator projection. The Constituent projection shows a tree diagram from top down to the lexical items, while the Operator projection starts from the lexical items further down. The Operator projection shows only secondary modifiers of the predicate and the noun/nominal arguments. The Constituent projection distinguishes CORE elements from PERIPHERY elements. CORE elements are required and consist of the Predicate plus its arguments or nominal expressions. The PERIPHERY on the other hand consists of elements, often adjuncts, which merely provide additional information and therefore can be dropped without affecting the meaning of the sentence. See the example tree diagram below. Verb operator items (tense, illocutionary force, agreement etc.) and nominal modifiers (e.g. determiners/articles, adjectives, number marking) have been left out as they are irrelevant for this study.





The SENTENCE is the topmost layer with the CLAUSE, CORE, NUC and PERIPHERY as other layers of the syntactic tree diagram. The adverbial items ‘assiduously’, and ‘yesterday’, are not subcategorized or required by the verb “worked at”. However, these add additional information to the whole sentence and so they occur in the PERIPHERY. The CORE plus the PERIPHERY constitute the CLAUSE.

RRG theory holds that adverbs can occur anywhere on the tree representation and that the type and position of the adverb will determine its interpretation. Therefore, if we consider the RRG tree above, an adverb can occur on any of the layers in English: it can occur on the layer SENTENCE (as LEFT DETACHED POSITION, abbreviated as LDP), on the layer CLAUSE, on the layer CORE, on the layer NUCLEUS or on the layer PERIPHERY. Basically, what it entails for an adverbial to be a NUC adverbial or CORE adverbial or other, is explained below (see also an example of a tree diagram at the end of the section which illustrates these different layers).

- NUC adverbial: modifies just the predicate or verbal element(s)
- CORE adverbial: modifies the predicate and its immediate arguments/ nominal elements
- CLAUSE adverbial: modifies the CORE plus any additional information, if any (this is information in the PERIPHERY)
- SENTENCE adverbial: modifies the whole sentence, which can be more than a simple clause. A sentence adverbial occurs in the LDP/RDP (RIGHT DETACHED POSITION).

The positions or placements discussed above are not haphazardly determined but depend on the type of adverbial. Consequently, we can match the different types of adverbials with their positions or layers for English as shown in the table below. This table will be compared with Ewe.

Table 1: English Adverbial Type and Position-Layer

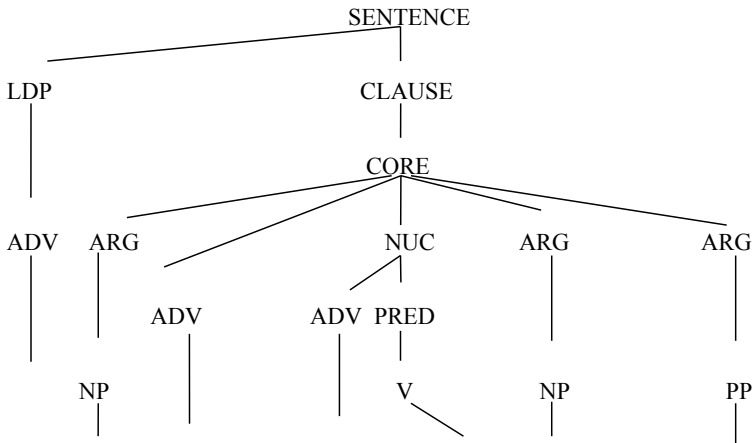
No.	Adverbial Type	Position-Layer
i.	Temporal adverbials (e.g., during the year, in the afternoon), including adverbials such as “yesterday” and “tomorrow”	PERIPHERY
ii	Space/Place (e.g., at the party, in the library)	PERIPHERY
iii	Location (with verbs of “put” e.g., on the table, anywhere, outside)	CORE
iv	Aspectual adverbs (e.g., completely, continuously).	NUCLEUS or CORE (If it is a preverbal/with auxiliary elements, it is NUC, but after the verb, it is CORE)
v	Directional adverbials (e.g., Mary is walking/running/driving <i>to the new school</i>)	CORE
vi.	Manner adverbs (e.g., slowly, skillfully. “John skillfully painted/ decorated the wall/John painted/ decorated the wall skillfully.” Position immediately before the verb or immediately after the DO).	CORE
vii	Modality adverbials (Deontic. e.g., can, must, may)	CORE
viii	Evidential adverbials (e.g., evidently, obviously, manifestly, clearly)	LDP, or RDP. (They are left detached or right detached from the rest of the clause if they modify the whole sentence and are marked with a pause/ comma)

ix	Frequency adverbials (e.g., never, always)	NUCLEUS CORE CLAUSE
x	Degree/intensifying adverbials (e.g., very badly reported)	NUCLEUS CORE
xi	Adverbials of reason (e.g., I was late <i>because the bus arrived late</i> /I was late and this, <i>because the bus arrived late</i> .)	PERIPHERY RDP
xii	Adverbials of condition (e.g., <i>If you will return the book on time</i> , I will let you have it./I will let you have the book, <i>on condition that you return it on time</i> .)	LDP RDP

Observe that adverbials of Place/Space (e.g., Mary ate the apple *in the kitchen*) are distinguished from Location/Locative adverbials (e.g., John put the books *on the table/ everywhere/upstairs*). This is because the locative adverbial is an oblique argument required by the predicate; it is not an adjunct modifier of the verb. Directional adverbials which specify an endpoint to verbs of motion (e.g., run, walk, drive) are also not PERIPHERY elements. Finally, notice that the table also distinguishes Modality and Evidential adverbials. Modality adverbials are of two types: root/deontic modality (e.g., can, may) and epistemic modality (e.g., probably, certainly, necessarily, possibly). The deontics occur nearer to the predicate and are resistant to movement because they can function syntactically as verbs. Evidentials provide speaker point of view in terms of whether the speaker is an eye witness within a scene or if he/she is merely reporting from hearsay/secondary source. Since deontic modality occurs nearer to the predicate, it occurs in the CORE, while the evidential, if detached from the clause, occurs further in the LDP or RDP (these layers branch from the SENTENCE layer). The occurrence of Frequency adverbials depends on the following: if they modify just the predicate, then NUC; if they modify the predicate plus argument(s), then they are in

the CORE, but if they occur beyond the predicate, then they are elements of the CLAUSE.

The following tree diagram from Van Valin & LaPolla (1997: 166) illustrates the point that adverbs can occur anywhere on the layers. Only the Constituent projection has been illustrated, where “completely” is a NUC modifier showing the aspectual nature of the verb, “slowly” modifies the CORE elements and finally, “evidentially” modifies the whole SENTENCE layer.



Evidently, Leslie has slowly been completely immersing herself in the new language.

2. Adverbial Placement in Ewe and Interpretation

This section will discuss Ewe adverbial placement or positions in relation to the RRG treatment presented in section 1.2. The discussion will show that a different position of the same adverbial is also subject to a different interpretation.

In terms of position, Time adverbials in Ewe (just as in English) have a basic placement, namely, PERIPHERY. This position or placement has no other interpretation but to express a basic statement or to provide information. However, alternative placements are possible (see below). FOC and TOP in the examples refer to Focus and Topic respectively (as used by Lambrech 1994; Chafe 2003, in Frawley 2003).

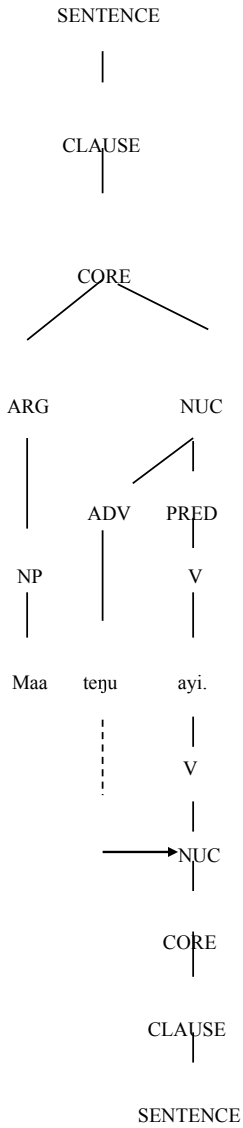
5. a. Nufiala dzodzo-ge etsɔ. PERIPHERY
 teacher leave-PROSP tomorrow
 “The teacher will leave tomorrow.”

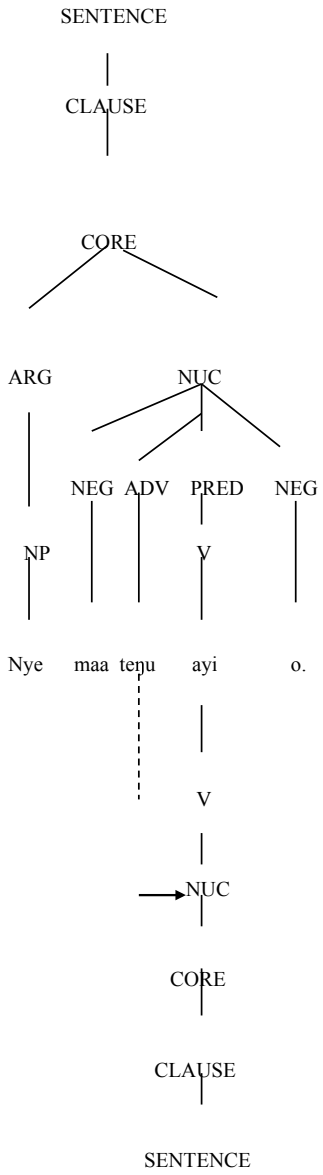
- b. ! Etsɔ nufiala dzodzo-ge.
 tomorrow teacher leave-PROSP

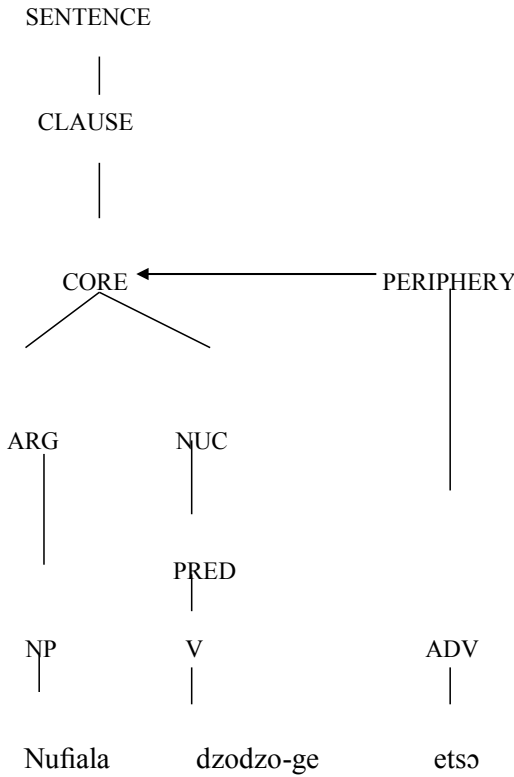
- c. Etsɔ-la, nufiala dzodzo-ge. LDP
 tomorrow-TOP, teacher leave-PROSP
 “The teacher leaves tomorrow.”

- d. Etsɔ -e nufiala dzodzo-ge.PrCS
 tomorrow-FOC teacher leave-PROSP
 “It is tomorrow that the teacher will leave/Tomorrow is when
 the teacher leaves.”

Example (5a) shows the basic or normal PERIPHERY position of Time adverbials in Ewe while (5b) seems problematic if the adverbial occurs in initial position. See the tree diagram for (5a) below.







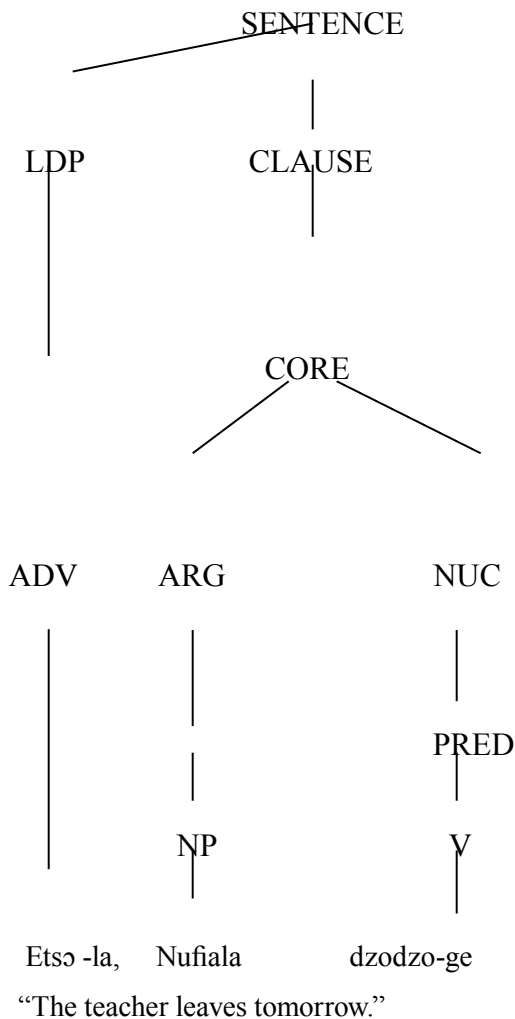
“The teacher will leave tomorrow.”

Examples (5c, d) show alternative placements; however, these positions are clearly marked and therefore will call for a difference in interpretation. In example (5c), the adverbial occurs with the bound form *-la* which is Topic marking. The adverbial is additionally marked with a comma which sets it clearly apart from the rest of the clause. The comma indicates a pause in the oral utterance. An example occurs in the following sentence, where the adverbial has scope over the whole utterance:

etsɔ -la, [nufiala dzodzo-ge.]

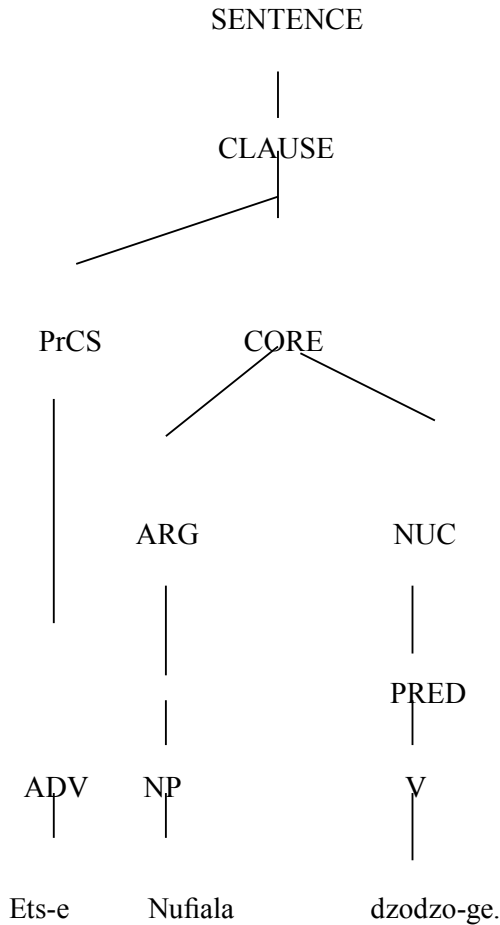
This position is the LDP (Left Detached Position) in RRG. The Left Detached Position branches from the SENTENCE layer. It is neither part

of the CLAUSE layer nor the CORE, but is part of the whole SENTENCE. See the LDP below.



Sentence (5d) is similar to (5c) in that it is marked. However, there is a visible difference in the coding of (5d) as opposed to (5c): there is the Focus morpheme -e which calls for emphasis in (5d) and this coding is

not set off from the rest of the sentence with any comma (or pause in the utterance). This is the Pre CORE SLOT (PrCS) in RRG. Thus, comparing (5c, d) with (5a), unless intonation is added, the reading in (5a) is merely informative: the teacher will leave, and this tomorrow. The reading in (5c) is also informative; however, it informs in a special way: our attention is called to a specific day, “tomorrow” and no other day. This interpretation is clearly different from the basic reading in (5a). Example (5d) is further different: it presupposes that the hearer knows that the teacher will leave, but doesn’t know the time, which is placed in the front of the sentence and also marked with the suffix -e which emphasizes it. There is no presupposition reading or interpretation in either (5a) or (5c). The tree diagram below illustrates (5d).



Notice that even though the single item glossed as “tomorrow” is singled out as emphasized in (5d), this item is uttered or spoken as part and parcel of the whole clause. This means that there is no intonation break in the utterance, as shown below.

[Etsə -e Nufiala dzodzo-ge]

This is precisely the position called the PrCS (Pre CORE SLOT), which is part of the CLAUSE layer, but outside of the CORE. (Compare with PrCS elements in English, e.g. “what”, “which”, “that”, in examples such as, *What* did you buy?; *Which* book are we talking about?; *That* story being told...etc. . These items are also clearly part of the clause and are not detached from it.) The CLAUSE layer in which the emphasized word occurs in (5d) is smaller than the SENTENCE layer, but bigger than the CORE.

What the discussion has shown so far is that Ewe Time adverbials have a basic position, PERIPHERY which is interpreted as merely informative; however, alternative positions which suggest other readings are possible. The observation is the same if the adverbial is a temporal PP (*Nufiala dzodzo-ge le ŋdi me* “The teacher will leave in the morning.”). Contrast this with *Le ŋdi me la, Nufiala le dzodzo-ge* “In the morning, the teacher will leave.’). Ewe adverbials that allow similar treatment in terms of placement and interpretation are as follows:

- Space/Place adverbials (minus locative arguments)
- Modality (epistemic modality)
- Evidential adverbials
- Adverbials of reason
- Adverbials of condition

Some Ewe examples are as follows:

6. a. Kofi kple Ama-wo dogo *le yeɖu-fe*. Place
Kofi and Ama-PL meet at dance-place
“Kofi and Ama met at the dance.”
- b. *yeɖu-fe-e* Kofi kple Ama-wo dogo le.
dance-place-FOC Kofi and Ama-PL meet at
“It was at the dance that Kofi and Ama met.”
7. a. Nyɔnu- ma to nyala na kpovitowo *nutefekpɔto-tɔe*.
Evid.woman-DEM tell story to policemen eye-witness-wise
“The woman told the policemen the story as an eye-witness.”

- b. (Abe) *Nutefekpɔtɔ-tɔe-la*, nyɔnu ma to nyala na kpovitɔwo.
like eye-witness-wise-TOP, woman- DEM tell story to policemen
“Like an eye-witness, the woman told the story to the policemen.”
8. a. Sɔleme ma-anɔ anyi o *ne etsi dza*. Conditional: PER
worship NEG-BE down NEG if water fall
“No worship service will take place if it rains.”
- b. Ne etsi dza-la, sɔleme ma-nɔ anyi o. Cond.: LDP if water
fall-TOP, worship NEG-BE down NEG
“If it rains, there will be no worship service.”
9. a. Me tsi megbe [*elabena* trɔtrɔ me va kaba o.] Reason: PER
1SG remain back [because lorry NEG come quick NEG]
“I am late because the lorry did not arrive on time.”
- b. * [*Elabena* trɔtrɔ me va kaba o la], me- tsi megbe.
[because lorry NEG come quick NEG TOP], 1SG-remain
back
- c. [*Esime* trɔtrɔ me va kaba o la], me-tsi megbe.
Reason: LDP as/because lorry NEG come quickly NEG
TOP], 1SG-remain back
“Because the lorry did not come on time, I am late.”

In each of these examples, the adverbial at the end of the sentence is able to undergo fronting for an alternative reading. At least one of the markers –la or –e can occur with the adverbials in initial position. The examples also show that additional elements occur where the adverbial is fronted; e.g., the adverbial PP in (6a) changes the order of its disjunctive elements in (6b), where the marker of the preposition is now placed at the end of the clause. Observe that there is no pause in the reading. Furthermore, *elabena* “because” in example (9a) becomes *esime* “as” to express the reason in initial position in (9c), etc. The (b) examples are clearly marked. These positions or placements come with a different reading and are therefore not the basic adverbial placements as seen in the (a) examples. The adverbials in (a) will occur in the PERIPHERY

layer on the tree representation, while those in (b), except (9b), will occur in a different layer namely, PrCS if the adverbial is Focused with *-e* and LDP if the adverbial is Topicalized with *-la*. Finally, example (7) shows an adverbial expressing evidentiality, where the word in Ewe is a derived form. There are no particular evidential markers or forms in Ewe, but the concept exists and can be linguistically derived. Adverbials that express Modality (epistemic modality) behave in similar ways as those that express evidentiality in Ewe.

What the above discussion shows is that adverbials in Ewe, just as in English, can allow alternative placements. Some adverbials can easily be dropped and the sentence will still be understood if they are not that relevant for the interpretation of the predicates. However, when the alternative expression is acceptable, it is much more marked and comes with a difference in interpretation which justifies a different position/layer on the tree representation. The next examples concern other types of adverbials in terms of their positions/layers.

10. a. Ama nɔ zɔzɔ-m blewublewu/dzadzadza. Manner Ama
BE.PAST walk.RED-PROG slowly/ silently
“Ama was walking slowly.”
- b. Blewublewu-e/dzadzadza-e Ama nɔ zɔzɔ-m.
slowly-FOC/silently-FOC Ama BE.PAST walk.RED-PROG
“It was slowly (the way) Ama was walking.”
- c. * Blewublewu-la/dzadzadza-la, Ama nɔ zɔzɔ -m.slowly-TOP/
silently-TOP, Ama BE.PAST walk.RED-PROG
- d. * Ama nɔ zɔzɔ -m _____?Ama BE.PAST walk.RED-
PROG _____?

Example (10a) has the manner adverbial at the final position, but is this PERIPHERY? The acceptable expression in (10b) suggests, in line with the statement above, that the adverbial can take an alternative position.

However, Example (10c) shows that the adverbial cannot be detached from the whole utterance, therefore it cannot occur in the LDP. LDP and PERIPHERY positions are for modifiers that are not required by the predicate and can easily be dropped. Furthermore, (10d) suggests that the manner adverbial is required for the predicate’s meaning, because if dropped, the expression is ungrammatical or incomplete. This is unlike the time adverbial, where it is possible to drop the adverbial in final position without the sense being affected. In which layer does the manner adverbial occur in Ewe? The answer seems to be CORE when the manner adverbial occurs in final position in the expression and PrCore Slot when the adverbial is fronted and marked with *-e*. This shows that final occurrence alone of the adverbial does not justify its treatment as PERIPHERY, but that it must be tested in terms of the type of adverbial, or there should be sound reasons to justify the position/layer in which it is placed. Directional, Location and Aspectual adverbials seem to behave as manner adverbials. Examples are below.

11. a. *Ama tuta yi-na ɔ̃e Kumasi.* Directional: CORE
 Ama head go-HAB to Kumasi
 “Ama is headed towards Kumasi.”
- b. *Me da ega-la ɔ̃e ekplɔ-a dzi.* Location: CORE
 I put money-DET on table-DET on
 “I put the money on the table.”
- c. *Nunya ɔ̃u nu-a [wo-vɔ] fɔo.* Aspectual: CORE
 Nunya eat food-DET PRO-finish completely.
 “Nunya ate (finished) the food completely.”

The predicate *tuta yi* “go towards/headed towards” requires an endpoint or goal to complete it, thus the Directional adverbial is not an adjunct; however it can be fronted with *-e*. Additionally, the predicate *da* “put” requires semantically someone who does the putting, the object put (somewhere), and the place to put the object. The Location adverbial is an argument and cannot occur in the PERIPHERY. Again, just because an element occurs in final position does not qualify it as a PERIPHERY element. Similarly, the degree adverbial *fɔo* “completely” specifies the

aspectual nature of the predicate and cannot be dropped. It occurs in final position but modifies the whole subordinate clause [wɔ-vɔ], which has its antecedent in the main clause. Since the adverbial modifies both predicate and argument, it is CORE. This is different from English where the basic Aspectual adverbial modifier occurs in the NUCLEAR, or simply NUC position (John ate completely the food/John completely ate the food). In Ewe, the NUCLEAR position for Aspectual adverbials is ungrammatical, as shown below.

12. a. *Ama fiɔɔ ɖu nu-a.
 Ama completely eat food-DET
- b. * Ama ɖu fiɔɔ nu-a.
 Ama eat completely food-DET

The ungrammatical sentences above prove that Aspectual adverbials in Ewe modify not just the predicate but the predicate and argument and thus occur in the CORE. The examples below concern Degree adverbials.

13. a. kpovito-a fo fiafito-a vevié/ɲuto/sěsié. Degree: CORE
 police-DET beat thief-DET strongly/well/
 harshly/mercilessly
 “The policeman beat the thief strongly/well/harshly/mercilessly.”
- b. Vevié-é /ɲuto-é/sěsié-é kpovito-a fo fiafito -a.
 Strongly-FOC/well-FOC/harshly-FOC policeman-DET
 beat thief-DET
 “It was very strongly/well/harshly/mercilessly that the
 policeman beat the thief.”
- c. * kpovito-a vevié/ɲuto/sěsié fo fiafito -a.
 policeman-DET strongly/well/harshly/mercilessly beat
 thief- DET
- d. * kpovito-a fo vevié/ɲuto/sěsié fiafito -a.
 policeman-DET beat strongly/well/harshly/mercilessly thief-
 DET

A Degree adverbial may or may not be specified for a given action predicate, which means that the degree specifier is not a strong requirement of the predicate. However, when a question is asked within a specific context that requires it, the degree specifier does not merely provide additional information but is an important characterization of the action, and therefore is a CORE element. It can be fronted with *-e* as the example in (13b) shows (the emphatic marker can also become *-ye* where the adverbial already ends with an identical form). The adverbial cannot be Topicalized with *-la* (not LDP) and cannot occur immediately before or after the predicate, as shown in (13c) and (13d) respectively. A summary of type plus layer is provided as follows:

Degree adverbial: CORE or PrCORE SLOT.

Some Deontic Modality adverbials in Ewe can occur only in a NUCLEAR layer, whereas others cannot.

14. a. Maa teɲu ayi/ Nye maa teɲu ayi o. Deontic Modality
 I can go/ I NEG can go NEG
 “I can go.”/ “I cannot go.”
- b. * Maa ayi teɲu/ * Nye maa ayi teɲu o.
 I go can/* I NEG go can NEG
15. a. ɖewohĩ, Kofi vava-ge. Epistemic Modality
 perhaps/probably, Kofi come.RED-PROSP
 “Perhaps/probably, Kofi will come.”
- b. Kofi vava-ge ɖewohĩ.
 Kofi come.RED-PROSP perhaps/probably
 “Kofi will come perhaps/probably.”
- c. *Kofi ɖewohĩ vava-ge.
 Kofi perhaps/probably come.RED-PROSP

The data suggest that Deontic adverbials such as *teɲu* “can” in Ewe have auxiliary function and therefore cannot be displaced; they are tightly connected with the predicate and therefore are only NUC adverbials. This is in line with what has been said earlier that since the deontics can function syntactically as verbs, they occur nearer to the predicate and are therefore resistant to movement. A similar point is made concerning Kwa languages in general (Aboh 2007), that these languages often make use of “grammatical particles ...that serve to encode aspect or discourse specifications.” The Ewe deontic, in my view, can be interpreted along similar lines: it is used as a particular modifier of the verb and therefore syntactically and semantically is restrictive in this vein. This is not the case with the epistemic modality marker *ɖɛwohĩ* “maybe” which does not accept the NUC position in (15c), but can occur in either PERIPHERY (15b) or LDP (15a). Note that the item marked with a comma only is equivalent to the occurrence with *-la*. Thus, Deontic adverbials with auxiliary function occur only in the NUCLEAR layer, while the layer/position of Epistemic adverbials can vary between PERIPHERY and LDP. The tree diagram below illustrates the NUCLEAR occurrence. The Modality adverbial is linked to both the NUC in the Constituent projection and in the Operator projection and has the reading: I can [go].

Nyemaa teɲu ayi o.

Finally, Frequency adverbials seem to occur in several different layers, just like other adverbials (PERIPHERY, CORE, PrCORE SLOT, LDP). Those such as *gbeɖe* “never” can occur in a double negation construction in which their peripheral nature is clearly seen.

16. a. Nu-ma me dzɔ-na le mia-gbɔ gbeɖe o.
 Thing-DEM NEG happen-HAB at our-side never NEG
 “That thing never happens at our place.”
- b. Nu-ma me dzɔ-na le mia-gbɔ o.
 thing-DEM NEG happen-HAB at our-side NEG
 “That thing doesn’t happen at our place.”

- c. Nu-ma me dzɔ-na gbeɖe le mia-gbɔ o.
 thing-DEM NEG happen-HAB never at our-sideNEG
 “That thing doesn’t ever happen at our place.”
- d. Gbeɖe, nu-ma me dzɔ-na le mia-gbɔ o.
 never, thing-DEM NEG happen-HAB at our-side NEG
 “Never! That thing doesn’t happen at our place.”

Example (16b) shows that the adverbial can be dropped and the negation sense will still be available since a negation already occurs in the sentence. (A clitic-like sound can accompany the expression in some cases where the ‘never’ is dropped.) Examples (16c, d) show alternative renditions of the adverbial. Observe that in (16d), a pause/comma alone marks the adverbial, which does not accept the –la Topic.

In summary, the discussion has shown so far that adverbials in Ewe can occur in more than one place in the sentence and that there is a basic position and a non-basic position. The non-basic position is clearly marked with either a Focus marker or Topic marker. Deontic Modality adverbials such as *teŋu* “can” are the exception. They occur in only a NUCLEAR position in Ewe.

Conclusion

The current article has shown that as with English, Ewe adverbials can take several positions in the sentence. It was observed that there is a basic placement, which depends on the type of adverbial, and a non-basic placement which is clearly marked in Ewe (English non-basic occurrences do not typically occur with particular markings). The alternative non-basic placements in Ewe also have differences in interpretation. The study has used RRG as a descriptive tool to interpret these adverbial behaviors in Ewe which can be compared with English. Table 2 shows a summary of adverbial placement as illustrated so far in Ewe.

Table 2: Ewe Adverbial Type and Position-layer

Summary

No.	Ewe Adverbial Type	Position-Layer
1.	Time adverbial:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periphery (sentence final) • PrCore Slot, when Focused with –e • LDP, when Topicalized with –la
2.	Space/Place adverbials (minus locative arguments)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periphery • PrCore Slot • LDP
3.	Epistemic Modality (e.g. <i>dewohi</i> ‘perhaps, probably’)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periphery • PrCore Slot • LDP
4.	Evidential adverbials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periphery • PrCore Slot • LDP
5.	Adverbials of reason	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periphery • PrCore Slot • LDP
6.	Adverbials of condition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periphery • PrCore Slot • LDP
7.	Frequency adverbials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Periphery • CORE • PrCore Slot • LDP

8.	Manner adverbials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORE (sentence final, but not Periphery) • PrCore Slot (sentence initial with –e fronting)
9.	Directional adverbials:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORE • PrCORE Slot
10.	Location adverbials; (e.g. with verbs of ‘put’ not, for example, ate in the library)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORE • PrCore Slot
11.	Aspectual adverbials (e.g. completely ate)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORE • PrCore Slot
12.	Degree adverbial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CORE • PrCore Slot
13.	Deontic Modality adverbials	NUC only. (These function as auxiliary, e.g. teɲu ‘can’)

The table shows that there are types of adverbials in Ewe that can occur only as NUC elements (Deontic). There is no other position for these. Other types can occur in the CORE (basic) position and alternate as PreCore Slot elements (e.g. Manner, Directional and Aspectual adverbials). A further set of adverbials are predominantly PERIPHERY adverbials but can freely alternate in a non-basic position as CORE, PreCore Slot or LDP depending on the sense intended. The alternative non-basic positions are clearly marked and come with differences in interpretation.

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The Place We Call Home and Other Poems: A Review Article

A.N. Mensah¹

The question which inevitably arises whenever a prolific poet like Kofi Anyidoho publishes a new collection is: “So what is new here?” But perhaps before we confront that issue, it is useful to step back for a moment, rather like the Husago dancer that the poet is always invoking, to consider why the writing, the reading and, for us in the academic community, the study of poetry is a worthwhile activity. Poetry offers images which define emotively and felicitously our condition as human beings in a family, a nation and the world. A sociologist can write a paper supported with statistics on the “problem” of street children in urban Ghana. In comparison, a poet will offer an image of the anguish etched on the face of one imagined street child, and the emotional power of the poet’s picture may well be more instrumental than the sociological essay in a national campaign against the proliferation of street children. However, let us not get simple-minded. We are not saying we should throw out sociology in favour of poetry. What we are suggesting is that poetry should be an essential part of the way we look at and understand ourselves as human beings – bearing in mind that not all poetry is good.

Anyidoho’s poetry has been most valuable in helping us see ourselves in powerful and quite unforgettable ways. Consider the picture of the rich relatives of the poor man in “The Dance of the Hunchback” who will not spend a penny to assist him, but on his death are quite ready to honour him with a lavish funeral. The fact that the people of this country will often waste on funerals money they will not spend to assist the needy living is well-known, but the poet speaks of it in language that imprints powerfully on our minds the folly of our ways. We feel the pathos of the hunchback’s dirge for his brother and sympathize with the sad-funny image of him as he tries to perform his ungainly dance for the departed.

In addition to providing us with memorable and moving images of our national character, Anyidoho has shown increasing concern with what I call the Pan-African theme, an affirmation of the common identity of all Africans and all people of African descent wherever they may be living,

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Haiti, Havana, Harlem or Harare. His poem, “Earthchild”(1985) is a celebration of the resilience of black people and of their ability to triumph over devastating and sustained adversity. In that poem, Jazz, the musical form invented by Africans in America, is the poet’s symbol of the black man’s capacity to create beauty out of cruelty and suffering, rather like the chokecherry tree on the back of Sethe, the heroine of Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*.

If solidarity with Africans the world over is a major theme of the poet’s work, the commitment to the homeland is an equally important concern. The magnetic power of home is a message he conveys emphatically in his early poem, “The Homing Call of Earth” in which he contrasts the natural simplicity of his African homeland with the technological wizardry of America where he happened at a time to be living as a student, and concludes:

- But against the distant gleam of shooting stars
- I choose and will choose again and again
- The Homing Call of Earth
- I am EarthChild turned to ghost
- At Festivals of MoonChildren.

In other words, despite the blandishments of the West, he, as an African from a specific corner of that continent, is only truly alive on the simple terrain of his home.

Let us now return to our initial question, “What is new in the new collection?” The volume is in three parts or movements, to use the poet’s own designation, each with a different focus. The first movement, a series of poems titled **Homage** takes up again the Pan-African theme that we observed so beautifully expressed in the poem, “EarthChild”, and sees the African wherever he may be found as the inheritor of a common heritage of slavery, colonization, displacement and the loss of a significant part of his identity. These are themes the poet has already powerfully explored in his 1993 collection, *AncestralLogic and CarribbeanBlues* in which his purpose was not only to educate his reader on the situation of the African in the diaspora, but also to move the Africans towards a more

positive view of themselves and help heal the psychic wounds inflicted by their history. The message of the first movement of the new collection is similar. However, while the mood of that earlier volume is a combination of anger and bitterness, the mood in *The Place We Call Home and Other Poems* is more positive and optimistic – with the dance as its recurrent symbol. The burden of the first movement seems to be that as Africans our future is still unmade and we need to go back to our past to gather the intellectual, moral and emotional resources we need in order to fashion a proper future for ourselves. And so the Husago dance is rhythmically invoked in the first two poems of the first movement to show the manner of our progress to our future and our revival from the battering received from the hurricanes of our history:

- Two steps forward
- to where Hopes
- rise like Rainbows.
- One step backward
- to where Sorrows
- fall like Thunderstorms. (“Prelude”)

But as the poet makes clear in the poem, “Ancestral Roll-Call”, the past we need to confront is not one dark tunnel of unrelieved gloom and pain; it is one from which we can draw inspiration. And so in this poem which is a solemn invocation, the poet, speaking in person, calls upon the heroes of the African’s encounter with Europe, heroes whom a one-sided history has mainly chosen to forget. Thus the poet recalls Pedro Alonzo Nino “who in 1492/ sailed the tempestuous seas with Christophe Colomb”, but whose name is not mentioned in most accounts of the voyages of Columbus. The roll-call of Pan-African heroes includes several familiar names: Toussaint L’Ouverture, Jean-Jacques Dessalines, Yaa Asantewa, Ann Nzinga, Queen Amina, Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X and Marcus Garvey among others. However, there are less well-known names like “Chief Albert of the Gold Coast/ one who brought a ship load of Africans back to the MotherLand,” King Zumbi, King Miguel, King Bayano, King Benkos, and the “Great Warrior-Poet Antara.”

Clearly, in this poem as with others in the first movement of the collection, Anyidoho is reclaiming the ancient role of the poet as griot who on ceremonial occasions both instructs and regales the assembled community with a performance of the narrative of the significant events and heroes of their past. These oral historians of old were masters of eloquence whose responsibility it was to keep the past alive within human memory rather than inert in books. Anyidoho shares with the griot the duty of rendering history as something to be felt and experienced in joy, pride and sorrow as the event narrated dictates. Sometimes as in the poem, “Stalemate”, the poet is even reproachful as he reminds us of the haste with which we have given up and continue to give up our cultural treasures in demeaning exchange for imported attitudes and systems of belief.

In “Harvest Dance”, the poet assumes the guise of a priest officiating at a ceremony of unification and forgiveness in which he calls on all peoples of African descent to reach their hands across the seas to each other, but, more importantly, to offer a hand to

... that sly Clansman
who clasped the chains around your neck
and offered the key to Slave Driver,
not forgetting
that Liverpool Guy now standing to your Right
trembling with ancestral guilt and fear.

And finally, in the magnificent poem which concludes the first movement of the collection, “The Place We Call Home”, the poet assumes a persona who speaks with the weary and languorous tone of a traveler who has had to roam the world, but now feels the irresistible call to come home to the land of his birth, to the place whose memories haunt his every waking hour. Now, as indicated earlier, Anyidoho has written before on the powerful attraction of home in “The Homing Call of Earth” in which he contrasts the simplicity of his earthy African home with the technological gleam of America, and declares a feisty and polemical commitment to his homeland, despite its poverty. Home is evoked differently in “The Place We Call Home”. The persona, opening the poem with slow and subtle repetitions, suggests a much-travelled man who yearns wistfully (and certainly not combatively) for the place of his birth:

I will come again to these Shores

I must come again to these Lands

Home is evoked here as a place of emotional solace rather than of ideological self-definition, and is sentimentalized rather than idealized. Even the shivering burden of having to walk through grass still wet with dew to fetch water from the stream – a chore he would as a child have done anything to escape – is recalled with a measure of affection: the cold morning dew is only a “nuisance”, nothing serious. Again, the teeth-chattering discomfort of the harmattan wind is remembered as a “biting touch”, an oxymoron, since “touch” as opposed to “grip” is usually gentle. Viewed through memory’s endearing prism, even the uncomfortable becomes mildly comfortable and nature herself is affectionately humanized: the hooting owl is “lonesome” and the shrieking seagull is an “orphan child,” as superb poetry is made to appear simple.

Of the characters that make up this sweetened landscape none is recalled with more feeling than

that Lead Sports Girl with a Slender Neck
who brought so many trophies home
rewarded your Timid Smiles
with a handkerchief
Embroidered with your Secret Name.

The poem is made up of iconic memories which, in the persona’s mind, constitute the most precious and unforgettable moments of his life, and make up the time and place to which he yearns to return as an African tired of journeying and waywardness. Poems of homesickness and of yearning for “the days that are no more” court the danger of sentimentality. Perhaps Anyidoho escapes the danger by the simplicity of his diction and images and by his occasional humour as in the image of “the class Bully who is now a mere ScareCrow.” It seems that by closing that first movement, with its Pan-African theme, with a poem about his simple, rural, ancestral home, the poet invites home all Africans who seem to have lost their way to the village of his/their birth.

The second movement of the collection, **CountDown to GroundZero**, comprises nine poems in which the poet reflects on the subject of war: the generals who plan it, those who fight in it, those who suffer as unintended victims, the destruction it inflicts, and above all the stupidity and, in Wilfred Owen's phrase, the pity of it.

There are satirical poems on the generals, all decked "in shiny medals/ issuing hourly briefs/ from cozy conference rooms", while a "widowed mother's only son/ Bleeds to death in DesertStorms." In one portrait the mockery is so strong that it reminds the reader of the poet's earlier debt to *halo*, the poetry of abuse. The poem tells the story of an old, retired, perhaps senile, general whose country for some reason decides to dig up and rehabilitate him. However,

[b]efore they could name Hero
he stopped the Anthem
with a fart so Loud
The Heavens went Silent. ("Hero")

Contrasted to the generals are the ordinary people of "ArmBushed" Iraq, the widows and orphans, endlessly wailing in the "FireStorm" of American bombs and the young American soldiers who

One by one convoy by convoy
...must pay with Blood
the bad debt of the CapitolGang. ("The CapitolGang")

The most moving poem of the second movement is undoubtedly "nine-eleven", composed in response to the cataclysmic events of that day in 2001. Written in language of the sheerest simplicity and structured on the page to suggest the fractured towers of the World Trade Center, the poem shuns all ideological posturing in order to express a cry from the heart at the awful horror of the massive tragedy which at least for a while seemed able to touch our very humanity:

There will be time again for Loving
There will be time again for Laughter
But now Only the Hurt
remains
Only the Pain
survives

Once again, we notice the slow rhythm, the varied repetitions and the simplicity of language which characterizes the collection deployed here to a very powerful effect, especially when coupled with haunting images:

one thousand body bags
ten thousand body parts
ten billion DNAs

images suggestive of human beings disassembled into their elemental building particles – a total destruction of humanity. The ability to create such a powerful effect with so few words and such simple language is what makes Anyidoho a supreme poet.

The third movement, **QuietTime**, is a series of poetic musings on a variety of subjects including reflections of the deaths of Air Marshall Harry Dumashie and Prof. Willie Anku among others, the fate of the African in exile, thoughts on reaching 60, satirical sketches on Ghanaian politics, optimism at the birth of the new millennium, and so on.

Some of these poems, like “Among Dreams” (and also “Portrait I” and “Portrait II” in the first movement) are among the most lyrical written by the poet – so beautiful the reader simply must pause to catch his or her breath. Others, like “Just Fine”, are satirical in tone, mocking the governmental habit of putting a fine, hypocritical spin on things even when the national situation is a desperate one which demands honest admission and remedial action. One poem, “Happiness”, celebrates the magic of the Highlife as performed by those wonderful bands of yesteryear, The Ramblers, the Black Beats with Jerry Hansen and King Bruce respectively, in those dingy-magical nightclubs, Tip Toe, Silver Cup, etc.

The third movement closes more or less with “Post-Retirement Blues” in which the poet reflects on his retirement at age 60, and ponders the various roles which that master puppeteer, Time, forces us to play. Thus the poet, with cosmic and heroic imagery, talks of his youthful days when all the world lay open for him to explore and conquer:

Once I was young and green and eager.
With SunRise playing in my Eyes
I thought I saw Futures clearer than the Skies
With MoonBeams circling round my Mind
I was sure I could hear the call to Arms
Across BattleFields filled with glorious Deeds

He forgets in his enthusiastic embrace of life’s challenges, that Time, mankind’s old enemy, is lying in wait to send him packing out his office when he turns 60, before he’s been able to complete his plans. And so his plans in tatters, he regretfully leaves his office and is obliged to adapt to a new lifestyle, a new pace of life, indeed to dance a new dance which he evokes in language reminiscent of his earliest work:

I would learn to shuffle my feet
to this slow and sometimes graceful
sometimes mournful dance
of giddy poise a dance
of fading ancestral drums.

The dance, a recurrent motif in the poet’s work, here recalls the inelegant persona of “The Dance of the Hunchback”. The retired person is a figure engaged here in a dance which is more of a shuffle because he lacks the energy to perform it with the briskness of youth, but which in its slowness can sometimes be graceful, but also mournful recalling the persona’s regrets, and often unsteady because its guiding rhythms (values?) are becoming outmoded – wonderful images of the uncertain situation of the retired person. There is pathos here in this self-portrait of the retired professor, but there is also humour, a touch of self-mockery. Significantly, the image of the clumsy dancer links the poet’s latest work with his earliest work and with the oral tradition.

Perhaps the most intriguing part of this complex meditation is introduced in the second part:

There will be Time enough Time
enough for the Final Bugle's Call
Time enough Time enough
for drawing the balance sheets
for settling outstanding debts
bringing closure to troubled day dreams.

There is a distinct echo here of the voice of T.S.Eliot's Prufrock for whom Time is an excuse for inaction; for Prufrock, because there will be time to do it later one need not do anything now. Prufrock's insistence that "there will be time" expresses a fake urgency. He is thus most unlike another literary persona, the one in Marvell's "To His Coy Mistress" for whom there just isn't enough time, for whom Time's 'winged chariot' hurries inexorably near, and who feels pressed into immediate action. How does Anyidoho's retiree persona relate to these other poetic personae? The retired professor seems to believe he has time to set his affairs in order, to draw "the balance sheets" and settle "outstanding debts." He is not unaware of approaching death, the "final bugle's call," but seems to think that Time will leave him enough space to bring his life to a satisfying conclusion. But perhaps he is being ironic: it is this same Time that waylaid him at 60 before he could realize his dreams; what reason does he have to believe that Time will not pounce again from the "alleyways" before he has settled his affairs to his satisfaction? The logic of the poem seems to suggest that any notion we may entertain that "there will be time" is inescapably contingent: the final bugle's call may come at any time. Time, not the human being, is the one in control. "Retirement Blues" is a delightful poem of many moods that seems to express its main position intertextually, providing a rare moment when this poet seems to deliberately recall a Western model.

So, what is new?

Many of the devices found in this new collection are repeated from earlier collections: the compounding of words to fuse them into fashioning a compound reality, as in "AncestralDreams", "HarvestDance" and

“DesertStorm”, indeed sometimes as in “RainbowJoys” the effect of this fusion can be quite picturesque; the use of spaces between words and phrases to suggest pauses, the lack of punctuation becoming a liberating device which enables the reader to dwell on the pauses as she or he deems appropriate, creating in part his or her own rhythm; also the copious use of repetitions to create a ritualistic rhythm or the sense of a refrain.

Thematically there is the continuing elaboration of what I have labeled the Pan-African theme, the common history and identity of all Black people, which is the main focus of the first movement of this collection. While the third movement is eclectic in both theme and style, the second movement focuses on a new element in the work of this poet, modern warfare. The poet is satirical in his portraiture of some of the men of war, but it is characteristic of the maturity of this collection that in the most significant poem of the second movement, “nine-eleven”, what we hear, through the repeated rhythms, is the sorrowful voice of a grieving human being. We have encountered the sorrowful voice before in the dirges of the poet’s early work, but this is deeper, because it is starker, sparer, simpler.

The main quality of this collection is a mellower, gentler voice which elicits calmer emotions from the reader. The poems of the first movement, **Homage**, may recall the passionate Pan-Africanism of the earlier volume, *AncestralLogic and CaribbeanBlues*, but the voice we hear in this collection is the deliberate and dignified one of the griot who sometimes even leads his audience in a ritual prayer.

Again, Anyidoho’s expression has always been simple and in sharp contrast to the style of some early West African poets who deliberately wrote only for the university-educated reader. Yet in this collection, a greater evocative and surprising effect is achieved through this essentially basic diction as in:

How did you know where I Hid
my Peace of Mind away from Old Nightmares? (“Among Dreams”)

Going with evocative simplicity is a very economical and suggestive use of natural imagery, of Rainbow, MoonBeams, Storm, Midnight,

Moonlight, LemonGroves, Harvest, SunRise, Thunderbolt and Twilight Hour to suggest qualities and states of the human soul. Thus we find in a poem that is a tribute to a dead hero

His mortal remains still glowed with
a smile that put SunRise to Shame. (“En Route San Salvador”)

Finally in the twin poems titled “Portrait I” and “Portrait II” we see a new evocativeness in which the poet uses the power of words to call forth beings of such ineffable beauty and mystery as we have not seen before in his work. The woman called forth in these two poems is unlike any woman one has encountered in this world, a creature from the magic world of the poet’s imagination – an African woman hailing from the time of the ancestors, a kind that cannot be found in an age like this, mysterious, pure, sensual and supremely beautiful:

There were water lilies
in the deep end
of the pool in her eyes. (“Portrait I”)
Each breath she took was marked
by the faintest trembling of her breasts

.....
And Oh that Rainbow in her Smile!
And Oh! That Rainbow in her Smile!!! (“Portrait II”)

Most poetry is the attempt to use language to express what appears to be out of the normal reach of language, but it would seem that here the poet seems to really stretch the possibilities of language, and this is certainly new; as indeed is the introduction of “Ohs!” and “Ahs!” into his poetry as if to indicate an awareness or vision that lies beyond the reach of words and at which he can only gasp. Perhaps the highest tribute the poet pays to the gift of life is the fact that he follows his partly self-mocking poem about his retirement with this emotional outburst:

But Ah! The Glory
The Fearsome Glory of This Life....! (“But Ah! The Glory!”)

Notes

1. Anyidoho, "The Dance of the Hunchback," *A Harvest of Our Dreams with Elegy for the Revolution* (London: Heinemann, 1984) 83
2. Anyidoho, "Earthchild," *Earthchild with Brain Surgery* (Accra: Woeli Publishing Services, 1985) 393 *ibid*, 43
3. T.S.Eliot, "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, vol.2, 5th edition, ed. M.H. Abrams, et al. (New York and London: W.W.Norton &Co. 1986) 2174
4. Andrew Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress," *The Norton Anthology*, vol. 1, 1387