# Nhango and Ndyaringo

## TWO COMPLEMENTARY POETIC GENRES

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Shona traditional poetry contains a number of different genres suitable to particular social occasions and social relationships which, between them, cover many of the rhetorical requirements of social life. Thus clan praise poetry, nhetembo dzorudzi, is evoked as a response to service and to kindness, or is uttered in order to conciliate and to elicit clemency from the person or persons addressed, Critical or 'blame' poetry, nheketerwa, on the other hand, is evoked as a response to disservice and unkindness. It is uttered to air grievances, often in a licensed form and situation, and seeks to right wrongs and restore equilibrium. Thus whereas praise poetry confirms social relationships and good social qualities, 'blame' poetry is corrective of harmful attitudes and selfish qualities. Each genre regulates social relationships, but from complementary angles.

Another complementary pair of genres is formed by *nhango and ndyaringo*, respectively the didactic and narrative poetry of traditional Shona literature. These forms, like the former, contrast not only in their social function but also in their style and subject matter. The social context of both is the *dare*, the village council or gathering-place, but the tone and intention of these contrastive forms, as well as the relationship of the speaker, *nyanduri*, to his audience, are quite different. It is proposed to study and exemplify some of the characteristics of these two forms in this paper.

The universe of Shona traditional literary utterance or discourse has other contrastive or complementary poles which it will be helpful to state here, both because they provide useful notions for describing the two forms chosen for particular study in this paper, as also because they serve to rough out the outline of the whole of which the *nhango* and *ndyaringo* are contributory parts.

Still within the inventory of forms we find elagaic poetry, *nhembo*, with several subvarieties, (i) utterances of sorrow on the part of the bereaved, *kudemba*; (ii) condolences on the part of sympathetic mourners, *kunyaradza vafirwa or kubata maoko*; and (iii) systematic chiding of death by those who have come to attend a funeral. Contrasting with the *nhembo* we have the love or courtship poetry, *madetembedzo okupfimbana*, rejoicing at unions to be created as the elegies mourn at partings. Courtship poetry is a kind of praise poetry, but much freer and more individual in its imagery and conceits than the clan praises.

Other forms of praise poetry which contrast with the clan praises are the praises of people in their professional capacity, and the boasts. Boasts are either communal, when uttered on behalf of a clan, or individual, proper to each man, and composed by him as he grows up. Whereas praise poetry directed to others is an expression of thanks, admiration or love, boasts are uttered to intimidate others, either to ward off a fight or to warn of the consequences of provocation.

Shona has other literary forms which need to be studied further for their main characteristics to emerge. The utterances used to address the ancestral spirits, *kupira midzimu*, form such a genre. Addressed to the dead members of the clans as opposed to the living, they are none the less not so much contrastive or complementary with those addressed to living seniors as continuous with them. The different kinds of sung poetry, varying with the occasions which elicit them, such as the eve of a hunting expedition or a funeral, are complementary to the genres of spoken poetry which have been already mentioned in this paper and which are better known. *Nheketerwa*, critical poetry, is usually sung. When it accompanies the instrumental music of the drum or the mbira it is called *madeketera*, allusive social comment conveyed in a rhythmically spaced series of lines.

The various kinds of *nheketerwa* differ greatly in the degree of indirection thought necessary. In certain confrontations such as in the utterances of grievances between husband and wife, the utterance is direct both as regards its target and its content or burden. In the *bembera*, the recital whereby a man formally makes known to all his neighbours, usually at night, that he is aware of the evil intentions of a sorcerer among them, the content is plain, but the target is not mentioned. The message will be clear, it is thought, to the culprit himself. In other kinds of *nheketerwa*, even content is conveyed by metaphor in the allusive style called *madimikira*.

We have left the domain of form and are now dealing with style in the wide sense. There are several parameters to note here, although, in order to include them, we can no longer restrict ourselves to the field of poetic genres and styles, but must include those of prose as well. Here we find a contrast between familiar and restrained styles depending on the relationships of the parties to the discourse. The speech between vasekedzani (those between whom there is laughter) is free and relaxed both in manner and matter, whereas that between vanyarikani (those between whom there is shyness) is constrained in both respects.

Another interesting contrast lies between the dramatic style of the *ndyaringo* (entertaining narratives) and the more sober manner of *nho*-roondo (descriptive narratives). That of the *ndyaringo*, which is to be examined here, is marked by the use of ideophonic phrases, while the matter of *nhoroondo* is conveyed mainly by verbal phrases.

The contrast between diction which is factual and that which is metaphorical provides the basis for a parameter which is very pervasive and includes many socially recognised speech styles. Examples are *nzvengure* (the language of courtship, or pursuit and evasion, of hide-and-seek), the criticism conveyed by *madimikira* (allusive comments) and the *nhango* (the didactic poems of the village meeting place. We turn to a comparison now between the *nhango* and *ndyaringo* in order to exemplify this contrast and some of the others which have been mentioned,

# NDYARINGO

Ndyaringo are a class of recitals usually uttered in the form of a succession of rhythmically spaced lines, the purpose of which is to entertain, divert or instruct an audience by means of a narrative. The appropriate setting for *ndyaringo* is the *dare* (the village meeting place), the beer party during a communal working session, or the home during the season of recreation. They appear to be in part, among adults, the literary form which corresponds to the *ngano* (folk-tales) of younger audiences. Hodza, who has published a number of them in his anthology of Shona traditional poetry, describes them as follows:

Ndyaringo or ny'ambo are poems or poetic fantasies of which some are meant to amuse, others to inspire pity or terror. This kind of poetry is the special province of professional jokers or entertainers who wish to divert their audiences, or to tell them what they have seen, or what they have heard, or what happened long ago.<sup>1</sup>

In another place he describes the entertainer as follows:

A person who narrates *ndyaringo* is someone who wants to keep people laughing all the time. The *ndyaringo*or *nyn'ambo*-teller can speak pure fantasy, describing episodes he has never seen. For the sake of mirth and entertainment he can form a story out of both fictitious and real elements.

When he appears before people you can hear him say,

Here I am!

I've come,

Son of Her-who-was-cast-away,

As a child she was abandoned in a wild fruit grove in a year of famine.

My grandmother drew water with a hyena's tail,

My aust took snuff seated on a spear.

I am one not to be talked about:

Where I am talked about, I come straightaway.

I am the darling of the girls. All tricks are at my disposal for my defence; My playground is where the girls spend their day.

Were I a spirit I would light on a baboon, Sit where its buttocks project.

My dog has licked a wizard.

The day I die, bury me at the well

So that I may see the girls' tattoo marks when they come.<sup>2</sup>

Hodza distinguishes *ndyaringo* which are pure fantasies from those which are founded on fact and exercise fantasy by means of humorous exaggeration or hyperbole. These figures of speech are called *zvizukuru* (fantastic haughable statements) or *gudziramukunwa* (hyperbole, lit, what is blown up in the mouth).<sup>3</sup>

Ndyaringo lend themselves very well to a a written medium. Another poet who has pubblished a series of *ndyaringo* is M. A. Hamutyinei.<sup>4</sup> His work brings out well the dramatic character of these narratives and the importance of the ideophone phrase as a stylistic device for achieving dramatic effect,

The subject matter of *ndyaringo* falls into a number of characteristic types, each of which it will be convenient to list and describe so that their general stylistic features may emerge. *Ndyaringo* deal with (i) cultural institutions; (ii) sensational or exciting experiences; (iii) items of fantasy suggested by folklore or dreams; (iv) extensions of riddles and other forms of word play; (v) satirical pieces.

Nyanduri make *ndyaringo* out of cultural institutions. These receive humorous treatment, and their more laughable or vulnerable aspects are dwelt on and brought out by hyperbole or critical comment. Examples of this variety of *ndyaringo* from Hamutyinei's work are a treatment of feminine behaviour during courtship, *Kana wamutanga musikana* (When you start courting a girl); and the traditional complaints

of daughters-in-law against their fault-finding mothers-in-law, Muri parumananzombe varoora (You are in a cleft stick, young brides).<sup>5</sup> In Hodza's unpublished collection of *ndyaringo* we have a description of a *nhimbe* where work and the hours of the day are punctuated by customary pots of beer; and a satirical treatment of lobola, Kuchiri kuroora here?, in which the grasping claims of the bride's family are pilloried by hyperbole. In this kind of *ndyaringo* the poems adapt themselves to the culturally recognised stages of the institutions treated, and are accordingly organised and segmented. The parts into which the poems are divided may be signalled by descriptive technical terms, often metaphorical or idiomatic in diction. Thus the progress of the ndyaringo on the nhimbe is marked by the mention of the different times of the day, that is the different stages of the sun's progress, the different stages of the work, and the names of the pots of beer which mark and accompany them.

Here we have a development of a feature which figures seminally in a type of children's verse called zvindori. These songs are one form of competitive game played by children in which items of certain defined categories, for example the names of children or of chiefs. the names of types of cattle, food or wild plants, or the names of hills or rivers have to be supplied within the framework of a song. and in successive verses. The best known example of these 'item' songs is a game called Pfukumbwe. In this game the children go through each stage of the agricultural year from preparing a new field to the threshing of the harvest. It is worth giving here in full as it is a splendid example of the use, at a level adapted to children, of two features of the *ndyaringo*, (i) parallelism of lines by means of similarity of grammatical constructions and of variety of imagery, and (ii) the development or segmentation of content according to the culturally recognised stages of an institution. Such nursery rhymes taught children the principles of verse construction which were developed in more mature fashion in all the different poetic genres which were necessary to the expression of a full adult life.

In *Pfukumbwe* the children are divided into two competing sides, each with a leader (*zimai*, lit. big mother) who may be a boy or a girl. The leader of the side which is 'in' sings a

solo verse consisting of two repeated lines, the other children responding as chorus to each line. As the leader sings each verse, he or she pretends to drill a seed into the ground, the action being done amid the hands of all the children of the side placed together. The 'seed', usually a pebble, is left in the hand of one of the children by the end of each verse, and members of the other side have to guess who has it. If they fail in their guess, the side which is 'in' continues with the next verse which mentions the next stage in the agricultural cycle. They continue in this way until the other side succeeds in guessing who is holding the 'seed', and has its turn at being 'in'. It now begins the series of verses, and continues in the same way as the other side until a lucky guess from their opponents puts them 'out' again. The side which finishes the series of verses first wins. and its members are allowed to call the other side sluggards as they have been so slow in arriving at the end of the game, namely at the verses which symbolise the harvest.

# PFUKUMBWE

| Mushauri (Leader)     | Vadaviri (Response) |  |  |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| Tsvagei gombo         | Haiya, gombo        |  |  |
| Tsvagei gombo         | Haiya, gombo        |  |  |
| (Looking for a new    | (Oh yes, a new      |  |  |
| field)                | field)              |  |  |
| Dunhurei              | Tichidunhurawo      |  |  |
| Dunhurei              | Tichidunhurawo      |  |  |
| (Clearing the bushes) | (We clear them too) |  |  |
| Temei mavivi          | Haiya, mavivi       |  |  |
| Temei mavivi          | Haiya, mavivi       |  |  |
| (Chopping up the      | (Oh yes, the        |  |  |
| branches)             | branches)           |  |  |

The remaining lines of the game, which are quoted only once though they are sung twice, are as follows:

| Omei mavivi                 | Haiya, mavivi         |  |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------|--|
| (Drying up the<br>branches) | (O yes, the branches) |  |
| Pisei                       | Tichipisawo           |  |
| (Burning)                   | (We burn them too)    |  |

Nhongei makoho Haiya, makoho (Picking up the burnt (Oh ves. the burnt ends) ends) Parurei **Tichiparurawo** (Hoeing the ridge (We hoe it one side one side) too) Tsivirei **Tichitsivirawo** (Hoeing it the other (We hoe the other side) too) Dzongerei Tichidzongerawo (We sow it too) (Sowing) Sakurei Tichisakurawo (Weeding) (We weed it too) Ibvei **Tichiibvawo** (Ripening) (We ripen too) Omei Tichiomawo (Hardening) (We harden too) Tichichekawo Chekei (Reaping) (We reap it too) Purei Tichipurawo (We thresh it too) (Threshing) Purei makoto Haiya, makoto (Oh yes, the chaff) (Threshing the chaff) Isei mudura Haiya mudura (Storing in the barn) (Oh yes, the barn)

The segmentation of the agricultural year provides the basis for the division of the game into verses. The functions of this device are educational, recreational and artistic, all at the same time. In *ndyaringo* the function of the device is, similarly, literary and, through the literary, recreational and educational, as when a *nyanduri* is speaking of the institutions of the past to listeners who have never experienced them.

A good example is provided by Hodza's poem *Chayambuka chasiya* (What has crossed the river has left the bank behind) in his unpublished collection. The title refers to the fact that, in his description of the *nhimbe* (the working bee), the *nyanduri* is recalling the past. The following is an extract from the middle of the poem:

Hwaiti hwanzi bvundu ihwo uchena naiwayo mazuva,

Mapadza nevhu zvaiteterera,

10 Kunyanya panguva yainge zuva ropisa gotsi.

Kuzoti ropisa chipande. Vanhu vaimiswa kuti vamboosa zuva Pavaipihwa musumo nenhururazviso. Pashure penhurura, vaipihwa nhiridziro.

15 Kuzoti paye porondoreka, Waiona vana vevanhu vanukirana narwo.

Kuzoti rondogara miti, vaipiwa hotore, Vanashongamakavi, nehumwe uzhinji hwebasa.

Kuzoti rochindodya mbira, ndopaibuda zvigaramusungwa,

20 Dziye dzinonzi zviparadza, mharadzamusasa.

Raizoti zvino rapinda mumakanda, Waiona huruva yotunga makore. Vonanga kumusha zvino, iko chaiko kubikiro, Kundonwa mbigirwa netsvitswa.

The sequence of times, stages of activity and accompanying pots of beer is clear. Also clear is the parallel form in which these stages are set out. A temporal clause introduced by the auxiliary verb /-ti/ indicates in each case (in stanzas 2-6) the position of the sun, and it is followed by a verbal clause describing the interrelated sequence of stages of activity and pots of beer. Each of these verbal clauses is inflected in the past habitual with tense signs /-a-i-/, since the speaker is passing on to his hearers a description of the past.

- When the light-coloured beer was stirred on days like that,
- Both hoes and soil were shown no mercy (though they pleaded),
- Especially at the time when the slanted sunlight made itself felt at the back of the head.
- When the sun was burning the crown of the head,
- People were called away to shelter from the sun.
- Then they were given the opening pot, and the one to remove the shyness from their faces,
- And, after the shyness had gone, another to top up the level.
- When the sun was about to start its descent,
- You would see the youngsters take up the work with one accord.
- When the sun had reached the level of the trees, they were given the pot for knocking off from work,
- Great pots carried on litters, and the main beer as recompense for the work.
- When it was the time for the sun to seek out the rock-rabbits, the big pots in which the strong beer had stood came out,
- The ones called the dispersers, that break up the party (lit. camp site).
- And when it sank into its bed (lit. skins),
- You would see the dust penetrating the clouds.
- People heading for the village, to the very spot where the beer had been brewed,
- To drink the pots set aside for the master against an unforeseen arrival.

Another aspect of the sung game *Pfukumbwe*, namely its diction, should not be passed over. Some remarks about it will serve to introduce the second type of *ndyaringo* which has been identified on the basis of its content, namely that dealing with striking and memorable adventures or experiences. In the children's game the solo lines consist of ideophonic phrases, the ideophones all being derived from verb radicals. For example the ideophone *tsvagei* (seeking) in verse 1 is derived from the verb radical */-tsvag-/* (seek). The responses are of two kinds, and it is interesting to note that the choice is determined by a purely structural clue. Where the solo line consists of a full ideophonic phrase, that is ideophone and complement, we have the response, 'Haiya' followed by the complement repeated:

| Tsvagei gombo      | Haiya, gombo          |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| (Looking for a new | (Oh yes, a new field) |
| field)             | · · · · ·             |

Where, however, the solo line consists of an incomplete ideophonic phrase, that is ideophone less complement, the response consists of a verbal participial inflection of the verb radical from which the ideophone was derived:

| Dunhurci               | Tichidunhurawo    |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| (Clearing, that is the | (lit. We clearing |
| bushes)                | them too)         |

Virtuosity in the use of language, particularly constructions based on the ideophone phrase, is a general feature of *ndyaringo*, and one of its attractions to a knowledgeable, experienced and appreciative audience. It is perhaps particularly noticeable in *ndyaringo* which

Pakarepo chimvuramabwe chakatanga kudonha,

10 Chichiita samazaya echando.

Aiona aiti mheno arì kudonhedza mabwe pasi.

Vaiva musango vaingoti nhasi zvatiwana. Kumusha magonhi akaita seachataura, Chamuzari muzari kuti zari,

15 Chamuhuva muhuva kuti huva-a.

Chiteerera unzwe pfuti yaNyadenga zvoyoita, Asi kungova kamutogo mutogo kuti togo, Kamupovo mupovo kuti povo, Kamuvaku muvaku kuti vaku,

20 Kamuputi muputi kuti puti, Kamuchenyu muchenyu kuti chenyu, Kamutsemu mutsemu kuti tsemu, Kamubari mubari kuti bari, Kamupwati mupwati kuti pwati. deal with exciting adventures and memorable experiences. These are described in all their particularity, an aspect which ideophonic speech is admirably suited to convey. Ideophones strive to capture, within an evoking verbal image, unique and particular states and actions. They aim at doing justice to the characteristic activity of an object in its concrete speciality. They strive to be, in as faithful a way as the speaker can make them, counters of the unique event, and capable of elicting, in the mind and imagination of the hearers. an answering image characterised by clarity and vividness. Thus their purely semantic content is reinforced and particularised by expressive features of stress, tone and length, as well as by facial and manual gestures. Their use is also an index of a speaker's emotional involvement in his subject. All in all, these features are aspects of a special dramatic style which exploits the co-operative potentialities of the ideophonic phrase, and for which the ndyaringo forms a culturally developed frame.

Examples of the second type of *ndyaringo* under study at this stage are provided by both the authors cited, Hodza has a poem of a storm *Mazauone aNyadenga* (The wonders of the Lord of Heaven), of which the following is a section:

Suddenly the rain began to fall in hailstones, Like pieces of frozen ice.

- Those who saw it thought someone was throwing down stones.
- Those who were in the veld thought that their time had come.
- At home doors seemed to be speaking their mind,
- Such a shutting, shutting everywhere,
- Such a slamming, each echoed the others' slam.

Listen to the cannon of the Lord of Heaven, Such a sequence of claps, one clap after the other,

Rumble after rumble across the heavens, Flash followed by lightning flash,

Muttering answering dispersed muttering,

Glimmering cast by dispersed coruscation.

Then splitting crack upon crack,

Burst upon burst of sound,

Crash upon crash in the heavens.

As in the earlier examples quoted, we have here a sequence closely matching the steps in the development of the storm and expressed by a series of expressions closely parallel and repetitive in construction. There is also an evident boisterous delight in word-play, the successive nominals constructed and struck off the anvil of creation as each piece of ideophonic raw material is fitted into the mould:

e.g. Kamuvaku muvaku (lightning flashing here and there) (12)

ср. vaku (flashing)

Ndainge ndiri ishe zvake, muzvinanyika, Ndiri ndoga chikara kubva kudoro. Chakanga chakandikiya kuti shwe, Hwahwa hwaVaMuchikuye chipanda.

5 Ndaingunotsika matama enzira kudzadzarîka

Svikei mugota mangu susururu,

Rupasa rwangu chee, gumbeze pamusoro wazviona !

Hope dzikati tasvikawo, changamire! Hezvi ndava mungoro yavashakabvu chinyeponyepo.

This stanza exemplifies the combination of verbal and ideophonic constructions which is typical of the narrative style of *ndyaringo*. The setting, both local and temporal, is provided verbally but, when the action starts, ideophones, ideophonic phrases, and ideophonic equivalents appear and carry the narrative forward.

In 1. 3 an infinitive ideophonic phrase, kuti shwe (to tie tightly), is used descriptively as a complement to the verbal construction chakanga chakandikiya (it had locked me up). In 1. 5 the vivid kudzadzarika (to stagger), a derivative of the ideophone dzadzara dzadzara (staggering), is used. Two ideophonic phrases follow in quick succession. Svikei mugota mangu susururu (lit. arriving fuddled inside my bachelor hut), and Rupasa rwangu che-e (lit. spreading out my sleeping mat). Now two ideophonic equivalents, formed out of direct speech, are used to continue, but vary, the vivid narrative. In the phrase gumbeze pamusoro wazviona (lit. blanket over the head — or, on top — you have seen it), the blanket is reminded of the work it was bought to do, and thus, in the narrative, Word-play has been singled out as the characteristic content of the fourth type of *ndyaringo*. As a stylistic device it is found in all types, enjoyed quite as much by the *nyanduri* who provides thereby a display of verbal artistry, as by his audience.

Hamutyinei has an account of a convivial bachelor who, on going to sleep, woke to find that he was sharing his bed with a snake. The opening stanza captures the unsuspecting, convivial mood of the hero, narrated in the first person.

I was a king, and lord of the land,

- Alone in the world, on my merry way back from beer.
- A pot of the brew of Mistress Grind-meal Had locked me in and tied me up tight
- inside.
- Staggering along, from one side of the path to the other,
- I came to my hut and entered fuddled inside. Spread out my mat! "Blanket over me,
- now do your job !" Sleep cried, "I've come along too, my lord !"
- And so I was off, as a hearse takes a dear departed.<sup>7</sup>

it is implied that it did do so. Hence sleep comes. Its action, introduced by the auxiliary verb radical /-ti/, is conveyed by the use of the 1st person principal recent past inflection of /-svik-/ (arrive). This is a common ideophonic substitute or equivalent, in the sense that it is a constituent occurring in the same constructions as ideophones and ideophone phrases:

e.g. Hope dzikati tasvikawo

(lit. And sleep said we have come too; viz. and sleep came too)

cp. hope dzikati svikei (and sleep came)

The final line of the stanza is a verbal construction and expresses a fantasy, another of the stylistic features of the *ndyaringo*. *Gudziramukanwa* and *zvizukuru* appear to require the fuller apparatus of verbal constructions, rather than ideophonic, for their effect. Other examples in the stanza are 1. 3, *Chipanda chakanga chakandikiya* (the beer pot had turned the key on me), and 1. 5, *Ndaingunotsika matama enzira* (lit. all the while I was treading the cheeks of the path). The constructions which provide the *nyanduri* with the linguistic flexibility for his virtuosity are those which are built upon the auxiliary verb |-ti| and its various complements. The following *ndyaringo* by Hodza entitled *Chino-kuvadza hachiyambire* (What hurts you gives no warning) will exemplify this feature as well

Ndakati ndaibatira padenga hombororo yedamba,

Rakati naiwoyo musi zuva ropisa chipande, Ndokuenda kurwizi kunozviponora. Ndakati ndapedza kuzviponora,

5 Ndakazoti ndochiti cheu, Ndokuona mutamba nechokumabvazuva. Pana iyoyi nhambwe, zuva rakanga rorereka. Mutamba waiva namatamba mambishi,

Iwo wakangoti goyo goyo nawo matamba. 10 Ndakati, 'Nhasi Mariga akombora',

Ndokukurumura rimwe chete, ndokuridya.

Kuzoti zuva rogara miti, Ndokupinda mune yangu nzira. Kuzoti rondodya mbira,

15 Ndokutanga kudzengedzeka sendanwa ngoto.

Kuzoti rondoti mumakanda kwetsvere, Ndakaona changu chisina akamboona. Irwo rwava rufura-mhembwe Ndokutanga naro kudapa kurutsa,

20 Nomwoyo ukabva wali tikibvu kuneta. Ndotarisa, ndokuona kuti gore rawa.

Vakazosara vouya vana-rubvunza-vaeni, Rukunzvi-kunzvi, vana-hope dzechibvamundiro.

Kuzoti pakati pousiku nazvose zvomurirakamwe,

25 Jongwe rechipiri, nerechitatu, pane rechina, Ini ndakanga ndototsvaira marinda navamwe.

Mukanga-nyama wese, handina kuuziva. Mwedzi nehweva zvikati zvanyn'ura, Nyamatsatse ikati yabuda, utonga tsvu-u.

30 Huku neshiri dzomarira-kwedza dzikati dzudavidzana,

Zuva vhu-u, ini ndokutanga kuzivawo.

as all the others which have been mentioned so far as characterising this genre, segmentation, parallelism, ideophonic constructions and the use of hyperbole and fantasy. It describes the painful experience of poisoning as a result of an unwary act of eating an unripe *damba* (klapper apple):

The time when I reached, thoughtlessly, for the poisonous klapper apple,

On that very day when the sun was burning overhead,

I went to the river to douse myself down. When I had finished bathing,

I turned around,

And saw the klapper apple tree to the east. At that time, the sun was about to descend. The fruit tree had many unripe apples,

It was covered all over with hanging apples.

- I thought, 'Providence has blessed me today',
- And I plucked one, only one, and ate it.
- When the sun had reached the level of the trees,
- f started on my journey.
- At the time when it seeks out the dassies,
- I began to stagger as if I had drunk strong beer.
- When the sun was about to sink into its skins,
- I encountered my trials, something never experienced before.
- At the time when the duikers graze

My trouble started, a prolonged retching and vomiting,

And my heart felt quite strengthless within me.

I realised that my last hour had come.

The succession of times passed over me, the time when the strangers ask.

- Dusk and the time of the sleep that comes after dinner.
- Then as for the middle of the night and the first cock-crow,
- The second, the third, and at the fourth,
- I was just sweeping the graves with the other dead.
- The time when hunters slip away quite passed me by.
- The moon and her attendant star sank out of view,

And the morning star rose with the rosy flush of dawn.

Kuzoti rorova gotsi, chikara ndikati, 'Ndotora mbuva!' Vhara vhazhu, mukono uno.

Vedu we-e, kukurukura hunge wapotswa. 35 Mushayo wandakatukwa handiutsike,

Zvinokonzera nhonho mutsoka. Kufa hakufiranwe, Negorgwo hazizi nakabwa rimwe

Negorewo harizi pakabva rimwe.

In this recital there are five separate types of construction involving the auxiliary /-ti/. An analysis of the poem from this aspect will show the underlying structure which supports the lively narrative style.

- (1) There is first the use of */-ti/* with participial complement:
  - e.g. 1.1 : Ndakati ndaibatira padenga hombororo yedamba (That time when I reached out, without thinking, for the poisonous klapper apple)
    - 1.4 : Ndakati ndapedza kuzviponora (That time when I finished dousing myself down)

The construction has a two-fold function, (i) to introduce a following clause, and (ii) to indicate the time and circumstances under which the action of the following clause occurs. The verbal inflection of the clause which is introduced is usually principal, though it is in consecutive position:

e.g. Takati tapedza kudira hwahwa, takatora musumo, toenda nawo kudare (We then having finished, viz. When we had finished pouring out the beer, we took the ceremonial first pot, and went to the meeting place with it)

Normally after first clauses with other verbal radicals as nuclei, inflections in subsequent clauses are consecutive.

cp. Takapedza kudira hwahwa, tikatora musumo, toenda nawo kudare (We finished pouring out the beer, and The fowls and birds at the dawning cry began to answer each other,

- Up came the sun and I came to my senses too.
- At the time when its rays strike the back of the head, the survivor thought,
- 'I'll take some food.' So up I got and sat apart, feeling a man again.

Brothers, only survivors tell tales.

At a place where I was ill-treated I never set foot again.

It gives one callouses under one's feet.

No one can experience death for another,

And a year never comes from the same place twice.

we took the ceremonial first pot, and went to the meeting place with it)

In the first stanza 1.1 is a clause, introductory in the sense explained, to II.2 and 3; and 1.2, which is an introductory clause of the same structure as 1. 1, is introductory to 1. 3. L1 4-6 are parallel in construction to II. 1-3.

The introductory clause with auxiliary *[-ti]* is often infinitively inflected, and this is so in this *ndyaringo* in which the steps of the action are linked to the stages of the sun's progress. *Kuzoti* followed by the appropriate participial complement is the basis for initial linking of successive lines indicating successive times in parallel fashion. Thus:

- 1.12 : Kuzoti zuva rogara miti (When the sun is about to rest on the trees, has reached tree-top, about 4 p.m.)
- 1.14 : Kuzoti rondodya-mbira (When the sun is about to pursue the rock-rabbits, about 5 p.m.)
- 1.16 : Kuzoti rondoti mumakanda kwetsvere (When the sun is entering its skin bag [in which it will be kept], sunset)
- 1.24 : Kuzoti pakati pousiku (At the middle of the night)
- 1.32 : Kuzoti rorova gotsi (When it [viz. the sun] starts to be felt at the back of one's head)

Of the couplets formed by these introductory clauses and their sequels, II. 12-13 are closely parallel to II. 14-15 and slightly less so to II. 16-17. Thus the narrative advances by successive stages set out in parallel wise.

- (2) The second constructional type incorporating auxiliary /-ti/ which occurs in this poem is that in which /-ti/ introduces an ideophone or ideophonic phrase as complement:
  - e.g. 1.5 : *ndochiti* cheu (now let me turn around)
  - cp. 1.9 : *Iwo wakangoti* goyo goyo nawo (it was covered all over with pendant fruit)
    - 1.16: rondoti mumakanda kwetsvere (about to sink into its skins)
    - 1.20: Nomwoyo ukabva wati tikibvu (And my heart felt quite strengthless within me)

Elsewhere ideophone prases occur independently of introductory /-*ti*/,

- viz. 1.29 : *utonga tsvu-u* (the dawn reddened)
  - 1.31 : zuva vhu-u (the sun came up)
  - 1.33 : vhara vhazhu
    - (up I got and sat down apart)
- (3) In the third constructional type /-ti/ introduces speech or thought, the actual words in which these are expressed appearing as a complement:
  - e.g. 1.10 : Ndakati, 'Nhasi Mariga akombora' (I said, 'Providence has blessed me today')
  - cp. 1.33 : chikara ndikati, 'Ndatora mbuva !' (feeling better I thought, 'I'll take some food')

In the discussion of Hamutyinei's 'Zvinyoka mugumbeze' it was stated that I and II person forms may function as ideophonic equivalents, and it appears that the relationship between introductory |-ti| and ideophonic phrases is analogous to that between introductory |-ti| and direct speech or quotations.

(4) In a fourth construction auxiliary or introductory */ti-/* is a co-constituent with principal sentences and clauses. Normally this construction is infinitively inflected and the infinitive inflected auxiliary and phrase then occurs in substantival positions:

- e.g. 1.21 : ndokuona kuti gore rawa (and [I] saw that the sky had fallen, viz. that my last hour had come)
- (5) In other places in this poem the combination of introductory *[-ti]* and principal inflected verbs is consecutively inflected:
  - e.g. 1.28 : Mwedzi nehweva zvikati zvanyn'ura (The moon and her attendant star sank out of view)
    - 1.29 : Nyamatsatse ikati yabuda (The morning star rose)
    - 1.30 : Huku neshiri dzomarira-kwedza dzikati dzadavidzana (The fowls and birds of the dawn began to call to each other)

These examples are probably instances, again, of principal verbs being used as ideophonic equivalents, albeit they are III person inflections. They are given a certain prominence within the course of the narrative which would be lacking if not so introduced:

e.g. 1.28 : Mwedzi nehweva zvikati zvanyn'ura (And what happened nex

(And what happened next was that the moon and her attendant star sank out of view)

cp. Mwedzi nehweva zvikanyn'ura (And the moon and her attendant star sank out of view)

This is a device, then, for drawing attention to the sequence of events, or to events as consequences.

Greater immediacy and vividness is achieved by inflecting these principal verbs introduced by *|-ti|* so that they appear to be spoken by the agents concerned:

e.g. hope dzikati, 'Tasvikawo' (and then sleep came along too) hosha ikati, 'Ndakura' (and the sickness grew worse; lit. it said, 'I have grown big')

Here a contribution is made to the dramatic style of the *ndyaringo* by personification and by action being conveyed as if by speech. There is also a strong element of word play.

- e.g. nzara nenyota zvikati, 'Ko watikanganwa? Tinewe. Tiri tese. Handei !' (and hunger and thirst made themselves felt as he went on; lit. and hunger and thirst said, 'Have you forgotten us? We are with you. We are all together. Let's go !')
- (6) In a final construction in which /-ti/ is auxiliary the verbal complement is a subjunctive inflected verb phrase. In this construction, which is not exemplified in this poem though it belongs to the series of stylistic devices appropriate to the *ndyaringo* style, an action is conveyed as desired and attempted. The attempt so described is normally unsuccessful, and attended with frustration:
  - e.g. Shumba yakati, Nditobata, mudzimu ukati, Kwete hazviitike (The lion tried to seize him but his guardian ancestral spirit interposed: lit. 'Let me just take hold', but the spirit said, 'No, it is not to be')

In this construction there is the same range of choice between third person inflections indicating (attempted) action and the inflection of direct speech used to introduce greater dramatic vividness:

c.g. Shumba yakati itobata (The lion tried to seize (its victim))

'Chinokuvadza hachiyambire' provides, then, a splendid example of a range of narrative stylistic devices used in *ndyaringo* and based on the auxiliary verb /-ti/. As pointed out it also illustrates the devices of segmentation and parallelism, the use of ideophonic phrases, and the use of exaggerated conceits which have emerged from the study of other examples. Two other features also characteristic of *ndyaringo* must be pointed out before we leave this poem.

The first is personification. The term has already been used in the description of certain kinds of verbal complements of */-ti/* whereby action is rendered more immediately and vividly. Here the term is applied to the personification of things and abstractions in order to make them agents in a story and so raise its dramatic potential. In the poem 'Chinokuvadza' this device comes in briefly in the third stanza to personify the times of the evening which come and go while the victim of the fruit-poisoning is unconcious. These are *rubvunza-vaeni* (the time when strangers ask for shelter) (11), *rukunzvi-kunzvi* (dusk) (11) and hope *dzechibva-mundiro* (the sleep that comes after dinner) (10,9) Normally of classes 11 and 10,9, these nominal constructions are transformed into class 1a nominals which normally indicate persons. The signals of this transformation are the use of class 2 subject concords and the changes of tone pattern which follow from the prefixing of the pluralising relative inflection *vana*- (lit. those who are with).

Thus, vaná-rubvúnza-vaeni (early evening and the other times) vaná-hope dzechíbva-mundiro (late evening and its companions) cp. vaná-babá

(father and his companions)

The second feature which should be pointed out is the conclusion, quite as much a stylistic feature of the *ndyaringo* as the exaggerated fancies, the ideophonic diction, the segmentation of the experience, and its setting out in a series of steps with parallel phrasing. The experience is summed up at the end in one or more proverbial sayings. It is not that the moral saws are drawn from the experience so much as that the experience is seen to verify and confirm them:

| e.g. | 1.34 | ; | Kukurukura hunge wapotswa            |
|------|------|---|--------------------------------------|
| -    |      |   | (lit. To tell a tale is to have been |
|      |      |   | missed (by death or by a missile))   |
|      | 1.37 | : | Kuta hakufiranwe                     |

(No one else can die on your behalf)

The form of the final proverb in 1.38 is usually given as follows,

Gore harizi pakaza rimwe (A year never comes from where another year comes)

The last two proverbs mean that experience is incommunicable.

In some *ndyaringo* the element of instruction is prominent and the recital is made in order to convey a warning or a chiding in an allusive, indirect way, or to strengthen proper attitudes. Hamutyinei has a delightfully tender poem devoted to his grandmother, 'Havachagoni mbuya vangu' (My grandmother cannot manage any more) which is devoted to her own strengthless condition after a lifetime of work. It uses the title as a constant refrain upon which a division of the poem into stanzas is made to

Yaisiva nyanzvi yechimbo nejerusarema. Vainge vachidadisa nenyora dzavo dzamasvunuríra.

Yainge mhandara singwi nehuhwa yavo Asi zvino huhwa yakasendekwa murukuva, Yangova nhumbi yamirira vadyi venhaka; Kwave kusakara kwedovo serisakambo-

dyiwe nyama.

Kwavari idzi dzangova ngano chete. Zoro rava redu kupa mbuya rukudzo. Pataichema usiku paucheche ivo vaishaya hope,

Patairwara valtirurira mishonga inovava. Ko, zvino ndovaitireiko mbuya vangu? Ndoda kuvapa gumbeze rina magambamagamba,

Vachigozoenda zvavo kunyikadzimu, Nyika isina kana mheremhere, Nokuti havachagoni mbuya vangu.

Published examples of these narrative ndyaringo by our poets include the following. Hodza describes the experiences of a n'anga (diviner) who is diagnosing a case of revenge by an angry spirit.<sup>9</sup> Hamutyinei in 'Ngozi yerombe'10 describes the murder of a beggar and the return of his spirit in vengeance. The moral in both these pieces is Mushonga wengozi kuripa (the remedy against a vengeful spirit is compensation). Other pieces by Hamutyinei are 'Pfumo renyuchi', an attack by a swarm of bees; 'Wava musoro', the fate of a young woman dragged to her death by a crocodile; and 'Ganyamuto'," a leopard hunt, Hamutyinei's poems are excellent examples of ndyaringo adapted for reading. The liveliness and verbal art of the oral prototypes is maintained in his vivid descriptions and dramatic presentations. The same devices which command attention in the oral genre are maintained here. a brief graphic outline of the setting, a sustained taut narrative consisting of a succession of clear individual pictures recreating the event, characterisation conveyed by praise-names and rest. Thus its form is influenced by the requirements of the written medium of eye-language, but enough of its oral character remains to leave it recognisably a *ndyaringo* with a message for the young.

She used to be a wonderful singer and dancer,

She used to be so proud of her beautymarks cut on each cheek.

She was just like a gir!, with her dancing axe, But now her axe leans against the wall,

Just an article waiting for a new owner;

As with a worn-out kaross,

No one would dream its meat was once enjoyed.

To her these things are just so many stories.

Our turn now to honour our grandmother. When we cried as babies in the night, she

- lost her sleep, When we were sick, she moistened the bitter medicines in her mouth.
- So now, what will I do for my grandmother?
- I want to give her a blanket with bright patterns,

As she goes her way to the ancestral country, The country where there is no outcry,

Because my grandmother cannot manage any longer.<sup>s</sup>

blame-names; humour, grim or hilarious according to the mood and subject of the poem; and the brief summing up of experience at the end. Such poems demand a very great command of language, responsive in all the dimensions required to express a sensibility as vibrantly alive as if the speaker were an actor in the action he is narrating. This sensibility is more poetically creative, however, than a running commentary upon a present event would be. Assimilation of the event is necessary before the creative sensibility of the poet, schooled in the traditional devices of the genre, can bring forth such an evocation which is at once faithful to the traditional genre and faithful both as a whole and in the articulation of its parts, to the original event.

The other subtypes of *ndyaringo*, concerned respectively with fantasy, word play and satire. can be described more briefly since they exhibit, on the whole, the same stylistic devices as have emerged from those dealing with cultural institutions and adventures and experiences. In the third type, dealing with fantasy, items of folklore find a congenial setting. The subject is frequently a description of a dream. Hodza has composed several which exemplify this category. <sup>12</sup> For example 'Mashura namashiripiti' (Omens and wonders) describes the abduction of a hunter by a nzuzu (water sprite), and the means, mainly music and dance, taken by his neighbours to recover him from the bottom of the pool to which he had been taken.

'Rima rerufu' (The darkness of death) describes a storm which followed upon a warning and frightening omen, and which plunged everything into darkness. 'Pane nhamo hapabye dzimwe' (lit. Where there is one trouble, other troubles do not go away) describes a series of fantastical experiences, one following upon another. The series, which does not appear to have any logical or causal connection, ends with a piece of nonsense: 'Crying for the liver of a fly which took four men to lift it, the fifth having gone off to the leaves.' In 'Ndoda kushereketa' (Now I want to play the fool)'13 Hodza gives a version of the well-known ndvaringo called Biriviri. The poem describes a series of incidents and experiences, somewhat similar in spirit to those in 'Pane nhamo hapabve dzimwe', but the treatment adds the formal device similar to that in the English nursery rhyme 'The House That Jack Built', whereby the treatment of each step concludes with a rhythmic mention of each of the preceding steps, but in reverse order.

The only *ndyaringo* by Hamutyinei which appears to conform to this subtype is 'Mazikope eguti' (Deep sleep during a time of drizzle).<sup>14</sup> The content of this poem consists of a series of dreams which end amusingly as the poet awakes to find himself late for work. The dreams are meant to be diverting as well as satirical. One describes his behaviour after he has won a lottery, and another his predicament at the gate of heaven:

Suo raizarurirwa zvirema namapofu chete. Vana vaduku vaikwana napamaburi nyore nyore

- (The gate was opened only to the crippled and the blind.
- Little children could easily slip through the chinks)

In the fourth type the element of word play appears to be uppermost. By word play here is not meant artistry or skill in the choice and arrangement of words and constructions in the service of meaning. Evidence of this facility and felicity in the use of language has already been provided. Rather is meant the creation of a piece which is based upon word play as a technical device. Hodza gives an example of a poem which describes the antics of some crows around a sleeping man. The sequence is developed partly through imitation of their cawing, an imitation performed through the use of suitable Shona words. This is a pastime which was a favourite among herdboys who devised pieces to suit the distinctive cries and songs of other birds as well. The device is also in use by storytellers who imitate animal traits by simulated speech made conformable to their supposed characters. In addition animals are sometimes made to lisp when speaking in stories.

This subtype of *ndyirango* is suited more to childish performances and audiences than the others. Thus children play with the names of the numbers in order to make up what are to them intriguing verses:

- Chiposhi : Ndochakapotswa mhembwe, ikafura nemusi usi wayo
- (One) (That was when the duiker was missed, and it grazed on a day it was not supposed to)
- Chipiri : Ndochakapikirana vakuru padare, mhosya ikaswera iri dembetembe
- (Two) (That was when the elders took oaths in disagreement, and the case was not decided)
- Chitatu : Ndochakatatuka mbira mugomo, ikabuda isina muswe
- (Three) (That was when the rock-rabbit jumped from the rock and came out without a tail)

However, puns and puzzles are used as the point of adult verses as well, showing that, in this subtype too, there is continuity between the word games of children and those of adults. Hamutyinci has an intriguing poem entitled 'Chidyamafuta asingakori' (An eater of fat that does not get fat).<sup>15</sup> This character is the first to be considered whenever there is meat to be eaten. No one else can eat in his absence. The piece is a *ndyaringo* in the form of a boast and is in fact an extended riddle to which the answer is 'A knife'. Finally there are the pieces with satirical barbs devised to lodge in the consciences of those to whom they apply. Hamutyinei has two very telling pieces of this sort. In the first,

Iwe muromo wangu, iwe, Ndiwe mapedzapſuma, mandiurayisa. Unondiparira masakandibayiwe. Mazwi aunobudisa ane uchi nenduru.

5 Unotaura ndisati ndazeya seiko? Muromo wangu uri mharadzamusasa. Ndichakusona zvangu, doro ndikanwa nenzeve.

The device used here is personification maintained through the use of apt 'blame' names, and a plausible tone of aggrieved complaint. There is wit in the conceits of ll.5 and 7 and in the attempt, a pretence purposely transparent, to shift the speaker's failings on to his tongue. The piece is aimed at a wider audience than the author's mouth, however. He blames himself with impunity for faults which, as he describes them, may in reality belong to others, and he trusts that the cap will be seen to be worn by him whom it fits best.

In a second piece 'Vakachenjera vanoti, "Zvipei doro" ' (The wily ones say, 'Give them beer')<sup>17</sup> Hamutyinei instances, in parallel form, case after case in which beer is used to calm troublesome characters, as well as to undermine happiness and goodness by the evilly disposed. While it deals pertinently enough with the surface facts, discerning readers claim to see in the poem a criticism of the practise of providing beer halls in the African townships.

In these pieces the poet's intention is conveyed by the use of *madimikira*, by figurative language and indirection. There is no call for vivid ideophonic presentation, and so the clauses and sentences are verbal. In fact the poems of this last subtype verge on the province of the *nhango* and are called *ndyaringo dzokuraya* (entertainment for instruction).

# NHANGO

This is a convenient place to move to a consideration of *nhango*, the genre of didactic

'Wangu muromo ndimandiurayisa' (My mouth is my worst enemy), he personifies his mouth in order to accuse it of all the faults of which he is guilty:

You, my mouth, yes you !

- You destroyer of my goods, my mortal enemy.
- You sin in my despite, you get me stabbed. The words you let fall have honey in them.
- and gall. Why do you speak before I have chewed them over?
- My mouth, you are the enemy of amity.
- I shall sew you up and drink beer through my ears.<sup>16</sup>

poems in Shona. The word nhango may be related to the verb radical /-rang-/ (instruct, teach, correct), a radical close in meaning to /-ray-/. A nominal more closely related to /-rang-/ is chirango, pl. zvirango, customs or observances which symbolise right attitudes of mind and reflect an awareness of right social relationships. Thus zvirango zvehwahwa are customary polite observances which regulate the serving out, in the right order, of the cups and ladles of beer. The passive /-rang-w-/ in-dicates the reception of instruction by youths and maidens prior to marriage. Nhango dzinopa munhu kuti ange arangwa (Didactive verse enables a person to be instructed). Nhango are sometimes known as nhango dzepadare (didactic poems for the council place). This does not mean that the delivery of nhango is limited to the dare but that the delivery of nhango from an elder to a junior creates an occasion for the giving of counsel. Another term employed is nhango dzepadumba; and this use of dumba, which refers to a small temporary shelter used to guard crops in a field, indicates moral instructions of a more private kind, for example that given by a paternal aunt to a niece.

J. Haasbroek has given a number of examples of *nhango* in articles in the weekly newspaper *Moto* which form part of a general discussion of Shona traditional poetry.<sup>10</sup> His examples show *nhango* being recited by *madzisekuru* (maternal uncles) to their nephews, and by *madzitete* (paternal aunts) to their nieces. He also gives examples of *nhango* by elder brothers or sisters to juniors, and by ritual friends (*madzisahwira*) and personal friends (*shamwari*) to one another. Hodza describes *nhango* in the Introduction to his collections of traditional poetry:

These didactic poems which contained so much of value for the lives of those to whom they were addressed were spoken by *madzisekuru* to their *vazukuru* (nephews). The nephews would thus be given guidance about adult life within the family, principles of customary law, as well as training in the formation of sound judgement on domestic, local, and tribal affairs. This moral education was absorbed particularly on the occasions when the boys and young men were present at the daily discussions of village and district affairs at the family council place.

To madzimbuya (the wives of madzisekuru) and madzitete belonged the considerable responsibility of instructing and teaching their vazukuru (nieces) the proper conduct of a wife in the home in regard to her husband, and the proper care of her children and household property. Long ago this task of instructing the daughters of each clan fell particularly upon the monga (a clanswoman standing in the relation of sister to the head of the clan, and who was also entrusted with the clan's charms and protective medicines).

Nhango are utterances full of insight and knowledge of the traditional conception of manhood and womanhood. Madzisekuru, madzimbuya and madzitete were the traditional councillors of their nephews and nieces. If the young people failed in any

#### MUKADZI MWOTO Chawanzwa usaudze mukadzi !

Mukadzi mwoto. Unofuma wokupisa.

Mukadzi imbwa irere. Ukaimutsira kudya inokuruma.

5 Mwoyo wemukadzi ndimasadaguke. Kufunga kwake hakuna nharo ndefu. Mwoyo wake unopinduka-pinduka serwaivhi.

Mukadzi inyoka yemvumbi Inogona kugara mumba sechipfuyo.

10 Asi, musi unosvika twayo, Inhemerakurasa, nyoka yenzayo. way to come up to expectation, particularly in behaviour relating to courtship, marriage and the family, their lapses would be taken as reflecting adversely upon the moral training they had, or had not, been given. For example, in the case of a sluttish bride, people would say 'She eloped while the old men and women were at the work- and beer-party.' Nowadays they say, 'She came while her elders were away at church.'

*Nhango* forewarn people about the evils which may befall them. The matters treated in *nhango dzepadare* are so numerous that the writing of them down would never come to an end.<sup>19</sup>

*Nhango* lend themselves to writing better than *ndyaringo* since they are delivered in a more neutral verbal style than the highly coloured narratives, and rely for their effect more on a reflective use of proverbs and apt metaphors than on ideophones with their frequent recourse to expressive and imitative features. Writers who have published *nhango* include Hodza,<sup>20</sup> from whose work we shall largely quote, Kumbirai,<sup>21</sup> and Haasbroek.<sup>22</sup>

'Mukadzi mwoto' (Woman is a fire) will provide a good example of the stylistic qualities of *nhango*. It is a widely known piece which seeks to instruct and forewarn men about the limitations of women. Like the proverbs for which *nhango* form a setting, and which may be very one-sided in their views, this poem presents a biased and partial opinion<sup>23</sup> In Hodza's version it runs as follows.

## WOMAN IS A FIRE

What you hear never tell a woman !

Woman is a fire. It will burn you first thing in the morning.

Woman is a sleeping dog. It bites you when you rouse it for its food.

The heart of a woman is change itself. Her thought has no deep dimensions. Her heart keeps changing like a chameleon.

Woman is a drowsy adder Kept in a house as if domesticated. But the day its anger is aroused. It kills for killing's sake like a mamba. Mukadzi inda inoruma akaitakura. Mukanwa make makapfavira kutana Kunge nyama yemusoro wemombe.

15 Zviri muhana make mutoro Unokunda gomo ripi neripi.

Mukadzi rwiyo rwusina kwarwo. Uimbe wafa; urege wafa.

Zvinobuda mune wake muromo zvifadzawafa.

20 Ungadzikaniise mwoyo uchiti ndomazvo, Usingazive kuti wananga mutome.

Front-linking and parallelism are features of this poem. The linking element is the word mukadzi, the subject of the poem. It is also the grammatical subject of a series of substantival clauses, namely those in II. 2, 3, 8, 12 and 17. In 1.5 there is a slight departure from this rhythmical repetition in that the subject is inwoyo womukadzi (the heart of a woman). In these clauses the character of woman is described in a series of images. She is fire, a sleeping dog, a drowsy adder, a louse which bites its host, a song impossible to sing. These images and their developments result in the poem being, in the main, a series of stanzas, parallel in construction and meaning. The poem ends with the correspondence between stanzas having passed to those commencing with ll. 15 and 19, Zviri muhana make (the things on her mind) and Zvinobuda mune wake muromo (the things that come from her mouth).

This is a polished piece of verse in which the formal poetic devices play a major part in making it didactically effective. The images reinforce each other cumulatively by being marshalled and deployed rhythmically in corresponding positions in the stanzas. The poem is an excellent example of the kind of repetition most favoured in Shona poetry. Mere verbal repetition is kept down to an indispensable minimum, namely the repetition of the initial linking element mukadzi. More important is the repetition of phrase structures and the semantic relationships between constituent parts of the phrases. It is seemingly in these more abstract aspects of the repetition that Shona poets delight. Their control of the form is achieved also in combination with freedom to depart from Woman is a louse that bites its bearer. Her mouth seeming soft but tough within Like the meat on the head of a cow.

The thoughts in her mind are burdensome, Heavier than any hill to bear.

- Woman is a song one can't get right. If you sing you're wrong; if you don't you're wrong.
- Her kind words come when expedient like respect shown to the dead.
- You may calm your heart thinking you are secure,
- Unaware that you are being led astray.

the recurrent pattern whenever a local development is required.

The poem helps us to recognise a certain sententious *nhango* style which derives from the proverb, just as that of the animated *ndyaringo* style derives from the ideophonic clause. There are no proverbs, strictly speaking, in 'Mukadzi mwoto', but the stanzas to whose correspondence we have drawn attention are proverbial in style, both in regard to their structure and their diction. Shona proverbs often fall into two balancing halves, a tantalising or teasing opening, which leaves the mind in enquiry or suspense, followed by a conclusion which resolves the puzzle and brings illumination:

e.g. Muroyi munhu. Kubayiwa anochemawo. (A sorcerer is human. When he is stabbed he cries like anyone else)<sup>24</sup>

The opening half is often, as in the example quoted, in the form of a substantival, non-verbal clause, while the concluding half is verbal in structure. These structural features, as well as the metaphorical diction, can be observed in the verses formed by 11. 2, 3-4, 5-7, 8-11, 12-14, 15-16, 17-18, 19-21. These stanzas are not as succinct as proverbs, but they reflect and extend the proverbial style into the *nhango*.

Nhango deal with the whole of life under its more serious aspects as the field of moral and responsible choice, of moral dangers and of moral good and evil. The pieces vary in generality, and the height from which life is viewed. Thus, in descending order, we find *nhango* which (1) are statements of general principles or truths drawn from experience. These are more pragmatic than abstract. We find as well (2) critical commentaries on current mores and (3) exhortations, instructions and warnings peculiar to the different sexes and age groups.

The term *nhango* is also applied to utterances which are not didactic, such as the rhythmic dialogues in which elders communicate to one another their views on current problems or important items of news; or the exchange of greetings called *mamuko*, addressed to elders by a visitor making a call, or just passing by a homestead. The reason for the term being applied to these pieces of traditional rhetoric is that they are an expression of the proper, stylised use of language required between

Nhamo haisarudze kuti youya Kana youya, inouya naambuya vayo vose.

Nhamo haina muzivi kana gamba, Nenyikawo haina mupfumi kana murombo.

5 Nyika chisukukuviri, haina wayo. Nhamo ndimutemagaga, nyoka yemvumbi Inoruma nemiti yose kana yatsamwa.

Ll. 1-2 are cross-linked which allow a development in 1.2 of the thought broached in 1.1.<sup>26</sup> Ll. 3-4 and 5-6 are two verses formed by parallelism, the latter having an additional cross-linked line in which the indiscriminate and unpredictable attack of the adder, figure of misfortune, is graphically developed.

Kufa kuri nani tigozororawo zvakaita vamwe. Nyika nhasi yangova rufuse rusingapore. Muri kumarinda pasi pevhu

pamakafugidzwa, Mune rugare rusina kana ani achafema. Vakafa mose makazorora musaricheme.

Vari kutsi kwaro ivhu vari kudya nhaka yavo

Kusina ani anofema anondokwatako.

persons of standing and authority. Such verbal skills are not taught as such. They can only be acquired by listening to the old people and, in being learned, they implant right attitudes and sentiments. These *nhango* may be compared to the *zvirango*, referred to earlier, which are the forms of behaviour appropriate to an institution, which reflect right social attitudes and sentiments, for example the order observed in serving the first ladles of beer from a pot.

A good example of a general statement of experience is provided by the poem '*Nhamo haisarudze*' (Trouble does not choose, that is, it is impartial).<sup>25</sup> It dwells on the fact that all are liable to suffer, irrespective of their merits:

Trouble does not choose when it comes It comes accompanied by all its grandmothers.

- Trouble has no favourite wise man or hero. Nor does the world exempt any rich man or pauper.
- The world is a two-headed blind snake, it knows no favourite.
- Trouble is a gratuitous killer, a murderous adder
- Which bites even trees when it is roused.

After five further lines similar to the preceding in which there is rhythmic repetition of the key words, *nhamo* and *nyika*, and the qualities, expressed metaphorically, which are typical of them and which, significantly, join them as allies, the poem turns to a comparison of the lot of the living with that of the dead:

Better to die and rest like others do.

- The world is a hot-bed of embers that never cools.
- You in your graves where you lie covered beneath the ground,
- You have a peace undisturbed even by a breath.
- You dead who are at rest, never weep for yourselves.
- They who are below the earth enjoy their inheritance
- Where no one breathes or comes to beg from them.

Ichokwadi kuti kusara kunze huona. Kusuwa nepfumvu zvatekeshera pasi rose.

After this, the poem concludes with the dominant theme and repetitions which give it unity, variety being supplied by the different metaphors which symbolise the indifference of fate to human worth and values.

An example of the second category which

### NONDO MUMBIZI

Charovedzera charovedzera. Bveni rakakwira mawere kwasviba. Zvimiro zvavanhu zvazungurwa. Unhu hwedu hwapera kupepetwa. Vedu we-e! Akatiroya akazunza negona rose.

This opening to a long poem starts with a proverb which provides a point of departure. The speaker uses the proverb as an introduction to his main theme which is that the young

Zvainyadzisa zvava zvedambe nazvo. Mwanasikana otamba nababa kunge muramu. Zvaiera hazvina achazviera. Chokwadi vazvinazvita mune chitema. Ndimi makakonzera vana ujoki.

Later on in the poem the relevant proverb is quoted and developed in corresponding couplets:

Nondo ikapinda mumbizi, Zvinonzi, 'Ndava mbiziwo'. Mbizi ikapinda mun'ombe, Zvonzi, 'Ndava n'ombewo'. Dzambiringwa munyemba Zvonzi, 'Ndava nyembawo'.

Vana vedu zvava zvimbwa zvowasungata. Zvongotevera chero waridza murudzo. Zvino dzimba dzedu dzaiswa mirao miviri Kuti wavabereki, kukati wavana, Tochingotarisa dzambiringwa munyemba Richizovewo nyemba. Truly, to remain outside the grave is to experience. Sorrow and suffering cover all the earth.

has been suggested, namely commentary on current mores, is supplied by the poem 'Nondo mumbizi' (a tsessebe among the zebra) which laments the alienation of the young from their elders by western education and missionary influence:

What you get used to, you are used to doing. The baboon climbs a cliff even in the dark. The settled ways of the people have been upset,

- Our human values shaken and sifted like chaff.
- Alas ! the sorcerer who bewitched us spared us nothing of his spell.<sup>27</sup>

have been taught alien ways to the extent that they no longer respect their traditional language and culture, and the representatives of these, the dead ancestors and the living elders:

- What was shameful before is now a plaything.
- A daughter at play with her father as with a familiar.
- What was sacred before is sacred no longer Truly you church people are guilty.
- You have led our daughters into prostitution.
- If a tsessebe comes among zebras,
- It says, 'I'm a zebra now too'.
- If a zebra comes among cattle,
- It says, 'I'm a head-of-cattle too'.
- Wild grapes among cowpeas
- Say, 'We are cowpeas now too.'

Our children are like dogs without a master. They follow whoever gives them a whistle. Now our homes are under the rule of two dispensations.

One of the parents, and the other of the children.

We watch the wild grape among the cowpeas

Becoming the cowpea itself.

The same source provides a good example of the third type of *nhango*. 'Kuraya' is a piece

Mwanangu Raviro, muzukuru, Nhasi waroorwa. Handiti baba wako pfuma atambira?

Chirega ndikuudze, muzukuru. 5 Zvamesomeso ibva wasvipira pasi, Zvoumhandara nhasi zvakuva samazhanje.

Usikana idambakamwe. Chikuru umvana.

Idana naye wakubvisira pfuma.

10 Usave noruchiva nomurume wanhingi, Urege kuva norudo runongoti Wakuti kwenyu, Wanzi herwu.<sup>20</sup>

As in the last example, these lines are but the introduction to a long discourse full of good advice, couched in memorable form by

Chamunodya mumba menyu, muzukuru, Ngachipakurwe norugwaku rumwe chete, kwete ruviri. Uyu ndiwo mupfuhwira mukuru wavarume.

The formal devices of this poem are, as usual, linking and parallelism. Ll. 2-3 are semantically similar; ll. 5-6 semantically parallel and front-linked; ll. 7-8 consist of a crossparallel proverb, usikana corresponding to umvana, and dambakamwe (a single game) to chikuru (an important thing). This verse is an example of the apposite use of proverbs in nhango. Haasbroek has written of them that they fit neatly into the poem's structual pattern as well as clarifying, and giving weight and authority to, the poet's abstract argument and train of thought through their concrete imagery.<sup>29</sup>

With its sharp structural outline and its definite antitheses, the proverb forms a nucleus in the flow of the discourse, radiating an influence through the other parts of the poem which mediate and develop its thought. The of advice given to a niece by her *tete* on the eve of her marriage:

My child Raviro, my brother's daughter, You are betrothed today.

Your father has accepted the bride-wealth, has he not?

Let me advise you, then, my brother's daughter.

Put your flirting behind you.

Your girlhood is over like the loquats of last season.

Maidenhood is a single game. Motherhood goes on.

Love him who paid your bride-wealth as he loves you.Never have desire for another's husband.Do not entertain the sort of love which, If a man nudges you,He is offered it straightaway.

various kinds of repetition, and culminating in a recipe for a truly effective love-charm:

- The food you eat in your home, my niece, Must be served out with only one spoon, not two.
- That is the great love-charm that works with men.

relationship of proverb to development makes for a type of unity within poetry which is peculiar to *nhango*.

So far we have been content to take examples of *nhango* from the work of Hodza. This is because we wished to dwell on the traditional characteristics of this form of poetry which, indeed, this author is anxious to display and preserve. The work of Kumbirai, to which we have already referred, exemplifies a development of *nhango* which enables us to examine briefly the way in which one poet has adapted his traditional poetry for a modern audience of readers.

Kumbiral is a poet conscious of living in a period of transition and aware of a responsibility to enable poetry to play its traditional social rôle in new conditions. Among these new conditions is the relation of a writer to his readers, analogous to, but different from, the relation of the *nyanduri* to his hearers. The new medium offers the poetry new opportunities and imposes new restrictions which call for an adaptation of forms, devices and diction which have yet to be fully understood.

Another of the changed conditions is the new faith of Christianity, shared in varying degrees by literate Shona. Kumbirai writes as a Christian, indeed as a teacher of that faith. There is little, if anything, repugnant to Christianity in the moral teaching of the tradi-

Chido moto unokuchidzirwa kuti usadzime. Ramba uchingofutidza chigoramba chichibvira.

Ukaona chave kuda kurota, pamhidza tsotso;

Ukaona chave kuda kunyenga, pamhidza huni.<sup>30</sup>

Not that Kumbirai is incapable of depth and of profound insights through an original use of imagery. These depths however are personal and, to that extent, are a withdrawal from public poetry. Witness his description of the

Svikai norumwe rudzi musarove zita. Mukarova zita maita mufakaviri. Kana nebira hamungafi makarinhuhwa. Mukutaurirana ndimi hatinganzwani.

Torai njere dzangu dzive svikiro renyu, Zvandisina mwana angave svikiro renyu. Chemedzai urozvi hwangu mupembererwe, Herina Shumbisa arege kurova pasi.<sup>31</sup>

The same personal expression is found in the dramatising of his moral consciousness in the two poems 'Zuro' (Yesterday) and 'Mangwana'

'Tagurirwa ukama hwedu naNhasi, Ati, "Zuro newe ukama hwapera, Chishamwaridzana neni naMangwana, tional *nhango*, and clearly Kumbirai wishes to continue to transmit it.

As a result of these two new conditions Kumbirai's work, though didactic, is a personal development of the traditional *nhango* and other forms which lend themselves to a didactic end. He is at pains to make his poems plain both because he wishes to write for the young, and because the written piece must be able to convey its whole message by itself. There is a certain loss of depth here in the repetitive language and transparent images which at times border on the childish.

Love is a fire which is fed to keep it alive. Keep blowing on it that it may keep burning. If you see it dying down, add more twigs; If you see it using up its fuel, add more wood.

enduring relationship, based on an affinity of mind and spirit, between himself and his mother in 'Haurovi Herina Shumbisa': He invites the spirit of his mother to possess his mind.

- Be present in a new way so that your name be not banished.
- If your name should vanish, then you die again.
- Even the fragrance of an offering will never reach you,
- The words we exchange we do not understand.

But take my mind to be your mouthpiece. Since I have no child to be your medium. Rouse my wits to utter and make you celebrated,

That Herina Shumbisa may not vanish from the earth.

(Tomorrow). Thus he personifies Yesterday and addresses him:

'Our kinship has been cut by Today.

He said, "Yesterday and you are no longer related,

Make friends with me and with Tomorrow,

Zuro achizvigarira kwake oga. Usamurege achikutevera, Angazokujoonora zvako zvose. Dzanga dzava shamwari dzikakusema Vakabvuta zvose zvavanga vakupa. Wava munyika itsva, chingwarira zvitsva." '<sup>32</sup>

A final aspect of Kumbirai's work which we may select for notice is its expression of personal religion. In Shona thought morality is not dependent upon religion. The supreme value is a happy community life, and morality defines the rôle which each one must play in achieving that end. Christian thought appears to be not so very different from this conception save that

Wandishamisa Zame, wandishamisa.

Ndikatsika chiva, chinondikobora. Ndikagunzva nyuchi, inonditi ndure. Ndikasvosva igo, harinditambisi.

Tsikidzi yandiruma ndinoipwanya. Nyoka ikandigunzva ndinoiponda. Svosve rikandiswinya rasiya pasi.

Asi kana isu tave kukuruma, Hautinakuri, hautipwanyizve. Unotifuridzira patinoruma Nokutipepa maronda edu ose Atinotapura patinokuruma. Wandishamisa Zame, wandishamisa. Ndaive ini, ndaiparadza nyika.<sup>33</sup>

# CONCLUSION

Ndyaringo and nhango are widely different genres of traditional poetry which are of great interest, not only in themselves, but as exemplifying complementary poles of an oral literature. As a conclusion to this study it will be helpful to set out the complementary aspects of the two literary forms which have emerged.

Ndyaringo deal in the main with particular situations and individual experiences in a narrative mode in order to entertain an adult And let Yesterday live at his place on his own.

Do not let him follow you.

- He could betray everything, your every deed.
- Those who were your friends, who now hate you,

They've taken back the things they gave you. Now in a new country, find a new wisdom."'

the community is the Kingdom of which God himself is the King, and in which love is the all-embracing commandment. As a result all relationships are seen ultimately as religious, and morality as a response to God's rule.

The poet addresses God, using one of the traditional names of the Creator, Zame, in a way never heard in traditional poetry:

- You make me marvel, Lord, make me admire.
- If I step on a cobra, it bites me.
- If I brush against a bee, it stings me.
- If I provoke a wasp, it will not play with me.
- A biting bug I crush.
- A snake too close I kill.
- An ant that nips is dead.

But when we would bite you,

- You do not flick us away, nor do you crush us.
- You blow coolness upon us when we bite you.
- And you nurse us for all the wounds Which we incur when we bite you.
- You make me marvel, Lord, make me astonished.
- If it were me, I would destroy the world.

audience, though the instructional function, common in varying degrees to all Shona literature, is not neglected. *Nhango* on the other hand are concerned to convey the general principles and rules of social experience, and to criticise behaviour in the light of proverbs and saws which enshrine that experience.

Ndyaringo entertain and divert through virtuosity of language. There is considerable room for invention and a personal flair for vivid description and narrative. The brilliance of this verbal skill is content to be superficial, though certain forms of *ndyaringo* show wit and satire as well as humour. The response sought is laughter, or awe and pity, as well as literary and aesthetic pleasure in the skilful use of language. *Nhango* on the other hand rely on consecrated formulae, such as proverbs and idioms, and on the aptness of their development and application to life. Speakers of these discourses are not required to be original, but to have a deep grasp of moral principles and an intuition into the potential relevance of images and metaphors to express them. The appeal is to the mind and moral sense of the audience which is typically youth in its formative years and at the crises of life.

In style *ndvaringo* make great use of ideophones in order to do justice to particular situations. They aim at reproducing, in the imaginations of the audience and in the round, the experiences which are described. To this end the ideophonic diction which evokes the data of every sense, as well as more complex phenomena such as movements, postures and concrete conditions of different kinds, is particularly suitable. This diction includes, of course, in the oral medium, reinforcing gestures and expressive features of tone, length and stress which witness to the emotional involvement of the speaker in the subject of his discourse. Humorous exaggeration and hyperbole are not only condoned but expected, and they arise from the challenge to the artist to make the most of his materials in the pursuit of the aim of literary entertainment. Where there is a discriminating, knowledgeable and appreciative audience, the *dare* is as evocative as a stage, the traditional art also present and presenting demands which arise out of the nature of the form.

On the contrary the style of the *nhango* is sober, its saws being expressed in sentences which can convey the general and the profound. These are substantival and verbal constructions. The mental training which from early youth is concerned with riddles and word play enables the young to seize analogies and relationships which light up the moral dimensions of life. These relationships are not only the correspondences of metaphors to life situations, but also those that exist between proverbs themselves. Proverbs are rarely explained in literal terms. The young are expected to learn their meanings and relevant applications from their contexts. No single proverb expresses the whole truth about any aspect of life. They are always partial, even though they are susceptible of different applications in different situations, and no literal explanation exhausts their meaning. For these reasons the meanings of proverbs are best learned by comparison with, and reference to, other proverbs, as the shape of jewels throws each into relief. The part is learned in relation to the whole. Thus is the relevant teaching of the proverbs grasped both in their positive content and in their limitations. The style of the nhango preserves wisdom from being banal. It is also profoundly educational, eliciting the mental effort of the disciple to make the truth his own. Finally it ministers to the authority of the elders who have the greatest store of proverbs and the ability to expound them appositely. As the style of the *ndyaringo* arises out of the expectations of an audience wishing to be entertained, so that of the *nhango* arises out of a relationship of moral responsibility between madzisekuru, madzitete, madzimbuya and their vazukuru.

### REFERENCES

•Ibid., pp.17, 21.

Mabvumira enhetembo, p.38.

<sup>1</sup>A. C. Hodza Ugo hwamadzinza avaShona (The culture of the Shona clans), Salisbury, Longman Rhodesia, 1974, Introduction, 'Mazwi okutura zvinyorwa zvebhuku', p.7 (my translation). The section devoted to Ndyaringo is ch.9, pp.72-9.

<sup>2</sup>Hodza, 'Denhe renhetembo' (a draft Ms from which Ugo hwamadzinza avaShona was selected). The passage cited is, of course, a translation. The verse which it includes is a professional boast. 3Personal communication.

<sup>•</sup>Mabuumira enhetembo (The harmony of poetry), compiled by the Rhodesia Literature Bureau, Gwelo, Mambo Press in association with Rhodesia Literature Bureau, 1969. Hamutyinei contributed the first 26 items to this anthology of which 15 are different kinds of ndyaringo.

<sup>•</sup>Ugo hwamadzinza ava Shona, p.72.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup>'Zinyoka mugumbeze', in Mabvumira enhetembo, p.25.

"Kusaziva kufa ugere", in Ugo hwamadzinza avaShona, p.74.

10 Mabuumira enhetembo, p.14.

"Ibid., p.39.

12 These poems are as yet unpublished, but will be included in a stencilled collection of *ndyaringo* to be published by the Department of African Languages, University of Rhodesia.

13 This poem is printed in Ugo hwamadzinza avaShona, p.77. Another version by Simon Mashoko was recorded by Paul Berliner in 'The Soul of Mbira', Nonesuch Records, H-72054 (stereo).

14 Mabvumira enhetembo, pp. 36-7.

15Ibid., p.30.

16Ibid., p.13 17Ibid., p.12.

18 Moto, 30 Sept.; 7, 14 and 28 Oct.; 4, 11, 18 and 25 Nov. 1972.

19These four paragraphs are a free translation of the description of nhango given by Hodza in the Introduction to Ugo hwamadzinza avaShona and in that to the unpublished collection, Denke renketembo'.

- 20In Ugo hwamadzinza avaShona, pp. 35-45. However the majority of the nhango which Hodza has written or compiled are as yet unpublished.
- 21J. C. Kumbirai's published poetry is entirely didactic in content and style, and in form consists of different adaptations of nhango and zvindori (children's verses). He contributed 30 poems to Mabvumira enhetembo, as well as 7 to an carlier anthology, Mutinhimira wedetembo, ed. C. R. Musiwa, Salisbury, Longmans of Rhodesia [1964?].
- 22Haasbroek's examples were contributed by his students at Gwelo Teachers' College and appeared in Moto (see above note 18).
- 23The bias is probably intentional and culturally sanctioned. Analogous uncomplimentary views about men are conveyed by radzitete in their warnings and instructions to their nieces. Cp. Hodza, 'Kuraya', in Ugo hwamadzinza avaShona, p.45.

24Quoted in Tsumo-Shumo, Shona Proverbial Lore and Wisdom, introduced, translated and explained by M. A. Hamutyinei and A. B. Plangger, Gwelo, Mambo Press, 1974, p.105.

25An unpublished poem compiled by Hodza. For another example of this kind of nhango, also compiled by Hodza, see G. Fortune, 'Shona traditional poetry', Zambezia, 1971, 2, i, 54-5.

26 The developments in 11. 2, 7 are by the use of zvizukuru, hyperbolic conceits.

27Ugo hwamadzinza avaShona, p.44.

28Ibid., p.45.

29 Moto, 7 Oct. 1972, p.6.

30 Mabvumira enhetembo, p.65.

31Ibid., p.41.

32Ibid., p.64.

33Ibid., p.48.

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