

CAUSE AND EFFECT: A STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE STORY IN NGUGI'S "A GRAIN OF WHEAT"

By

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Analysis of story in narrative fiction poses a major challenge to stylisticians. There are several studies of style in fiction, which are mainly micro-linguistic in nature and focus on certain sections of the novel that is being analysed. But up until today, there has not been a comprehensive analysis of the story of a full length novel because of the unwieldy form of the novel on the one hand, and, on the other, disagreement amongst scholars about identification of individual units that make up the story and how these units mesh together. Stylistic analysis of story in fiction, therefore, is a contested area of study. Narratologists attempt to describe the deep narrative structure or surface narrative structure of different kinds of narrative forms such as: folk tale, fairy tale, epic, myths, short stories etc. While it is exciting to discover the basic underlying patterns of diverse narratives and identifying the universal structure of narratives from various cultures and climes, the reduction of all narrative to its skeletal form divests the immense variety and incredible complexity of a narrative form, such as a novel.

*This article is an attempt to develop a methodology for the examination of a composite form of the story of a novel drawing upon insights gained from Stylistics and Narratology. Through this analysis, I hope to prove that it is possible to examine the story of a novel thereby emphasizing textual analysis and empiricism as a rationale for stylistic inquiry. For purposes of illustration, I examine **A Grain of Wheat** by Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Kenya's foremost novelist and one of Africa's greatest intellectuals.*

Keywords: *dynamic and static motifs, transitivity: material, mental and relational processes, causality.*

Introduction

Analysis of story falls within the domain of narratology and extensive research has been conducted in the area of fairy tales, folk tales, myths, short stories, and other narratives (Propp:1968, Bremond:1970, Levi-Strauss:1968). While fiction has been subjected to stylistic analysis these have been mainly confined to sections of novel, (Leech and Short:1981, Toolan:2001) or to short novels. Perhaps a full length study of the novels form has been done only by Genette (1977) where he analyses the narrative discourse of Proust's **A La Recherche Du Temps Perdu**. Recently, due to the advent of computers and corpus studies, stylisticians have analysed novels to substantiate the intuitive responses of intelligent readers (Hidalgo Downing:2000, Stubbs:2008). One can attribute the lack of a full length study of novel to two main reasons: the unwieldy length of novel and secondly, to the incredible complexity of the form allowing for multiple stories are interwoven and presented by the narrator.

I would like to argue that it is possible to undertake an extensive story of the novel using insights from narratology and functional systematic grammar. My examination of the story is conducted within the purview of stylistic analysis which is "rigorous, replicable and retrievable" (Simpson:2008). For this purpose, I develop a theoretical framework which will be applied to Ngugi wa Thiongo's, famous 1971 novel, **A Grain of Wheat**. This novel is a complex one with multiple narrations spanning an important period in the history of Kenya dealing with colonial encounter as well as decolonization.

For the purposes of delimiting my topic I choose to ignore Ngugi's politics and the "misrecognition" (Arnove:1993) of his position vis a vis English as a language of administration and creativity. Many have commented upon Ngugi's abandonment of English as the language of hegemony, his attempts to write both creative and discursive prose in Gikuyu, his mother tongue, and finally, his reluctant embracing of English as language of multiculturalism consequent upon his continued presence in the American academe.

The hermeneutics of my analysis will be laid out in three discursive steps which will include a brief review of work done on story in narratology, a discussion of the reception of *A Grain of Wheat* and finally, the theoretical framework of my analysis and its application.

Story in Narratology

Rimmon Kenan (1983) defines story as "a sequence of events abstracted from their disposition in the text and reconstructed in a chronological order together with the participants of these events"(p.3). Early narratologists, like Propp (1968) and Bremond(1970) attempted to isolate elements which recur in narratives. For example, Propp describes *function*, which is an act of a character defined from the point of view of its significance in the course of action (1968:21) and he isolates 22 *functions* in a corpus of 200 Russian fairy tales. He states that the *functions* are:

1. Stable and constant elements in a tale regardless of how and by whom they are fulfilled.
2. Functions are limited
3. Functions are identical
4. All fairy tales are of one type in regard to their structure. (p:21-23)

Todorov(1977) and Griemas(1977) extend the notion of "recurrence" to develop a narrative grammar which has "deep narrative structures" and "surface narrative structures" derived from Chomsky's Transformational Generative Grammar. Deep narrative structures are paradigmatic and static as illustrated by Levi Strauss(1966) in his analysis of the Oedipus myth. Surface narrative structures on the other hand, are specifically dependent on paraphrase in terms of *event* as outlined by Barthes(1970) in his five codes with *Proairetic* code taking primacy of place because it deals with the story. Chatman(1978) classifies *event* into two main kinds: *kernels* and *catalysts* where *kernels* open an alternative to the action and *catalysts* amplify or delay the action. For example, if a telephone rings, a character may choose to pick up the phone or not, therefore this *event* is a *kernel*; but the character may perform any number of things before he/she answers or chooses not to answer a phone; for instance, light a cigarette, scratch his/her head, etc. Since the actions do not move the action forward, they are *catalysts* (Rimmon Kenan:1983:16). A story line is developed from a combination of *kernels* and *catalysts*.

Ngugi's "A Grain of Wheat"-A Literature Review

A Grain of Wheat (1971) has been described as Ngugi wa Thiong'o's crowning achievement. Cook (1977) stresses that the novel "encourages us to adopt a tolerant perspective on man's delinquency" (p.101). According to Cook there are two major themes in the novel: one related to "private responsibility" and the other to "public responsibility" (p.103). Praising this novel as Ngugi's most ambitious and successful novel, Palmer (1972) says "Ngugi is concerned not merely with the wickedness of the oppressors but with the weakness of the indigenous people themselves" (p.26). Robson (1978) believes that the "theme of betrayal" (p.55) forms the core of the novel. According to Cook and Okenimpke (1983) it is a novel about "heroic corporate effort towards a juster society and betrayal... Individual's betrayals are representative of the vast betrayal of the whole society by its power elite" (p. 69). Commenting on the use of the Moses figure in the novel, Mathuray (2009) states that Ngugi's early novels "use messianic narratives to claim social responsibility for themselves" (p.41). He believes that Ngugi's novels necessarily spring from Gikuyu nationalistic discourse that drew on, as John Lunsdale (2008) suggests, "different and opposing prophetic, traditions" (p.241). For Sharma (2009) the central message in the novel is profoundly Christian. Gurnah (quoted in Kearny:2006:48) states that Ngugi's novels were dependent on fairly rigidly sustained stereotypes such as "heathen African" and "heartless European" and by particularizing the pasts, Ngugi is able to undertake "transformative strategies" (p.149) for redeeming his nation from the oppression of neocolonialism. Such strategies turn Ngugi's narratives into national allegories which are inflexible and "consist of a polemic which is bluntly authoritarian" (p.157).

While all the commentators critique the underlying themes of Ngugi's novels, none focuses on the form of the novel and how the stories are presented. I believe that *A Grain of Wheat* cannot be cast into a single mold and doing so would rob the discourse of the manifold stories that it comprises and I hope to be able to demonstrate through a comprehensive narratological-stylistic analysis of cause and effect in the novel how Ngugi sets up a post colonial world where all participants are complicit with the forces of colonialism. I would like to argue that the theme of guilt is symptomatic of a deeper malaise which afflicts Ngugi who finds himself playing into the hands of the colonisers willy-nilly because he uses their language. This leads to an "epistemological break" (Gikandi:2000:195) in his writing when he decides to write only in Gikuyu, his mother tongue. The betrayal of the national cause at the political level and personal betrayals are in fact outward manifestations of Ngugi's belief that in adopting a foreign tongue he has betrayed his people.

Framework of Analysis

For a narrative to be successful, it requires a story which moves to a conclusive ending. While the story consists of a theme, characters and atmosphere, it is incidents in the story that move it forward. Since all incidents in the story are interlinked through a network of causality, it is essential to study cause and effects of the story in a novel. To understand

casality, and for purposes of analysing the story, a basic distinction that Dolezel (1971:96) makes between *dynamic motifs* and *static motifs* is used in this study. According to him, “motifs are minimal dissection of thematic material”(p.95). *Dynamic motifs* are those which bring about a change in the situation, while *static motifs* provide details of place, setting, mood and other psychological details. While this distinction between *dynamic* and *static motifs* works admirably for short stories, it was found necessary to formulate specific and precisely definable categories to identify to provide for the immense complexity of the form.

Brent Harvey's study of "*Action and Narrative*"(1978) firstly provides a useful starting point in formulating the criteria for identification of dynamic motifs. Secondly, once the dynamic motifs and static motifs have been identified, the manner of their introduction in the novel is examined. Thirdly, the dynamic motifs are classified using Halliday's *material, mental* and *relational processes* of clause representation. It is necessary to identify the actor/sensor/participant in the processes to determine who initiates the action. And, finally, the dynamic motifs are categorised into the kinds of effects they have in the course of the novel, whether the effects are *lasting, temporary, cumulative* or *isolated*.

I Identification of dynamic motifs

In his essay, Harvey offers a four step criterion for “pointing up” (p:247) narrated actions, since action with its cause effect relationship provides a cogent source of study within the “pragmatic of literary discourse”(p:247). These are:

- A. Is **A** **X**ing or has **X**ed ?
- B. Could someone, not necessarily **A**, on some occasion decide to do **X**?
- C. Is it under **A**' s description that behavior **X** is given?
- D. Is the result of **A** doing **X** such that it can be reasonably said that **A**'s doing **X** is responsible for someone doing something else or a change in the state of affairs other than those changes stated by the doing?

According to Harvey, "some bit of narrated behavior **X** qualifies as the action of some agent / character **A**" (p:248). Harvey's first condition is meant to exclude from the list of actions in a story, those habitual actions of characters which would provide affirmative answers to question like Does **A** **X** ? or Did **A** **X** at some regular intervals of time? This criterion is essential to distinguish between actions and characterization and has therefore been considered relevant in deciding which motifs are dynamic and which are static.

Of other conditions listed by Harvey, the second restricts the application of the term 'action' to only those motifs which describe the intentional deeds of the characters in the story. But in novels it is not always the intentional actions of characters which bring about a change in the situation; i.e., which function as *dynamic motifs*. Often we have what Halliday (1985:103) calls *events* which are caused by inanimate agents and *actions* which happen without the agency of any character (*action-supervention*, an accidental

happening, for example) which bring about changes of situation crucial to the progress of the story.

The third of Harvey's condition concerns [at] "which level of narration a particular description of some character's doing is offered" (p 253) and helps in distinguishing between those action which are reported by **A** and actions reported by others. Since this essentially deals with how *dynamic motifs* are introduced in the narration, it was also not considered essential in *identifying dynamic motifs*.

Harvey's fourth condition is the most important of all because it is this which accounts for the development of the story. Sometimes **A**'s doing **X** causes **A** to do **Y**, in addition to someone doing something; therefore it was found necessary to modify Harvey's fourth condition thus: Is the result of **A** doing **X** such that it can be reasonably said that **A**'s doing **X** is responsible for someone doing something else or **A** doing **Y** or a change in the state of affairs other than those changes stated by the doing?

It must be noted that **X** need not always have action or doing verbs, like 'killing', 'striking', ' imploding', etc, but can also include feeling verbs, such as 'loving', 'hating', 'feeling pain and humiliation', etc, which bring about a change in the situation (often in the form of another action on the part of **A** him/herself or someone else) but also **A**'s *feeling P*. Further, it is found that sometimes **A**'s being **Q** also brought about changes in the situation and proved to be dynamic. Thus Harvey's fourth criterion had to be modified as follows: Is the result of **A** doing **X** /feeling **P**/ being **Q** such that it can be reasonably said **A**'s doing **X**/ feeling **P**/ being **Q** is responsible for someone's doing something else or for **A** doing **Y** or a change in the state of affairs other than those changes stated by the doing? The criterion mentioned above is also meant to cover negative 'doing', 'feeling' and 'being' since these negative 'doings', 'feelings' and 'beings' play a crucial role in the novel, *A Grain of Wheat* and bring about major changes in situation.

As mentioned earlier, *events* which are caused by non-human agency and *happenings* which take place without any agency also bring about changes in the situation in *A Grain of Wheat*. In order to account for these events and happenings which function as *dynamic motifs*, a third criterion was also considered in identifying dynamic motifs in the novel:

3 Is the incident foregrounded in the story?

Foregrounded incidents are those which lead the characters into doing something significant in the course of the story.

Thus the three criteria used in identifying the *dynamic motifs* are:

1. Is **A X** ing or has **A X** ed?
2. Is the result of **A** doing **X**/feeling **P**/ being **Q** such that it can be reasonably said **A**'s doing **X**/ feeling **P**/ being **Q** is responsible for someone's doing something else

- or for **A** doing **Y** or a change in the state of affairs other than those changes stated by the doing?
3. Is the incident foregrounded in the story?

II Manner of introduction

As pointed out by Dolezel (1971) there are four different ways of introducing *dynamic motifs* in a narrative. They are:

- a. **Text motifs** which appear as direct quotation in the novel. For e.g.,

- 1 The members of the party came to meet him (Mugo) in the evening.

This motif appears in the text as is.

- b. **Summary motifs** are those which are derived through a process of removal of circumstantial details of the text. For e.g. ,

- 2 Kihika disappeared into the forest.

This motif is a summary of a length of text in the novel.

- c. **Paraphrase motifs** are those which paraphrase the speech of characters. For e.g.,

3. Mumbi offered him food.

In order to make a distinction between a summary of a length of text and a summary of the speech of characters, it was necessary to introduce another category which is a paraphrase of the speech.

- d. **Summary inferences** are those motifs which are not explicitly narrated but implied. Therefore the motif has to be derived by inference. For e.g.,

4. He (Mugo) was to be punished.

Sometimes dynamic motifs are not directly introduced into the text but have to be *inferred* from a length of text as is given in the above example.

III Clause representation: Processes

With dynamic motifs it is useful to consider what kinds of process (Halliday:1985) they represent in order to gain insight into how the story unravels in the novel. Halliday's analysis of clause representation is used in this study to analyze dynamic motifs.

According to Halliday, a clause can present three kinds of processes: *Material*, *Mental* and *Relational processes*.

A. **Material processes** are process of doing and can be of two kinds: **action processes** and **event processes**. **Action processes** can be further subdivided into **intention** and **supervention** depending on whether the actor is animate or inanimate. **Event processes** on the other hand are those which happen with an animate actor but involuntarily. Every **material process** has an **actor** and a **goal**. For e.g.,

Material action intention

5. Mr. Rogers started a forestry research station.

Mr. Rogers is the actor of this material process. Also, the action is performed with the intention of the actor and the goal is the Forestry research station which is the result of the action.

Material action supervention

6. Gikonyo's foot got caught in a tuft of grass and he fell down.

In this case Gikonyo's fall is an accidental happening. It is not his intention to fall. In fact Gikonyo is very eager to win the race. It must be noted that this accidental happening, or action supervention is crucial because, even though his rival, Karanja wins the race, he does not win the heart of Mumbi. Mumbi rushes to Gikonyo who has fallen to express her commiseration.

Material event

7. Mugo visited the old woman who thought that he was her son. She died.

There is not a single dynamic motif in the novel which is an event. The above example is a static motif. The motif does not lead anywhere but adds an interesting detail about Mugo who delineated as a loner and a grim and morose man. Nevertheless, he is also a man who helps people.

B. **Mental processes** are those clauses which include *feeling, thinking and perceiving* and are represented through sensor and phenomenon. Mental processes are subdivided into **internalized** and **externalized** processes. **Internalized** processes can be further sub-divided into **perception, reaction** and **cognition** depending on whether verbs of perception, affection/non-affection or cognition are used.

Mental internalized perception

8. He (Gikonyo) discovered it was Karanja.

Gikonyo returns from detention to find that his wife, Mumbi, has a child. He is very angry and upset when he discovers that the child is Karanja's. The motif is a mental process of perception, internalized and represents his view of the situation.

Mental internalized reaction

9. Gikonyo was in love with Mumbi.

In this case, Gikonyo's love for Mumbi is expressed through a mental process of reaction, internalized.

Mental internalized cognition

10. Kihika's mind was in politics.

Kihika's belief is expressed here by Ngugi as an internalized mental process of cognition. The motif given above is a static motif. Kihika knew that he was a leader and that he had the ability to lead his people to freedom. Therefore he was ready to sacrifice his life. The motif is not dynamic because it does not lead to any action in the story which would be crucial.

C. ***Relational processes*** are clauses that indicate a state of being and have a participant. For e.g.,

11. Robson was a terror.

Robson, was a white man who terrorized the black people in the community. He was hated by all the people.

IV Effects of dynamic motifs

Since dynamic motifs by definition bring about a change in the action it is essential to study the effects which are classified in the following way:

- A. Immediate or delayed effects
- B. Lasting or temporary effects
- C. Cumulative or isolated effects

A. Immediate or delayed effects

Immediate or delayed effects are those processes which lead to actions that are performed in the story to take it forward. These actions can have an immediate or a delayed effect. For e.g.,

Immediate

12. The women of the village decided to send Mumbi to Mugo.

Once the women of the village decided that Mumbi should speak to Mugo, she goes to him immediately. Therefore this motif has an immediate effect.

Delayed

13. The district officers spat on him (Mugo).

While this motif does not have an immediate effect, its effect is revealed later when Mugo beats up an officer.

The other two types of classification were combined in the following manner:

Lasting and Cumulative

14. Mugo confessed to her(Mumbi) that he had killed Kihika.

This dynamic motif has a lasting effect because it leads to Mugo's admittance of his betrayal at the end of the novel and his redemption. It is also cumulative since his admittance leads to a chain of reactions. Gikonyo and Mumbi forgive each other and the novel ends on a positive note.

Temporary and Cumulative

15. Mumbi mentioned Mugo saving a pregnant woman.

Mugo prevents a pregnant woman from being beaten up by the prison officers. While the incident is an isolated one and the effect is temporary, it is also cumulative since it adds to the reputation that Mugo acquires during the course of the novel as a leader of the community.

Lasting and isolated.

16. A man shot him (Robson).

Actually it is Kihika who shoots the white man, Robson. It is an isolated incident in the novel, because subsequently Kihika himself is caught by the white guards. But the incident has a lasting effect in the novel since Kihika seeks shelter with Mugo. Mugo terrified that he will get caught by the district officer, betrays Kihika to him.

Temporary and isolated

17. Mugo had held the whip before the home-guard could hit the woman again.

This incident is an isolated one in the novel, *A Grain of Wheat*. It is also temporary since the action itself does not set of a chain of reactions in the course of the novel.

All dynamic motifs in the novel *A Grain of Wheat* were identified and plotted in the following manner to gain a greater understanding of the cause and effect relationship of the dynamic motifs in the novel: (See Appendix)

No	Manner of introduction	List of Dynamic Motifs in sequence	Process	who initiates	Effects 1 Imm/del	Effects 2 last/temp/ isol/cum
1	Text motif	Mugo went to work in the shamba	Material, act, int	Mugo	Imm	

A Grain of Wheat- Findings

Following is a brief summary of the findings of the analysis of the dynamic motifs in the novel:

1. Ngugi seems to employ more summary and paraphrase motifs rather than text motifs.
2. The text motifs are distributed more or less equally throughout the story.
3. Summary motifs form a large part of dynamic motifs. Ngugi uses the indirect style in his narration. His method of narration consists mainly of dialogues, conversation and implications in great detail.
4. Ngugi seems to make considerable use of conversation in his narration to convey information about the Gikuyu land, and the political issues troubling Kenya. Dialogues further the plot at the same time therefore there is a preponderance of paraphrase motifs in his novels.
5. These paraphrase motifs are used to report events which have taken place in the past.
6. The use of retrospective narration (analepsis) to update characters' knowledge of each other, in turn provides motivation for suitable changes that take place during the course of the novel.
7. There is a predominance of dynamic motifs of the type *material: action, intention*.

A study of these processes helps in distinguishing between important events caused by the agency of the protagonists and events caused by other characters in the novel.

Discussion

A Grain of Wheat is set in the period in which Kenya gained her independence. Ngugi depicts the Mau Mau rebellion and the freedom struggle as the result of the collective

effort of the people. Therefore in terms of initiating action, there is not a single protagonist. Mugo, Gikongo, Mumbi, Kihika, Karanja and the party, all initiate crucial actions. Even among the whites, Thompson initiates a few important actions. Thus this novel is not about a single protagonist. Ngugi makes use of the flashback technique (analepsis) for narrating the events in his story.

In *A Grain of Wheat* most of the dynamic processes are of the type: **material, action, intention**. This clearly indicates that the characters initiate the action and the actions transpire because of the intentions of the characters. In other words, there is an explicit relation between cause and effect in the novel. But there are **material processes of action, supervention** which function as dynamic motifs and they are:

18. Mugo escaped death
19. Gikonyo was not at home
20. Gikonyo's foot got caught in a tuft of grass

The motifs mentioned above are important because Mugo escaping death in detention leads ultimately to the revelation of his behavior at the end of the novel. Gikonyo's absence causes Mumbi to confide in Mugo and reciprocally in Mugo's confession to Mumbi about his betrayal of her brother, Kihika. When Gikonyo's foot gets caught in the tuft of grass, Mumbi rushes to his side and this ensures a tentative renewal of their love for each other at the end of the novel. The theme of guilt and redemption is central to the novel, as I have argued elsewhere (Krishnamurthy:2007) and it is evident from this analysis that Ngugi's novel is not a simple story of cause and effect but consists of multiple stories. All the characters perform actions with intention, therefore providence does not have any part to play in the novel.

The State plays an important role by initiating action which being about major changes in the lives of the main characters. In *A Grain of Wheat* the state is represented by white men. The actions they initiate are, for example,

21. Thompson picked on Mugo for questioning and punishment.

The interaction of the colonial power and the colonized is fraught with violence and danger. In his discursive writing Ngugi(1983) makes it very explicit that it is the colonial master and later, the neocolonials who are responsible for the oppression of the poor and disenfranchised people of his country. My analysis reveals that despite his protestations and proclamations to the contrary, Ngugi is ambivalent in his presentation of the oppressed class. All his characters are responsible for their actions and the several stories of betrayal is symptomatic of the ultimate betrayal he himself feels. Therefore, even though Mugo is declared a hero by his people and his betrayal forgiven, he is arrested and taken away by the police officers.

The **mental** and **relational** processes which functions as dynamic motifs are not too many in Ngugi's *A Grain of Wheat* :

Mental Processes

22. Mugo felt a pang of jealousy as he looked at Kihika.
23. The members believed that Mugo gave Kihika shelter.
24. Gikonyo was in love with Mumbi.
25. Karanja was also interested in her.
26. Gikonyo was terribly hurt (on seeing Mumbi's child from another man).
27. He was very bitter (on discovering that the village chief was Karanja).
28. Mugo was terrified of being caught.
29. For the first time, Mugo felt light (after he had confessed).

As can be seen from the list given above, the mental processes are of the type, *internalized, perception, affection* and *cognition*. They have to do with the three main protagonists in the novel: Mugo, Mumbi and Gikonyo.

Relational process

30. Gikonyo was among the first group of detainees to come back to the village.
31. Carpenters were in great demand.
32. Two days later Mugo went to work unaware of the hero worship coming his way.

All the motifs given above for *Relational processes* illustrate the character traits of the main characters of the novel along with the effects their action have in the course of the novel. With reference to *A Grain of Wheat* literary critics claim that Ngugi focuses on the effects of the Mau Mau rebellion and the coming of Uhuru on the individual. This analysis shows that the stories of the main protagonists are closely interwoven with these two major events in the course of the novel.

Effects 1 Immediate or delayed: These kinds of effects in Ngugi's novel cover a period of the history of Kenya from the beginnings of the land of Agikuyu when women ruled. The birth of the political party is described in some detail. Further, Ngugi also has a detailed account of the white man coming to Africa. Here the white man is represented by John Thompson who "first came to Africa during the second world war" (*A Grain of Wheat*: 1971:74) and who leave in the course novel. The period described in the novel is the colonial period. Ngugi uses retrospective narration extensively to fill up gaps in the story. What is interesting to note is that the stories that are set in the past have immediate effects and lead to a final result, but the final motif in these stories has a delayed effect. For instance, Mugo's narration of the past and his betrayal of Kihika are depicted as dynamic motifs with an immediate effect. But this sequence of motifs ends with a motif that has a delayed effect, since it is only at the end of the novel that Mugo confesses in public his betrayal of Kihika. Further, the slow pace of narration in the novel can be attributed to the preponderance of dynamic motifs with delayed effects.

Effects 2 lasting or temporary, isolated or accumulative: Since Ngugi makes use of retrospective narration many important incident do not take place in the course of the

novel. There are incidents which are either narrated in the form of reminiscences from the past, or which form a part of conversation in which a character narrates his or her past. Whether the motifs which represent these incidents have a lasting or temporary effect often depends on the role the particular character, who narrates or reminisces about his/her past, plays in the novel. These are three distinct patterns which have been identified in *A Grain of Wheat* :

The pattern where an incident has a lasting and cumulative effect, the narration of which consists of a series of cumulative motifs.

33. Mumbi confided to Mugo about Gikonyo.
34. During the Emergency her hut and her mother in law's hut had been burnt down.
35. She had started working in the shamba.
36. Karanja had come to help them.
37. The homewards came again and collected whatever little [harvest] they had gathered.
38. Karanja came to her place often with food.
39. He had stayed back from joining the Mau Mau to be near her.
40. He proposed to Mumbi.
41. She refused him.
42. Then she heard that he had joined the home guards.
43. One day Karanja informed Mumbi that Gikonyo was coming back.
44. In sheer gratitude Mumbi gave herself to him.

This sequence of motifs explains the tension between Gikonyo and his wife Mumbi which is one of the major themes of the novel. The rivalry between Karanja and Gikonyo is carried right up to the end of the book, where an accident (*material process, action, supervention*) causes Gikonyo's fall in the race and subsequently some glimmerings of understanding dawn on the couple.

The second pattern consists of *isolated* incidents which are not connected to the main story but have *lasting effects*:

45. Robson was a terror.
46. A man shot him.
47. Within hours, the villages were besieged by soldiers.
48. Mugo came home that night.
49. Kihika came to his place for shelter.
50. Kihika informed Mugo that it was he who had killed Robson.
51. Mugo was terrified of being caught.
52. Mugo promised to meet Kihika in a week's time at a certain place.
53. Kihika left.
54. Next day Mugo went to the District Officer.
55. He told him where Kihika could be found.
56. The District Officer spat on him.

The above incident is related by Mugo to Mumbi. It is crucial to the action in the story because for years, Mugo has been carrying the terrible guilt of betrayal in his heart. The incident explains Mugo's moroseness and fears in the first section of the novel. Though a number of motifs with lasting and cumulative effects make up the narration of this incident, in the main story of the novel itself the incident has an isolated but lasting effect. The consequence of the set of motifs given above is revealed at the end of the novel where Mugo confesses his treachery publicly in the Uhuru Day celebrations.

The third pattern is that of dynamic motifs with *temporary* and *isolated effects*. In *A Grain of Wheat* most of the dynamic motifs with temporary and isolated effects are with reference to whites. This is precisely because half-way in the novel, the whites leave Kenya and their presence is an example of temporariness in the novel. There are only two dynamic motifs with temporary isolated effects motifs linked to the blacks in the novel. Both are extremely crucial to the story. They are:

57. Actually Gikonyo's resentment was directed elsewhere.

58. Gikonyo informed Warui of Mugo's refusal to speak.

Gikonyo proves to be a shrewd businessman in the course of the novel. However, in his transactions he loses some land to the whites. In his frustration Gikonyo shouts at Mumbi. This incident has a temporary, isolated effect but it causes a split between Gikonyo and Mumbi.

The second motif brings about a change in the situation because Mugo's refusal to speak causes Mumbi's visit to his place to plead with him on behalf of the villagers. This results in Mugo's open confession of his guilt to Mumbi, who is Kihika's sister.

Conclusion

A stylistic analysis of the story of a novel as given above with an emphasis on the cause and effect relationship clearly establishes that Ngugi is a complex writer. The story of the novel is narrated through indirect means such as paraphrase motifs and summary inferences. It is evident that this novel denotes a remarkable progress in his skill as a novelist and he is able to present issues that touch his heart and concern him deeply. It is only in *A Grain of Wheat* that he also presents a broad sweep of history of Kenya from the times of yore. Even though Kihika is a Moses like figure in the novel and a leader of his community, by his death, Ngugi seems to suggest that African leaders, being idealistic, do not succeed because they are betrayed by their own people.

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APPENDIX- A sample of the dynamic motifs identified in the text out of 213.

No of DM	Manner of introduction	List of Dynamic motifs	Process	Participant	Effects 1	Effects 2
1	Text	Mugo went to work in the shamba	Mat act int	Actor Mugo		LI
2	Text	The members of the party came to meet him in the evening	Mat act int	Act Members	Del	LC
A1	Text	Mugo once attended the meeting held at Rung'ei	Mat act int	Act Mugo	Del	LI
A2	Text	Kihika unravelled the history of the tribe	Mat act int	Act Kihika	Imm	TC
A3	Text	Mugo experienced a twang of jealousy as he looked at Kihika	Men Int reaction	Sensor Mugo	Del	LC
A4	Text	Soon after, Jomo and other leaders were arrested	Mat act int	Goal Jomo and others	Del	LC
A5	Sum	Kihika disappeared into the forest	Mat act int	Actor Kihika	Del	LC
A6	Sum	Kihika and the prisoners broke into the prison at Mahee and let the prisoners out at night	Mat act int	Act Kihika	Imm	LC
A7	Text	A prize was out on Kihika's head	Mat act int	Goal Kihika	Del	LC
A8	Text	A year later, Kihika was captured alone in the forest	Mat act int	Goal Kihika	Imm	LC
A9	Text	Kihika was hanged in public	Mat act int	Goal Kihika	Del	LC
3	Para	The members believed that Mugo gave shelter to Kihika	Men ext	Sensor Members	Imm	TC
4	Para	Therefore they wanted him to make the main speech on Uhuru day	Mat act int	Act Members	Imm	TC
5	Para	In a discussion General R. Reiterated the need to avenge Kihika's death	Mat act int	Act General R.	Del	LC
6	Sum	Gikonyo went back to	Mat act	Act	Imm	LC

		his hut	int	Gikonyo		
7	Para	Mumbi offered him food	Mat act int	Act Mumbi	Imm	LC
8	Para	He refused	Mat act int	Act Gikonyo	Del	LC

- Key:
- Text: text motifs. Sum: summary motifs. Para: paraphrase motifs
- DM: Dynamic motifs
- Mat act int: Material action intention. Men int rea: mental internalized reaction. Men ext: mental externalized
- Imm: immediate. Del:delayed
- TC: temporary and cumulative. LC: lasting and cumulative. TI: temporary and isolated. LI: lasting and isolated.