Hearing Voices:
The Linguistic and Narrative Design
of Three Eminent Shona Novels

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ABSTRACT

In this essay, I suggest a new methodology for the analysis of literary texts in Afrophone languages. Focusing on the concept of *voice*, I use a computer-generated linguistic corpus for exploring the linguistic and narratological set-up of three Zimbabwean novels from distinctly different historical and literary periods: Patrick Chakaipa's *Pfumo Reropa* [*Spear of Blood*] (1961), Charles Mungoshi's *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva* [*How Time Passes*] (1975), and Ignatius Mabasa's *Mapenzi* [*Madmen*] (1999). Supported by corpus-related data, my analysis will show that Chakaipa's narrator speaks with a public voice that has a certain moral in mind and displays a patriarchal outlook. In Mungoshi's novel we find a splitting of the narrative into different voices as well as an understated tone focusing on private rather than on public matters. Mabasa's *Mapenzi* confronts the reader with extreme narrative fragmentation and a protagonist who is prone to "hearing voices," mirroring the despondency that has overcome Zimbabwe at the end of the second millennium.

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It is almost a presupposition in African literary criticism to measure written texts against their degree of orality, a common appraisal being, the closer they are to oral tradition, the more "African" they are. In particular, early novels by African writers have been seen in this light, a romantic myth often cultivated by the writers themselves (see Barber and Furniss 10). However, when taking up the pen to write a novel, Alain Ricard writes it in regard to Thomas Mofolo's Sesotho novels, he "has an acute consciousness of the creation of a literary

language" (Ricard 55). However, to date, criticism of Afrophone literatures has failed to develop a conceptual frame for determining and analyzing the linguistic specificities of such literary language.

While from a postcolonial perspective, *voice* has mostly been highlighted as a form of political empowerment, I will consider it from a narratological point of view and, thus, as a key element in the set-up of a literary text. Who speaks (hetero- or homodiegetic narrator?) and from where (extra- or intradiegetic narrator?) are the key questions of classical structuralist narratology (see, e.g., Fludernik, "New Wine," *Natural Narratology*; Walsh; Bal). In a written text, however, these questions become metaphorical. It remains to be asked how voice becomes "audible" in a "silent" medium. This point, according to Richard Aczel in "Hearing Voices in Narrative Texts," has largely been neglected in narratological debates based on Genette's categories: "The first steps toward reopening (opening up) the concept of voice is to restore the realm of 'how'—tone, idiom, diction, speech-style—to a central position among the configuration of essential first questions of narrative voice" (Aczel 469).

This essay is an outcome of the research project "Changing Patterns of the Shona Novel from Zimbabwe—A Linguistic Literary Analysis" conducted at Humboldt University in Berlin between 2013 and 2016 (see editorial introduction). While, particularly within Afrophone literatures, linguistics and literary studies have largely worked as separate disciplines, the project sought to combine research tools from both sides, in other words, to use linguistic devices for a more in-depth reading of literary texts.

The literary corpus of the project consisted of the three novels mentioned above. They were chosen because they are of outstanding literary quality, represent distinctly different periods and styles of writing, and have had a great influence on following generations of writers. Chakaipa's novel stands for the first, classical phase. It represents the norm of how Shona had to be used in literature, safe-guarded by chaperons of cultural preservation even up to after Zimbabwe's independence in 1980 (see Veit-Wild, *Teachers* 304). In a survey I conducted in 1987, in which ninety-six Zimbabwean writers participated, Chakaipa topped the list of "favourite authors during school years"—on par with Shakespeare (Veit-Wild, *Survey* 61, 64). Mungoshi, the leading voice of the "second generation" of Zimbabwean writers (see Veit-Wild, *Teachers* 151–54) topped the list of "favourite authors" read "*after* school years" (67; emphasis added). Hailed for his mastery in both Shona and English writing, he innovated the genre by introducing first-person narrative and a nonlinear plot structure. After a gap of more than three decades, Mabasa's *Mapenzi* finally surprised the Zimbabwean reading public with a narrative that obliterates any coherent storyline, reproduces the language "of the streets," and speaks of issues such as corruption, abortion, sexual violence, and AIDS.

With their clearly marked generic differences, the three novels stand for three prototypes of Shona literature and are thus most suitable for analyzing and comparing narratological and stylistic patterns. In order to obtain such an analysis on the micro-level of language, the Berlin research team employed a computer software, the "Field Linguist's Toolbox," that normally serves linguists "for data management, parsing and text analysis" (SIL). As the parsing of the entire texts of the three novels (105,000 words) would have been too time-consuming,

Toolbox - [Chakaipa_Chapter01]

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\id    Chakaipa.1a.Munhamo_Ndyire
\dt    CREATED:tn,04.12.13; LAST.CHANGED:kk,10.06.14
\ref   cha01a.01
\tx    VaMunhamo    vakachiti              vosimudza              musoro
\mb    va-    Munhamo  va-      ka-    chi-  ti   vo-      simudz  -a   mu-  soro
\ge    2HON-  Munhamo  2.FS:PST- REM-  SIM-  MIM  2.FS:EXCL- lift.up  -DFT 3-   head
\ps    ncl-   pn       sc-      tam-   tam-  v    sc-      v       -fv  ncl- n
\sc    -                -       -      -          -        -            -    -
\sc    -                -       -      -          -        -
\ue    -      -         -       -      -     -    -        -       -    -    -
\nd    -      -         -       -      -     -    -        -       -    -    -

\ft    As Munhamo raised her head
\nt

\ref   cha01a.02
\tx    vakabva                     vasanganidzana            meso   naMambo         Ndyire.
\mb    va-    ka-    bv       -a   va-    sanganidz  -an   -a  ma-  ziso na-   ø-    mambo ø-   Ndyire
\ge    2:PST- REM-   THEREUPON -DFT 2.FS- meet.by.chance -RECP -DFT 6-   eye  COM-  1-    chief 1-   PN
\ps    sc-    tam-   aux      -fv  sc-    v          -ext  -fv ncl- n    prep- ncl-  n     ncl- pn
\sc    -      -      -             -      -          -     -   -    -    -     -     -     -    -
\ue    -      -      -             -      -          -     -   -    -    -     -     -     -    -
\nd    -      -      -             -      -          -     -   -    -    -     -     -     -    -

\ft    her eyes met those of chief Ndyire.
\fg    IDM - vasanganidzana meso namambo Ndyire
\nt

\ref   cha01a.03
\tx    Pavakamuona                          vakarohwa                 nehana
\mb    pa-        va-    ka-    mu-  on  -a  va-    ka-    rov  -w   -a  na-  ø-    hana
\ge    16ADE:GEN- 2.FS:PST- REM-  1-  see -DFT 2:PST- REM-   beat -PASS -DFT COM-  9-    heart-beat
\ps    ass-       sc-    tam-   oc-  v   -fv sc-    tam-   v    -ext -fv prep- ncl- n
\sc    -          -      -      -    -   -   -      -      -    -    -   -     -     -
\ue    -          -      -      -    -   -   -      -      -    -    -   -     -     -
\nd    -          -      -      -    -   -   -      -      -    -    -   -     -     -
```

\id Chakaipa.1a.Munhamo_N: 1/5   Shona Project 1.prj

Start   EN   ⚡   12:17

BeShoNo: First lines of Chakaipa's *Pfumo Reropa* (in the following cited as *CHA*).[1]

excerpts adding up to about 40 percent of each text were entered into the Toolbox corpus (40,500 words altogether). The selection of excerpts was based on questions of beginnings and endings, their significance for plot development, narrative perspectives, and language variety.

Our work on the three novels using Toolbox led to the creation of the *Berlin Shona Novel Corpus* (*BeShoNo*). As the screenshot above shows, Toolbox breaks up each unit of text ("tx") into morphemes. The lines underneath reflect the morpheme break ("mb"), linguistic glossing ("ge"), parts of speech ("ps"), and free translation ("ft"). However, the morpheme-based software does not identify any literary features such as rhetorical figures or sentence structure. An extra line was added for figurative language ("fg") that, however, had to be filled in manually and could not be standardized for statistical searches of the corpus. Hence the greatest challenge of the project consisted in working out how to use the device for a literary reading.

In my investigation of voice I will attempt to tackle this challenge. I will do so by submitting selected passages to—morpheme-based—close readings. I will then correlate the conclusions from the latter with some statistical figures generated from the corpus. Finally, with reference to specific concepts within narratology and discourse analysis, I will come to a comparative evaluation of what kind of voices speak in and from the three novels. As will become clear, the minute linguistic reading will enhance my attempts to make "voice audible in a written text."

CHAKAIPA: PASSIVIZING THE FEMALE PROTAGONIST

For Patrick Chakaipa, a priest and archbishop born in 1932 and educated at Roman Catholic mission schools, writing was a conscious act of recovering mythical tales, yet also, more importantly, of creating a literary language. *Pfumo Reropa*, his second of five novels, is situated in precolonial times and belongs to what George Kahari calls the genre of "romance": "[It is] a story portraying family feuds based on chronicles and legends" (Kahari, *Romances* 13). Like most novels of this period, it has a linear, chronological plot structure, centering on the quest of a hero, Tanga (later named Tanganeropa), who has to overcome numerous tribulations before he succeeds in avenging his family, wronged by a cruel chief. The eponymous "spear of blood" stands metonymically for the hero's prowess in vanquishing evil forces.

Looking at the opening of the novel, we discover that it is surprisingly "modern." Whereas the first Shona novel ever published, Solomon Mutswairo's *Feso* of 1956, opens with an instructive description of the natural environment in which the novel's warfare will take place, Chakaipa's starts in medias res. The very first sentence evokes a whole scene, staging the dramatic conflict that will cause the story to unfold. Here I quote the first sentence with basic linguistic annotation:[2]

> *As Munhamo raised her head*
> va- Munhamo   va-   chi- ti   vo- simudz -a
> mu- soro
> 2HON- Munhamo 2:PST- REM- SIM- MIM 2.FS:EXCL- lift.up -DFT 3-
> head
> *her eyes met those of chief Ndyire*
> va- ka-   bv -a   va- sanganidz-an - a   ma-ziso
> 2.FS- REM- THEREUPON -DFT 2.FS- meet.by.chance -RECP -DFT 6- eye
> na- ø- mambo ø- Ndyire
> COM- 1- chief PN
> (*BeShoNo* Cha01a.01–02)

My close reading of the sentence discerns the following aspects of its linguistic and stylistic construction:

1. It is built symmetrically. Through the counter-positioning of VaMunhamo and Chief Ndyire at the beginning and the end of the sentence, the two characters are set out as the initial antagonists from whose encounter the conflict arises.
2. Using Shona naming practice—names that introduce a sense of foreboding—the narrator's sympathy is made clear. The woman, *Munhamo*—literally, "in misfortune"—will fall prey to *Ndyire*, "the greedy one" (derived from the verb *kudya*, "to eat").
3. Yet, interestingly, though Ndyire is the one with power, he is syntactically subordinated to Munhamo; she is the one mentioned first and is the grammatical subject of the sentence, while the chief comes last and his name is merely an addition to a complete verbal phrase ("with chief Ndyire").
4. The two logical objects of the verbal constructions, *musoro* (head) and *meso* (eyes), highlight the physical aspect of the ominous encounter, further emphasized through their alliteration.
5. The verbal constructions "va-ka-chi-ti vo-simudza" and "va-ka-bva va-sanganidz-an-a" carry most of the descriptive and dramatic weight of the sentence.

The morpheme *chi* indicates simultaneity—"while she was lifting her head"—and is further dramatized by a signal of change and mimesis, the morpheme *-ti*.[3] In Shona, the deficient verb *ku-ti* (to say) is used to avert the listener/reader to a shift in the mode of speaking and thus has a poignant dramatic function (see Güldemann 262–68). Finally, the *vo-* is "an exclusive" in linguistic terms, meaning that something is just about to happen; here it takes the narrative forward, adding a moment of acceleration.

Thus the first part of the sentence is the preparation for what follows; it alerts the reader for the interruption, or rather, intrusion coming in the second part: "va-ka-bva va-sanganidz-an-a." Though the auxiliary verb *ku-bva* has an adverbial function ("just then, immediately"), its original meaning is "to come from," hence it implies movement; it thus builds up to the decisive moment, "the meeting of their eyes." Interestingly, if we look at the verb form closely, we notice the reciprocal extension *-an-*, the two protagonists interact with *each other*. But the verb itself goes back to what is known as a "shortened causative," expressed by the morpheme *-idz-*, implying that a verb causes something to happen or to be done. Hence, one might argue that Munhamo does not *choose* to look at Ndyire but is *forced* to do so; she cannot avoid it. The whole word order insinuates that it is Ndyire who urges her to look at him, to get in touch. Thus, while he is the intruder, the perpetrator, the grammatically given agency of Munhamo is taken away from her. The verb *–sangana* (to meet), contained in *vasanganidzana*, even carries a sexual connotation (Hannan 592).

My analysis of the verbal constructions has highlighted a major feature of a Bantu language: what in most European languages would need adjectives and adverbs as well as conjunctions, pronouns, and prepositions can be expressed through tense, aspect, mood (specifying the action), and verbal extensions (a suffix modifying the meaning of the basic verb). Chakaipa uses the grammatical complexity and linguistic potential of Shona as his material to create an expressive, multilayered literary language.

If we listen to Chakaipa's voice in the literal, audible sense, the first sentence makes it sound heightened, loud, and clear. The verbs do not appear in the potential or subjunctive mood; there are no enclitics (a syllable attached to the end of a word) qualifying what is being said, as we will encounter in Mungoshi's novel. Thus the diction does not leave any doubt that things might be otherwise. This is the voice of the extradiegetic narrator, whom we see (and hear) standing outside the scene, arranging the events, and who now returns to the narration in the ordinary past tense, telling us what happens to poor Munhamo after the intrusion of the chief into her life.

For my analysis of the second sentence, I divide it into three lines:

Pavakamuona vakarohwa nehana
ndokuramba vangoti surududu somunhu afirwa
iko kapadza kavaicheresa muti womwana kari muruoko.

When she saw him, her heart beat with fear
Then [she] continued bowing her head like a bereaved person
still holding the little hoe with which she was digging the medical plants for the child in her hand. (*CHA* 1)

Through the use of the passive mood in "va-ka-roh-w-a" (marked by -*w*-), Munhamo is now clearly relegated to the role of the one something is done to—literally, "she was beaten by the wildly hammering heart." Her plight also becomes clear in the image of her ensuing body posture, which the narrator evokes through the ideophone "surududu," introduced, as is the rule, by the mimetic marker –*ti*, which translates into something like, "Look here! Listen! That is what it is like." An ideophone, according to the Bantuist Clement Doke, "is a vivid representation of an idea in sound. A word, often onomatopoeic, which describes a predicate, qualificative or adverb in respect to manner, color, sound, smell, action, state or intensity" (118). In other words, as the ideophone is a synesthetic figure of speech, "surududu" makes Munhamo's emotional state *audible*. The ensuing simile "somunhu afirwa" enhances the somber tone of the ideophone, further emphasized through the alliteration of the "s" sounds. Like a person struck by death—another passive construction—Munhamo lets her head (which she had raised at the outset of the story) hang down. The last part of the sentence returns to the situation in which she found herself before the intrusion of the chief, but shows her in a freeze position. With her head bowed, she is still holding the little hoe with which she was digging herbs for a sick child. In my reading, this image acquires a heightened quality through the deployment of an object belonging to noun class 12 for diminutives, "kapadza" (little hoe). Necessitated by grammatical agreement, its prefix *ka*- appears three times, thus virtually *belittling* the poor woman.

In conclusion, one can infer from the first two sentences that the narrator is eliciting pity for the plight of the woman, while at the same time showing her to be helpless and powerless, exposed to the demands the chief will make on her. Behind the specific linguistic set-up the reader can perceive, or hear, the voice of the Roman Catholic priest who will condemn the deeds of lawless, heathen men, yet is far removed from seeing women as agents of resistance or change.

GENERIC CHARACTERS AND A VOICE FROM OUTSIDE

As the analysis of the opening lines have shown, the story is told by an authorial (extradiegetic) narrative voice, in the third-person singular, with an external perspective on the characters. Interestingly, the list of the twelve most frequent words in the *Shona Novel Corpus* correlates with this narratological categorization (see Table 1). For *Pfumo Reropa* the only character name appearing on the list is Tanga, the hero of the story. This finding is in tune with the genre, a tale of adventure, warfare, and fantasy, which comes forth with a multitude of characters, most of whom are of minor importance. At the same time, the list displays a high frequency of the generic terms *murume* (man, husband), *munhu* (person), and *mukadzi* (woman, wife), which in turn confirms the great distance the narrator keeps from his characters, who for him are prototypes rather than realistically depicted human beings.

Such narrative distance also corresponds with the "public voice" of the first generation of Zimbabwean writers to which Chakaipa belonged, the "teachers and preachers" (see Veit-Wild, *Teachers* 18–147) who saw it as their mission to convey the beauty of the land and the richness of customs and material culture prior to the coming of the white men (see Kahari, *Romances* 13). Accordingly, the narrating voice often takes on the role of the commentator who then switches to the

Table 1: List of the twelve most frequent words

	Pfumo reropa		*Ndiko kupindana*	
	word	**frequency**	**word**	**frequency**
1	kuti (conj.: that)	280	kuti (conj.: that)	385
2	kana (if, or)	123	kana (if, or)	225
3	asi (but)	101	Rindai (proper name)	161
4	akanga (he was/she was)	77	asi (but)	131
5	murume (man/husband)	68	akanga (he was/she was)	121
6	munhu (person)	63	Magi (proper name)	116
7	pamusana (because of)	55	Mai (Mrs., mother)	82
8	nokuti (because)	52	chete (only)	71
9	hapana (there is nothing/ no one)	46	nguva (time)	68
10	mukadzi (woman/wife)	43	ini (I, me)	60
11	uyu (this)	43	iye (he/she)	59
12	Tanga (proper name)	41	here (interrog.)	56

(extracted from *BeShoNo* by Alena Witzlack-Makarevich)

first-person plural, using phrases such as "Nyika yedu" 'our country' and "mun-guva iyi yatiri kutaura" 'this time of which we are speaking' (*CHA* 3–4). While this voice, in what Kahari termed "Old World Novels," and its mission have been amply characterized in critical works (e.g., Kahari, *Rise*, *Aspects*; Veit-Wild, *Teachers*; Chiwome), less attention has been paid to the way in which the voices—and thoughts—of characters are put into place.

In most cases, Chakaipa's characters speak in dialogue, that is, in direct speech, which "is a natural vehicle for vivid and dramatic presentation and in fact, it is the chief device of 'mimesis,'" Elena Bertoncini remarks in her discussion of speech forms in Swahili novels (178). However, there are some instances in which the narrator tries to enter the consciousness of his characters in more indirect ways, which I am going to investigate now.

The first chapter of the novel ends in an emotional climax, highlighting the despair that has overcome Munhamo and her husband after Munhamo's encounter with the chief.

> Rakati zvino jongwe rokukuridza kechipiri, *baba imi namai imi* hope dzikati dzabata. *Baba imi, ta*kavata demo nepfumo zviri kumusoro. *Amai imi, ta*kakotsira kuti rororo iyo misodzi ichingoerera sakakova kemvura mbovovo dzichinge dzichakarosvika nomunzeve.

> When the cock was crowing for the second time, the *poor* man and woman fell asleep. The *poor* man slept with an axe and a spear at his head. The *poor* woman slept deeply, the tears flowing like a rivulet, saliva almost trickling into the ears. (*CHA* 8; emphasis added)

In this passage, the narrative voice moves close to the couple, not however by reproducing their fears in their own words but by speaking *to* them, addressing them as *baba* and *amai*, followed by the pronoun of the second-person plural, *imi*,

followed by another switch to the first-person plural ("we fell asleep"). So the high state of emotion is externalized; it is the narrator who pities his characters. This technique imitates the oral storyteller who includes his audience in his commiseration for *his* "poor people": "It is a typical feature of literary works of cultures in transition from orality to literacy that they presuppose more of a common context of situation than can be reconstructed from the text alone" (Coulmas 163).[4]

However, this passage might also indicate a problem of narratological conceptualization. As the translation shows, a Shona speaker does not perceive the aforementioned switching of personal pronouns in grammatical terms—the third person is maintained—but rather on the semantic level.[5] The empathy they entail is rendered by the adjective "poor," which does not have a direct equivalent in the Shona text.

Interestingly, the problem of representing characters' thoughts is highly salient at points where the focus of narration hones in on the intimate sphere, in contrast to the public arena, such as when Tanga is reflecting about the matter of love: "Chimwe chinhu chaimunetsa kunyara akanga asingagoni kuti kumusikana *ndinokuda* pamusana penyadzi." 'One other thing that troubled him was shyness, he was not able to say to a girl *I love you* because of his shyness.' (*CHA* 27; emphasis added). In tune with what Bertoncini observes about early Swahili writing (180–87), the narrator here switches within a sentence from third to first person without marking this through a reporting verb (say, think, etc.) or quotation marks.

In other instances we find a "hint" of free indirect speech, as prevalent in modern fiction (see below): "Hongu zvaiva nyore kuda musikana asi zvakanga zvisiri nyore kuti musikana azive kuti aidiwa naTanga." 'Yes, it was easy to love a girl but it was not easy to let the girl know that she was loved by Tanga' (*CHA* 28–29). While here, for a moment, narrator and character voice overlap, the extradiegetic voice takes over again, in first-person plural, giving his "authorial" take on the beauty of the girl his hero has set his eyes on: "Uyu mwana wa*a*kaona ha*ti*na mazwi okutsanangura runako rwake." 'This child whom *he* saw *we* do not have words to describe her beauty' (*CHA* 27; emphasis added).

KEEPING MODERNITY AT BAY

Chakaipa's generation of writers, journalists, publishers, teachers, and clergy men, born between the two World Wars, were important agents of modernization, urbanization, and the creation of an African middle class in the 1950s and 60s, who strove to be accepted as equal partners by the white settlers, whose way of living they, to a large extent, emulated (see Veit-Wild, *Teachers* 17–34). However, while the act of writing was an inherent part of modernity, their cultural nationalism induced them to keep modernity out of their writings. As Table 2 shows, *Pfumo Reropa* does not use a single loan word, in stark contrast to Mungoshi's and Mabasa's novels, which opened Shona literature up to the borrowings and mixes taking place in urban Shona.

Another aspect of the purity of the Shona language that Chakaipa was cultivating is reflected in the figures on ideophones and similes (Table 3). Not surprisingly, the table shows a high density of ideophones in his novel, which, like the preponderance of direct speech, is another reflection of the mimetic nature of his writing. The simile, as the most explicit (and, as I would contend, least mimetic) of

Table 2: List of loan words and their source languages (*BeShoNo*)[6]

Source language	Chakaipa	Mungoshi	Mabasa
English	0	209	403
Afrikaans	0	25	40
Arabic	0	25	54
Ndebele	0	1	66
Fanagalo	0	14	21
Other	0	1	13
Total	0	275	597

Table 3:
The distribution of ideophones and similes in the three novels (*BeShoNo*)[7]

Figure of speech	Chakaipa		Mungoshi		Mabasa	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
ideo: total	50	0.56	55	0.32	27	0.19
ideo: variety	42	0.47	39	0.23	27	0.19
simile	27	0.30	90	0.52	107	0.74

all rhetorical figures, appears at the lower end. Thus the table displays a striking proportionality between the decrease in ideophones and the increase in similes in Mungoshi and Mabasa, compared to Chakaipa.

MUNGOSHI: MAKING THE FEMALE VOICE AUDIBLE

With Charles Mungoshi's *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva* (in the following quoted as *MUN*) a new era in Shona novelistic discourse began. Published just over a decade after Chakaipa's, we hear a completely different voice, or rather, a spectrum of voices. Low, unassuming, questioning the very fact of a single voice, "Mungoshi is less interested in what happens than in why it happens" (Veit-Wild, *Teachers* 280).

The plot of his novel picks up a common theme of the time: the challenges of a marriage with the husband working in the city, where he starts drinking and living with another woman, while his wife and children stay in the village. The structure of the text, however, reflects his completely novel treatment of the theme. He breaks the story up into two main sections for which he uses different narratological features. The first part, "Rindai," gives voice to the wife's view of the matter, in third-person narration; the third part, "Rex," lets the husband speak, in first person. Both investigate the causes of the breakdown, mostly in retrospect, and explore ways to restore it. A short section, "Rangirai," is inserted in-between, making the voice of their nine-year-old daughter heard, in first person.

The figures in Table 1 (see page 7) reflect Mungoshi's focus on a few individual characters: the names of the two female protagonists, Rindai and Magi (Rex's girlfriend in Harare), appear at rank 3 and 6, respectively. Interestingly, even the absolute personal pronouns *ini* (I) and *iye* (you) feature among the twelve most

frequent words, which I read as another marker of the personal voice pervading the novel, in contrast to the collective voice in Chakaipa. The marked philosophical dimension of *Ndiko Kupindana Kwamazuva*, its preoccupation with the passing of time (as the title indicates), is reflected in the appearance of the noun *nguva* (time) at rank 8.

Arguably, Mungoshi's greatest innovation and modernization of the Shona novel is the introduction of free indirect speech (FIS). Apart from a cursory mention in Veit-Wild (*Teachers* 282), this important feature—and achievement—has been overlooked in the critical literature; most critics, rather, speak vaguely of "interior monologue" (Chiwome 149; Nyawaranda 211), "stream of consciousness" (Vambe 54–56), "plurality of voices or multiple narrative," (Vambe 57), "flashback" (e.g., Kahari, *Rise* 270), or "psychological realism" (Chiwome 145; Veit-Wild, *Teachers* 285).

In free indirect speech (also called free indirect discourse), focalization moves from the narrator to the character, i.e., from the outside to the inside. FIS implies a fluid transition from the narrator's to the character's voice. Without announcing it, the third-person narrator speaks in the words of the character. FIS makes itself known through typical markers of direct speech such as interjections, modal particles, or peculiarities of the character's language (see Bray; McHale; Massamba; Bertoncini).

In his novel, Mungoshi employs FIS amply and aptly as a means to enter into the consciousness of his main female protagonist, Rindai. As my reading of the opening sentences of the second chapter will show, the Shona language offers particular means to do so.

> va-- paradz -an -a ku- daro
> 2.FS:PST- disperse -RECP -DFT 15INF- do.thus
> *When they parted like that,*
> Mai Mbare vakatangisa kufambisa
> 1- mother 1- PN 2:PST- REM- start -INT-DFT 15INF- move -INT -DFT
> kuitira vana vavo vavakanga
> 15INF- do -APPL -DFT 2- child 2:GEN- 2:POSSR 2:GEN- 2.FS:PST- REM-
> STAT
> vasiya pamba vega vega.
> 2.FS:PST- leave -DFT 16ADE- 9- house 2- only 2- only
> *Mrs Mbare started walking faster for the sake of her children who she had left alone at home.* (*BeShoNo* MuRi02.001–002)

In the preceding chapter, Rindai was exposed to the gossip of village women about the state of affairs in her marriage. Now, as she is parting from them, her mind immediately turns to her children. Unlike Chakaipa, Mungoshi uses a simple sentence structure and everyday language. At the same time he frequently employs verbal extensions to reflect the protagonist's state of mind: Rindai wants to get home quickly (emphasized through the "intensive" extension -*is*- in the two subsequent verbs "vakatangisa kufambisa") in order to look after her children (the "applied" extension -*ir*- in "kuitira"); she is worried because they have been left alone ("vega vega"). Her worry is stressed through reduplication, a common means of emphasis; Rindai's anxiety is reflected even before her own thoughts are spelled out. Thus the sentence offers an impressive example of what James

Table 4 Distribution of markers of appraisal (*BeShoNo*)

Morphemes	Chakaipa		Mungoshi		Mabasa	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
Enclitics						
-zve	3	0.03	59	0.34	7	0.05
-wo	30	0.34	291	1.69	260	1.81
-ka	3	0.03	63	0.37	43	0.30
Modifiers						
-mbo-	62	0.69	204		165	
-ga-	14	0.18	64	0.37	19	0.13
chete	54	0.60	137	0.80	70	0.49

Wood calls "free indirect style," which arises "when the gap between an author's voice and a character's voice seems to collapse" (22). While Wood, who focuses on writers such as James, Chekhov, or Naipaul, talks about the "authorial *irony*" this gap generates, in Mungoshi's case we might call it authorial *empathy* (emphasis added). Compared to Chakaipa, this empathy seems to be rather what I would call "language-inclusive" than "narrator-obtrusive."

The next sentence dips directly into Rindai's thoughts through free indirect speech:

> Hongu zvazvo Rangarirai akanga akura
> zvokuti akanga o*to*gona*wo* kubik*ira tu*hanzvadzi twake,
> asi Mai Mbare vakanga va*singa*fungi
> kuti aive nezvimwe zvizhinji zvaaiziva kuri kunzi pane tsaona inoitika. (My emphases)

> Yes Rangarirai had grown
> so that she could cook for her little brothers
> but Mai Mbare did not think
> that she knew a lot if an accident happened. (*MUN* 6)

Here the transition to FIS is marked through the interjection *hongu*, followed by *zvazvo*, a particle of emphasis in noun class 8. As it does not have any meaning as such other than modulating what is being said, it is not reflected by the free translation in the *Shona Novel Corpus*.

In the second line we have the applied extension again (-*ir*-) and noun class 13 with its prefix *tu*-, the plural form for small things. Most significantly, we have two modalizers attached to the verb: -*to*- meaning "already, just" and the enclitic -*wo* (also), both of which are absent from the translation, yet are significant markers of FIS—of a voice that is not sure of itself.

These modalizing particles as well as enclitics (verbal suffixes) appear to be important markers of what "appraisal theory" conceives as "language of evaluation," referring to linguistic elements expressing affect, judgment, appreciation, attitude, etc., on the lexical, rhetorical, syntactical, phonological, and morphological level (Martin and White; White, "Appraisal," "Language"). The structure of Bantu languages offers a wide range of such forms of appraisal (see, e.g., Musiyiwa).

For my comparative reading of the three authors' style, I have counted the occurrence of specific morphemes that I read as expressions of appraisal, that is, of modifying what is being said:

> 1. the three enclitics -*zve* (again), -*wo* (also), and -*ka* [expression of emphasis]. Their meaning depends largely on the context in which they then function to qualify what is being said;
> 2. the two modifiers (infixes) –*mbo*- (advl.: previously, neg.: never), -*ga*- (only); and
> 3. the word *chete* (only), which has an explicit qualifying meaning.

Table 4 confirms my preliminary observations on Mungoshi's style. Compared to Chakaipa and Mabasa, it features by far the highest percentage of all six of the listed markers of appraisal.[8]

The high frequency of the enclitic -*wo*, which, according to Hannan (734) adds "persuasiveness or respectfulness to a request," reflects, as Shona speakers have confirmed to me, a female register, in particular of a wife talking to her husband. The frequency of -*zve*, which, like *zvazvo*, belongs to class 8 (the plural for "things"), goes hand in hand, in my reading, with the writer's tendency toward low-key statements and neutrality. Mungoshi's general predilection for noun class 8, I would posit, is inherent to his unobtrusive and inconspicuous way of writing and of speaking. Shona speakers who know him personally have said that this is "also the way he speaks."

The first section concludes, or even culminates, in a letter that Rindai writes to Rex—"Kuna baba vaRangarirai" 'To the father of Rangarirai' (*MUN* 65–68)—imploring him to tell her the reasons for his silence, and, for the sake of their children, to return home. The letter, being a female genre per se, offers a condensed example of the register of submissiveness and self-effacement I have noted above. "Mudiwa wangu!" 'My loved one,' she writes, and starts her plea with two questions: "pane chandakakutadz*ir*a here? Kana paine chandakaita chakakugumbura haugoni*wo* hako here kana kunyora tsamba zvayo uchinditauri*rawo* mumwe wako?" 'did I wrong you in any way? If I did anything that angered you, why don't you just write me a letter telling me about it?' (emphasis added). The whole letter, consisting of only 724 words, contains thirty-one interrogative sentences. Yet while Rindai puts herself down, looking for the blame in herself, she also takes her husband to task. I tend to believe that the applied verb extension (-*ir*-), appearing twenty-four times in the letter, can also function as a grammatical marker of the female voice: what has she done *to* him, she wants to know, and why does he not *talk to* her. By assuming agency through writing a letter, her questions simultaneously evoke the weakness of the male sex, his passive aggressiveness: he keeps his silence and does not talk or write, as she does.

In the third paragraph, Rindai reiterates her wish to receive a letter from her husband, yet she becomes even humbler by making it into a "small letter," through the use of noun class 12: "Kana zvirizvo ndizvo maitadza*wo* henyu kundinyorera*wo katsamba kadikidiki* zvako muchindiudza*wo*?" 'If that is the case [that he has been transferred to a different work place], why did you not write me even a small letter telling me about it?' (emphasis added). Again the enclitic -*wo* (appearing twenty times in the entire letter), takes all possible sharpness out of her questions, enhancing her stance of modesty and respect. The smallness of the letter is further

emphasized by the adjective *diki* ("small"), which again is reduplicated in *kadikidiki*, making it "the tiniest of letters."

A PSYCHOLOGICAL STRIPTEASE OF THE MALE

Critics have identified Rex's part of the narrative as an inner monologue or even stream of consciousness (see above). I do not agree. The interior monologue and the linguistically more loosely structured stream of consciousness define parts of a narrative in which the narrator steps back while the character delves into his or her inner thoughts. The "Rex" part, however, which makes up more than half of the whole novel, is a conscious switching to the husband's view of the conflict, after the wife's has been heard, and it is narrated in first person.

> Ko, wakazvivhiringidza papizve iwe? Chimbotiudzawo nezvoupenyu hwako, kubvira kuroorana kwako nomudzimai wako, kuonana kwako naMagi. Chakakuita kuti usiye mudzimai wako chii, uchidanana neshamwari yake? Zvakanga zvisingakunyadzisi here kuita zvinhu zvakadai? . . . Zvino kwauri kuenda ndekupi? Unogumirepi?

> Tell me, where did you get confused again? Can you please tell us about your life, since you married your wife, your meeting with Magi. What led you to leave your wife, falling in love with her friend? Were you not ashamed of yourself to do such things? . . . Now where are you going? Where will that take you to? (*MUN* 79)

While Rex also asks many questions, his voice is not as tempered and mitigated as Rindai's. He summons himself to court, making himself testify before the community, as shown in the use of the second-person singular and first-person plural in the first paragraph: "*You* are the one responsible, *you* have to confess, to *us*, the community, the reader." Like a judge, Rex bombards himself with questions. The interrogative morpheme *-pi* used twice at the end of this paragraph—"where? where to?"—underlines his rigorous self-questioning.

At some points, however, Rex's self-questioning gives way to free association, which then comes close indeed to a stream of consciousness.

> Magi kaive kakorodzi kana kakova kane mvura inorwadza nokucheka kwayo kachiri kupwipwinyika nokutamba-tamba pamatombo egomo rina mawere akadzika zvikuru. Rindai aive dziva hombe rine mvura yakanyarara, yakachena, inotonhorera. Asi pasi pedziva iri pakanga pasingaoneki. Kunyarara. Kudzama. Kutyisa.

> Magi was like a small stream with water which is painful because it is cold and which produces smoke and dances repeatedly on stones of a mountain with deep steep slopes. Rindai was a big pool with quiet water, clean, cool. But the bottom of this pool could not be seen. Quietness. Depth. Fearfulness. (*MUN* 82)

Comparing his wife Rindai and his girlfriend through the extended similes of a small stream versus a big pool, Rex's language acquires a highly lyrical rhythm: alliteration, reduplication, assonance in the first sentence are followed by strings of verbs evoking the rich nature of Rindai's personality. They are basic yet

expressive verbs, the first three in the participial mood—*yakanyarara, yakachena, inotonhorera*—are echoed by three infinitives: *Kunyarara. Kudzama. Kutyisa.* These one-word sentences make the voice seem ponderous and give weight and depth to Rex's mental image of Rindai.

It is debatable whether Mungoshi's diction, such as these ellipses, sounds like a translation from English, as some readers have argued (Veit-Wild, *Teachers* 286; Chirere, Personal Interview). The introduction of new narrative forms such as free indirect speech can surely be put down to Mungoshi's vast reading of English and American literature, as he confirmed himself (Mungoshi, "Interview" 81). There is no doubt, however, that Mungoshi has freed Shona literary language from the conservative rules and attitudes prescribed by the preservers of culture who objected to linguistic "contamination" and narrative experimentation (Veit-Wild, *Teachers* 304–05). Mungoshi's defiance of his literary elders, the "fathers" of Shona literature, went hand in hand with his empowerment of the voice of women and children against patriarchal dominance. In this, he was very much avant-garde. The psychological striptease that Rex performs, his dismantling of the male super-ego, is equaled, in Zimbabwean writing in English, only twenty-six years later by Shimmer Chinodya in his story "Can We Talk," a text written in English.

Yet unlike Chakaipa's generation of writers, Mungoshi never followed any political agenda. His is the voice of someone who discovered "that the psychological aspect of the human being is as much a scientific reality as the historical-social one. People write/paint/sing the way they feel" (Mungoshi, "Towards" 2; see also "Musomo"). The result is a private, gentle, and gender-sensitive voice that offers much empathy for the female character and some counseling for the male.

"NDINZWE IWE!—YOU LISTEN TO ME!": VOICE(S) AS THE TOPIC AND STRUCTURE OF MABASA'S *MAPENZI*

"Ndinzwe iwe!"—this is how Hamundigone, the central character of *Mapenzi* (in the following quoted as *MAB*), begins his public lamentation at the outset of the novel (8). While his appeal is directed to those in power and everyone in society, the novel conjures a multiplicity of disparate voices, speaking in and through the altogether thirty-eight chapters of different lengths, voices that disturb and derange Hamundigone, i.e., make him go mad. Yet, in the end, the reader will understand that, in accordance with the topos "it is the fool who speaks the truth," the novel's title assigns madness not to him but to everyone else around him: *mapenzi* is the plural of *benzi* (mad person) (see Veit-Wild, "Zimbolicious").

The narrative voice changes from chapter to chapter. Chapter titles bearing protagonists' names will often be written in the first person, but not always, and it is also not always the eponymous character that is speaking. Chapters in the third person are seldom controlled by a heterodiegetic narrator, but consist foremost of dialogues or monologues reflecting individual voices in direct speech. None of the chapters is named after Hamundigone, yet in many chapters his voice is central, either as reported through other characters or in direct speech. There is also no consistent narrative time or chronology: events are not related directly but rather reported in retrospect by one of the many characters.

Non-linearity and fragmentation as well as the putting together of different literary genres (*Mapenzi* includes poetry, songs, and folktales), the playfulness

of tone, sarcastic irony, and intertextual referentiality characterize the novel as a postmodern work of literature. This trend, which Mabasa introduced into Shona literature, had a forerunner in Dambudzo Marechera, to whom the novel explicitly refers. Not surprisingly, it has been reported that since the appearance of *Mapenzi* its author "has . . . been considered 'a distant relative to Dambudzo Marechera'" and that "there was even debate on whether *Mapenzi* is in fact a novel or just a heap of broken images" (Chirere, "Ignatius Mabasa's" 221).

Mapenzi can also be read as an example of anti-mimetic fiction as defined within the theoretical framework of "unnatural narratology" (see Alber; Alber, Nielsen, and Richardson). This includes, according to Jan Alber, "foregrounding the thematic . . . rather than mimetically motivated occurrences" and "reading allegorically. . . . The unnatural permanently urges us to create mental models that transcend our real-world knowledge, thus seeking to exhaust the possibilities of our imagination and the worlds of fiction" (453, 455). Part of *Mapenzi's* non-realist set-up is the way in which it is bracketed by the first and last chapter, each entitled "Munhu" (person, man). With its general reflections about life and the state of society, this frame serves to foreground the theme of the novel, underpinning it with a metafictional level.

"Munondiziva" 'you (all) know me' (*MAB* 5), the very first word of the novel, introduces the intimate and menacing voice of the chapter. It is a voice one cannot evade and that will return: "Imi zivai chete kuti ndichadzoka" 'Just know that I will return,' *munhu* echoes in the last sentence of the novel. The sense of alarm that the *munhu* voice evokes is reflected in its imagery. "Nyanga dzepfungwa dzangu dziri kukochekerana" 'The horns of my mind are tangled,' the anonymous "man" says, "Svinga remazano riri kuramba kupfutunuka" 'The bundle of my ideas resists being unraveled' (*MAB* 5). The semantic incongruity of such metaphors makes them as hard to untangle as the subject matter being talked about. "Mindboggling" would be the Marecheran term for the state of affairs *munhu* is concerned about (Marechera, "African" 366), and like Marechera, the voice also uses images of sickness and decay: "Pfungwa dzave nechiveve. MuZimbabwe muya mave nechirwere, chirwere chisiri njovhera kana mukondombera" 'My mind is numb. There's a new sickness in Zimbabwe, and this sickness is neither an STI nor AIDS' (*MAB* 5).

Hence, implicitly, it is also the ghost of Hamlet who speaks through *munhu*—"something is rotten in the state of Denmark"—introducing two of the philosophical leitmotifs of the novel: time and fear. "Ndinototya kutya kwacho nekuti kunondityisa!" 'I only fear fear itself because it frightens me!' (*MAB* 5). Interestingly, this phrase echoes Franklin Roosevelt's famous dictum in his inaugural speech of March 4, 1933, when his nation was in the grips of the Great Depression: "So, first of all, let me assert my firm belief that the only thing we have to fear is . . . fear"—an intertextual reference the writer of which was not aware (Mabasa, Personal Interview). Unlike Roosevelt, Mabasa's *munhu* and his impersonation of Hamundigone is not a man in power, but speaks from the gutter against those in power, calling his countrymen and women to attention.

Quite in contrast to the solemn, emphatic tone of "Munhu," the second chapter, "Musika weBindura" 'Bindura Market,' switches to a casual, everyday, slightly flippant way of speaking. The protagonist is introduced as an "old bloke drinking beer and chewing on a maize cob" 'Dzimwe dzimudhara dzakanga

dzichinwa doro uku dzichidya chibage chekubika' (*MAB* 6). Surprisingly, the narrative voice—one of the rare instances of a heterodiegetic narrator—applies noun class 10 to speak of the character instead of class 1 or 2, as is usual when referring to a person. This usage, Shona speakers have confirmed, reflects the way people speak in such a setting, a bus terminal; it is street language—*chidhoroba* (see Nyota and Mareva 1). However, as is often the case in Shona writing, there is also a poetic effect created through the grammatically necessitated repetition of the class prefix. The soft sound of the prefix *dz(i)*, reiterated throughout the first four paragraphs, enhances the feelings of endearment and bemusement the reader will adopt toward the character. "The moment I used *dzimudhara dzakanga*," says his creator, "it makes him accessible. He is likable. He is embraceable" (Mabasa, Personal Interview).

When the *mudhara*, in his suit that could do with a trip to *ku*dry cleaning, gets up and addresses a woman in the crowd, we hear him speak in the same idiom: "Kupenga! Ha-a, hameno kuti kupenga kwakadai kuchazoonekwa nani chaizvo kuti kupenga. Ini chaiye kudhunya? Ndiko kunonzi kudhunya manje." 'Mad! I don't know who can tell this kind of mad. Me nutty? Now that's real nutty' (*MAB* 7). Yet shortly afterwards, the voice switches again to a heightened, formalized register. This weird person stands up and starts reciting a *bembera,* a poetic genre originally aimed at sniffing out witches "that continues to be in vogue up to this day" (Mutasa and Muwati 163).

True to the carnivalesque—in the Bakhtinian sense—nature of the novel, a formalized genre of praise poetry is *dis*placed to a bus terminus, a sordid and boisterous area full of rubble and garbage, where tires screech, exhaust fumes pollute the air, *hwindi* (touts) call out for passengers, pickpockets flit, and vagrants search for scraps of food. It is against this "unholy kind" of backdrop that the person who seems to be the laughing stock of those around him raises his voice to intone a solemn complaint, a scene made even more ironic as he is brandishing a half-eaten maize cob against the sky.

"'Listen and hear,' is the beginning of an authoritative statement," Kahari says, characterizing the *bembera* as "'exaggerated praise,' a sort of ironic hyperbole" (Kahari, "History of" 83–84). "Ndinzwe iwe!" 'Listen to me (hear me)' is also how Hamundigone's poem begins. The frequent repetition of variations on *kunzwe* (listen, hear) or *inzwi* (words, voice) throughout the thirty-eight lines lends the poem its dramatic structure. As a "boasting song" it uses specific rhetorical devices "to intimidate others, either to ward off a fight or to warn of the consequences of provocation" (Fortune 3). The speaker will aggrandize himself and belittle his antagonists. Hence, right after Hamundigone has downplayed his voice as disreputable ("inzwi rebenzi" 'voice of a mad one'), he threatens his listeners by comparing himself to an *ngozi*, an avenging spirit. Through *ngozi yerombe*, used twice in the poem, he also alludes to his image as a vagrant and mad man, an intertextual reference to the frequently anthologized poem by Mordikai Hamutiynei (16; also Fortune 39).

The whole of the first stanza is marked by repetition, anaphora, parallelism, and a dyadic structure: verbs, often in the imperative mood ("tarisa!" 'look!' or "enda!" 'go!'), form the first part of the line, followed by similes depicting the speaker's prowess. This structure builds up to the main antithesis: you may turn your eyes away from me and turn your back but (*asi*) you will have to listen.

Ndinzwe iwe! Ndati ndinzwe!
Ndinzwe ini inzwi rebenzi,
Inzwi rawakavenga sechikwereti.
Tarisa zvako divi asi unondinzwa,
Ndinotokunetsa sengozi yerombe,
Enda zvako uchiti ndezvebenzi,
Asi zvichakubika semazondo,
Ugosara wawota semapepa anaiwa.

Hear me, hear me, I say!
Hear me the crazy voice of a mad one,
A voice hated as a debt is hated.
You may look askance but still you hear me,
I will vex you as a *ngozi* of a vagabond,
Go your way saying it is madness,
But it will pound you properly
And leave you a pulpy mess.
(Beginning of the poem: *MAB* 8–9)

A *bembera*, in Pascah Mungwini's words, is a "veiled public admonition . . . directed at bad elements in society so as to stop the malevolence" (116). Hamundigone holds his admonition back until the end, the climax of all his *ndinzwe iwe* lines. Keeping to the nature of a *bembera,* he does not spell out the cause of his anger but *veils* it in the form of a riddle.

Poto yakatsva ichibika sadza pamoto,
Asi kutebhuru kukaenda ndiro dzaive musherefu.

The pot was burnt cooking sadza on a fire,
But for serving the sadza, the plates on the shelf were used instead. (*MAB* 9)

In the collective consciousness of Mabasa's time the meaning of the riddle is obvious: while those who fought the battle are made the underdog, the ones who did not dirty their hands are now the political class (see Nyota and Mapara).

THE MADNESS RUBS OFF

Once the *bembera* is finished, the tone switches back from a formal register to the informal one of the street. While the people around him are shaking their heads, Hamundigone goes to urinate against a tree, comes back with his fly gaping, and boards a kombi (commuter taxi) to Harare.

Thus, the literary topos of *agora*—the public speech at the market place—is followed by the topos of traveling and enclosure: stories are being told by a fixed number of passengers traveling together, like, for instance, in the *matatu* in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's *Devil on the Cross*, or in the *Decameron*, storytellers enclosed in a villa, as we find in Marechera's *Black Insider*. In *Mapenzi*, Hamundigone is the storyteller who in long spiraling flashbacks tells his fellow passengers his story. Dismissed from his position as a teacher for allegedly being mad, he has been traveling between Bindura and Harare to sort out his pension. He muses on topics such as incompetent or lazy ministry employees, fellow drinkers in the Ambassador Hotel robbing him of all his money, the man who—to Hamundigone's consternation—was waiting for his *boy*friend, girls who keep on bringing their newborn babies to their mothers, and worst of all, a former comrade from the war who, driving in a big flashy Mercedes, had his security guy chase Hamundigone out of his way. Hamundigone keeps talking because the voices and war songs in his head prevent him from sleeping; the wounds of the war are unhealed.

Once the journey is ended, the narration is handed over to an array of other voices. Unlike in realist fiction, these characters do not speak to each other much

but rather seem like actors lined up on a stage speaking to an anonymous audience. Their various little stories appear as commentaries on Hamundigone's story and the general theme laid out by *munhu*. Some of these voices are shrill and aggressive, unfiltered reflectors of the conditions around them; others are angry, despondent, cranky, or callous; others again are cautious, sensitive, concerned. All of them form a cacophony, a chorus out of tune, voicing the absurdity and senselessness of a state that has lost its bearings. While the reader will initially be confused by the labyrinthine external structure of the novel, an inner connection evolves through the way in which, and the degree to which, all characters relate to Hamundigone, to his questioning of reality and search for truth.

> It is also the state of the mind of the protagonist which influenced very much the structure of the novel . . . . Even the other characters seem to be affected by his lifestyle, his thinking, his behavior, it sort of rubs off . . . His state of mind, to me, was what we were going through as a nation and even now what we are still going through, where we have issues but issues have not been addressed, issues that have not been discussed, because people were expecting to suddenly come back from [the war] and just live a normal life. (Mabasa, Personal Interview—see also Nyota and Mapara)

The strongest bond, in the end, appears to be between Hamundigone and his young nephew as well as with the dog Harare. Similar to the girl figure in Mungoshi's novel, the boy mirrors the disturbances of adult life in the naive and unfiltered way of a child, while the dog stands as an ironic allegory of post-independent Zimbabwe. When independence came, a white couple leaving the country asked their maid to keep their dog, then called Salisbury. They put enough money for a two years' supply of dog food into a bank account. Once they had left, the woman cashed the whole amount, bought a sofa and two fridges, and opened a shebeen.

> Shabhini yaida kuti munhu ange achimhanya-mhanya. Salisbury yakatozoona kuti hupenyu hwasiyana ichibva yazotanga kudyawo sadza rine mavhu nekunokudubura mabhini. Yakabva yazove Harare yatinoziva iko zvino. Yakange yave muZimbabwe.

> The shebeen kept everyone busy. In time Salisbury realized things had changed irrevocably and began to eat dirty *sadza* dumped in the bins round the neighbourhood. He became the Harare we know today. At last, he'd truly arrived in Zimbabwe. (*MAB* 100)

LINGUISTIC LIBERTY AND DIVERSITY

The liberty Mabasa has taken in terms of structure is equaled by his liberty of language. As Table 2 above shows, Mabasa stands out with 403 English loans, almost doubling the number in Mungoshi (209). (Both corpus extracts have about the same amount of words—*MUN*: ca. 17,000; *MAB*: 14,000). The total figure for *all* loans is more than double: 597 to 275. Mabasa's loans are also distributed more distinctly across the different source languages (Afrikaans, Arabic, etc.), reflecting the higher degree of linguistic mix in the city at the end of the millennium compared to the early seventies, when Mungoshi wrote his novel.

Table 5: Occurrence of loans, codeswitching, and slang

	Pfumo reropa	*Ndiko kupindana . . .*	*Mapenzi*
Loan words	—	x	x
Codeswitching	—	—	x
Slang	—	—	x

Loan words, which are often English words transposed into Shona phonology (see Mlambo), such as in the last quotation with the words *shabhini* for "shebeen" and *mabhini* for "bins," contribute to the humor and playfulness of *Mapenzi*. *Mabhini* is not only a loan, but also a form of codeswitching. While the Shona plural prefix *ma-* serves as the grammatical matrix, the lexical content comes from English (see Myers-Scotton).

As the software used for the *BeShoNo* only breaks up words into morphemes, it has not been possible to extract exact figures for the occurrences of codeswitching and slang. However, the basic comparisons shown in Table 5 can be ascertained.

In the *BeShoNo* we can count 272 instances of codeswitching. This figure is, however, not very accurate, as each instance applies to a single word or expression such as "*ku*dry cleaning," which Hamundigone's suit needs, or the "*pepa re*Sunday Mail" he is seen reading at the bus terminal; here the *ku-* and *re-* are Shona prepositions used with English words, and *pepa* is the loan for "newspaper." Or they apply to parts of or an entire sentence in English, such as when a university student talks about being raped: "Kwozoti iro zimunhu racho rekundinhumburisa, hanzi, '*Unozviziva kuti ndine mukadzi nevana kumba, saka haiweke.*'" 'And the bastard who got me pregnant says, "You know I've got a wife and kids. *Just forget about it and let's close this chapter*'" (*MAB* 48). As socio-linguistic studies have affirmed (e.g., Bernstein and Myers-Scotton), usage of codeswitching and slang correlates with social milieu. Thus in *Mapenzi* a much higher frequency of codeswitching occurs in the dialogues of university students, and a higher number of slang words is used by characters who are drug dealers and the like.

A third category of language change prevalent in cities is "slang," which can be linguistically related to loans or codeswitching but also to idioms used globally. It is the most unstable of all three linguistic forms. *Mapenzi* is the first novel to make ample use of slang. The glossary to the book as it was published in 1999 contains a list of thirty-one slang words with Shona translations; words such as *blazi/blazo* for "guy," "brother," or *shaa/shaaz* for "friend" are among the most common ones, but *kudhunya* (being "nutty") and *manje* ("now"), as in the quote by Hamundigone above, are also listed.

All in all, *Mapenzi* comes along as a carnivalesque tragi-comedy of the state of the Zimbabwean nation at the end of the millennium. Structurally and linguistically of an extraordinary openness and a product of the joy of experimentation, varied, witty, and dynamic, the novel is a landmark in the development of Shona novelist discourse and as such has been a significant encouragement for younger writers. In Mabasa's own words: "The madness becomes a device that liberates the writer" (Personal Interview).

CONCLUSION

My discussion of the three novels that have been of eminent importance in the development of Shona literature has brought to light some gains and some short-comings encountered in the use of software-generated linguistic parsing for literary analysis. The minute morphological dissection of selected passages has imbued the method of close reading with a new quality and meaning. It has laid open how specific features of a Bantu language, such as the noun class-system and modalities of verbs, are used by a writer to produce a certain tone, diction, and, lastly, voice. Thus, the patriarchal innuendos of Chakaipa's voice have gained linguistic grounding, as has Mungoshi's narrative empathy with the inner thoughts of woman, man, and child. Some evidence has also been provided for the carnivalesque nature of Mabasa's city novel in the dismantling of linguistic formality through his unconventional use of noun classes and the mixing of codes and registers.

I have furthermore attempted to backup my readings with statistical findings from the *Berlin Shona Novel Corpus.* A few interesting correlations have appeared between the distant voice of Chakaipa's versus the intimate voice of Mungoshi's narrator and the most frequent words in their novels, as well as between Mungoshi's cautious diction and the high number of modifying particles in his text. On the whole, however, the corpus has been too small and the morpheme-based software too limited in its applicability to literary analysis to produce more specific and substantiated statistical conclusions. This is particularly the case with regard to Mabasa's novel where it has not been possible to count cases of codeswitching and slang, for instance, or to attribute specific differences in language to the various voices in the novel. Such features cannot be processed by Toolbox. Yet, it is my hope that my approach to "hearing voices" in these three remarkable novels has opened up new perspectives for linking literary and linguistic tools of analysis in the field of Afrophone literatures. I am curious to see how this challenge will be taken up in future research.

NOTES

1. For abbreviations and tags in the screenshot, see *BeShoNo*, "Conventions and Settings."

2. I am quoting one sentence each of Chakaipa and Mungoshi with linguistic annotation. Apologies are extended to readers not familiar with linguistic terminology used in this essay. As I am trying to straddle two disciplines, I have to employ some of the respective terms, yet cannot go into detail to explain the grammatical features of a Bantu language, such as the noun class system. Where my explanations are not sufficient, the Internet will help out.

3. According to Güldemann, a mimetic expression is a form of representation that works rather "by means of enacting/performing than with the help of canonical linguistic signs." It is thus closer to pre-verbal or non-verbal language (279).

4. I am indebted to a number of Zimbabwean colleagues who have instructed me about such issues, among whom are Jacob Mapara, Tsitsi Nyoni, Shumirai Nyota, and Zvinashe Mamvura.

5. The English translations for the quotes from Chakaipa and Mungoshi are taken from the *BeShoNo* and were done by a native Shona speaker. The translation of the

quotes from *Mapenzi* are taken from Tendai Huchu's forthcoming translation of the novel, at times modified by myself.

6. I am indebted to Isabelle Nguyen who assisted greatly with statistical searches within *BeShoNo*.

7. Different from other rhetorical figures, ideophones and similes can be searched for and counted in the Toolbox Corpus: an ideophone appears as "ideo" in the Ps-Line, a simile, through its "simulative preposition," in the Ge-Line.

8. The preponderance of enclitics in Mungoshi and Mabasa compared to their low frequency in Chakaipa will also be down to the fact that their language usage is much closer to the spoken idiom than Chakaipa's. This observation also correlates with the occurrence of loan words in Table 1.

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