

Descriptive Pause in Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* and *Snakepit*

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ABSTRACT :In the study of narrative duration as theorized by Genette (1980), descriptive pause is one of the four major canonical movement, the others being the scene, summary and ellipsis. During a descriptive pause, the story is suspended while the narrative continues, and Genette notes that it is traditionally deployed to stall action as the story is suspended while the narrative to proceed, and to provide extra narrative information. My contention in this paper is that, pause, like other aspects of narrative temporality, is under studied within the larger corpus of Ugandan novel; secondly, that Isegawa deploys pause for more than its traditional function of description. Therefore, adopting an interpretivist paradigm, this paper analyses descriptive pause in Moses Isegawa's *Abyssinian Chronicles* and *Snakepit*. This paper embraces a qualitative research approach; specifically, a descriptive case study design was adopted. Data was collected through documentary analysis and close reading; the paper is anchored on the Genettian discursual perspective of narrative theory.

Keywords -descriptive pause, story, narrative, duration

I. INTRODUCTION

The study of pauses and other hesitation phenomena in speech production has a long tradition in psycholinguistics (Cenoz, 2016). Linguists suggest several functions for pauses: i) a physiological function to allow the speaker to breath; ii) a cognitive function to allow the speaker to plan his/her speech and iii) a communicative function, to help the listener to identify demarcations in the speech stream (Cenoz, 2016:3). Moreover, psycholinguists divide pause into; Silent pauses that correspond to the perception of a silent portion in the speech signal, and filled pauses that correspond to the perception of a voiced section in the speech signal (Zellner, 1994:44). In narrative theory, pause is studied as component of narrative sequencing (Fludernik: 2009, Jan: 2021). It is one of the four sequencing movements suggested by Genette (1980), the other being scene, summary and ellipsis. Genette has taught us that a narrative is only isochronous when "story time and discourse time are approximately equal or rhythmically mapped" (Jan, 2021: 64). This is normally only hypothetically possible during scenes since they involve dialogue which is, "a rendering of language in language, every word in the text presumably standing for a word uttered in the story" (Kenan, 2002:54). Schematically pause is represented $NT = n, ST = 0$. Thus: $NT \gg ST$: where NT stands for narrative time and ST for story time. It is clearly the contrary to ellipsis that schematizes infinite story time and zero narrative time (Malcom, 2018). Talib (2022), has observed that the contrast between story time and discourse time may result in ellipsis, where an event in the story is deleted in the discourse; on the other hand, it may result in a pause, where time in the story is stretched or suspended in discourse in order to describe something. Pause thus refers to a situation where some section of narrative discourse corresponds to a nonexistent diegetic duration (Genette, 93-4). During a pause, discourse time elapses on description or commentary, while story time stops and no action actually takes place (Jan, 2021:65). For Fludernik (2009, 34) pause describes a situation where action in the story stops while narration continues. This section discusses how descriptive pause (here after referred to as simply pause) functions in *Abyssinian Chronicles* (here after only referred to as *Chronicles*) and *Snakepit* both novels by Moses Isegawa.

II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Gerald Genette's (1980) Discoursal Narrative Theory

In the Genettian theory, discussing narrative duration is always a trickier operation than the discussion of either narrative ordering or frequency, principally because duration of a narrative is never really measurable in the strict sense of the word. His study of narrative duration thus focuses “steadiness in speed” between the story and the narrative. By speed Genette implies the relationship between a temporal dimension of the story and the spatial dimension of the text. As such narrative duration parallels the duration of the story on the temporal continuum, with the length of its telling on the spatial continuum. Accordingly, “the isochronous narrative, our hypothetical reference point zero, would thus be here a narrative with unchanging speed, without accelerations or slowdowns, where the relationship: duration-of-story/ length-of-narrative would remain always steady.” (Genette, 88) However given that narratives are inherently rhythmical, Genette suggests that the isochrony of a text be studied on the basis of four movements. The extremely first or ellipsis “where a nonexistent section of a narrative corresponds to some duration of the story” or the absolute slowness of the descriptive pause “where some section of narrative discourse corresponds to a nonexistent diegetic duration” (Genette, 93-94). From ellipsis and descriptive pause, we derive the two other movements; these are scene most often in dialogue which realizes, conventionally the equality between the narrative and the story, and summary a form with variable tempos; with a great flexibility of pace that covers the entire range included between scene and ellipsis. This paper laboured to establish the working of descriptive pause within the Isegawain novel: Genette (97) for example notes that in the classic novel, summary functions as “the most usual transition between two scenes, the “background” against which scenes stand out, and thus the connective tissue par excellence of novelistic narrative, whose fundamental rhythm is defined by the alternation of summary and scene.”, this paper however labours to explain the extent to which, by over deploying descriptive pause, the Isegawain narrative departs from the above stated norm.

III. METHODS

In studying descriptive pause, I assumed an interpretivist paradigm with its relativist ontology, subjective epistemology and predominantly qualitative methodology (Al-Ababneh, 2020). In interpretivism the investigator and the object of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so that the “findings” are literally created as the investigation proceeds (Guba, & Lincoln 1994). Moreover, every effort is made to try to understand the view point of the subject being observed as opposed to that of the observer (Kivunja&Kuyini, 2017) As such, and despite the Genettean tenets on prolepsis, I set out to establish whether those tenets subsist in the Ocwinoyian novels under study, and in the way Genette describes them. This is also in line with Kivunja&Kuyini (2017) observation that in interpretivism, theory does not precede research but follows it so that it is grounded on the data generated by the research act.

The study employed a descriptive case study design because, and like Yin (2003) reiterates, a case study design should be considered when: the focus of the study is to answer “how” and “why” questions; or when you want to cover contextual conditions because you believe they are relevant to the phenomenon under study; or when the boundaries are not clear between the phenomenon and context. This approach often uses open-ended questions; data are often words and phrases; textual analysis is often employed; the data are interpreted; themes and patterns are identified. Creswell (2008) has pointed out that observation, interviews, and document analysis as the leading methods of data collection for the qualitative approach. This research used documentary analysis to draw data for the study; documents are interpreted by the researcher to give voice and meaning around an assessment topic (Bowen, 2009). Accordingly, the novels under study were subjected to a documentary analysis guide to explicate cases of descriptive pause. The research also consulted different books, journals, and reports that were analysed with the novels under study to access the most recent facts, ideas, opinions, and quotations on descriptive pause. The READ approach of Dalglish et al. (2020) recommend that: (1) read the materials, (2) extract data, (3) analyse data and (4) distil the findings. The findings were distilled into broader themes according to the functioning of particular descriptive pauses. The novelist under study was purposively sampled because of the way he engages descriptive pause while interlacing his narrative.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Isegawa provides the perfect example of an an isochronous narrative; yes, there are cases when story action coincides with text narration like in the graphic representation of the Serenity first sexual encounter with Padlock in *AbyssinianChronicles* (here after referred to, as *Chronicles*)but these are few and quite apart. In Isegawa, the novel dominantly oscillates between pause and summary with transitory cases of narrative ellipsis. Even then, descriptive pause is the most deployed form of narrative duration in *Chronicles*, and I dare say in *Snakepit* too. Abide to mention that while it is hard to place my fingers on the exact number of cases of pause given that they are scattered all over the novel, and some are neither coherent nor clear, there are still over 103 (*Chronicles*), and 24 (*Snakepit*) well established episodes of descriptive pause spanning at least a half of a page.

Courtney (2013,182-3) reveals that in pause, the narrator goes to great length to explain the complex links or reasonings between thoughts and actions in a given narrative. Necessarily, Courtney (2013,183) observes, “the movement of the action in the scene is paused by the narrator to allow him fill the reader in on important information”. This is the situation in *Chronicles*; book one of the novel otherwise titled *Village Days* is permeated by descriptive pause as the narrator chronicles the life and times of the family of a once upon a time prominent chief, and grandfather to the narrator. So this way we learn about the late arrival of Serenity to the world after the mother had resolved to leave grandpa’s house for failing to find a son. The birth of Serenity thus never stops her from leaving. Her decision to leave in turn leaves an emotional lacuna in the life of Serenity that even time never manages to rub away. So for the longest time in his childhood, he keeps hoping that any arriving tall woman might be the mother he is searching for. We learn through pause, over 117 pages later that; “his [Grandpa’s] favourite wife and mother of Serenity was taken by another man and not long after died” (*Chronicles*, 121). This way the reader is introduced to almost all the characters of this novel: through pause we meet Aunt Tiida also called “Miss sunlight soap/ Miss etiquette” (11) because of her signature 4 times bath a day. She is Serenity’s elder sister (10) and by far the most unpopular visitor the family receives as often. She is married to Dr. Ssali cum SeifAmil; and after a friendly chiding from Grandma, Tiida confesses that “a medical Assistant with his [Ssali’s] experience is good as any doctor. My man can do everything a doctor does.” (12) We therefore learn that calling Ssali doctor is an affront to Tiida’s ego, and not the description of her husband’s medical qualification. She is the moment of light of grandfather partly because “she resembled her mother so much” (12), and despite her mother’s departure she identifies with Grandpa and the home. The story is further paused to give way to Kasiko, “the woman he [Serenity] had cohabited with at the end of the fifties, fathered a daughter with and then decided to send her away.” (21), and who is replaced by padlock. It is the same apropos how we meet Padlock’s parents; “the father was a small but strong man, a frank expression the main asset of his face. The mother was tall and thin expressing great fortitude and perseverance” (32). We thus find it easy to align padlock’s personality with the mother’s. We meet a host of other characters the same way; Sauya Lusanani (93), Father Mindi (211), Fr. Lageau (211), and Lwandeka (293), Keema (454) et cetera.

Snakepit deploys pause for a similar purpose; most of the historical background of characters is delivered to the reader this way. The coming of age of General Bazooka is quite detailed requiring a pause in the story; he was born in 1938, the same year as Bat Katanga, to a family with a long soldierly history. Bazooka’s destiny seems cut out for him from the start; the grandfather was a traditional warrior that turns into soldier, and “in the days Captain Lugard was fighting in the name of the Imperial British East African Country” (11). Bazooka’s father follows in the footsteps of his own father; “He ground out his life as a sergeant, further promotion blocked by his limited education.” (12) So, given this background, Bazooka determines to do everything to leap-frog himself to a top ranking soldier. He is the first sergeant to own gold-plated Oris Autocratic Wristwatch after grenading the owner along with two of the watch owner’s colleagues. General Bazooka enjoys quick promotion first through the ranks of the British military and he later exploits Uganda’s post-independence anarchy to rise. He heads the Armed Robbery Cracking Unit, rises to the rank of Colonel and under Idi Amin raises to full General; All this information is, thanks to descriptive pause. Nor is General Bazooka the only character in the novel whose history is highlighted through pause; Victoria is introduced to us the same way; “[she] came from a well-to-do family of textile importers” (25), and to fill us in on how she degenerates to a State Research Bureau (SRB) agent that we come to meet in the novel; “then an incident to do with her parents’ business turned her life upside down. Custom officials found a box of riffles in a container of imported fabric.” (25-6) this incident marks a point of no return for her family and her. The father is imprisoned. In frustration, Victoria “fell into the company of bold but aimless girls who went out with older men who drove Boomerangs and Euphorias, and had money to spare and appetites to satisfy” (26). This is how she meets General Bazooka. The rest of the story one can fill in. Mafuta’s failed relationship with her royal highness the princess “a woman faintly related to the King of Buganda” (36) is rendered analeptically in terms of reach and extent. The incident is narrated on the occasion of the first meeting between Mafuta, Bat, and Sister - the woman he eventually marries; therefore, to fill us in on Mafuta’s past, the meeting scene is paused. The incident revives the memories of a relationship gone bad, and fills us in with the reason Mafuta is no longer with the princess. The reader meets Robert Ashes (50), Babit (60), Bossy man (119) the same way.

Fludernik (2009, 34) reiterates that pause also encompasses text passages that are “descriptions of landscape, of states of mind, or of socio-historical background”, and because of what they are, such texts tend not to correlate with the action world of the fabula. Incidents describing physical setting are littered all over the novels. Mugezi in *Chronicles* (71) observes that “our village, Mpande Hill, and the swamp always made me think of an octopus, the hill representing the head, and the swamp the long torturous tentacles snaking around the village.” The same Mpande Hill is ubiquitously referred to with ever varying reasons; as the village of the narrator (4); and Mugezi notes that the salty clay that Padlock nibbles at while expecting him were “from the vast swamp at the foot of Mpande Hill” (54). Mpande hill is thus described in the wake of the smuggling trade that characterized the Idi Amin regime: “the village had shrunk. It was like a desert island eroded by gales,

before being revitalized by a new population of pirates.”, and further that the hill has become a site of musical mayhem, of liquor intoxication, of girls with “Afro wigs and gaudy jewelry, mouthing obscenities formerly unknown in these swampy areas.” (297) Such descriptions in a way preclude the state sponsored degeneration that has been characteristic of post-independence Uganda.

There generally is a strong correlation between physical settings and pause; *Snakepit* opens on a note of pause to allow for the description of the Mirage Avenger, General Samson Bazooka’s military plane. “It looked surreal, the spinning blade like whirling knives, the sun rays its only decoration.” (05) As opposed to the ministry office where Bazooka seats, the Avenger is the symbolic seat of power. This is where for example Bat Katanga goes for interview, it is in the avenger that he is hired for a top job in the ministry of Communications. That he is singlehandedly hired for such a crucial job is an advance notice of the time when his maker will break and imprison him. With the new role comes the dawn of a new life; his house is for example painted in the descriptive pause quoted below:

The house was built on a hill overlooking Lake Victoria and was serviced by a gardener, a cook and a watchman. It had a red-tile roof, huge windows and heavy oak doors, a long curving driveway, a floor garden and trees all the way down the lake. To the north was the golf course, the Botanical Gardens and the zoo and the civilian and military airports [Snakepit: 16]

So, Bat is living on an Island of wealth and provision in sea of poverty; the facility and facilitation that comes with his new role resonate with the novel’s first book’s title: *In the Air*. This setting also contrasts in advance, Bat’s life in prison with all its lack and under-privilege. Bat Katanga and Babit’s visit to London is also encumbered with pauses of the physical setting type. This is for example how; the reader is let in on Babit’s feeling of the awe of London city. Grand Empire Hotel, where they lodge during their stay in London is thus described: “a magnificent affair with marble floors, glittering lifts and cathedral-like rooms” (173). Let us also take cognizance of the description in passing, of General Bazooka’s house: “huge bungalow lighted like a burning ship...” (97). We can thus deduce that in a military government, it is the military top brass, their compatriots and associates that live in bliss. A similar pause introduces us to Bat’s holiday in America and especially his arrival in Chicago ahead of the street racing. Chicago is painted as being made of “the captivating heights of the skyscrapers, juggernauting with no competition in sight. Then the marvelous great lakes ...” (220), all this thanks to pause. Therefore, and in tandem with Fludernik’s claim that pause exposes physical setting, places in both *Chronicles* and *Snakepit*, and their significances along, are largely depicted through descriptive pause.

The above notwithstanding, care needs to be taken to note hiatus episodes especially in *Snakepit* that eschew the physical, and instead have pauses dedicated to the temporality of the narrative. The Mirage avenger pause for example helps the reader’s memory to the fact that Uganda has been deserted by the international world, we are told that “since the coup, air traffic had dried up, except for the weekly Libyan and Saudi flights which brought supplies” (5). More often than not, the physical settings themselves are mentioned in passing, then the narrator concentrates on their temporal significance; upon arrest, we are told that Bat is thrown in a dark room (85), and that is about what we get to learn at the physical level and the narrator instead concentrates on Bat’s thought process lending significance to the contrast between the time Bat was free and now. It is the same a fortiori when descriptive pause remembers the home of the lead searcher otherwise called Surgeon, when Bat’s family and friends went searching for his body, all for not knowing he was still incarcerated. We are told that; “the man lived in a small settlement of iron-roofed mud houses...”, and the narrator quickly moves on to the significance of the surgeon; “the man had been doing the job for a number of years and oozed with the confidence of an expert” (138-39). The narrator also makes passing comments about the fact that “surgeoning” booms in the face of military anarchy and random killings. Accept addition here of the temporal significance of Bazooka’s Bungalow as the venue for Bazooka’s orgies and shooting contests, and as a reminder of Bazooka’s power and to some extent a prognosticate of the time Bazooka will lose such power. Victoria’s home is a poster where one can read how far circumstances have forced her down the road of degeneration. Clearly therefore, there are instances when physical settings are a means to an end which is to describe the times of the novel.

Even this banal fact needs mention; the chapter titles in *Snakepit* are temporal in nature, and are about temporality. *In the Air* is literary not in the air, let us stay put about the over detailed scene of Bat’s fly in the Mirage Avenger to Jinja; it is neither pause nor significant in the physical setting sense. Instead, the chapter captures the establishment part of the plot of the novel, but also of the dismal significance of the technical wing of government in the face of dictatorship. This is why Bat zooms to a top position in the ministry at the beckon and call of Bazooka. And we literally see characters flying in the air thanks to pause. Within a year of returning, Bat has a dazzling house, a sport-utility vehicle, and is dating a stunning beauty. So is General Bazooka who has been rising through the military ranks like a bushfire; he is a General, Minister, and head of the Anti-smuggling unit. Victoria has found a model boyfriend and hopes she can escape the humdrum reality of an SRB agent; Sister marries her ideal man. The reality of military led government though lurking in the background, seem far from most characters. *In the Morgue* we are, so to speak in a funeral parlour; Bat’s family has since his

disappearance failed to trace him, and during a search for his body, the narrator pauses action to bring us face to face with the morgue:

They [dead bodies] were there lying on their backs, on their sides, on their faces, some in coils like pricked millipedes. They were lying on top of each other, hands and arms over their neighbours as if for fun or ritual. They were lying singly, in twos or in bigger bunches. They were dressed half-naked, naked, sheathed only in coats of blood. There were those who seemed to have dozed off midway in prayer, rapture...they were the faceless ...the fresh ones...the stone-cold with collapsed skin coats betraying bones [Snakepit:139]

So all the promise that we had seen in the first chapter dies down to the morgue; there are attacks and counter attacks by dissenting voices; anarchy rules the day, we see for example, a top businessman of Bossman's caliber and his wife burned to ashes on the orders of Ashes, and no investigation is launched into this gruesome killing. And no one is insulated against the morgue, not even the almighty Bazooka; we learn that "in one last explosion, the fifth and last one, General Bazooka's wife lost an arm and was severely burned" (189). Structurally speaking this chapter sets stage for the third and final chapter of the novel: In Limbo. And what is not in limbo when one can be killed at the snap of a finger, and the cacophony in the courtroom during Victoria's trial for masterminding Babit's murder. And the quick fall of the military government that lives its senior officials in limbo, and some like Bazooka are forced to take their own lives.

Let us extend our coverage of setting and pause to the book titles in *Chronicles*; I don't have to mention that each book assumes its own locale, and albeit somewhat intertwined, each book has sections of it paused, especially at the beginning to provide for physical setting. In The City, one learns through pause that Kampala city is made up of seven hills and each of them is given a deserving pictorial painting (see 87-92). Here we also learn that Serenity and family; "...had moved from the rural obscurity of Serenity's village to the red-roofed pretension of a big Indian bungalow." (90) And with this shift in setting comes new social order to which Mugezi must adjust; there are "too many regulations, too many pretensions exacerbated by the dictatorial administration that believed in incarceration as a superior form of upward mobility" (90-1). And by extension the narrator makes an advance notice of the days he will rebel and for which he will be harangued. The beatings Mugezi endures under Padlock's authority rather than soften, harden him. Pause is also called upon while exposing setting in the other books of *Chronicles*; in the description of the ways to the seminary in Seminary Days (220), in the representation of Makerere University Hill in Triangular Revelation (365). In Ghetto Bluster, the description of Behemoths, the ghetto in which Mugezi first settles upon escaping from what he calls "cartels and sharks of the aid industry" (449) is very informing; we learn of his new home (453), the Culverts and other nooks of Behemoths (456) where drug dealers, criminals and brothels own the nights. Our discussion of setting here is in line with Namin's (2017) observation that the setting includes both the time and geographic location within an illustration for narrative fiction, and that along with the plot, character, theme, and style, setting is considered one of the fundamental components of fiction.

Pause is sometimes used to make social comments or to raise social consciousness either about the state of the country, or the people or on events of the novel as they unfold. Social consciousness notes Sivaji (2020), refers to an awareness of the problem or issues by the individuals within a society and how they take part in the process of developing and implementing solutions. Sivaji further observes that when the ideologies and practices that mould or ruin a particular society and the influences and forces behind those ideologies and practices are identified and understood by an individual who is a part of the society, the social consciousness begins to bloom in the individual's mind and grows steadily until it finds an outlet. Fludernik (2009) has observed that pause can be used in describing a mental state which, in my view, is an extension of function of social commentating. This is the function to which pause is deployed when the apolitical Serenity makes his first and only political statement in the novel:

He said that Uganda was a land of false bottoms where under every abyss there was another one waiting to ensnare people, and that historians had made a mistake: Abyssinia was not the ancient land of Ethiopia, but modern Uganda. Buoyed by intermittent bouts of optimism, he would go over his statement, looking for ways to improve it and make it attractive enough for ambitious politicians to pick up, for he believed that time had come to change the name Uganda to Abyssinia

[*Chronicles*: 469]

Descriptive pause therefore hands us the title of the novel, and the crux of the matters in reading it. In line with my reading of Serenity, Cesare (2014: 52) observes that "Serenity posits a Ugandan Abyssinia characterized by the abyss, a geographical feature of untold depth and measure, unable to be contained by latitudinal and longitudinal coordinates, and with no clear outlines or solid borders." This is seen throughout the novel as one observes endless regime changes, through continued evolutions and devolutions of characters (a case in point is Nakibuuka) and place (consider Mpande Hill) throughout the novel. Further, in the introduction to his article "Collapse, War and Reconstruction in Uganda: An Analytical Narrative on State-making", Frederick Golooba-Mutebi (2008,1-2) notes that Uganda has had a turbulent political history characterised by putsches,

dictatorship, contested electoral outcomes, civil wars and military. Indeed, and as is seen in the novel, here is one country with false bottoms Golooba-Mutebi notes that in a period of 24 years (1962-1986), the country changed regimes eight times and “five of those eight changes of government were violent and unconstitutional.” So, while Serenity is only philosophizing, he calls out the humdrum reality of Uganda. Cesare (2014: 51) moreover, observes that “in proposing that the term Abyssinia better describes the land of his birth than the name Uganda, Serenity also resists a given label and replaces it with his own experiential designation, calling attention to the arbitrary relationship between titles and the entities to which they refer”. There are also social comments made by Grandpa, who in Mugezi’s view, and as we note in the course of the novel represents the voice of reason. When Amin announces the expulsion of Asian’s he quips: “a few more explosions and the house will be brought to ashes and reconstruction will begin” (124) and further about the Amin’s decision to expel the Indians Grandpa notes “British Officers had promoted Amin and Britain had had a hand in his coup and now the bastard was paying them back” (125). These veiled statements of Grandpa’s show the extent to which post-independence Uganda is sat on a time bomb, whose times of explosion keeps coming, and continue to come.

There are social comments directly made by the Mugezi/Muwabi either as a character or as narrator, the difference between which, is so fluid in the novel that one might miss it. Consider for example what the narrator reports of the Serenity/Nakibuuka relationship: “she was not looking for a husband, nor was he looking for a wife. They had both been looking for lovers” (170). He thus prepares us for their relationship of love for love’s sake. Its success is imbued with euphoria; on the one hand the narrator describes Serenity’s official marriage as one that “...compressed lives, histories and religions into the shared burden of structural intimacy” (90). All this to show the extent to which formalization of love and marriage down plays its emotion aspect in favour of structural obligation. On the other, the Serenity/Nakibuuka relationship is the flag-post upon which the reader can revive the Serenity/Kasiko relationship out of which Serenity volunteers unceremoniously, and for which he is punished by marrying Padlock, and in so doing inadvertently sponsoring the Mugezi/Jo Nakabira incest. The narrator notes:

Kasiko was nice, kind, shallow, limited in her ideas –very good in bed, very good in the kitchen and wonderful in the garden- the type of woman every man should have kept as a second wife or concubine. But polygamy was not on Serenity’s mind, at least not at the time.” [Chronicles: 21-2]

So on top of social commentating, pause here functions to contrast the past and the present; we know that Serenity once upon a time looked at polygamy and concubines with disdain, but with the passing of time he comes to terms with the whole idea. We should note that social commentaries that compare the past and present are quite common in *Chronicles* probably because Mugezi is chronicling the story of Abyssinia as it is lived. A good example is when Mugezi starts staying with Aunt Lwandeka, a comparison becomes inevitable; he compares Lwandekawith Padlock, the former being described as someone that could smile, laugh and even cry. The narrator thus concludes “it was a shock to discover that a woman who had come from the same Catholic peasant womb as Padlock could be so different” (293). So in Lwandeka, Mugezi finds the mother that he never once found in Padlock. The experience of staying with Lwandeka empowers Mugezi so much so that he becomes the default father to her children. Another such example can be drawn from Kasawo when she visits the Vicar General of the Devil’s diocese for cleansing rites after she is raped. The process, a near repeat of the exorcising she endured under the hands of the white parish priest during the days she was in love with pangaman leaves her commenting: “On her way back, Kasawo became more convinced that God and the Devil were two sides of the same coin. They even used the same methodology in combating opposition.” (358). While there are social comments in *Snakepit* they not to fit within pause, and are carried by other pacing strategies like scene and summary.

Another unique way descriptive pause is deployed in Isegawa is in moments of narrative iterations. Such pauses “are not connected to a particular moment in the story but to a series of analogous moments” (Genette, 99). This is what happens when the narrative takes on extra action details of events, and behaviour that used to happen so often that a routine had been established. It is said of Father Kaanders for example, that he used to call everyone “boy”. This unpopular, if not the contrary, interjectory word of his is described as “The most irritating characteristic of his fading years” (205). The descriptive pauses in the book *Seminary Days* in *Chronicles* largely adopt iterative modes. The title *Seminary Days* is itself permeated by iterative sneers; it is suggestive of a certain portion of elapsed time, which while it subsisted, had gained a well-known pattern. In reference to the seminary system, the narrator notes that “the seminary system bore three venom-laden heads: brainwashing, schizophrenia, and good old-fashioned dictatorship” and to substantiate his claim he observes that “Therefore a seminarian’s mandate was to please, obey and be docile and trustworthy” (197). The seminary, as Mugezi describes it, is about routine and any effort to detail life there tends to involve iteration. As opposed to slowing down or better yet completely halting action, Iterative pauses tend to speed it up. They are a form of summary of a series of action that while they happened were repetitive but that are represented by the description of the one that inaugurated the series. Cogitate what Mugezi says: “Food was the most important

element in our secluded environment. We ate to live and to void our bodies of redundant desires. We went to bed with food on our minds and woke up the same way” (230). Similar incidents are to be found in *Snakepit*: the narrator for example describes General Bazooka’s orgies that always climaxed in a shooting spree iteratively. Bazooka would dare his company to a shooting contest with an award in dollars as the bait. And “as always, they would get carried away as soon as they handled the gun, miss a lot and eventually a heap of dollar bills would pile up at the General’s feet.” (98) Iterative pauses sometimes adopt scenic modes as the narrator goes about remembering the past:

“This is what we fought for,” a general or colonel would say.

“That was before the reptile came,” a brigadier cut in one evening, shutting up every guest, all of them afraid that General Bazooka was going to erupt or reach for his gun... There were times General Bazooka drank and pissed and shat in his pants. He would command his date to disrobe and clean him [Snakepit: 98]

From the above example, the dialogue seems present but given the context of the narrative, it is part of the descriptive iteration. On the one hand, it draws the memory closer to the reader lending it real time talk and action, on the other it highlights the Omni-temporality of the remembering self that tracks things then as if they were now. The imperfect tense in narratives like this, observes Toit (2017), serves to locate the state of affairs in a narrative as non-closed; it offers an internal viewpoint without reference to the beginning or end-point of the action.

Broadly speaking, there are also several scenic pauses, if I may describe them as such, in Isegawa; instances where descriptive pause carries scenes. In *Snakepit*, the passage capturing Bazooka’s quick rise from sergeant to a top ranking military officer, carries within it a brief scene in which Bazooka, then sergeant unscrews the cap of grenade and stakes, in fact later costs, the lives of three men because one of them refused to hand him an Oris Autocrat wristwatch. Such incidents are quite common in *Chronicles*, the conversation between Grandpa and Serenity about the fiddler, and Padlock’s scolding of Nantongo preceding her departure (98/113). There is also the recall of the conversation between Lwandeka and sisters after she is freed from prison (165-6), the recall of the bicycle scene (305), and Kasawo’s escapades with Pangman (342). All these scenes are in the middle of pause, and at the level of narrative ordering, such scenes are either returns to or recalls of an otherwise covered part of the diegesis.

A unique kind of deployment for pause is the evocation of repeating prolepses; Genette (73) reiterates that repeating prolepsis refers in advance to an event that will be told in full in its place. They play a role of advance notices of such events. The prototype here is the opening episode of *Chronicles*:

“Three final images flushed across serenity’s mind as he disappeared into the jaws of the colossal crocodile; a rotting buffalo with rivers of maggots and armies of flies emanating from its cavities; the aunt of his missing wife who was also his longtime lover; and the mysterious woman who had cured his childhood obsession with tall women.” [Chronicles: 1]

Naturally, such episodes set an expectation in the mind of the reader who wishes to appreciate them in context and thus they propel the plot of the novel. From the above quote, and as Genette observes some such advance notices have a shorter reach and may be resolved within the same chapter. This kind of short span advance notices are quite an ingredient in Ocwinyo’s (2002) *Footprints of the Outsider*, and which I think he uses to build curiosity in the reader’s mind as opposed to leading them on by suspense alone. Chapters two, nine, ten, and eleven all start with some kind of advance notice before the narrator delves into the story, which story is often resolved within the same chapter. FROM THE ABOVE QUOTE, ONE notices that Serenity’s obsession with tall women is shortly narrated and that he gravitates towards such women in the hope that one day one of them will turn out to be the mother he never learnt. We learn slightly later that the mother eloped with another man and died shortly after. The same quote also notifies us in advance of how Padlock will die. We learn 476 pages later that she is tossed up and down to her death by an enraged buffalo. We also learn before its time, of the later death of serenity who is swallowed by the very crocodile whose image flushes in his mind over 482 pages later. The advance notice also tells of the love affair between serenity and Nakibuka – an Aunty to padlock. Each of these incidents in their full-blown narration adopts a different mode of narration the first two appearing as descriptive scenes while the Nakibuka relationship stretches from pause to summary to scene. Dr. Sali’s conversion from Protestantism to Islam is permeated by advance notices as well. First of the days he will suffer to heal and for which he will fail to participate in an Islam popularisation campaign, and he will have his reward for conversion, a Peugeot car, replaced by a 125cc Scooter. The notice also prepares us for the time Dr. Sali will win the battle with the Islam Conversion Committee, and for which he receives; “an oil-white Peugeot which he washed daily and looked after like the sole remnant of an endangered species.” (240). The final example in this series is an advance mention by Mugezi about Lwandeka when he observes that; “her smile was the dearest feature I preserved and clung to when the tide turned against her and riddled holes into old dreams”. (290) This mention hints at the time she will ail with AIDS, for which she will slim her way to the grave.

V. CONCLUSION

Our discussion of pause reveals the versatility with which Isegawa deploys the technique. Away from merely stalling action in the novel, and providing extra narrative information, pause is a scene for all sorts of action in Isegawa: it is used to introduce character and anchor them within the narrative as we saw in the majority of cases for the characters in both *Chronicles* and *Snakepit*. Pause also functions to remember, in fact enact dramatic action especially of the analeptic type. We have also seen cases where pause is deployed in the making of social commentary; in fact, in *Chronicles*, such commentary account for the title of the novel. There are also cases when pause carries advance notices, and by extension propels plot as we saw in the proleptic thrusts about the death of Padlock, and Serenity. Pause thus comes across as a magnet of all sorts of core and complementary information in the Isegawaian narrative. The proliferation of paused action in the novels also implied that the deeper into the Isegawaian narrative, the more one notices that he deviates from the hypothetical norm of narrative isochrony.

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