Issues and Implications in Staging Mungoshi’s *Inongova Njakenjake* (Each Does his Own Thing)
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Charles Mungoshi is one of the most prolific writers Zimbabwe has produced. As with any attempt at categorisation, it proves futile to bunch Mungoshi with most Zimbabwean writers in the same cauldron of realism, as some of his works operate beyond that realm. His Shona novel, *Kunyarara Hakusi Kutaura* (1983), for example, employs multiple narrators who rely on the stream of consciousness technique to tell their stories. The spaces explored are psychic as opposed to the real, tangible and concrete spaces that form the hallmark of realism. These techniques employed by Mungoshi are predominantly used in avant-garde writing. However, the bulk of his work, including the playtext under study in this chapter, *Inongova Njakenjake* (*Each Does His Own Thing*) (1980), uses realism as a creative method. This chapter testifies to the ethical sublime in Mungoshi’s *Inongova Njakenjake* (*Each Does His Own Thing*) (1980) by way of thematic interpretation including a discussion of the quality and validity of ideas expressed in the playtext. This chapter will dissect and analyse the playtext, attempting to give insight into Mungoshi’s writing technique highlighting the creative talent, craftsmanship and those constituent elements that are worthy of special consideration. As Pushkin succinctly puts it ‘criticism is the science of discovering the beauties and shortcomings in works of art and literature’ (cited in Chiwome 2002: vii). The real crux of the matter is how the above issues relate to the visualisation or staging of the play, *Inongova Njakenjake* (*Each Does His Own Thing*) (1980). The argument presented is that Mungoshi has always taken recourse to poetry, the short story and/or the novel as channels to unload his obsessions and his experiment with a play, which is a different genre, has been unfortunately characterised by the domination of the word at the expense of the visual dimension creating serious technical problems for the prospective director and performer. This diagnosed problem is traceable to, among other things, Mungoshi’s ‘panic’ without the narrator (a tool he uses in novel writing) and textual structural fragility.

Technically, Mungoshi writes *Inongova Njakenjake* (*Each Does His Own Thing*) (1980) as if it were a novel, although the formatting of the play into acts and scenes can deceive many a gullible reader into believing that it is real drama. We shall return to how this relates to staging the play shortly. At the moment, let us look at the playtext as literature.

Mungoshi (1980) achieves his distinctiveness through a special use of language, which allows him to competently deal with those burning issues which obsess him. To him, language is
a weapon that he uses to deal with danger that can/has harmed his society. Indeed, Sartre (1986) views the writer's language in the same light:

When one is in danger or in difficulty one grabs any instrument. When the danger is past, one does not even remember whether it was a hammer or a stick;... all one needed was a prolongation of one's body... Thus regarding language, it is our shell and our antennae; it protects us against others and informs us about them... (1986:11).

Mungoshi knows that with words, he is carrying a loaded pistol and that when he writes, he is firing. But unlike his anti-realist contemporary, Dambudzo Marechera, Mungoshi's distinctive use of language is morally and ethically acceptable, even though it still retains the capacity to shock and dazzle the reader/spectator. That explains my apt description of Mungoshi's work as the ethical sublime. The sublime is defined as 'a certain distinction and excellence in discourse'. The sublime does not necessarily please nor persuade the reader/spectator. According to Kelly (1998) the sublime 'causes rapture or ecstasy by storm' (323). Notwithstanding the fact that it neither pleases nor persuades, the sublime is irresistible as elegantly explained by Kelly:

The dazzled witness then tends to identify with the source, acting as if the constraint emanated not from without, but from within himself, 'for, as if instinctively, our soul is uplifted by the true sublime; it takes a proud flight, and is filled with joy and vaunting as though it had itself produced what it has heard' (Longinus 1899; cited in Kelly 1998:323).

On one hand, Mungoshi's contemporary, Dambudzo Marechera, achieves that distinction and excellence in discourse by becoming a language terrorist, abolishing syntax and the traditional construction of sentences. In all his anti-realist works, notably The House of Hunger (1977) and Black Sunlight (1980), Marechera believes that those structures set up by man; language, grammar and even theories and ideologies stifle authentic expression and must be destroyed. On the other hand, Mungoshi in Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing) (1980), writing as a realist, uses language within the bounds of the moral and acceptable. He uses it as a weapon for a cruel attack against family disintegration, but he is well composed and disciplined to the extent that his shots are not aimed at his readers/spectators. His shots are aimed at the Gwaumbu family - Tafi, Sheila, Lucy, Joe and Kate. The spectators, through an empathetic relationship with the events on the stage, are only implicated if they have the potential to be guilty and/or are guilty of the same crime. The theatre event, in that case, is a therapeutic process which corrects and heals possible fractures within families. For Marechera nothing is spared; everything is brutally attacked; language, realism, our very understanding of art as well as readers/spectators themselves. The prosaic quality of Mungoshi's language is typical to the situation, social and domestic issues of everyday life played by his characters. Unlike non-realist language which achieves excellence by creating non-worlds, dream-worlds and even anti-worlds, Mungoshi's realist language achieves distinction by describing the
observable world before us, hence his emphasis is on intelligibility as opposed to obscurity. His language validates that which is immediate to our senses.

The ethical sublime is also made manifest through rhetorical speeches. The play being a tragedy, Mungoshi aspires to sublimity or elevation of diction in his rhetorical speeches. Here is an example from part of a speech by Sheila:


You know what? Isn't life, for you, reversing to the old Gwaumbu homestead where a window is being opened for us to see the goings-on there; with people spending all their time trapping mice and beating drums? Isn't it pitiful seeing those many naked children whose navels are being pecked by free-range chickens as they ululate thanking their father for birthing them and giving them a chance to enjoy the spoils? Is this life when husband and wife spend twenty years of their life charging at each other like stray dogs that have met at a stockpile of bones?

Mungoshi's grip on language excites the nerves to the point of causing ecstasy. Here, he employs three rhetorical questions to make his point. Profoundly embedded in these rhetorical questions is Mungoshi's operation in the realm of metaphors where the abstract is connected with the concrete through an implied comparison in order to enhance the qualities of that which is not on its own discernible. Life is at once given qualities of a reversing vehicle. Life is reversing back into history to view lots of Gwaumbu children whose navels are being pecked by chickens. The Gwaumbu world is also given qualities of fat meat from which the pathetic Gwaumbu children are ironically feasting. The words, through the exploitation of metaphors are able to create strong mental pictures which add value to the play. In a sixty-eight page playtext, thirty-four character narratives are speeches and the longest one has fifty-one lines (pp 53-55). On average, in every two pages of the playtext, there is a speech. Most of the speeches in the play have this sublime quality. At this point we are still judging the value of the playtext as literature and not as drama. The weaknesses of this approach to writing will soon become clear from an animation point of view. From a literary perspective, Mungoshi's speeches manage to leave an impression in our minds. Lucy's speech on pages 33-55, among many examples is a spectacular example of the sublime. She manages to cow down the patriarchal Joe through a special use of language. She throws nineteen rhetorical questions at Joe in one speech. She takes Joe's imagination to a myriad of spaces; home, Tafi's work place, Makwiro, Convent and so on as the word has the inimitable ability to leap from one place to another and from one event to the next. Mungoshi uses the word not only to depict the external world but the entire realm of the psyche and the emotions. Lucy, in the same speech is able to construct a possible event of her death. She walks Joe down memory lane to the love affair between their parents. Joe makes logical and intuitive connections that his mind can
establish between these facts. This has got a very strong visceral appeal which leaves the reader/spectator dazzled. Mungoshi is a master of the lyrical and imaginative riches of proverbial Shona speech 'Urikuswera wakabatira pamindya yembereko uchirega kutsvaga basa usingazivi kuti mindya yacho yakaora kudhara' (1980:54)/By not looking for a job, you are wasting time holding on to a fragile rope unconscious of the fact that it will break. This figurative language permeates through Mungoshi's work giving it a special distinction. Mungoshi artistically distorts everyday language by constructing words and sentences in a distinct way. At certain points, he seems to subscribe to the notion that literature is way of experiencing the artfulness of language. In another speech Sheila says 'Pembe yakarira Gwaumbu akasara akachochomara pamutsetse vamwe vachindohwina...' (1980:33)/When the starting signal was given, Gwaumbu was left crouching in the starting blocks while others were winning the race. This is a type of language which achieves its distinctiveness by deviating from the way it is used in everyday ordinary conversation.

The rhetorical speeches and other shorter chunks of dialogue contribute to Mungoshi's attack against family disintegration. At the centre of this thematic concern is the gruesome initiation of the African child into adulthood. That process is harrowing and it leaves the reader/spectator shocked and horrified. Lucy, Joe, and Kate are very vulnerable at a very tender age. They cannot at all times rely on the social and financial protection of their parents. Lucy has decided to be a commercial sex worker because according to her, there is nothing at home to tie the family together. These children are more often than not unwilling spectators to Sheila and Tafi's violent spells of inebriation and physical bouts of fisticuffs. This theme is carried further in Mungoshi's short stories contained in *Some Kinds of Wounds* (1980). The children are vulnerable and are sometimes unwilling watchers and witnesses to their elders' sex life as Tendai in, *The Brother* (1980), almost did. Life at Magufu's house is lived in bits and pieces as his name suggests and cannot produce a morally upright child. It is a life of debauchery, sex, wild merriment, violence and dirt. What is not said about Lucy in *Inongova Njakenjake* (*Each Does His Own Thing*) (1980) is covered in greater detail in, *The Brother* (1980), through the character Sheila. Sheila in, *The Brother* (1980), finds herself drugged by Magufu and is force-marched to strip naked, bitten, threatened, intimidated and taken advantage of. A court of law could probably find Magufu guilty of rape. Zakeo in, *Who Will Stop the Dark* (1980), is an epitome of the suffering of children as he can longer rely on the protection of his parents. All these examples underline the painful process of growing up in Mungoshi's works. The life of children in Mungoshi's work is almost cyclical where children are born to face almost the same fate faced by their predecessors. It is almost explainable in terms of the Abiku child in Soyinka's *A Dance of the Forest*, who shuttles back and forth between life and death, but coming back periodically to haunt the living child and its parents. Through this use of language and manipulation of theme, the reader/spectator is dazzled, shocked and his/her soul is uplifted by the true sublime.
Before a wrong precedent is set for the playwriting beginner, let me hasten to say that the above is true only from a literary perspective. Indeed, the playtext, *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980), is studied at the University of Zimbabwe as great Shona literature in the department of African languages and Literature, which it is, but a lukewarm stage play. Theatre Arts directing students of the same university have constantly failed to put up a successful performance of the same play. A television adaptation of the same play by the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Corporation was not impressive. The sources of this difficulty will soon become evident.

We begin by a provocative premise. A writer does not become a playwright for having elected to tell story. All people would become playwrights, for everyone has a story to tell. One becomes a playwright for choosing to tell a story in style and style immensely contributes to the value of a play. Reality in general, ideas and emotions possess very little dramatic significance in themselves. They only provide the raw material for the functioning of dramatic techniques. What distinguishes realist drama from an ordinary everyday story is its 'constructed' quality. To put it more crudely, reality has to be constructed before it is experienced. A realist play is an artefact whose structure and intrinsic connectedness is far removed from actual reality as it is experienced every day. The construction of reality is artificial and historically derived rather than naturally given. For a playwright who uses realism as a creative method like Mungoshi, he has to take advantage of the full benefits of literary history.\(^2\) We are not insinuating that Mungoshi's *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980) does not possess that constructed quality. It does, but let us distinguish between good workmanship and lukewarm craftsmanship.

Mungoshi's *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980) displays quite a number of structural deficiencies which consequently pose problems in staging the play. The first weakness is lack of syntagmatic gaps. The Greek term for the same concept is *narrativus interruptus*. Counsell and Wolf (2001) use the term 'blanks' for the same concept. These terms shouldn't confuse us for they mean the same thing. These gaps are created by the playwright when s/he suspends the text at very key narrative points. This is not done for just the sake of it, but to whip the spectator into imagining how the story will unfold. Through this technique, the playwright heightens the spectator's participation in the construction of the story. The syntagmatic gaps are essential for purposes of prompting the act of ideation on the part of the reader/spectator. Reading Mungoshi's *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980), the reader can artificially produce these gaps by lifting his/her eyes from the page for a moment or stopping at a certain point in the playtext from which the reader will pick up the story hours or days later. Sadly, this privilege cannot be exercised by the spectator during a live performance of the play or s/he will never see the missed part again. A theatre performance is ephemeral. The show has to be seen at once in, say, seventy minutes. Opportunities for creating blanks occur through strategic artistry at beat, scene, and act changes as well as the
shift to subplots. Mungoshi does not take advantage of these opportunities. Let us take a few scenes as examples. In Act 1:3 Mungoshi resorts to his more comfortable technique of rhetorical speeches which are exchanged between Tafi and Sheila in ping pong fashion. When the scene ends, a new one begins within the same space and the spectators are presented with the same combination of characters apart from the addition of Joe and Kate. The characters are pursuing the same issues they were dealing with in the previous scene. Mungoshi does not leave the story suspended to pursue a different agenda which should, however, be related to the superobjective of the play. A gap creating opportunity has been lost at this point. Another way of creating syntagmatic gaps is the shift to a subplot(s). In Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing) (1980), there is no subplot. This is not a compulsory technique, but it remains an option to scriptwriters who want to strategically suspend the story for purposes ideation and engaging the spectators. Because Mungoshi does not use this technique anywhere else, apart from a few possible exceptions during beat changes, one would expect this technique to be employed at plot to subplot shifts. The cumulative effect is that the story becomes just a linear progression, moving on the basis of cause-to-effect and undimensionalised. There are glorious opportunities for creating a subplot in the playtext, which Mungoshi does not take advantage of. For instance, the could have been a shift to the Max-Sheila subplot or Lucy-boyfriends subplot or Tafi-workplace subplot and so on. This provides the necessary twists and turns and an opportunity to have the kind of character development which the main plot does not have time for. Moreover, the scene mentioned above ends with a definitive resolution by Tafi that there should be no more pain in the family 'Sheila, tiri kuzvirwadzireiko?' (1980:28)/Sheila, why are we inflicting pain on each other? Nothing has been left unresolved to compel the spectators to continue watching the play. Everything has been given to the audience. The scene ends on a lower note of drama than it began. It leaves no narrative question unanswered. Mungoshi’s two Acts and the remainder of his scenes almost begin and end in a similar way without creating gaps. Mungoshi loses these gap-creating opportunities throughout the entire play. Staging this play will present problems of engaging the audience. Hooking the audience into the story is paramount to the success of a show.

Another structural problem in Mungoshi’s Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing) (1980) is technically feeble revelation of the background story. Virtually all of it is revealed at once a quarter way through the play. As would be argued, it introduces the talking head syndrome and prevents the action from moving forward. The ideal situation is that the background story must be theatrically compelling and during the process of its revelation, the stage action must simultaneously go on. In revealing the background story, Mungoshi is shrewd enough to avoid the outdated historical technique used by William Shakespeare and his contemporaries of introducing the background story at the beginning of a play by way of extended rhetorical speeches. Although he avoids the early placement of the background story, he doesn't do the same with the technique of extended rhetorical speeches. Writing as a
realist, Mungoshi embraces the early modern technique where the background story is shared among several characters. In most successful realist plays, the background story is distributed through the entire play in small bits and pieces. The information is given on a need-to-know basis, only when it is of maximum service to the action. This is retrospective in the sense that 'the on-stage action moves forward while the past unfolds backward...' (Thomas, J 1992:34). The problem with Mungoshi's approach is that he gives away the background story in one fell swoop. Pages 15 to 20 of the playtext are given to reveal Sheila, Tafi and Maxi's past. This is not the place where the information is most effective theatrically. Small doses at a time could have been better. Towards the end of the play, Mungoshi resorts to the extended rhetoric technique where he gives Lucy two speeches of 36 and 51 lines respectively to reveal the remainder of the background story. From a performance point of view, there are three problems ushered in by this kind of writing. Firstly, the action is held back as the story is forced to stop, this time in a negative way. Secondly, the spectators are being given too much information which they have to remember throughout the play. Asking the spectators to absorb too much at once will make them lose interest. The playwright has to be skilled enough to know the information that has to be signposted, when and how. S/he has to tell what has to be held back and the most opportune time for its entry and the technique of its revelation. Just revealing is not enough. The secret of dramatic writing is withholding information. As Davis, R puts it ‘The audience has to work harder, and that in itself produces a certain involvement: they want to know answers to a mass of questions... No one is simply going to give them’ (1998:46).

The issue of the background story links with the concept of syntagmatic gaps as both of them invite the audience to take part in the construction of the story. This is crucial in a performance event. Thirdly, when the background story is brought in lengthy speeches instead of brief exchanges of dialogue the visual dimension and action suffer. There will be one or two talking heads on the stage, in the fashion of radio drama, while nothing in terms action happens. Cassady, a scriptwriting scholar, finds the use of speeches as serving no useful purpose:

Another reason to avoid long speeches is that the major device for advancing a plot is action, which implies reaction and interaction. If one character is forced to stand and listen while another makes a long speech, how can the person effectively portray his/her personality for an audience? Long speeches become repetitive as well as monotonous. During some periods of theatrical history, they were expected. But today's audiences are not as willing to accept them (1984:55).

Speeches normally work with poetic dialogue especially as it is used by Eugene O'neill, William Shakespeare, J.P Clark and others. If the speeches are written in prose as is the case with Mungoshi in Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing) (1980) it becomes difficult to hold the audience's attention.
Another technical shortcoming in the play *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980), is Mungoshi's fragile workmanship in the construction of the play's structure. There is certainly a very exciting exposition where the main characters, Tafi and Sheila are introduced. Their motivational drives are very clear. Tafi, the protagonist would like to mend relations with his wife and put the family back on a sound footing. Sheila, the antagonist is simply living-in at the Gwaumbu family while waiting for the coming of her girlhood boyfriend Max. The supporting characters, Kate, Lucy and Joe are also introduced and they do their job pretty well. They force the main characters to act and react. The background story is also introduced, although the method of its revelation has loopholes as discussed above. The point of attack which is part of the rising action comes quite late during the play as one-third of the play is given to establishing characters and revealing the background story. There is no problem in doing so. The only problem is that the coming back of Max is reported rather than seen. We do not see Max face to face with his ex-girlfriend Sheila and his out-of-wedlock son Joe until later in the play. The catalyst of the play does not happen right under the nose of the spectators. An effective catalyst should be an action, event or situation which is seen by the spectators. This spins the story into motion. For Mungoshi, it is all reported and we see Tafi and Sheila wrestling with ideas rather than the substance which is seen.

To add on to the list of shortcomings, Mungoshi seems to have a truckload of good intentions in his play *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980). He has a burning desire to bring the issue of family disintegration to the attention of the spectators, but he seems to forget that in order to hold the attention of the spectators, the material must be interesting. The major ingredient in holding this attention is complications, obstacles or conflict. Thomas says the following about complications:

> On the stage as in life, all planned behaviour encounters difficulties as it tries to reach its goal. Invariably characters meet others who have opposing wishes, or they run into opposing events. Complications, sometimes called obstacles by actors, are the counter-movements in the plot created by these conflicting wishes and events. ... complications must be about common points of disagreement shared by at least two characters. ... It is the complications that produce the increasing levels of tension in the play (1992:70).

Admittedly, there are quite a number of chunks of text in *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980) where characters are clashing. There is the clash between Sheila and everybody else, the clash between Joe and Lucy and other minor conflicts. Where this good workmanship is evident the plot thickens and the internal tensions begin to show drawing the spectators into the story as they make choices on behalf of characters. However, more often than not, Mungoshi's craftsmanship is compromised by his good intentions. Act 1:3 is a good example. The chunk of text on pages 21-22 is well written with myriad of conflicts. From the bottom of page 22, Sheila dwells into her personal history and from there the dialogue degenerates into conversational ping pong. Sheila and Tafi take turns to tell each other about
life in three very long speeches. This does not allow tension to build. Mungoshi finds back the formula from line 6 of page 28 where Sheila and Tafi are relating and reacting to what each is offering. The same trend manifests itself in the Scene 4 of the same Act. As soon as Tafi leaves the stage, Sheila begins to lecture Joe about life and her personal history with Max. The whole chunk of text on pages 31 up to the end of the scene on page 35 is virtually a speech which is intermittently interrupted by Joe. The director cannot do anything more except by way of cutting and changing parts of the text to hold the attention of the audience. However, the director has no moral and artistic obligation to do so as his selection of the script is based on the vision the playwright's creative work has given him. The director has to be the playwright's representative and not his/her editor. Catron takes the same position with regard to the sanctity of the playtext when he says that directors should 'work on the premise that audiences deserve to experience the depth of the writer's work untarnished by directorial changes' (1989:19). There has to be complications by way of shared disagreement. Act 2 is written in a similar way. In Act 2:1 Joe and Kate take turns to tell each other the events about the increasing depression of Sheila and the worsening drinking habits of Tafi. When Lucy joins Joe and Kate, she narrates the life style that Sheila is now leading away from home. The chunk of text on pages 51-55 is given to revealing the promiscuity of Sheila by way of reportage. In a record fifty-one lines Lucy reveals everything to Joe and Kate. Half of the last scene of the play is a speech given by Tafi with Kate occasionally responding 'baba'/father. There is virtually little conflict in this text. Drama is an art of showdown and irritatingly, this vital aspect is not highly profiled in the playtext. Staging this play could be a nightmare to the director, performer and the spectators.

The sources of the above difficulty are easy to locate. Writing as an established novelist, Mungoshi is close to panic in the absence of a narrator (impersonal, third person or omniscient) whom he uses in most of his fictional works. The poetic duty of the narrator is to tell the reader everything they need to know. The narrator is the tour guide. Much of the dialogue in Mungoshi's Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing) (1980) is crammed with a lot of information, some of which the spectators should not even know. Most of the thirty-four speeches are a spectacular example of how not to write for the theatre. Tafi, as illustrated above, speechifies to Kate in the first half of the last scene. Sheila does the same to Joe in Act 1:4 and a number of scenes reveal this anomaly. All this information can sit quite comfortably with a narrator. Mungoshi is trying to draw parallels between the novel and drama. As Davis warns, the playwright must recognize that his business is quite different '... no compensation for the absence of a narrator is necessary...' (1998:45). Davis further postulates that:

We present a world without a mediator, a world in which the audience has to make sense it can of all that is said or done, much as people do outside the theatre. There is, after all, no narrator life... drama handles life in a different way from narrative, (the novel or short story) and the dialogue within drama should not try to compensate for the lack of a narrator (1998:46).
In the present scenario, it seems as if the sublime novelist has reincarnated in the budding playwright. Both art forms, drama and the novel are distinct and each has its own merits and need not copy or imitate the other.

Let us continue our examination of Mungoshi’s shortcomings in his construction of plot. The obligatory scene is certainly present in the play *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980). Mungoshi has highlighted that Tafi and Sheila’s marriage is not built on solid rock. The spectators are anticipating the worst of that conflict to happen. The spectators are also aware before Act 1:5 that Max has returned from England. They are anticipating the consequences of the reunion of Sheila and Maxi after twenty-two years of separation. In Act 1:5 all characters who share common points of disagreement meet. This is one of Mungoshi’s best scenes in the play, apart from the opening two pages of the scene. This scene is a shining example of the ability of drama to communicate through dialogue and visual action. While the dialogue serves to communicate the conflict, the visual gives the conflict impetus. The spectators see Sheila drinking beer and this raises certain expectations on whether the family is going to tolerate it or not. Sheila is also putting on clothes and make-up, which according to Tafi’s values do not conform to the minimum standards of decency and what is acceptable. This violation of the unwritten values produces tension and revulsion in Tafi who in this case is enforcing the values. There is also an open confrontation between Max and Sheila. The dramatic interest and emotional intensity is heightened. However, page 36 does a disservice to an otherwise excellent scene. Whereas it is desirable to have dialogue resemble the way people use it in everyday life, dramatic dialogue has to go a step further and have a purpose. It should not rumble around without any direction as this wastes the spectator’s interest. This page has no particular agenda. It is more of a documentary where nothing leads anywhere. In other words, the dramatic action is redundant as it is dwelling too much on one thing—drinking. Dramatic dialogue has to make a point in order to establish character and advance the plot. This chunk of text will therefore be very difficult for the director to stage. The plot only starts moving forward on page 37 when Max asks for the whereabouts of Sheila.

The climax and resolution of Mungoshi’s *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980) comes just before the end of the play. There is no problem so far as the exact placement of the climax is concerned. The emphasis devoted by the playwright to each structural component is what makes each play unique. The climax is located in Act 2:2 which is the last scene of the play. Here the reader/spectator sees the ultimate confrontation between Sheila and Tafi on the one hand and the confrontation between Sheila and Max on the other hand. The problem is solved and the central question is answered. Tafi is on the very brink of death in his bedroom. While in this state, Max force-marches Sheila back to her husband and would like to leave her bound in ropes. Joe discovers that Max is his biological father.
There is a problem with this climax from a performance point of view. The events in the play do not build in a profound way towards intensification leading to this climax. The problem is traceable to the issues that have been discussed above - lack of adequate complications and crises and a reliance on reportage rather than a balance of dialogue and action/events. In the last scene (Act 2:2), the chunk of text on pages 56-61 is a lecture to Kate by Tafi. When the audience is supposed to see real events leading to the climax which begins on bottom of page 61, all they hear are words. The play reads like a radio drama, although even radio drama requires action as well. The playwright should be like a time bomb maker by way of using dialogue and action carefully as if s/he were adding one explosive after another until everything is well placed and there is only a pin to be removed. *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980) is somewhat flat when one reads it for visualization. Mungoshi should have skipped unimportant routines and activities which characterise real life since drama is a symbolic representation of life and not life itself. Drama should deal with interruption of routines and not their following. When time is condensed to seventy-five minutes, which is the approximate length of *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980), only those patches of high drama should be captured - those colourful patches of terror, high tides of passion, euphoria, infatuation, bliss, animosity, wariness, supreme joy and other outstanding experiences. These passions, however, have to be rhythmically placed in order to avoid saturating the spectators, which in itself is bad.

The resolution as outlined above brings a definitive closure to the play *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980). A new order and not the old order is established. The Gwaumbu family will have to live without the father figurehead as it seems Tafi will never recuperate. The play ends with Tafi delivering a verbal will on how the family should live after his death. For the first time Sheila accepts her faulty and apologises to Tafi. It also becomes clear that Maxi is not prepared to restore the old love and reconcile with Sheila. The resolution grows naturally out of the action and does not look grafted. It gives unity and shape to the whole play. Like his predecessors such as Hamutyinei, M.A, Chidyausiku, P, Mashiri, P and Tsodzo, T.K, Mungoshi opts for a didactic ending. This seems to be a technique borrowed from traditional folkloric narratives whose endings are characterised by a heavy moral whip. Sheila regrets ‘*Handichazvipamidzi futi! Ngatichengetanei murume wangu*’ (1980:67)/I am never ever going to do this again. Let us be each other’s keeper my husband. This aspect of regret is expressed in all the plays written by the aforementioned Shona playwrights. This technique reduces the ending to its lowest terms possible. It does not give the spectators any leverage to chart their paths with regards to matters of life presented before them. They are forced to gobble a prepared and pre-packaged remedy to problems of life. Involving the spectators is most preferable. A way to involve them at endings is usually achieved not by prescribing an absolute truth, but by leaving them suspended, leaving certain questions unanswered so that they go home thinking about possible ways they could have solved life's problems as provoked
by the play. Contemporary audiences have outgrown their pre-literacy taste for didactic endings as post-colonial thought is fast moving towards multiplicity of truths.

Throughout this chapter, Mungoshi’s reliance on the word has been hinted on, but without achieving depth. Let us now look at this anomaly and its implications on staging the play *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980). It has been indicated that Mungoshi relies on reportage which is captured in much of the thirty-four speeches contained in the playtext. This is putting too much information in dialogue and Davis offers interesting insight into the need to correct that anomaly:

> When dialogue is made to work to too hard, sometimes it is because it is being asked to take the place of a narrator... The scriptwriter must never forget that, however important the dialogue, things must also actually happen. Dialogue must not be made to substitute for events (1998:54).

Certainly, the word is powerful as it possesses a certain range of the visual, auditory, olfactory, sensory and taste media. The word is able to present internal action through the clash of psychical forces. This is the realm in which the novelist, the poet and the radio dramatist operate. However, for the playwright who creates for theatre, the word is an insufficient instrument. There are certain things that the playwright cannot express in words but through bodies moving in space. A greater number of the thirty-four speeches in *Inongova Njakenjake/Each Does His Own Thing* (1980) are unstageable as they would require the utilisation of one medium - the word. Arnheim illuminates the limitations of the word as it is used in theatre:

> Even so, at the one extreme of the scale that leads from percept to concept, language cannot go beyond a certain degree of approximation. It cannot materialize things to the point of presenting us with their material nature. It can say 'colour' but cannot show us colour. Hence the practice of completing the spoken dialogue with stage action (1958:178).

This writer concedes the presence of one aspect of the visual elements in the playtext - visual information for the designer. Mungoshi is very generous with information throughout the playtext. At the very opening of the play, Mungoshi gives almost a page of the description of the set, which is welcome to the designer. At the beginning of every scene Mungoshi is at pains to describe the setting and the characters involved in that particular scene. His characters are fully developed physiologically, sociologically and psychologically. All this information is vital to the designer whose duty it is to put colours, properties and shapes on the set. These visual elements appeal to the spectators. However, there is another dimension to the visual elements - the human body moving in the space created by the designer. This is the area where Mungoshi is weak. The director and the performer’s work suffer as their stage action is limited by too much reportage. Theatre audiences come to 'watch' theatre as opposed to the radio audiences who switch on the set to 'listen' to radio drama. Visual action must therefore be an integral part of the play. The visual aspect is biologically older than speech. Before man could
speak, he could see, draw and make things. Arnheim argues that even if man has gained speech the visual image appeals to his intrinsic primitive side of the mind and he 'cherishes these ancient resources and their vigorously simple interpretation of what he has to say' (1958:179). This is the domain of directorial picturisation and composition, which, sadly, cannot be fully realised if the play is written like a novel.

As a way of concluding this discussion, it is pertinent to say that the alienation of spectators is the worst thing to happen during a theatre event, unless it is used as a technique \([\text{verfremdungseffekt}^8 \text{ (v-effekt)}] \) as it is used in Brechtian avant-garde epic theatre. Realist dramatic effectiveness is measured by the degree to which the playwright’s techniques allow the spectators to take part, (but without physical involvement) empathetically in exciting events of the play. In theatre this challenge is to a very large extent taken care of by a well-balanced mixture of visual action and dialogue. Events, situations and actions are concretely brought before the eyes of spectators while simultaneously those thoughts, intentions and colourful patches of passion of the characters are articulated through direct recourse to the word. Each medium, visual action and the word should handle the issues in its own way without aping the other. In other words, they must complete each other to form a composite work of art. To the extent that a playwright prefers one medium - the word - as Mungoshi does in *Inongova Njakenjake (Each Does His Own Thing)* (1980), while the visual dimension suffers, then one questions the logic of choosing the play as an art form to deal with life's problems instead of the novel.

References
Endnotes

1 Avant-garde is used in this context as an umbrella term to denote styles of playwriting which break from the mainstream realist commercial system by way of experimentation. That experimentation is a rebellion against bourgeois art leading to the evolution of a myriad of styles which reject beliefs and expectations of traditional audiences. Theatre and art in general no longer imitates nature. There is a fundamental restructuring of perception and understanding and the very traditional notion of theatre is questioned. The avant-garde did not and does not develop as one unit in the fashion of a marching army, from which the term is derived. No insinuation of a well defined coterie united by aesthetic agreement is implied here. The avant-garde manifests itself in various aesthetic movements which include the following: symbolism, expressionism, futurism, dadaism, constructivism, surrealism, epic theatre, modernism, post-modernism and more recently post-colonialism (see Aronson, A 2000).

2 The realist dramatic structure was sculpted by Aristotle in his Poetics. However, realism as a literary movement began around 1850, although most of its elements may be found before the 19th century. The realist well-made-play was perfected by Eugene Scribe 1791-1861. It was taken up and further polished by playwrights like Anton Chekhov, August Strindberg, and Bernard Shaw. The same techniques were taught by European mentors in the then Southern Rhodesia during writers' workshops organized under the auspices of the Rhodesia Literature Bureau.

3 The background story is used here to mean the past of a dramatic story which because of the limits of time and space cannot be shown on stage. The background story happens in the offstage world but is referred to by the characters and the audience is asked to assume that the event happened. Good playwrights have an excellent style of revealing it.

4 There is a revisionist school of thought which believes the director must actively search for fresh approaches to staging plays, particularly old classics which Inongova Njakenjake is not. This school of thought believes that directors should freely change the script as, according to them, innovative changes improve the play by correcting the playwright's errors. However, the revisionist and the collaborative schools of thought agree that no director has a right to exploit the script for self-serving reasons. (see Catron, L.E, 1989, p.19).

5 The obligatory scene is also called scene a faire in French. The obligatory scene denotes an intensely emotional scene that the author is obliged to include because the audience has been led to anticipate it. Technically speaking, the obligatory scene is an open confrontation about the main conflict that takes place between the two major opposing characters (see Thomas, J 1992:71).

6 For a detailed study of this issue, see Zinyemba, R.M 1986)

7 Picturisation is used here to mean the visual interpretation of each moment in the play and such interpretation is motivated by how the characters are placed on the set so as to suggest their relationship towards one another (mentally and emotionally). The movement of these stage pictures (blocking) is part of the concept. Composition is the rational arrangement of people in a stage group through the use of emphasis, stability, sequence and balance to achieve an instinctively satisfying clarity and beauty (see Dean, E and Carra, L 1965:109-173).

8 Vefremdungseffekt is a German word which does not have an English equivalent. In Brechtian epic theatre it refers to any technique which breaks away the illusion on the part of the audience to allow them to distance themselves from empathetically taking part in the events taking place on stage. The distancing of the audience is done in order allow or force them to turn stage action into food for thought. (see White, A.D 1979)